



Marking for Improvement Policy

November 2025

Review Date: November 2027

Rationale

The Northern Ireland Curriculum aims to empower young people to achieve their potential and to make informed and responsible decisions throughout their lives. This marking policy is in line with the school's agreed assessment policy.

Purpose and Aims of the Marking *for* Improvement Policy

The purpose of this policy is to make explicit how teachers mark children's work and provide feedback to children. All members of staff are expected to be familiar with the policy and to apply it consistently in the marking of children's work.

A marking for improvement policy helps to promote consistent standards of marking across the school.

It is important to provide constructive feedback to children, focusing on successes achieved against **learning intentions and success criteria**. This enables children to reflect on the learning achieved and helps them to understand how they can close the gap between what they can currently do and what we would like them to be able to do.

- Marking for improvement is a positive reinforcement of what the pupil has achieved.
- Marking for improvement indicates the strengths and weaknesses within a piece of work as well as indicating how a pupil can improve their achievements in future pieces of work.
- Marking for improvement is an effective way of keeping the pupil focused on the agreed learning intentions and encourages self- assessment and self-correction.
- Marking for improvement demonstrates the value and respect due to children's efforts.
- Marking for improvement provides an indication to parents about their child's progress.

At Ballyoran Primary School marking will take on several forms:

Verbal Feedback: so that children receive immediate feedback. This feedback should focus upon the successes, areas for development and target setting for the future.

Formative Feedback: This focuses on the learning intention and is designed so that the positive achievements of pupils will be recognised.

Diagnostic: This focuses on the positives and the areas for development within a piece so the strengths and weaknesses of pupils can be identified.

Summative Feedback: This focuses on closed tasks or exercises so that the overall achievements of pupils may be recorded in a systematic way.

Evaluative: so that the information gained about pupils' achievements may be used by teachers to inform future learning and teaching and curriculum planning.

Marking for Improvement: This gives pupils the opportunity to respond to feedback given and make improvements in their work. During reflective time children are encouraged to read the teacher's comment and make improvements to their work at given times in the day/week.

Implementation

We at Ballyoran Primary School have agreed the following approaches towards marking for improvement:

- Marking needs to be completed regularly, kept up-to-date, and returned promptly to pupils.
- Pupils need to understand marking, both the success criteria for marking as well as the comments awarded.
- Marking should include comments, not just ticks. The comments should be encouraging and should reflect the learning intention (WALT) as well as the success criteria.
- Comments should give pupils some indication of how they could improve their work.
- Pupils should be given time to respond to teacher, peer or self- assessment in Literacy and Numeracy and to make improvements to their work.
- The amount of marking should be manageable for teachers.

Marking and Feedback in the Foundation Stage

Within Foundation Stage, marking and feedback strategies include:

- Verbal Praise
- Stickers and stamps
- Written annotations, short and narrative observations
- Annotation of children's work

Teachers in the Foundation Stage have agreed a Foundation Stage Marking Code (see Appendix 1).

Approaches to Marking

The following guidelines are minimum requirements and are expected to be adhered to by all teachers.

Literacy and Numeracy

- All work should be marked.
- A minimum of one in every third piece should have a quality comment.
- Comments should be written by the teacher detailed and (as much as possible) be related to the learning intention and success criteria.
- Comments should be written clearly. All teachers should use legible writing.

'Well done', 'Very good', 'Excellent' or 'V.G.' on their own, are not considered constructive feedback. These types of comments should be extended. For example, if a child has completed an exercise in report writing, 'Very good closing statement in this piece' would be a more constructive use of the term.

Learning in children's books will reflect a wide range of marking:

- Children's self-assessment through smiley faces
- Peer Marking
- Teacher's marking and general teacher marks
 - * Margin marking, positive formative comments and next steps marking
 - * Corrections, scaffolding and ideas for improvement
 - * Notes for teacher's own use

All children's learning will be marked in one of the above ways and all children will experience a range of marking types reflecting professional judgement.

Marking will be completed in any colour of ink.

Live Marking

The main form of marking will be in the form of live marking.

How it works

Teachers set pupils to work and, while they are engaged in independent tasks, books are marked in real time. This live marking is primarily recorded in the margins using the agreed marking code, but may also include specific feedback, ideas and directions tailored to the pupil's work.

If a recurring error or misconception is identified across several books during live marking, the teacher can pause the lesson to address the issue with the whole class.

This allows for immediate impact and correction, ensuring that learning is deepened within the same lesson.

Live marking ensures that:

- Progress is visible during the lesson.
- Feedback is timely and relevant to each pupil.
- Misconceptions are addressed promptly, benefiting all learners.

It is not expected that every pupil will receive live marking in every lesson. However, each pupil should receive live marking at least once per week.

Should spelling, grammar and punctuation be corrected in all subjects?

Spelling, grammar and punctuation will not be corrected in all work if we are marking towards the learning intention for the lesson. Correcting every error would be extremely time consuming and possibly demoralising for the pupil.

If a pupil has consistently misspelt an important key word, it should be corrected e.g. when studying the topic of electricity in WAU lessons, children would be expected to spell the technical vocabulary correctly (conductor, insulator, current etc.) In literacy it would be likely that the spelling, grammar and punctuation would be touched upon in the teacher commentary.

Other areas of the curriculum

- One substantial comment in every child's book per topic (This can be completed during the topic or after the topic has been completed).
- All other work should be ticked.

Homework

Y1-4

- Homework should be marked weekly.

Yr 5 - 7

- All individual questions should be corrected either by the children or the teacher.

Self and Peer Assessment

All teachers use self and peer assessment across the curriculum areas. The children are able to assess their work by compiling a list of success criteria at the beginning of the lesson with the teacher and checking their work against this criterion when they have finished.


Children should have the opportunity to carry out this form of assessment in all subjects.

Marking code

The marking code should be used to reflect on the learning intentions (WALT) and success criteria (SC). It should be accessible to the children. The code should be frequently discussed with children, so it is not misinterpreted.

The following codes in the margin may be used:

Literacy

✓	Correct
•	Incorrect
sp	Spelling error to be corrected
p	Punctuation error in that line
.	Full stop needed
g	Grammar error
//	New paragraph needed
	Finger space needed
CL	Capital letter needed or in the wrong place
?	This doesn't make sense
^	Below line to indicate an omission/missing word

Numeracy

✓	Correct
•	Incorrect, try again
• ✓ _c	A completed correction

Marking and Support Indicators: Independent work can be signified by writing 'Ind', although this does not need to appear on every piece of work. It is particularly useful for pupils with SEN or when a child has transitioned from supported to independent work. Any work completed with assistance should be clearly marked at the top using 'TS' for Teacher Support or 'CAS' for Classroom Assistant Support. A stamper may also be used to indicate whether work was completed independently, with 1:1 support, in a small group, or as part of a whole-class activity. Positive achievements should be acknowledged with stickers or stamps where appropriate and teachers will award House Points for effort and success.

Role of other adults supporting

Classroom Assistants may mark work with groups of pupils with whom they have been working. When this is the case, they will follow the guidelines in this policy: to initial work they have supported, identify if work was independent or supported and as appropriate give feedback verbally or through marking.

Volunteers should not be marking and/or commenting in a child's book.





Monitoring and Evaluating

Marking will be monitored through book scoops carried out by the Principal, Vice-Principal, Literacy/ Numeracy coordinators or key stage coordinators each term in line with the School Development Plan.

Marking Code Foundation Stage Appendix 1

Teachers/teaching assistants will make use of the following symbols when marking pieces of work, taking into consideration the success criteria of a lesson.

The following code will be shared with all pupils so that they can understand their learning and what they can do next to make improvements (at an appropriate level of detail).

Symbol	Meaning
	<p style="text-align: center;">Smiley Face/Positive Stamper</p> <p>The child has met the success criteria of the task confidently.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Completion of work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Independently <input type="checkbox"/> With 1:1 support <input type="checkbox"/> In a small group <input type="checkbox"/> As a class
	<p style="text-align: center;">Finger Space</p> <p>Remember to take a 'finger space' between words when writing a sentence.</p>
Oops...	<p style="text-align: center;">Oops...</p> <p>The child has become a little mixed up in completing the task and has not achieved the learning intention or met the success criteria. This will be discussed and guidance given to make improvements.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Verbal Feedback</p> <p>The teacher and the child have reflected on the work together, discussing what was done well and identifying areas for improvement.</p>

Once a week on average, pupils will use the following symbols to self-assess their learning.

