



Parents' Guide to Feedback and Marking that you can see in your child's books



At Parklands, we have invested a great deal of our teacher training time in making some significant improvements to the style of our assessment and marking. Good assessment and marking should **not** look completely the same across every subject in a school: the format depends both on the nature of the work, and the demands of each subject. Every department has its own unique ways of marking work, but we also have a common framework which is outlined in our Assessment Policy (Website link).



This summary explains some of the key features that you will encounter in students' books.

What is Summative and Formative Assessment?

Summative assessment takes place at the end of a topic or unit of work; for example an end-of-topic test in Science, or a Maths test that tests the unit you have just been taught on algebra, or a Geography essay summarising the work on 'Coastal Erosion'. Summative assessment tests if you have understood the work, and can demonstrate your understanding.

In isolation, summative assessment doesn't help students to improve because the learning has already taken place by the time the feedback is received but they do indicate the students understanding of the work undertaken. Good teaching needs a mix of both summative and formative assessment, but it is mainly **formative** assessment that helps pupils improve their work and overall achievement. As a result, teachers focus on formative marking in books.

Formative assessment is all about a written and verbal conversation or dialogue between teachers and students. This dialogue happens during the learning on a regular basis, rather than simply at the end of a topic. Teachers comment on the quality of the work, and how students can improve their work moving forward in the topic. Drafting work is important, and we stress this to our students. Verbal feedback contributes extensively to formative assessment.

What are some of the features of formative assessment that you can find in books?

Dialogue in books is shown in three clear ways: teacher assessment, peer assessment and self assessment (TA, PA and SA). All three are valuable in their own way, and work in combination.

- **Teacher assessment (you will see this completed in green pen)** will provide specific feedback from teachers to students
- **Peer assessment (you will see this in red pen)** is where students review, assess and compare each others' work to help improve their own understanding
- **Self assessment (you will see this in purple pen)** is where students look at success criteria for a piece of work, and evaluate how successful they have been.

Some of the terminology that we use in our formative marking;

WWW and EBI; A simple format that many teachers use in their work to structure feedback. Students respond better to teacher comments if there are specific areas on which they can work. So "www" stands for "what went well" – the teacher praising aspects of their work, and "ebi" stands for "even better if" – specific areas that the student can address to improve their work. Praising alone is not helpful, so we try to focus on the next steps in their learning. Individual departments may use

equivalent expressions

DIT and Purple Pens; DIT is central to our teaching methodology in this school. In the past, teachers marked work then handed books back. Then the learning moved forward. However, students need to be provided with time to reflect on, and improve, their work. Teachers identify areas where improvement can be made, and teachers are encouraged to ask students questions in their feedback, in order to move their learning forward and reflect on the next steps.

DIT stands for “**Dedicated Improvement Time**”. After a teacher has returned work, students are given a block of time in a lesson to respond to their teacher’s questions or improve their work. This is usually completed using a purple pen, to signify that this work is different: it is improvement based on their teacher’s comments. So we can easily see by looking back through the book where a student has responded to teachers’ comments. Looking for the purple pen, you will see examples of where students are responding to their teachers, and therefore making progress. It is the dialogue here that is important – a two-way communication between student and teacher.

RAGP; Each department operates a slight variation on this, to suit their particular subject requirements. However, you may find stamps in books, often looking similar to a traffic light format. This is particularly important at Key Stage 3, where we now no longer use National Curriculum Levels. These letters or colours refer to students’ understanding or acquired skill within a particular topic or piece of learning. This understanding is measured by teachers in terms of;

RED; pupil has not demonstrated understanding or skill to the standard that is expected

AMBER; pupil has demonstrated some understanding or skill to the standard that is expected but not consistently.

Green; pupil has fully demonstrated understanding or skill to the standard that is expected

Purple; pupil has demonstrated understanding or a level of skill beyond the expected standard

The standard expected depends on the pupil’s targets for achievement. We find this more helpful for students than the old system of providing levels: students are more focused on the actual learning, rather than limiting learning to a level.

Prior learning

Teachers also often provide students with a summary of the key learning within a unit, broken down into each key learning objective. The style of this will vary according to the department. Teachers will check at the start of each unit that students understand the basics before the unit is taught. So, for example, if a student in English is being taught a unit on the effectiveness of advertising, they may be tested in advance to check that they understand each feature of persuasive writing before teaching the new topic.



For any further information or clarification
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