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14TH January 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

CHANGE TO MARKING AND FEEDBACK

We are writing to tell you about some changes we are making to the ways in which we give feedback to pupils about their work.

The Changes

There will be a change to how often and how much written feedback is given in exercise books. Although there will be a reduction in written feedback, this will not mean that your child has not received any feedback on their work:

- Extended pieces of written work will still be assessed as usual at key assessments points throughout the year with more detailed marking of selected pieces of work or tests.
- Teachers will look at books during lessons and provide immediate 'live verbal feedback'.
- Books will still be collected in on a daily basis by teachers so that they can read and check pupil's work. They will use these checks as well as information gathered in the lesson to plan lessons adapted to pupils' needs and to provide specific and timely feedback to the whole class.
- Your child will still be kept informed verbally about how well they are doing and how to improve during lessons.
- Teachers will continue to praise and celebrate effort and achievement, to take action to improve them or to provide support if a pupil is struggling with a task.
- There will be lots of in-class responsive feedback through questioning and lots of whole-class feedback.

The Reasons for Change

We want to improve the effectiveness of feedback so that pupils use it more effectively to improve or take the next steps in their learning.

We want feedback to be given to pupils lesson-by-lesson, based on how well they did and what they found difficult in their most recent learning, either in the previous lesson or in their most recent homework.

Our teaching staff will make timely use of their checks on pupil's written work by using their findings to plan the next lesson. This is so that the right challenge, support and learning focus can be tailored to pupils each lesson. In subjects where there is at present a great deal of written feedback in books, this will be replaced by immediate 'live verbal feedback' during lessons. We are therefore changing the balance between written and spoken.

The Evidence for the Changes

Many large-scale national studies inform us that one of the most important things that enable pupils to make progress is the feedback they receive from their teachers and how they use that feedback to improve their work.

However, it is recognised that written feedback does not always improve learning, as it is not always processed effectively by pupils in order to support their progress. Previous studies have shown that other methods of feedback have a greater impact and that adopting different feedback techniques can improve pupil's progress up to 8 months. In the Summer term of 2017 there was a ground-breaking study which was funded by the Department of Education. 11 Teaching Schools nationally were selected to undertake the study, and we have worked as part of a collaboration of 8 schools across West Derby with Tim Sherriff to share our findings. In summary, early indications suggest that the classes who were taught using the types of feedback mentioned above, rather than the teacher using written feedback, performed, on average, better than the other groups. Moreover, students responded very positively to the new feedback approaches, which motivated them and enables them to focus clearly on their progress.

What Next

The Federation have decided to change the way we provide feedback after much consideration of the evidence, and following the results of national and local research we fully believe that these methods will offer a rich dialogue between teachers and pupils and make feedback more purposeful, enabling pupils to make better progress. As with everything we do, we will closely evaluate this through our regular monitoring systems. We will be explaining these different approaches to pupils over the next few weeks. Please do discuss with your child, especially this term when the changes will be introduced. If you would like further information, or to talk to us about this, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Mulligan
Head of School