



Update on Marking Policy Review Group: December 2015

The Marking Policy Review Group has already met three times and have engaged in a wide-ranging set of discussions. Discussions have included a presentation from Mick Walker on the origins of 'deep' and 'dialogic' marking', the frequency of marking and feedback and what can be learnt from cognitive psychology in a presentation by David Didau. The group have explored a number of practice examples and policies from across the country.

The groups have also heard from people who are looking at radically changing their practice in response to the workload challenge by streamlining and cutting back the frequency of marking.

All three groups are already clear that:

- It is essential to maintain a proportionate approach to marking, planning and data management to balance what is best for pupils alongside what is best for teachers. 'Effective' is therefore being used as meaning a good balance between these two.
- It is important to go back to first principles to ask what the purpose and audience is for marking, planning and data management.
- They want to create principles, stimulate debate and provide an opportunity for schools to review their practice to actively reduce the overall burden on teachers.
- Decisions made by teachers and headteachers are influenced by many factors such as government reforms and the accountability system, but the purpose should always be driven by the need to help pupils progress rather than for evidence gathering purposes. Ofsted have been clear about what they do and do not require to see when undertaking inspections and these principles need to be embedded into practice.
- Decisions by senior leaders are crucial. The groups are mindful of ensuring clear messaging around the requirements related to marking, planning and data management, so leaders and teachers can concentrate on the elements which drive progress for pupils.
- Government needs to explore further how it can support and reduce demands on schools.
- One particular method of practice will not be relevant to all schools. It is, therefore, important that a range of principles are put in place which acknowledge all phases and settings.

- Training, both initial and continuing, is crucial to embed approaches which reduce workload whilst maintaining high standards to help pupils progress.

These groups will report in late spring 2016. We are keen to hear from schools which are tackling workload and any which are taking radical action. Please email workload.solutions@education.gsi.gov.uk.

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