

# **Supplementary guidance on inspecting assessment**

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This supplementary guidance has been drafted to support inspectors in evaluating formative assessment and pupils' attitude towards, and understanding of, the feedback that they receive on their learning.

## **CONTENTS**

### **Document details**

Copyright statement

About this guidance

### **Guidance**

Evaluating pupils' attitudes to classroom based formative assessment

# Document details

**Copyright statement**

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# Copyright statement

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# About this guidance

## Overview

This supplementary guidance has been drafted to support inspectors in evaluating formative assessment and pupils' attitude towards, and understanding of, the feedback that they receive on their learning.

From September 2021, guidance 'What we inspect' for maintained schools and PRUs includes reference to pupils' attitude towards, and understanding of, their role in formative feedback. It identifies in inspection area 2 (2.2 Attitudes to learning) that:

Inspectors should consider:

- how well pupils understand and respond to feedback from adults and their peers
- how effectively pupils use feedback to move their learning forward

This complements the guidance in inspection area 3 (3.2 Teaching and assessment), that sets out a range of classroom-based practices that inspectors must consider, including:

- the quality and effectiveness of feedback that pupils receive
- the extent to which teachers develop pupils' thinking and understanding through skilful questioning and monitoring of pupils' learning
- how effectively teachers and other practitioners respond to pupils' learning during lessons and activities and adapt their approach accordingly
- how successfully teachers provide relevant, purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' learning
- When evaluating these areas, inspectors should note that we have no preferred methodology that schools should adopt. Teachers and other adults may use a range of different approaches over time. The key consideration is whether practice is successful in supporting all pupils to make effective progress.

Under inspection area 3 (3.2 Teaching and assessment), inspectors evaluate and report on the quality of the feedback that teachers provide, and how successfully teachers provide relevant, purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' learning. However, a significant aspect of any assessment and feedback approach is the quality and strength of pupils' responses to the feedback. For feedback to be beneficial to learning, it is important that pupils understand how to receive and use feedback appropriately, and appreciate their own active role in the feedback process, relevant to their age and ability.

Inspectors should note that feedback can take a range of different forms that should be chosen purposefully, such as written feedback (in the form of marking) and/or verbal feedback. It may come from teachers and support staff or be the result of peer and/or self-assessment. High quality feedback should be an integral part of effective school-wide teaching and assessment practices.

# **Guidance**

**Evaluating pupils' attitudes to classroom based formative assessment**

# **Evaluating pupils' attitudes to classroom based formative assessment**

## **Inspection Area 2: Wellbeing and attitudes to learning.**

**how well pupils understand and respond to feedback from adults and their peers**

**how effectively pupils use feedback to move their learning forward**

Inspectors will undertake a range of activities to gather evidence for these areas. These may include:

- learning walks
- conversations with pupils about their work
- observations of learning
- scrutiny of books and of other learning

The emphasis should be on evaluating how well pupils understand the role that they play in the feedback processes, and what they need to do to benefit from feedback and move their learning forward.

Just as inspectors should consider pupils' attitudes towards feedback from teachers and other adults, they should also evaluate how well pupils respond to, and use, feedback from peer and self-assessment activities to improve their learning.

Discussions with pupils is a key source of evidence for these areas. This will provide an opportunity to explore pupils' understanding of their role in the feedback process. In coming to a judgement on this, it is important for inspectors to bear in mind the age and ability of the pupils involved.

Inspectors should consider:

- what is pupils' attitude to the feedback they receive?
- do pupils invite feedback and are they motivated by it?
- do pupils think of feedback as being a supportive and helpful part of the learning

process?

- can pupils explain what they do with the feedback they receive and how they will act on it to improve their work?
- how well do pupils make improvements or apply new strategies as a result of the feedback they receive?
- is there a culture where errors are valued as learning opportunities, and admitting to not understanding something is acceptable?

Evidence gathered from this work will also help inspectors when they consider classroom-based assessment practices in inspection area 3 (3.2 Teaching and assessment). It will help inspectors to gauge how well the school develops pupils' understanding about their role in the feedback process as they progress through the school. This important role is also identified in guidance that accompanies the Curriculum for Wales 'supporting learner progression: assessment guidance'[1]. It notes that an important role for practitioners is 'developing learners' skills in making effective use of feedback to move their learning forward'.

[1] ['Supporting learner progression: assessment guidance'](#)

## Inspection Area 3: 3.2 Teaching and assessment

**When evaluating the quality of feedback from teachers and other practitioners, inspectors should consider how well verbal and written feedback helps pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They should evaluate the effectiveness of the feedback that pupils receive about work they have completed online or digitally.**

Inspectors will undertake a range of activities to gather evidence for these areas. These may include:

- discussions with teachers and other adults
- scrutiny of school documentation
- learning walks
- conversations with pupils about their work
- observations of learning
- scrutiny of books and of other learning, including online and digital

When evaluating the quality of feedback, inspectors should remember that there are a range of factors that can determine its impact on pupil progress. As such, inspectors should consider:

- is feedback suitable for the age and ability of the pupil?
- is feedback clear, personal and specific?
- does it focus on the elements that are important and relevant?
- is it clear about next steps?
- does it provide helpful guidance on how to improve? (i.e. not just tell pupils when they are wrong)
- is feedback linked helpfully to learning intentions and/or planned outcomes?
- is feedback timely, so as to be useful for future learning?
- do pupils have sufficient opportunity to discuss and/or take action in response to feedback? (NB pupils are unlikely to benefit from feedback unless they have appropriate time to consider and respond)
- is there evidence that pupils have opportunities to address potential improvements at a later stage?

NB. Not all feedback needs to conform to all of the criteria above to be beneficial.

It will also be important for inspectors to consider:

- how well do teachers and other adults teach pupils about how to use feedback, such as through coaching and modelling?
- how well do teachers help pupils develop these skills as they move through the school?
- do pupils receive good quality feedback in all subjects/disciplines and areas of learning?

Inspectors should consider:

- the extent to which teachers develop pupils' thinking and understanding through skilful questioning and monitoring of pupils' learning
- how effectively teachers and other practitioners respond to pupils' learning during lessons and activities and adapt their approach accordingly

When evaluating the above points, inspectors should consider how well:

- do questions draw pupils towards key understanding and/or increase the level of challenge as lessons proceed?
- does questioning involve all pupils?
- do questions promote thinking, justification and reasoning?
- does questioning reinforce and revisit learning intentions?
- does questioning encourage pupils to speculate and hypothesise?
- does the teacher create an atmosphere of trust where pupils' answers, opinions and ideas are valued?
- does the classroom environment encourage pupils to listen and respond to each

other as well as to the teacher?

- do teachers encourage pupils to ask as well as respond to questions?
- do teachers continually monitor pupils understanding to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of their progress during lessons?
- do teachers adapt learning and teaching in response to questioning and scrutiny of learning as the lesson, or series of lessons, progress? For example, do they use this information to guide the pace of learning and to decide on the most appropriate challenge for pupils?

Inspectors should consider:

- how successfully teachers provide relevant, purposeful opportunities for pupils to assess their own and their peers' learning
- When considering how successfully teachers provide relevant, purposeful opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own and their peers learning, inspectors should consider both the opportunities that pupils have and the impact that this has on their learning.

Inspectors should consider:

- whether the purpose for using peer and self-assessment is clear for pupils and staff
- whether the school has well-understood practices for developing pupils' skills in evaluating their own and other's learning
- how well teachers and other adults teach pupils about how to assess their own and other's learning, such as through coaching and modelling
- how well teachers monitor feedback to ensure that pupils benefit from useful advice and are able to make progress as a result
- how well teachers help pupils make choices about how they move their own learning forwards

When evaluating practice, inspectors should consider whether criteria for evaluating learning are clear to enable pupils to have a good understanding of the aims of their work and of what it means to complete it successfully. Teachers may develop and share these criteria, or as pupils develop, they should become increasing involved in developing the criteria themselves.

Inspectors should consider:

- how well the school's peer and/or self-assessment practices encourage pupils to reflect critically on their own and/or other's learning and progress
- how effectively pupils identify strengths and areas for development in their own and other's learning
- how well peer assessment helps pupils to learn from each other

- how well pupils' understanding and independence in assessing their own learning and that of their peers develop, as they progress