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Feedback in action: A review of practice in English schools

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Contents

Glossary of abbreviations

AfL	Assessment for Learning
CPD	Continuous professional development
DIRT	Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time
EAL	English as an additional language
FAR	Feedback Action Response (a DIRT alternative)
FE	Further Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SEN(D)	Special educational needs (and disabilities)
SLT	Senior leadership team
SPAG	Spelling, punctuation and grammar
TA	Teaching Assistant
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey

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Introduction

Feedback is recognised to be one of the most cost-effective and effective interventions to improve student learning (EEF Toolkit, 2018). The Teachers' Standards require teachers to 'give pupils regular feedback, both orally and through accurate marking, and encourage pupils to respond to the feedback' (DfE, 2011, p. 12). However, there is relatively little empirical evidence on what feedback practices are used in English schools, how effectively they are implemented, and how they interact with other aspects of school life, leading to a strong need for a review of feedback practice in England. This Report documents a mixed methods study of feedback practices in England in primary, secondary and Further Education (FE) contexts. A documentary analysis of school policies provides contextual information, which is then supported by rich data supplied by a medium-scale survey and in-depth qualitative interviews with 32 teachers in 8 institutions, with a minimum of three in each school. In this introduction we give a brief overview of some relevant aspects of the literature on feedback in English education.

The data collected for *A Marked Improvement?* (Elliott et al., 2016), using the NFER's Teacher Voice survey (a nationally representative sample of 2,000 teachers), was the first clear evidence on what feedback practices schools currently implement, albeit focused on written marking. 10% of secondary teachers who responded put a mark on all work; just 2% of primary teachers did. Over half (55%) of the primary teachers who responded indicated mistakes but did not correct them on all or most pieces of work and 63% of secondary teachers did the same. Over half (55%) of primary teachers and 58% of secondary teachers who responded reported giving pupils time in class to respond to previous written feedback for all or most pieces of work. Nearly two thirds (62%) of primary teachers and more than three quarters (81%) of secondary teachers gave targets for future work on all or most pieces of work (Elliott et al., 2016).

The 2016 Teacher Workload Survey (Higton et al., 2017) found that 53% of respondents said marking created unnecessary additional workload. (There was no reference to feedback as opposed to marking in the 2016 survey.) By the time of the 2019 Teacher Workload Survey 55% of respondents reported that 'approaches to data tracking, school behaviour, marking and feedback, and teacher appraisal' had been changed in the last 2 years in an effort to reduce workload (Walker, Worth & Van den Brande, 2019, pp. 13–14); a finding which is reflected in the interview portion of this study. However, this was not always perceived as successful: 27% of respondents who worked in schools rated as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' by Ofsted found that changes to policies on marking and feedback had increased their workload, compared to 24% who found that they had reduced their workload. In contrast, 16% of respondents in both 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools found changes in this area had increased their workload, in comparison to 30% and 36% who found they had reduced it in 'Good' and 'Outstanding' schools respectively. In this context marking and feedback remain a significant part of a teacher's role and their workload. The

OECD TALIS (Teaching and Learning International Survey) report from the 2018 survey showed both primary and secondary teachers in England reporting spending approximately 6 hours a week on marking (6.1 for primary and 6.3 for secondary) (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). This showed no change from the 2013 survey. The amount of time primary teachers in England spent marking was higher compared to all other countries, with the exception of Chinese Taipei. For secondary teachers only Shanghai and Singapore showed more time spent marking than England. 41% of primary teachers in the survey reported that the amount of time they spent marking was 'about right' but a total of 58% thought it was 'too much' or 'far too much' (Jerrim & Sims, 2019, p. 90). For secondary teachers the 'about right' was only 29% and the combined 'too much' and 'far too much' categories represented 65% of all respondents. The fact that marking, an important component of feedback, remains such a large part of teachers' workloads also suggests further evidence is needed about what is happening and why.

Feedback and marking are also significant in the policy context, particularly in relation to workload. Ofsted re-emphasised in 2016 that, given the lack of high-quality research evidence on marking, 'inspectors should not report on marking practice, or make judgements on it, other than whether it follows the school's assessment policy' (Ofsted, 2016, n.p.). The Department for Education workload reduction toolkit identifies feedback and marking as a key area in which workload can be reduced (Department for Education, n.d.).

Hattie and Timperley's (2007) model of the 'Power of Feedback' has largely informed practice in the UK, along with the principles of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as promoted following the Kings-Medway-Oxon-Formative-Assessment-Project (KMOFAP) at the turn of the 21st century (e.g. Wiliam, Lee, Harrison & Black, 2004). Hattie and Timperley suggested there were three key questions guiding feedback: 'where am I going?', 'how am I going?' and 'where to next?'. They also identified four focuses of feedback: about the task (i.e. correct or incorrect at its simplest level); about the process of completing the task; about self-regulation; and about the student as a person. The last of these, they argue, is the least effective in terms of promoting student progress. Specificity is recommended in relation to learning goals ('where to next?') but overly specific feedback at the task level can interfere with progress at the process level. KMOFAP focused on formative assessment (Wiliam, et al., 2004) and the short publication *Inside the Black Box* (Black and Wiliam, 2001) has been influential on teaching practice across England. It focused on the concentration at that time on assessment, i.e. marking, in the classroom, without accompanying information on how to improve, i.e. feedback. The principles suggested in *Inside the Black Box* included:

- Feedback should be particular to the individual and not encourage comparison with other students;
- Students need to be trained in self-assessment so that they understand the purpose of their learning and how they can achieve it;

- Dialogue between teachers and students should be reflective and intended to evoke understanding.

One area promoted as part of Assessment for Learning was the use of peer and self-assessment. Peer and self-assessment can vary from simple verification feedback of 'right' or 'wrong' answers in a quick quiz to in-depth analytical discussions. There are a number of meta-analyses which confirm the power of peer and self-assessment (e.g. Double, McGrane & Hopfenbeck, 2019) but most do not differentiate between school level and higher education level studies. One exception is Sanchez et al. (2017), a study which focused on 'K-12' students. In US terms, K-12 is from the beginning of primary to the end of secondary school ('K' or Kindergarten in the US is age equivalent to Year 1 in England and 12th Grade is the last year of high school, which students in the US typically finish at age 17 or 18). Sanchez et al. found that students who engaged in peer assessment typically achieved more highly in subsequent assessment than those who did not, and they also found a reasonable level of correlation between peer grading and teacher-grading ($r = 0.67$). In most studies this was supported by the use of clear rubrics and assessment criteria. The implication of the findings of Sanchez et al. is that taking part in peer feedback generates benefits beyond the actual feedback itself, enabling a deeper engagement with the learning material or deeper metacognition about the learning process.

Several authors suggest that training is required to maximise the benefits of self- and peer assessment. Newby and Winterbottom (2011) found that peer assessment comments in a secondary science context were mostly focused on relatively straightforward improvements. They recommended training students to ensure that they evaluate the whole piece of work and do not just concentrate on obvious errors and omissions. Sutherland (2015) reported a year-long project with four teachers of Year 8 English classes in urban secondary schools to use a guided model for classroom talk to develop dialogic talk, including peer feedback exchanges. Use of the model was judged to be beneficial for all students, but changes in terms of increased confidence and discourse were particularly marked among low-attaining, low-socio-economic-status students. Training may also be needed to alleviate the worries of students about the use of peer assessment: a focus group study of New Zealand secondary students' views of feedback and assessment (Peterson & Irving, 2008) found that participants dismissed peer feedback as just the views of their friends, whereas what really mattered was the teacher's judgement. In contrast, however, Williams (2010), in her study of the perceptions of feedback of 56 twelve to thirteen year-olds in New Zealand found that the most helpful type of feedback in their view was 'talking to yourself about your work' (p. 310).

Almost every interaction between teacher and student in the classroom is a potential assessment and opportunity for feedback (Ruiz-Primo, 2011). Studies documenting feedback practice in the classroom are few in number and are distributed globally which means that their relevance to schools in England may be low. Changes in recommended practice since 2000 in England also means that older articles are less likely to be representative of reality today. One study of

British primary classrooms (Apter, Arnold & Swinson, 2010) suggested that higher levels of academic feedback (as opposed to behaviour feedback) was strongly correlated with higher levels of on-task behaviour from students, but note that the direction of this relationship is not established. A small study of four primary religious education classrooms meanwhile suggested that much of the teacher's discursive talk through the lesson was feedback-related, including the use of assistive questions to support learners reasoning their way forward (Eke, Lee & Clough, 2005). See, Gorard and Siddiqui (2016) described the implementation of research evidence by teachers in a study of nine treatment primary schools in one local authority, with five participating comparator schools (and further comparison of outcomes with schools in the local authority and nationwide), where the focus was on using feedback to enhance learning. They concluded that transferring research evidence to the classroom is not a simple or easy process; they also reported that many of the lessons observed in the study were classified as poor in terms of feedback practice, particularly lacking in specificity and being high in non-specific praise which the teachers had been taught not to use because of its likely negative effect. There was some positive effect on attainment outcomes for older students receiving free school meals. The authors suggested detailed training on feedback (in this instance) with greater exemplification of what the techniques might look like (a point also raised by Black & Wiliam, 2001); they also pointed out the importance of 'feedforward' which was rarely observed in the lessons in the study. And they suggested that feedback is no substitute for the basics of classroom instruction: 'Feedback has to be built on something: If there is no initial learning or surface information, feedback is surely of little use' (See, Gorard & Siddiqui, 2016, p. 69).

There is a need for further research to understand how feedback works in classrooms in England; this review of practice goes some way to filling that lacuna, in terms of considering what teachers say they do, and what is mandated by schools, but stop shorts of an observational study which would describe what actually happens in the classroom. The whole class feedback lesson, which was seen in several schools in this study, is notably absent from the research literature, as a relatively recent development in practice which expands the widespread use of short focused periods at the beginning of lessons to conduct 'DIRT' (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time); more than half of all teachers (57%) reported giving time in class to respond to written feedback in a representative survey in 2016 (Elliott et al., 2016).

Written feedback is mostly studied in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, in terms of depth, thoroughness, length, speed, or in higher education contexts where written feedback on termly (or less frequent) assignments is the main source of feedback to learners. This makes it problematic to apply this research directly to school contexts because the learners are more likely to be adult, and they are also often highly motivated. There are further problems with utilising EFL research because it is directed at linguistic skills (grammar, spelling, etc.) rather than at other subject specific skills and disciplinary literacy. That is to say that correcting past tenses in written English may be easier than learning about how to use source material in history, for example. It also leaves

subjects such as mathematics, in which work may be entirely without text, and in which targets for one topic may be entirely irrelevant to the next topic, at a disadvantage in the ways in which feedback research is applied.

Verbal feedback provides a more immediate dialogue between teachers and students (Kerr, 2017); it offers students the opportunity to ask questions and teachers the opportunity to adapt their feedback in the moment. Students find this two-way nature of verbal feedback to facilitate more diverse and higher-order learning outcomes (Tan et al., 2019). The immediacy of feedback that verbal feedback offers can also result in students paying more attention to the feedback and acting upon it (Webb-Williams, 2018). An increase in spoken versus written feedback has been suggested as a way to reduce the workload caused by marking, particularly following the Teachers' Workload Survey in 2016 (Higton et al., 2017). The use of 'verbal feedback given' stamps to record spoken feedback for monitoring purposes by Ofsted was at one point common, indicating a nervousness about feedback in the moment which is not recorded in some way.

One topic which has largely been studied in experimental conditions and often in EFL contexts is the question of delayed versus instant feedback. It is important to note that much of what we would call instant feedback is the delayed condition in experimental design. That is, instant feedback in many of the studies which have been done describes when a student is given task feedback (correct or incorrect) after every item on a test, whereas delayed is when feedback is given at the end of a test, or after a short period of delay, not after a day or a week. The general consensus is that feedback should be given as close as possible to the point of an error in terms of factual learning, in order to prevent that error entering into long-term learning (Elliott et al., 2016). Very little work has been done on this in relation to actual classroom contexts, but lengthy delays are likely to be counterproductive. For example, in a study conducted in the US, Bruno and Santos (2010) noted that with one assignment in their study, a gap of three weeks (caused by an intervening holiday) between the initial assignment and receiving the feedback to work on it meant that their case study student could no longer remember the original task. Rapid feedback, that is, intervening while students are in ongoing productive intellectual effort, does not mean removing desirable difficulty (Bjork, 1994) from a task, but providing intervention when the student has completed a task or element of task to their own satisfaction. Indeed, rapid feedback might involve increasing desirable difficulty by asking students to look again at problems that they thought they had solved, without providing an answer.

In this study, we included written and spoken feedback practices, including peer and self-assessment, and any digital feedback tools which were in use. 'Feedback' was used to refer to information given to students to help them improve their work or their understanding (following Hattie & Timperley, 2007), rather than information returned to teachers from students. When feedback combines information about past performance with guidance for future work, feedback and instruction become intertwined until 'the process itself takes on

the forms of new instruction, rather than informing the student solely about correctness' (Kulhavy, 1977, p. 212).

Practice review methodology

This is a mixed method review of practice which triangulates documentary analysis of feedback policies, a medium-scale online survey of primary and secondary teachers, and in-depth interviews with teachers at eight case study institutions. By doing this we aimed to gain a picture of what is happening in schools, how that relates to policy, what staff think about it, and also the lessons that may be gained for practice elsewhere. Ethical clearance was obtained through the University of Oxford institutional research ethics process. The review also incorporates eight case studies of feedback techniques from different institutions, which can be found in Appendix C: these are different institutions from those with participants in the interview study. These case studies exemplify the implementation, challenges and benefits of these particular feedback practices and may be useful for teachers, schools, and colleges considering developing their feedback practice, albeit without evaluation of their effectiveness.

The conclusion triangulates the information from the three methods to generate a picture of feedback in English schools today.

Analysis of school feedback policies

The definition of 'school feedback policy' was inclusive. If any document or website page gave information about the school's feedback practices and was labelled in a relevant manner (i.e. as a feedback, assessment or marking policy), it was included in the review.

Assessment policy review method

Sample

The sample of schools for the analysis of feedback policies was a subset of the school sample approached to participate in the survey of practice in the first instance.[1] Using the Department for Education list of schools in England,[2] a stratified sample of 301 primary schools was constructed, using school size (small equals less than 100 pupils) and special school status as stratification variables. A stratified sample of 300 secondary schools was constructed, using school type as a stratification variable (FE colleges, sixth form colleges, other schools and special schools). From these lists, 20 primary (stratified by school size) and 20 secondary schools were selected for inclusion in the assessment policy review. Ten of the primary schools were small schools (because these schools have cross-age teaching which is likely to require slightly different feedback practice).

School websites were identified and checked against the postcodes listed in the Department for Education database. Websites for each of the schools were interrogated for the school feedback policies and the search facility on each site was used in an attempt to access such policies. Additionally, google searches for the name of the school and 'assessment', 'feedback' or 'marking' policy were conducted. Only 22 of the 40 schools had a publicly available assessment policy. Some websites indicated that parents could request school policies from the school office.

Of the 15 policies which were dated, seven were from 2018 or later. Three were dated 2017, two dated 2016, one dated 2015 and two dated 2014. All but one of these indicated a review on a one- to three-year cycle, but for most of these the review date had passed.

Analytical strategy

School websites were logged in the data spreadsheet, as were the locations of the assessment or marking policies. The policy information was then downloaded

[1] More information about the construction of the survey of practice sampling can be found on page 23.

[2] https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/download-data?currentstep=region&downloadYear=2017-2018&regiontype=all&la=0

for secure access by the research team, as online information is subject to change. The initial searches were conducted in October 2019. All policy documents were read by the coders prior to coding. The 22 policy documents were coded in the following ways:

- type of school (primary/secondary),
- the name of the policy was logged,
- length of the policy document (number of pages),
- frequency of feedback requirements,
- type of feedback (oral/written),
- feedback monitoring method (where indicated),
- stated purpose of feedback,
- discretion for practical subjects mentioned (yes/no),
- policy on correcting errors (qualitative data),
- mention of mechanism for pupil response to feedback,
- whether a list of feedback codes was incorporated,
- noting where verbal feedback had been given (yes/no),[3]
- triple marking (yes/no),
- live marking (yes/no),
- whole class feedback (yes/no),
- emphasis upon planning (yes/no).

School websites were searched for policies independently by a second member of the research team. Coding was double-coded, with resolution by the Principal Investigator. Secondary coding and resolution were conducted in January 2020. This process uncovered three additional policies. Two of these policies were unavailable on the websites in the first round of data collection. Another policy which was ultimately included in the data was a short statement on a web page containing relevant information but was not labelled as a policy as such. These explained the majority of the coding differences, with only eight other data points (1.3%) being additional sources of non-common coding, representing the high degree of inter-rater reliability to be expected for these relatively simple codes.

Findings

Purpose of the policy documents

Half of the policy documents were for primary schools and half for secondary schools. Approximately half of the policies from each school type explicitly mentioned that the aim of the policy was to improve learning. Four policies' objectives were closely related to learning objectives and monitoring of progress, but twelve of them mentioned the use of assessment data for tracking

[3] The code for verbal feedback given was added following a preliminary analysis of results and is therefore not included in the above reliability statistics.

purposes in the body of the document. Four of the policies mentioned planning as an objective. Two primary school policies mentioned the 'two stars and a wish' approach. Five policies mentioned improvements in self-esteem or confidence as intended outcomes of the practices contained in them. Fourteen of the policies mentioned student response to feedback, with two of them only giving details of the colour of ink that their responses will be in (implying a monitoring purpose) and others stating that the expectation is for students to re-work the assignment (2) or with reference to assessment being a two-way process (2).

Policies were diverse in terms of content and style in this sample, implying that schools did not use off-the-shelf documents or adapt existing documents created by other schools. They ranged in length from half a page to 19 pages and were on average seven pages long. Nomenclature for the policies, including the document names, were not standard. Most of them included the words assessment (12) or marking (12) and a minority included the word feedback (7) in their titles.

Some of the policies referred to the schools' values or principles (4), suggesting that they had been created to embed assessment and feedback policy in the general ethos of the school. Approximately one third of the policies (7) referred to an evidence base for their feedback practices: Assessment for Learning (5), Hattie's work (1) and an Ofsted review (1).[4] None of them referred to the EEF review entitled *A Marked Improvement*.[5] This does not mean, of course, that the other policy document authors had not consulted evidence in the construction of the policies. None of the policies referred to the lack of evidence base in general.

Teacher workload

One secondary school policy directly referred to a number of practical strategies to reduce workload whilst having impactful marking, such as spending time on quality feedback where it would have most impact rather than using a 'flick and tick' approach, and giving whole class feedback for common errors rather than writing the correct answer in full on each student booklet. One primary school policy referred to marking being manageable. None of the secondary school policies required every piece of work to be marked, but three of the primary school policies explicitly stated this, with implications for teacher workload. For example, one policy directed that:

> All work on a daily basis is to be marked either during the lesson with the children giving immediate feedback or after each lesson, ready for the next lesson/day. (Primary school 20 policy document)

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[4] Ofsted (2003) *Good assessment in secondary schools*. https://content.ncetm.org.uk/itt/sec/KeelePGCEMaths2006/OfSTED/Assessment/3205GoodAssessmentinSchools.pdf

[5] Elliott et al. (2016) *A Marked Improvement. A review of the evidence on written marking.* EEF Evidence Review. https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/evidence-reviews/written-marking/

Thirteen of the policies referred to verbal feedback, with five referring only to written feedback (3 primary; 2 secondary) and three making no explicit distinction. There is clearly scope for more recognition of the importance of verbal feedback. Strategies for management monitoring of feedback included lesson observations (3), subject moderation (1), student feedback (1) and work sampling (5). However, most of the policies did not mention how feedback would be monitored (14). Some schools (7) persisted in noting when verbal feedback had been given (6 primary; 1 secondary), with implications for teacher workload, despite indications from Ofsted that this was not an inspection requirement. Many policies specifically mentioned feedback in English (9) and mathematics (11), such as the frequency at which it should be given in those subjects (which varied). However, only one secondary policy recognised that feedback in practical subjects needed to be given specific attention in the policy document. Nine schools' policies (only one secondary) indicated how teachers should deal with errors, with the emphasis being upon spelling, literacy or grammar. A small number of policies (4) indicated that general error patterns should be acknowledged rather than every error being identified.

Feedback strategies

Almost half of the school policies mentioned the use of live marking. Whole class feedback was mentioned in approximately one quarter of policies (Figure 1). Reference to feedback conversations was also prevalent (8), but the mention of triple impact marking was uncommon, indicating a shift in practice since the 2016 EEF review on marking (Elliott et al., 2016). Use of marking codes was present in approximately half of the policy documents. These could be very effective mechanisms for reducing teacher workload, but they rely upon pupils understanding the codes, which can have different meanings in different schools and will be opaque to those coming to them new (Table 1). Notation for verbal feedback given is for monitoring purposes, as it does not add to the dialogue between the teacher and pupil. One school policy stated that feedback is for the pupils and not for adults, explicitly rejecting the notion that teachers had to log their marking and verbal feedback to satisfy Ofsted and management requirements.

Figure 1: Feedback strategies from school policies

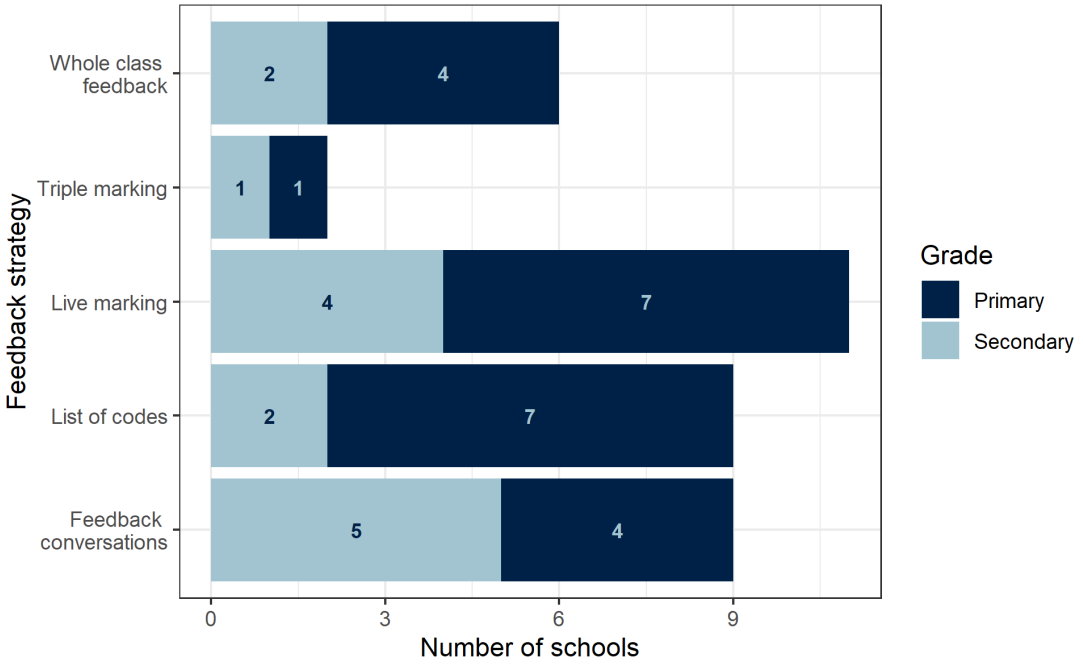


Table 1: Example marking codes in policy documents

Codes	*Brief description*
IM1/2/3	Understands/needs more time to embed understanding/needs an extension to get to a position of understanding
Red/orange/green	Learning intention stickers: not achieved/partially achieved/fully achieved
Underline with wavy line	Spelling mistake or sometimes used for a grammatical error
Drawing of a finger	Word spacing inaccuracy
^	Missing character, word or phrase
Dot	Answer which needs to be corrected by the pupil
VF	Verbal feedback given
Use of highlighter pen	Indication of successful response or a wrong response in other schools (use of colour important)

TA/I	Some schools have codes to indicate whether there has been support to achieve the performance or if it was an independently conducted piece of work

Conclusions regarding school feedback policies

- The diversity of approaches in written policy documents is a striking finding, indicating that schools are constructing policies to fit their school strategies, ethos and cultures rather than adopting and adapting policies borrowed from elsewhere (such as those available from the Times Educational Supplement website).
- The lack of reference to evidence is another main finding regarding the policy documents. Given the well-publicised lack of research evidence for some marking and feedback practices, this may not be surprising. However, reference to the publicly available reviews and policy documents could help to anchor practice in specific evidence sources.
- Although a number of policies addressed teacher workload, a minority of primary school feedback policies could have a detrimental impact upon teacher workload. This implies that some schools take a different view to Ofsted and the government on these practices. Although some policies date from before the workload reviews detailed in the introduction above, most of those which could be dated were relatively recent, with 12 dating from 2016 or later.
- The majority of policies recognised the importance of verbal feedback, which is progressive, as dialogue between pupils and teachers is important to feedback quality.

Survey of teachers

A survey was deployed across primary and secondary schools in England to gain an overview of feedback practices and policies at each stage of education. This survey was deployed in three stages, and includes a diverse set of schools, including special schools, selective state schools, and non-selective schools in selective and non-selective areas. As detailed below, the analysis and understanding across the two stages of education has been structured into sections that address feedback from different perspectives. The data collected are a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, allowing for the building of a more holistic narrative on feedback across the primary and secondary schools in this study.

Descriptive statistics were generated for the questionnaire items, except for free text items. Answers to free text questions were coded using themes that arose from the data, to generate key themes which have been presented alongside quotations below. Coding was discussed between two raters, before the main coding was carried out by a single rater, followed by a post-hoc check by the second rater. All word clouds are generated from the responses to open questions. The data for the primary and secondary schools were analysed separately and presented below.

Survey methods

An online survey was created with versions for primary and secondary teachers. As described under the methods for policy analysis above, using the Department for Education list of schools in England,[6] a stratified sample of 301 primary schools was constructed, using school size (small equals less than 100 pupils) and special school status as stratification variables. A stratified sample of 300 secondary schools was constructed, using school type as a stratification variable (FE colleges and sixth form colleges, other schools and special schools). A second, replacement sample following the same specifications was generated at the same time.

Email invitations were sent to each of these schools in the summer term of 2019 asking for a sample of three teachers to complete the survey: one teacher with a whole school responsibility which incorporated feedback, and two teachers representing either Key Stage 1 and 2 (for primary) or different areas of the curriculum (for 11-19). After a disappointing response from the first survey sample, reminder emails were sent to the first sample, and initial invitations to the second sample in the first half of the autumn term 2019. At this time a small incentive of a prize draw of vouchers was included to encourage participation. Finally, in the latter half of the autumn term 2019 and in the first half of the spring term 2020 an open online invitation was issued to teachers in England via

[6] https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/download-data?currentstep=region&downloadYear=2017-2018&regiontype=all&la=0

social media and invitation emails were sent to several thousand schools. This combination of recruitment procedures resulted in a final sample of 247 primary teachers from 194 schools and 144 secondary teachers from 113 secondary institutions. During the open recruitment a large number of overseas institutions participated and these results were removed from the data. The demographics of this sample are shown in the next section. This represents a sample of 1% of all schools in England. Although the overall sample does not represent a stratified sample of the school types, it does cover the breadth of school type and geographical location; and within schools the range of subjects, age ranges, levels of experience and levels of responsibilities are well represented, as is shown in the demographic analysis shown in 'Sample' below.

Instrument

The survey was developed utilising the initial scoping questions of the study, following guidance from the Advisory Group, and with reference to some of the existing literature on feedback. A copy of each of the survey instruments can be found in Appendix A. Questions focused on practices in feedback and beliefs about feedback. Practice questions were linked to specific time frames in order to reduce social acceptability bias.

Sample

The total number of schools in the survey overall is 307, with 391 teachers across those schools.

Primary school sample

Over the course of data collection, 247 teachers and members of senior leadership responded from 194 individual schools. Of these schools 20 were small primaries of under 100 pupils, one was a special school and 171 were primary or junior and infant schools of over 100 pupils (n = 192; 2 respondents did not answer this question). Most of the schools in this study (150) were rated 'Good' by Ofsted, with a small number rated as 'Requires Improvement' (19) or 'Outstanding' (20) and only 4 in 'Special Measures'.

Where are the primary schools from?

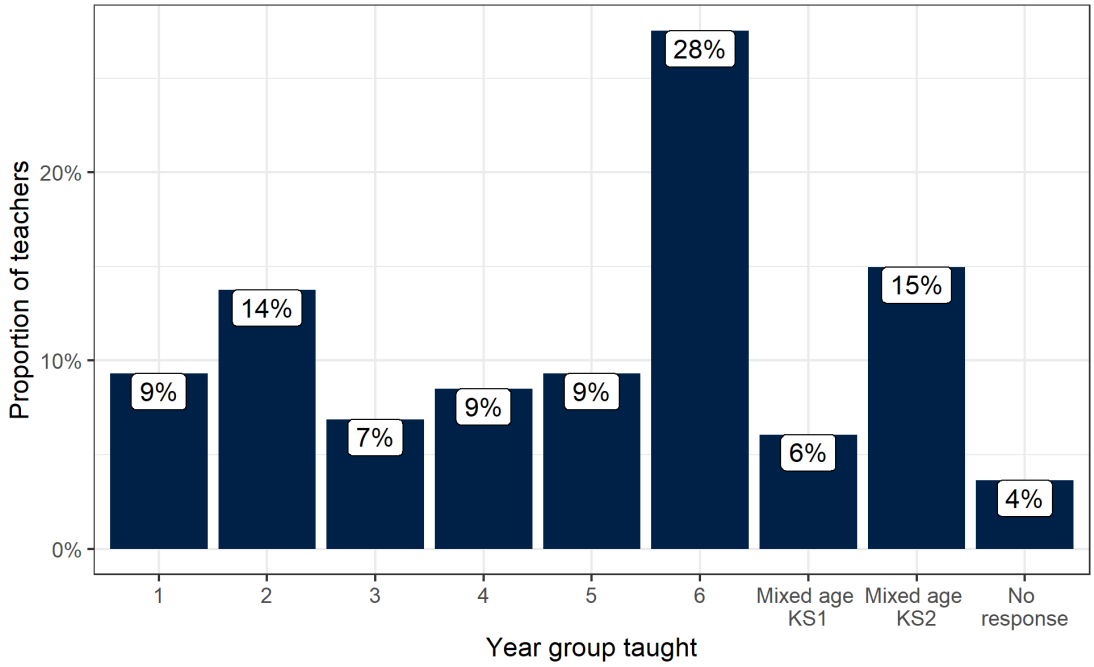
Postcode data were collected from the primary schools in this study not only to ascertain the geographic spread of our respondents, but also to ensure that the responses were not being over-weighted from any one school that had provided multiple responses. Figure 2 shows that the spread of responses is from across England.

Figure 2: Geographic spread of primary schools

Who are the primary respondents?

The largest group of primary teachers in the study were Year 6 teachers (who might be expected to take the most interest in feedback given the context of high-stakes testing), but respondents were spread across all year groups, including representatives of mixed age classes from both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (proportions shown in Figure 3).

Figure 3: What year group do you teach?

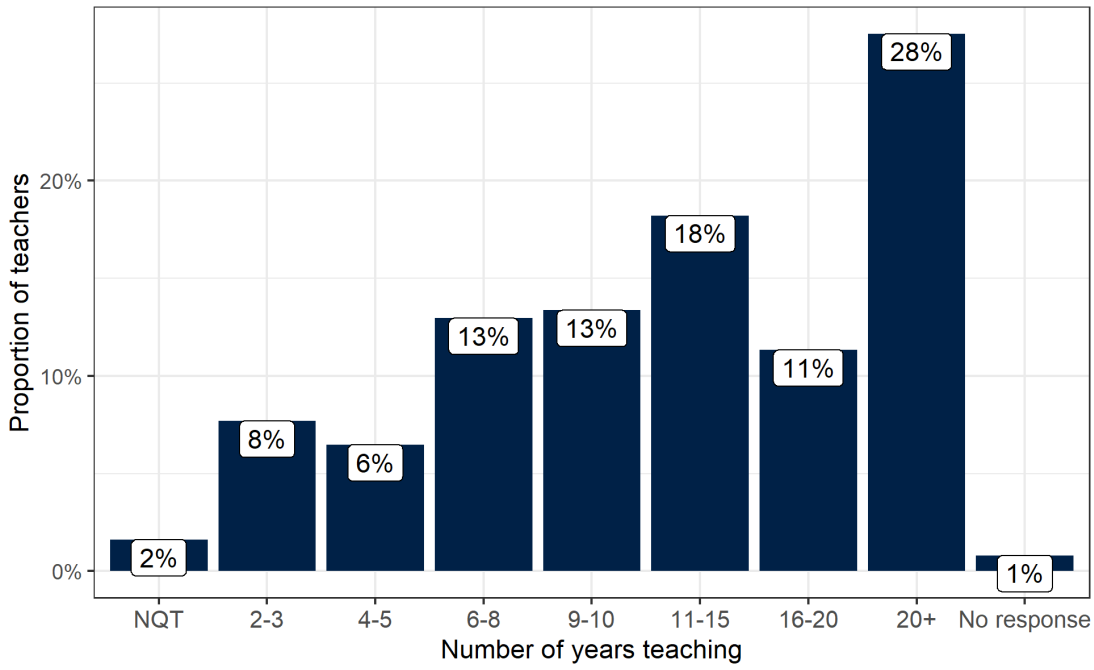


Note: Nine 'No responses' were recorded.

While primary teachers usually teach across the curriculum, we also asked if they had a particular subject specialism. One quarter of respondents specialised in English, with a further 15% specialising in mathematics; other subjects represented included geography, computing, science, foreign languages, art, drama, music, technology and history. Where quotations from the qualitative responses are given in the text, teachers are identified with what year they teach, and with subject specialism only if it is immediately relevant to the comment. Despite the varied ways in which teachers were recruited for the study, 30% of primary respondents held a position of responsibility in relation to feedback, as initially intended; the majority of primary respondents were receivers and enactors of policy.

A large proportion of the primary respondents (28%) had over 20 years of experience, with a range of other levels of experience including a small proportion of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) (Figure 4). The majority of respondents from the primary schools described having either mixed ability classes throughout the school and across subjects (46%) or grouping for ability within classes for some subjects (43%). Only a small percentage (3%) of respondents reported having classes that were set (which would only be possible in large primary schools).

Figure 4: How many years have you been teaching (primary)?



Secondary school sample

The total number of secondary schools participating in this study is 113, with 144 individual responses received from across the schools. The majority of the schools in the study are non-selective state schools (92), with an additional five non-selectives in selective areas, some selective schools (13) and special schools (3). Almost half of the secondary schools are Ofsted 'Good' (55) and a further

third are 'Outstanding' (33); there were 18 'Requires Improvement' and four in 'Special Measures' (an additional four schools with 'no response').

Where are the secondary schools from?

School postcode data was once again collected across the secondary schools to ensure that the data were not over weighted by different people in the same school. Figure 5 shows the spread of secondary schools across England.

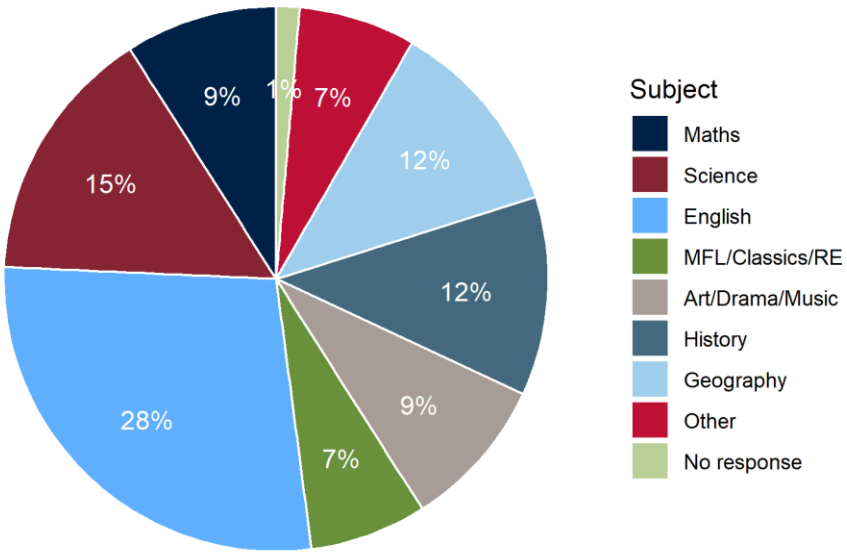
Figure 5: Geographic spread of secondary schools

Who are the secondary respondents?

The secondary teachers represent a wide range of subjects, as shown in Figure 6. The four respondents who picked 'Other' represented ESOL, PSHE, and project based learning.

Figure 6: What subject do you teach?

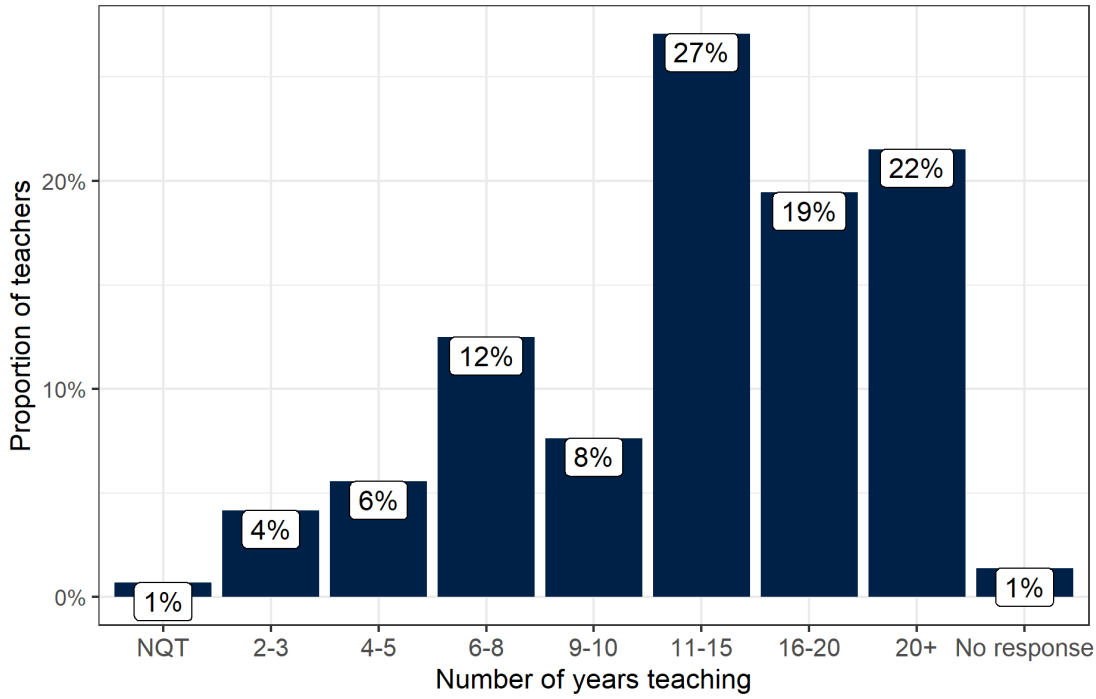
(n = 144)



Again, despite the disparate recruitment methods, we achieved almost a third of respondents with a whole school responsibility for feedback (28%) and a further 17% had responsibility for feedback within a subject, largely as part of a Teaching and Learning responsibility. The secondary respondents were slightly more experienced in terms of years teaching than the primary respondents, with only one NQT responding to the survey (Figure 7).

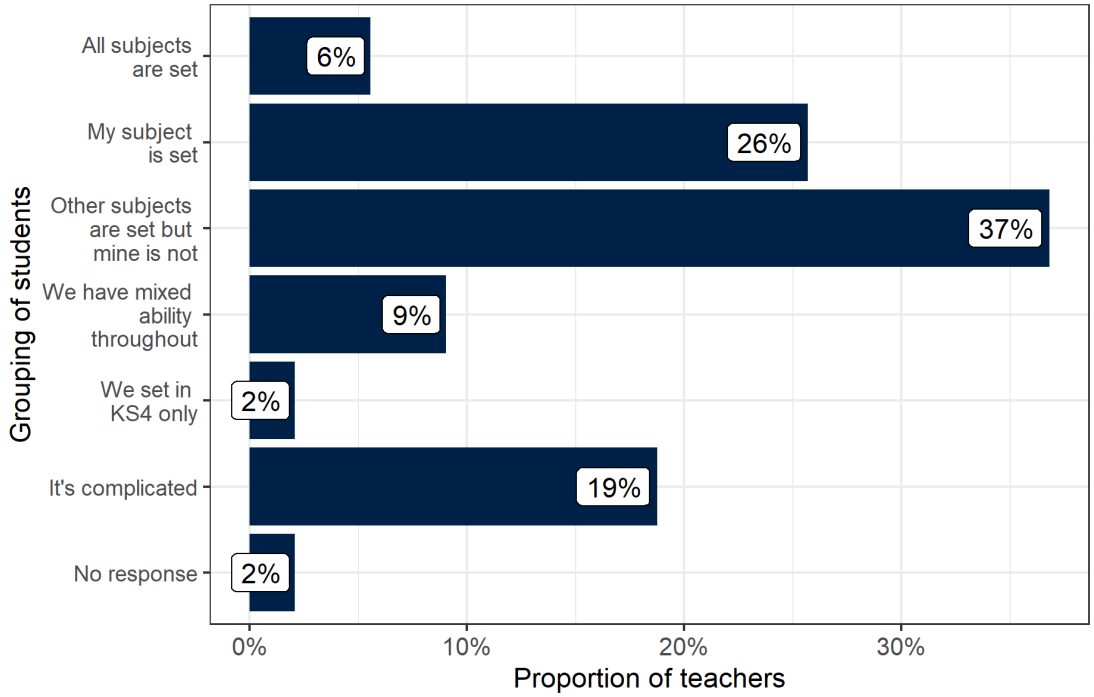
Figure 7: How many years have you been teaching (secondary)?

(n = 144)



One quarter of the secondary teachers indicated that their subject was taught in sets; only 9% had mixed ability throughout the school (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Do you use setting in your school?



Survey data analysis

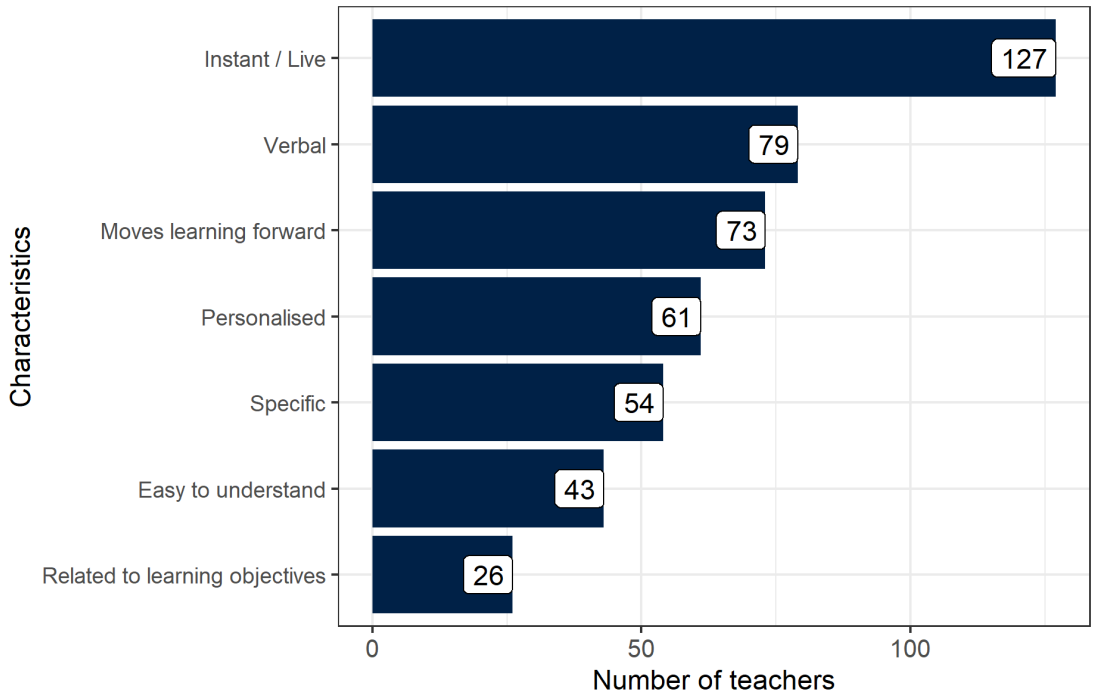
Primary schools

What constitutes good feedback?

The teachers in this study were asked about characteristics of good feedback (Figure 9). Two hundred and forty-four respondents provided responses from which the themes have been coded. As can be seen in Figure 9, the majority (52%) of teachers and senior leaders in this study believe that for feedback to be effective, particularly with their younger students, it needed to be oral and immediate. This is what would allow students to correct misconceptions in the moment, and then build on their learning with the correct grounding.

Figure 9: What makes for good feedback? (Primary)

(n = 244) (Coded qualitative responses)



The respondents also highlighted that feedback needed to be constructive and framed positively (even when pointing out development areas), keeping in mind the importance of moving the child's learning forward. For example, one teacher indicated that the following constituted good feedback:

> Instant, verbal or 'live' because it corrects misconceptions in the lesson and pushes the learning forwards. (Year 4 teacher)

Current feedback practices at primary level

The respondents in this study were asked to describe what they had done in terms of giving feedback to their students the last time they had done so. There was an emphasis on having given feedback in the classroom during the lesson,

thereby ensuring that it was immediate. The feedback was largely verbal in format and tended to be on a piece of written work that the teachers could then use as a model of 'what a good one looks like' for the students.

When providing feedback to the students verbally, teachers took the time to ensure that it was positive, constructive, and also was specific for students to understand. For example, one teacher described their last feedback encounter as:

> Verbal discussion with the pupil about their work. Marked positive whilst talking, talked about next steps, picked up on a few spellings. Sent the child away to respond to my marking and improve work in a different coloured pen. (Year 2 teacher)

This meant that when teachers were identifying areas of improvement for the students, they were also pointing them to the resources they could use that would support them in making the corrective actions they needed to move their learning forward.

> Spoke with child in lesson about errors in work and get them to explain what they needed to do to rectify using resources to support. (Mixed Key Stage 2 teacher)

Survey respondents were also asked what they might have done when providing feedback in the more practical subjects such as art, PE or drama. For these respondents, it was also equally important to ensure that the students received verbal feedback as it was immediate.

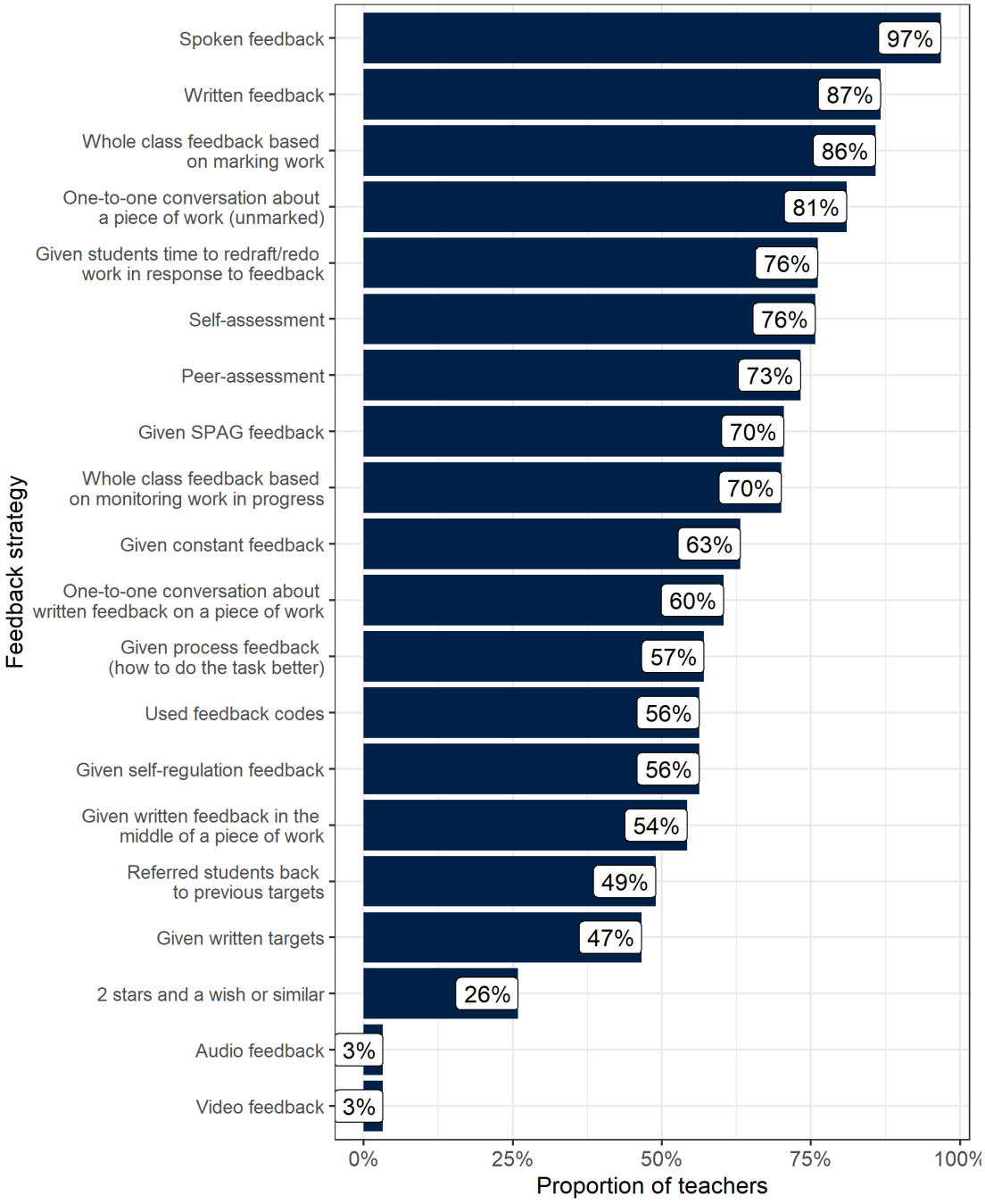
> Verbal feedback posing questions are effective in practical subjects. Celebrate something you like and then ask what they like, how do they think they could improve? (Year 2 teacher)

There was slightly more emphasis on modelling or demonstrating what good looked like, but no major difference highlighted by the respondents when giving feedback in the more practical subjects.

> Listening to the composition, identifying what was good and what was needed to improve, for example a specific thing like dynamics. (Year 6 teacher with specialism in music)

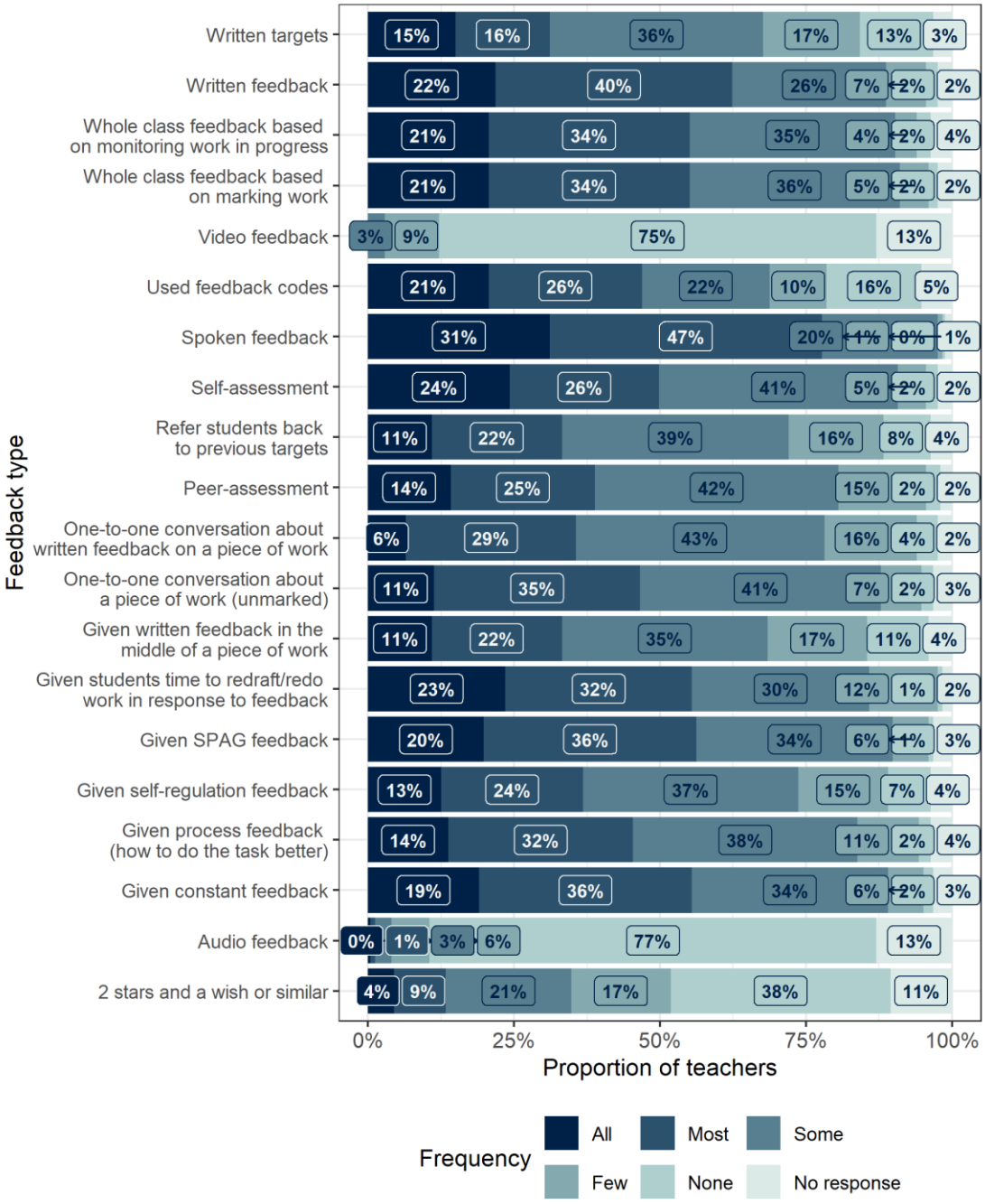
The respondents were also asked about the different types of feedback that they had provided to the students in the two weeks prior to recording their response. Respondents could choose as many of the forms of feedback as they had used in the last fortnight. As can be seen from Figure 10, the most used medium of feedback was 'spoken feedback', which is reflective of the importance that the respondents have placed so far on verbal feedback. The respondents also used whole class feedback to a large extent, and there was a high emphasis on one-to-one feedback (once again, spoken) with unmarked pieces of work. Written feedback is still very high as an overall approach.

Figure 10: Which forms of feedback have you used in the last fortnight? (Primary)



Survey respondents were then asked how often they engaged with the different forms of feedback. Respondents were asked to select not more than one option of All/Most/Some/Few/None (of pieces of work) for each of the different forms (Figure 11). When looking at the teachers who taught classes composed of more than one year group (Figure 12), spoken feedback was used most often (79%), followed closely by written feedback (71%).

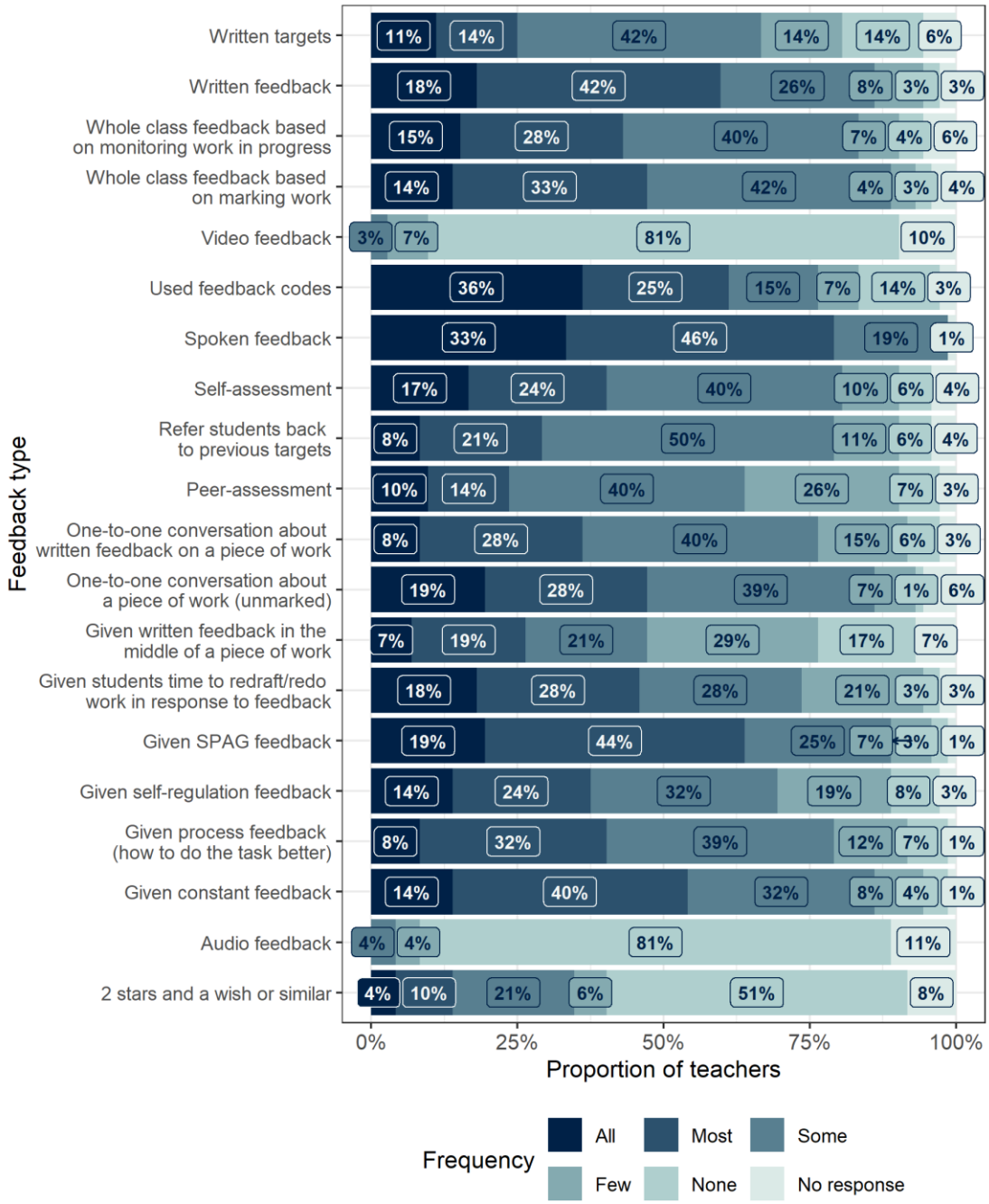
Figure 11: Do you use these forms of feedback for all/ most/ some/ few or no pieces of work? (Primary)



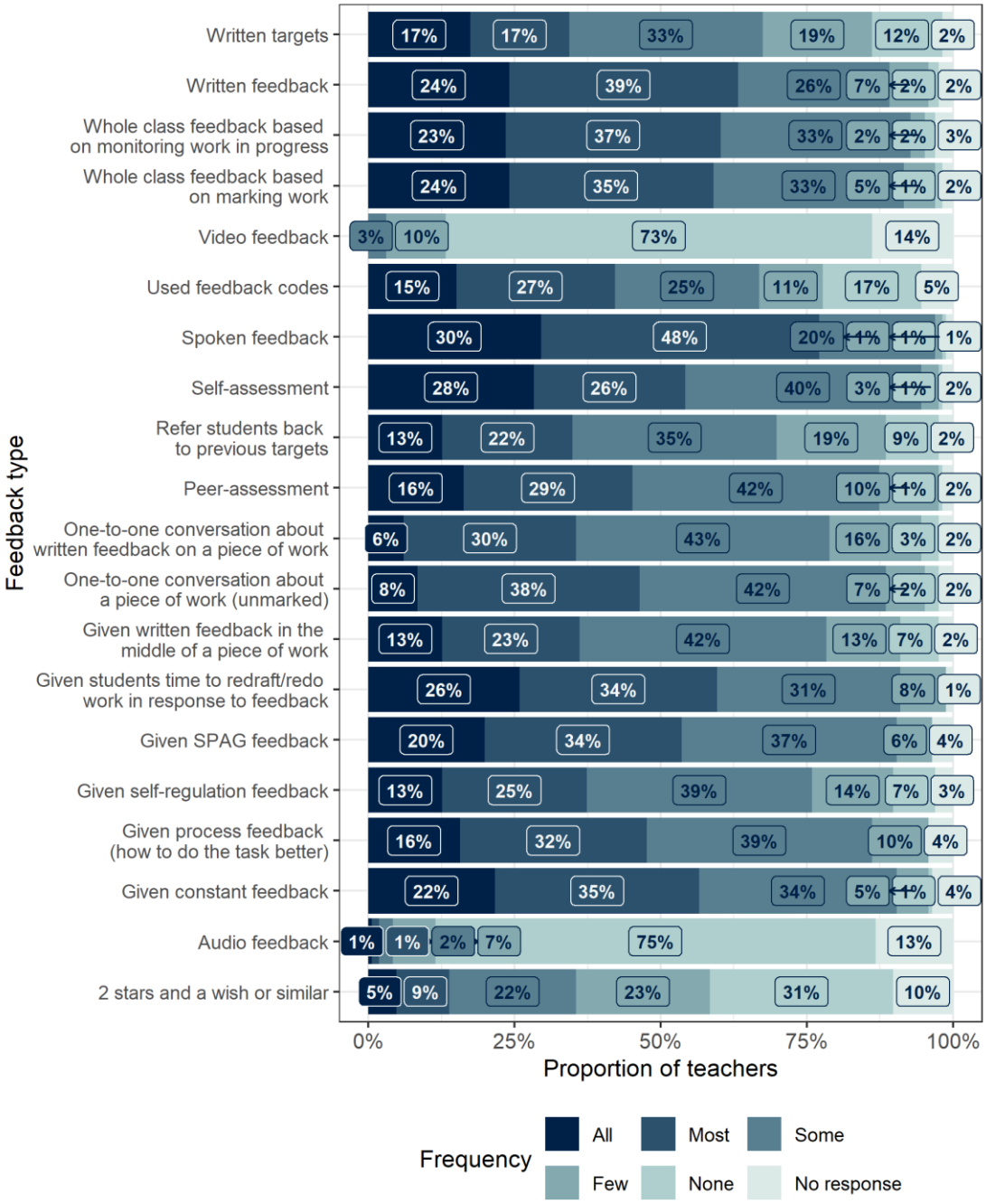
In the case of those teachers who identified themselves as Key Stage 2 teachers (Figure 12), a similar pattern was observed in that the teachers stated that they used spoken feedback (86%) most or all of the time, however, this was followed by the practice of 'whole class feedback based on monitoring work in progress' (69.5%) as something the teachers did all or most of the time. Like the other teachers across Key Stage 1, these teachers also only used audio or video feedback a few times.

Figure 12: Do you use these forms of feedback for all/ most/ some/ few or no pieces of work? (Primary, separated by Key Stage)

Key Stage 1:



Key Stage 2:



Respondents were also asked to consider their behaviour with regards to written feedback given to students. As seen in Figure 13, 66% of the respondents tended to provide written feedback to the students within 24 hours, with only 14% taking longer than a week to provide such feedback. Written feedback was provided to students frequently, with the majority of respondents (over 70%) aiming to provide written feedback either every day or at least two or three times per week (Figure 14).

Figure 13: I give written feedback to students within: (Primary)

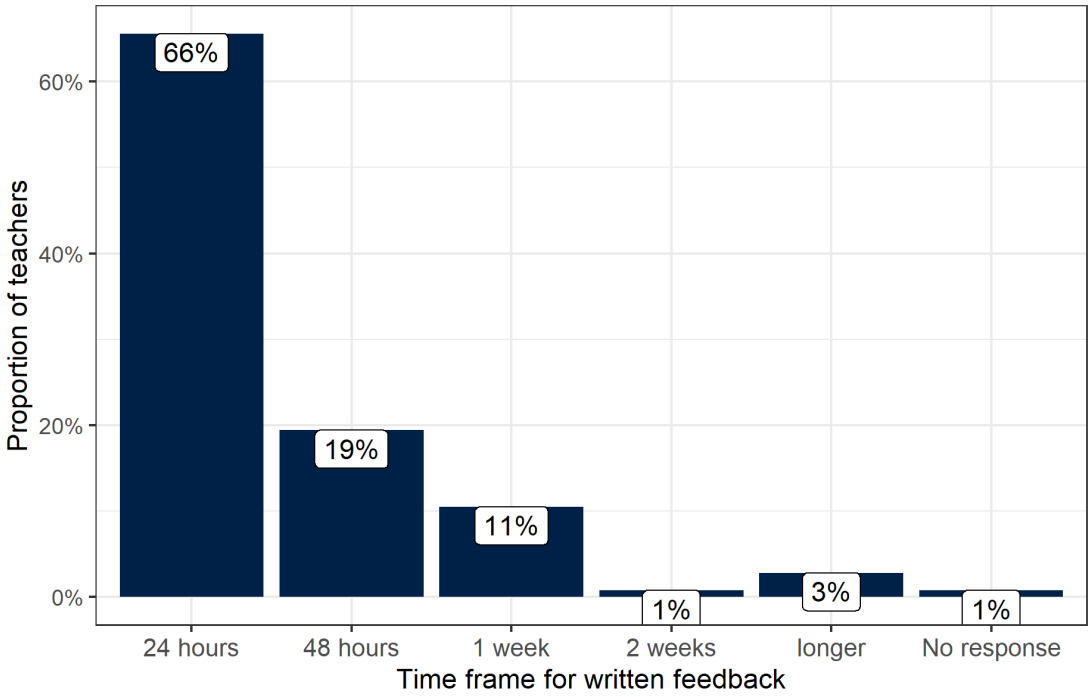
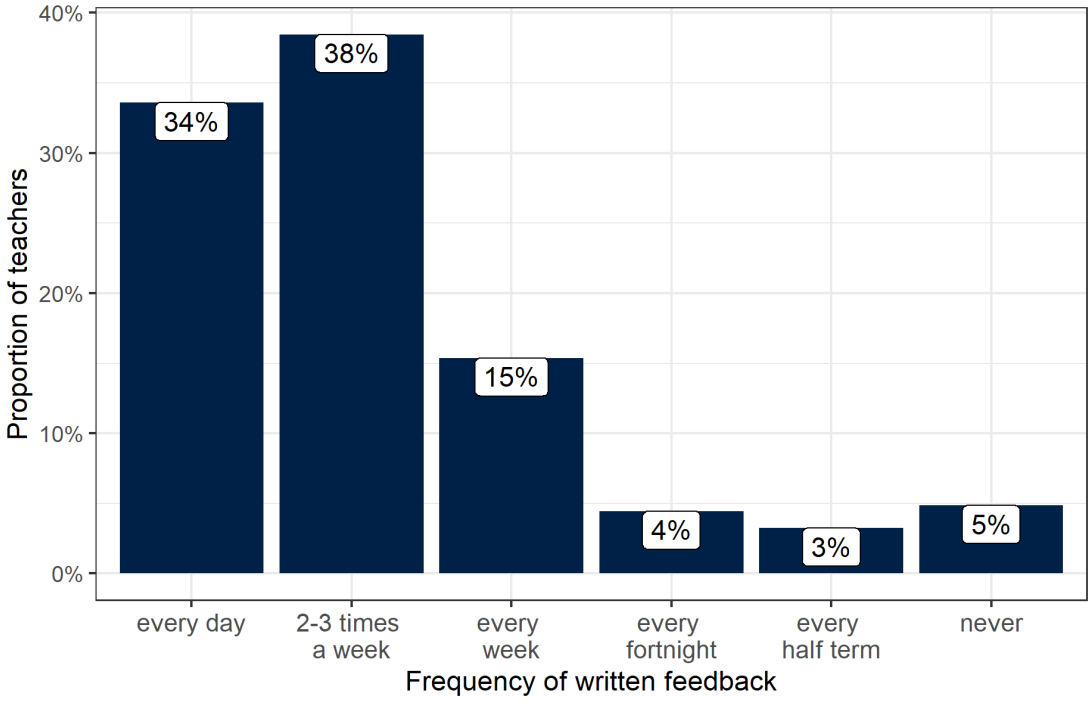


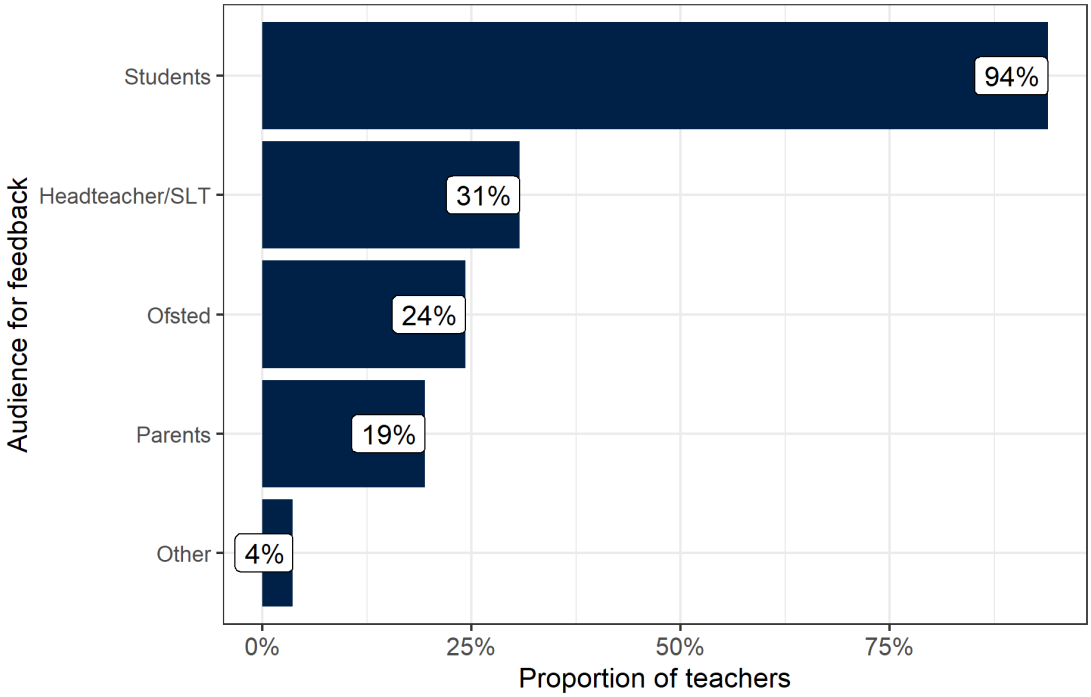
Figure 14: How often do you give written feedback? (Primary)



Written feedback as given by the teachers is mainly aimed to aid students in improving their work (Figure 15), although, this can also be for the benefit of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and parents. Despite repeated briefings from Ofsted that they do not need to see any particular frequency or type of feedback,

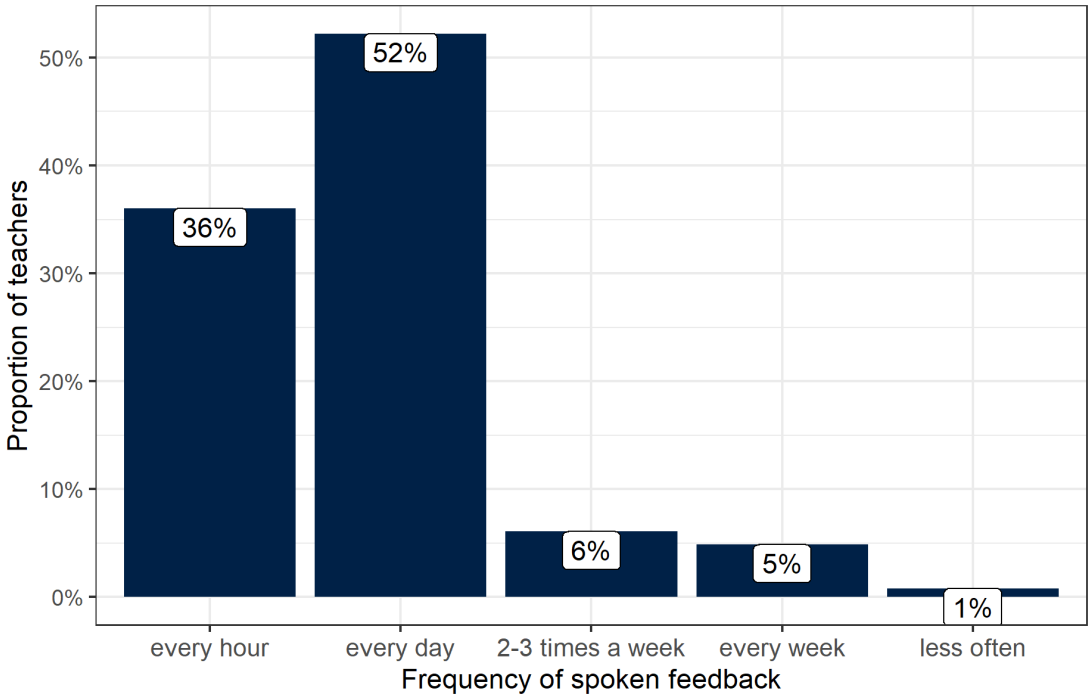
24% of respondents suggested that the inspectorate was an audience for the feedback they wrote.

Figure 15: Who do you write feedback for? (Primary)



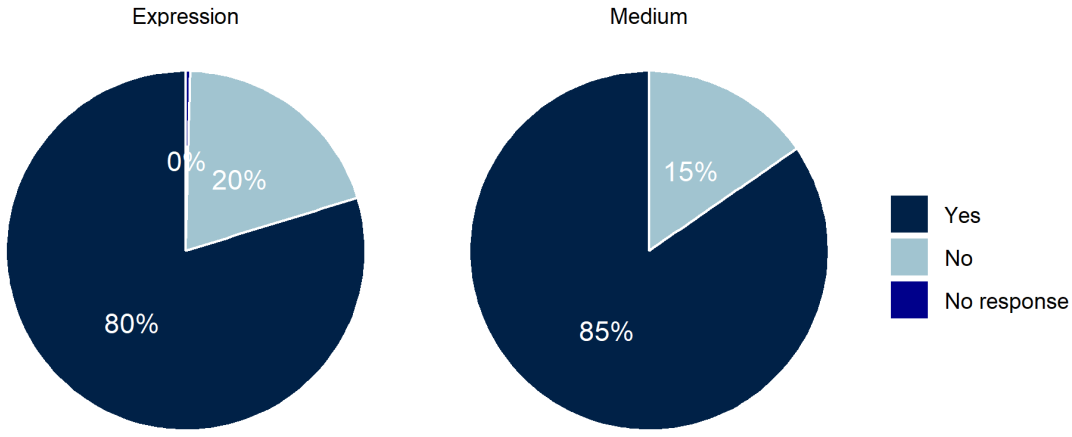
Respondents were also asked to consider their practices around verbal feedback. The majority of respondents (52%) aimed to provide verbal feedback to students everyday (Figure 16), with 36% of the teachers and senior leaders aiming to give verbal feedback to students every hour.

Figure 16: How often do you give spoken feedback to all students? (Primary)



The respondents also highlighted (Figure 17) that it was regular practice for them to vary the medium of feedback based on different groups of students (e.g. SEND, EAL, and so on).

Figure 17: Does the medium or expression of feedback vary for different types of students?

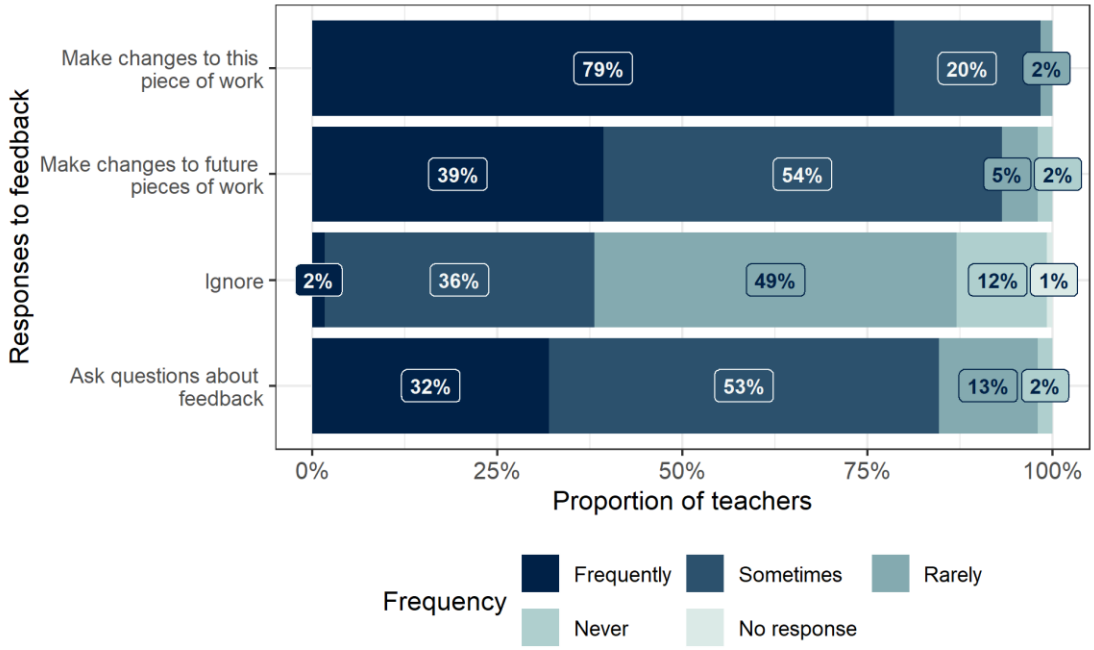


The majority of primary teachers were explicit in their belief that the medium of feedback needed to vary based on the needs of the individual student. The medium used needed to address the students' needs, confidence, focus and even anxiety levels. For students with special educational needs for example, teachers responded that there needed to be a higher emphasis on the use of spoken

feedback, or short codes and symbols. This medium of feedback was also found to be ideal for students who have EAL, or those who are younger or have lower attainment. Longer, written feedback was described as more suitable for students who were older, or those who had higher attainment.

Teachers were then asked to consider the kind of response (Figure 18) they received from students to the feedback that was given to them. With regards to making changes for a particular piece of work 78% of the respondents felt that students would frequently respond positively to the feedback they had received. As to making changes to future pieces of work, this number dropped, with only 39% of the respondents believing that students would frequently use the feedback received. In this scenario, 53% of the respondents felt that students would sometimes use the feedback received to make changes on future work. Only a small percentage of teachers (2%) felt that students frequently ignored the feedback they would receive on their work.

Figure 18: Do students in your class respond to feedback in any of these ways? (Primary)



86% of the respondents in this survey felt they had reasonable mechanisms in place that would allow for students to respond to the feedback given to them by the teachers. The respondents described a diverse set of ways in which the students were encouraged to respond to feedback. The majority of respondents said that they had time set aside at the start or end of lessons during which students could work on responding to feedback or dedicated feedback lessons, for example:

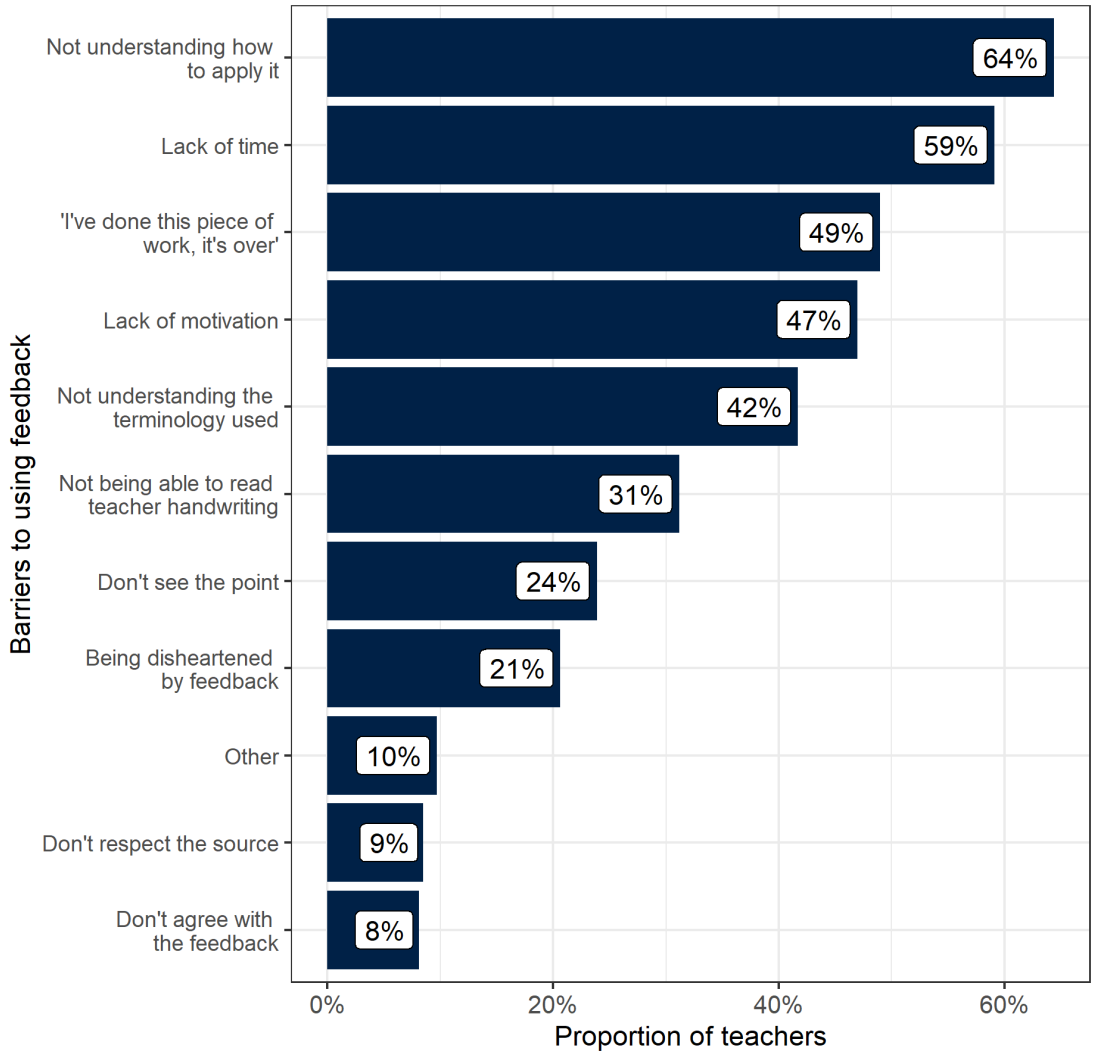
> They revisit marking every morning first thing. (Mixed age Key Stage 1 teacher)

Some of the teachers also described a 'purple pen policy', that is, where students would show the response to or incorporation of feedback to a piece of written work by using a purple pen.

> We have 'purple pen time' at the beginning of each lesson to allow time for feedback. This is normally only a couple of minutes and sometimes involves the teacher discussing with an individual or group. (Year 6 teacher)

64% of the respondents felt that the one of the reasons (Figure 19) that students did not use feedback was because they did not have an understanding of how to apply the feedback. 59% of the respondents felt that it was because of a lack of time which stands in sharp contrast to their own assertion that they carved out time for their students to respond to and incorporate feedback on various pieces of work.

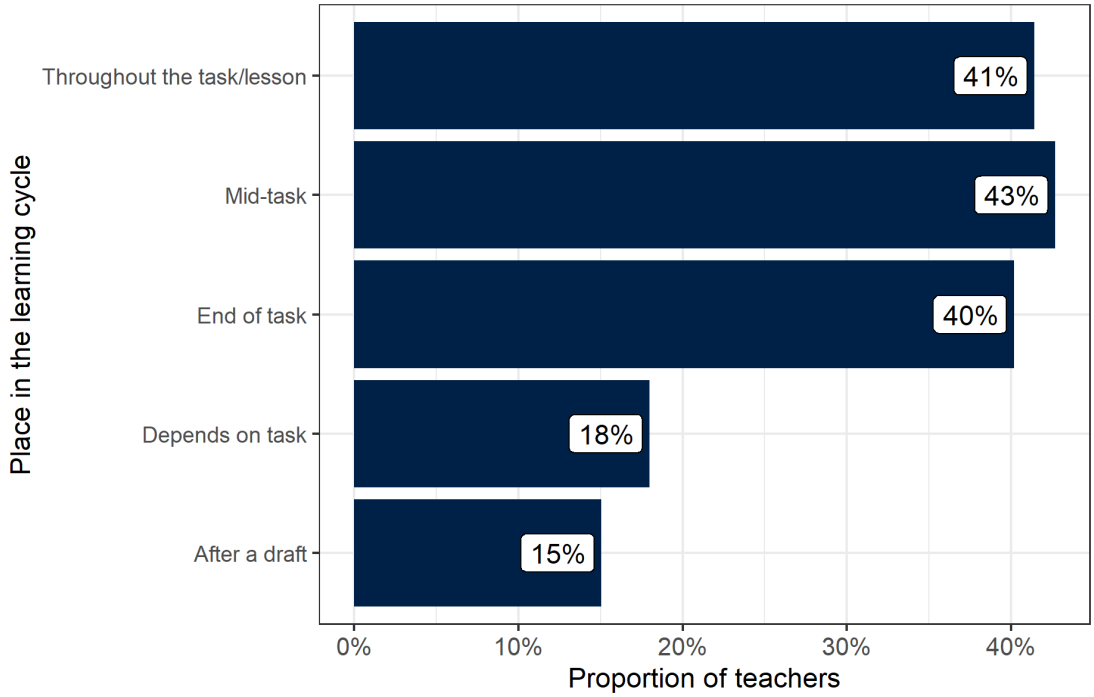
Figure 19: What stops students using feedback to make progress? (Primary)



Those who had chosen 'Other' as a response highlighted age and maturity in responding to feedback as key factors contributing to students not using feedback. They also felt that the students might find the feedback overwhelming and that they could only work on a limited number of things, not on addressing all comments.

The majority of the respondents from primary schools approached giving feedback (Figure 20) to students either mid-task, at the end of a task, or throughout the lesson. Feedback mid-way through the lesson and throughout was mostly verbal and formative in nature, whereas the feedback provided at the end of the lesson tended to be written. Teachers believed that when providing feedback through the task or lesson it was important for it to be verbal so that students would have the chance to react to it almost instantly.

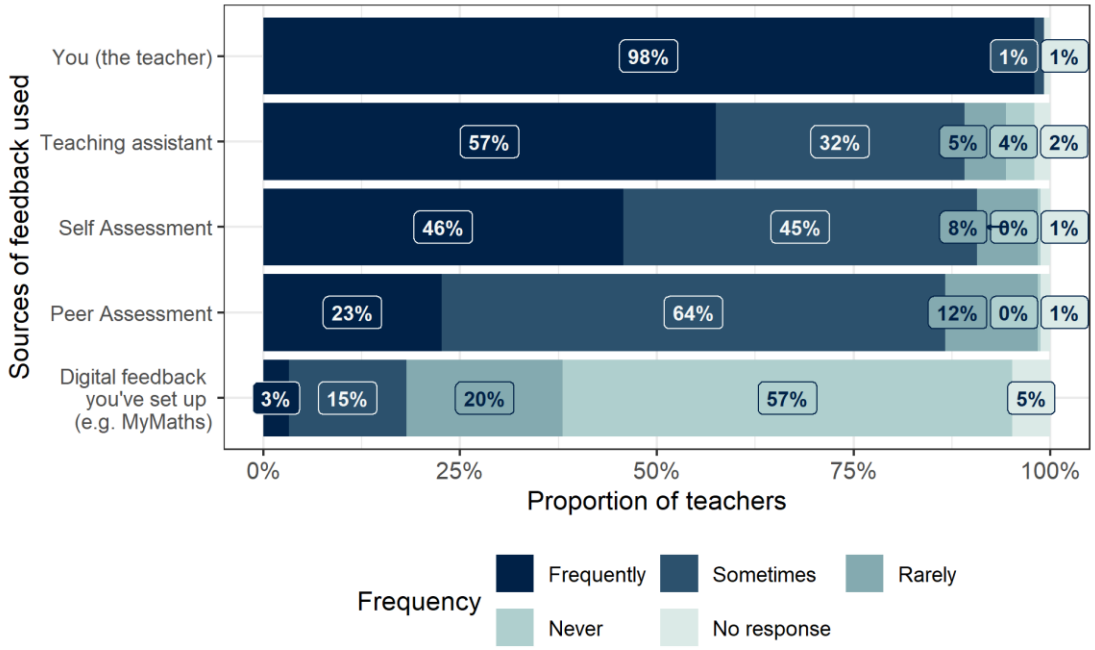
Figure 20: When in the learning cycle do you give feedback? (Primary)



Almost all teachers gave feedback to students so that they could make changes towards their next steps (99% of teachers); a smaller proportion used feedback they gave to plan for teaching the same thing next year (58% of teachers).

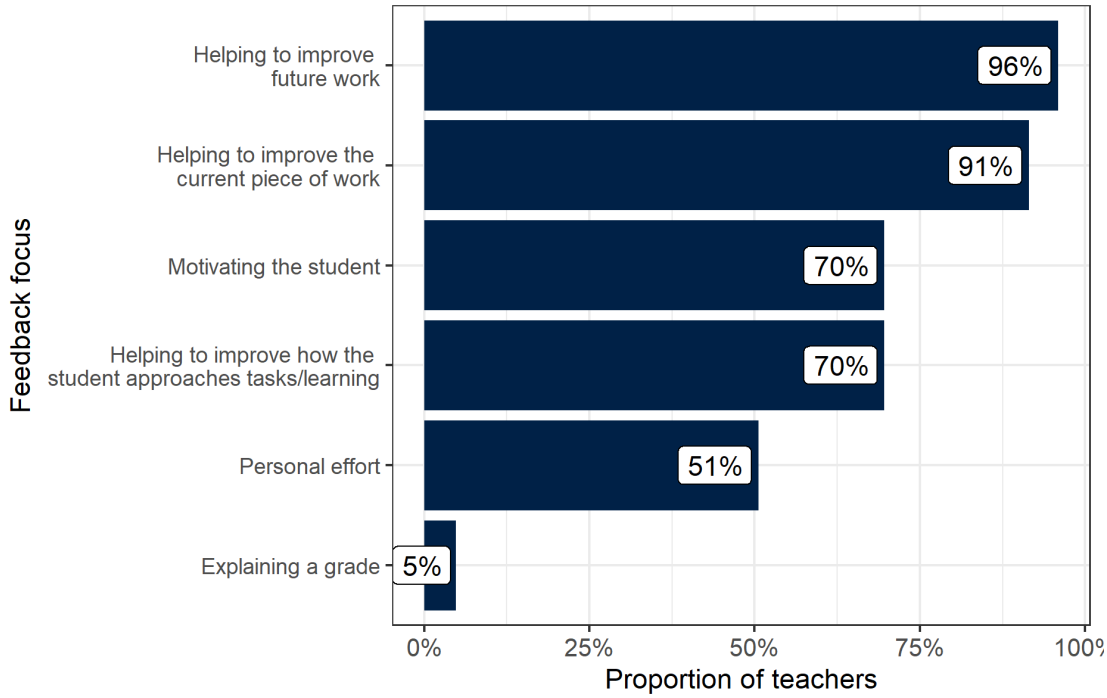
The teachers were by far the most frequent source of feedback for their students, although peer and self-assessment also played a role, as did teaching assistants. Digital feedback was very rarely utilised (Figure 21).

Figure 21: How often are the following sources of feedback used in your classroom? (Primary)



Teachers considered that feedback should mainly focus upon helping the student to improve future and current work, though helping the student to approach learning and motivation were also considered important (Figure 22). Personal effort was considered a focus for approximately half of the teachers but very few felt that feedback should focus upon explaining grading.

Figure 22: What should feedback focus on?

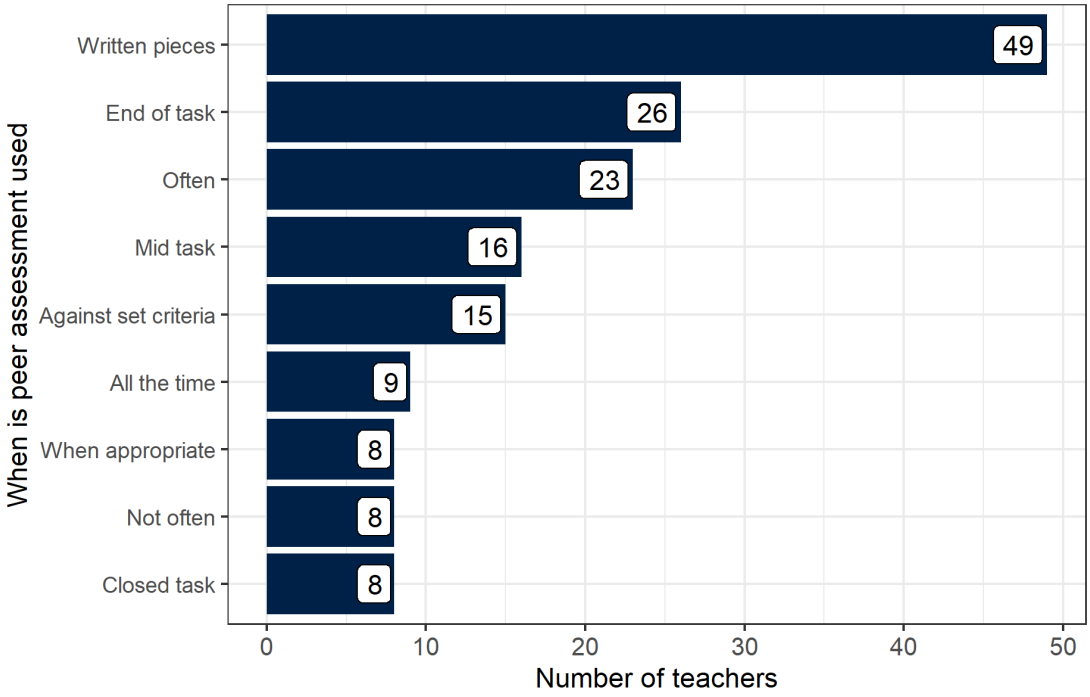


Peer and self-assessment

In this section the use of peer and self-assessment in the primary classroom is considered. The teachers were asked to think about how often they use peer assessment and why. Of the responses recorded (Figure 23), 49 teachers said they used peer assessment to provide feedback when looking at long written pieces. They found this to be a particularly helpful form of feedback for this type of work as it provided students the opportunity to 'see and experience other pieces of work' (Year 6 teacher) and it also allows for the sharing of good ideas (another Year 6 teacher). It was noted to be particularly helpful to use this form of feedback with a clear set of criteria that is made obvious to students, as it additionally allows students to understand how assessment is done.

> I use peer assessments with longer written tasks to share ideas and inspire each other. I find it can build relationships and help children improve their work. I often find children enjoy sharing their work and make it a game to spot mistakes in each other's work. (Mixed age Key Stage 2 class teacher)

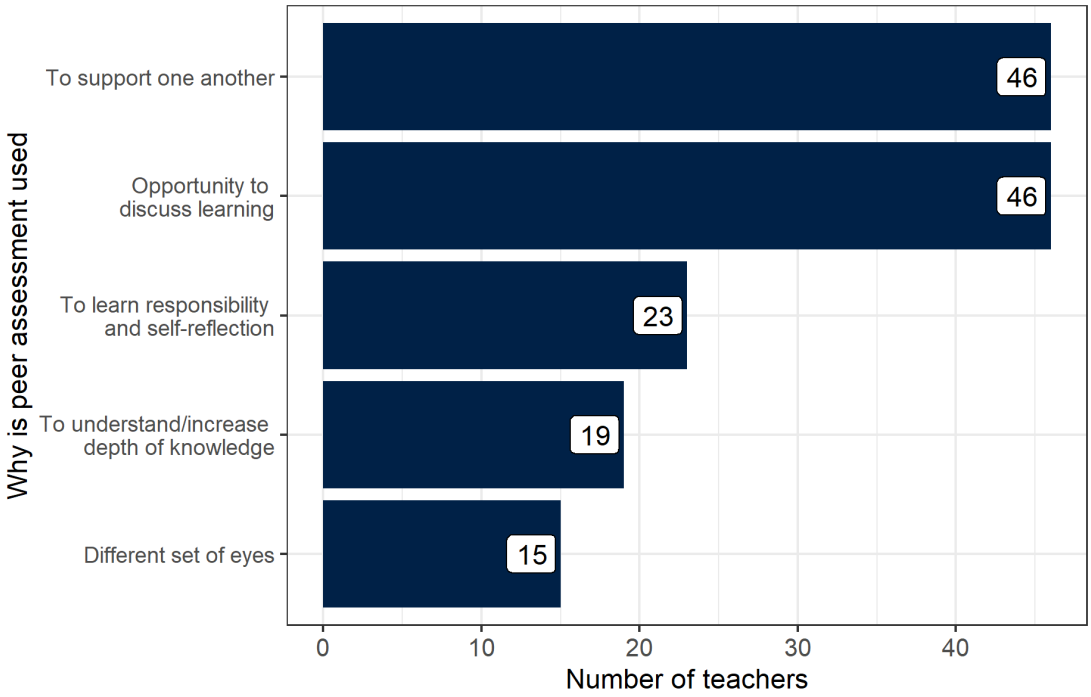
Figure 23: When do you ask students to peer assess? (Primary)



A large proportion of the teachers in the primary schools found that peer assessment is important as it helps teach the students how to support one another in a constructive manner (Figure 24). It also helps to provide students with the opportunity to discuss learning and to compare understanding of different concepts and topics across the curriculum.

> [I use peer feedback] to encourage children to support and guide each other during tasks. It further develops their own understanding. (Year 6 teacher)

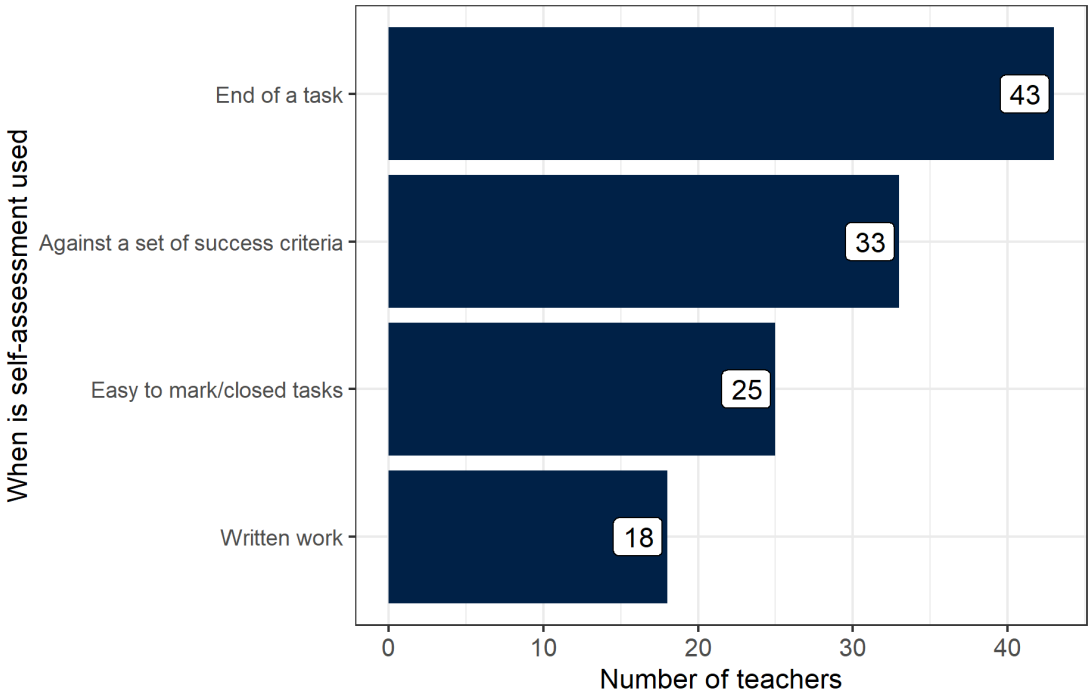
Figure 24: Why do you ask students to peer assess? (Primary)



When thinking about self-assessment as a form of feedback, patterns were slightly different from peer assessment (Figure 25). The majority of respondents felt it was most appropriate it to use it at the end of a task, and for those tasks where students could gauge their progress across a set of clear and specific success criteria. One teacher said she used it:

> When I want children to reflect on their own learning and use a predetermined success criteria to check their own work against. (Year 6 teacher)

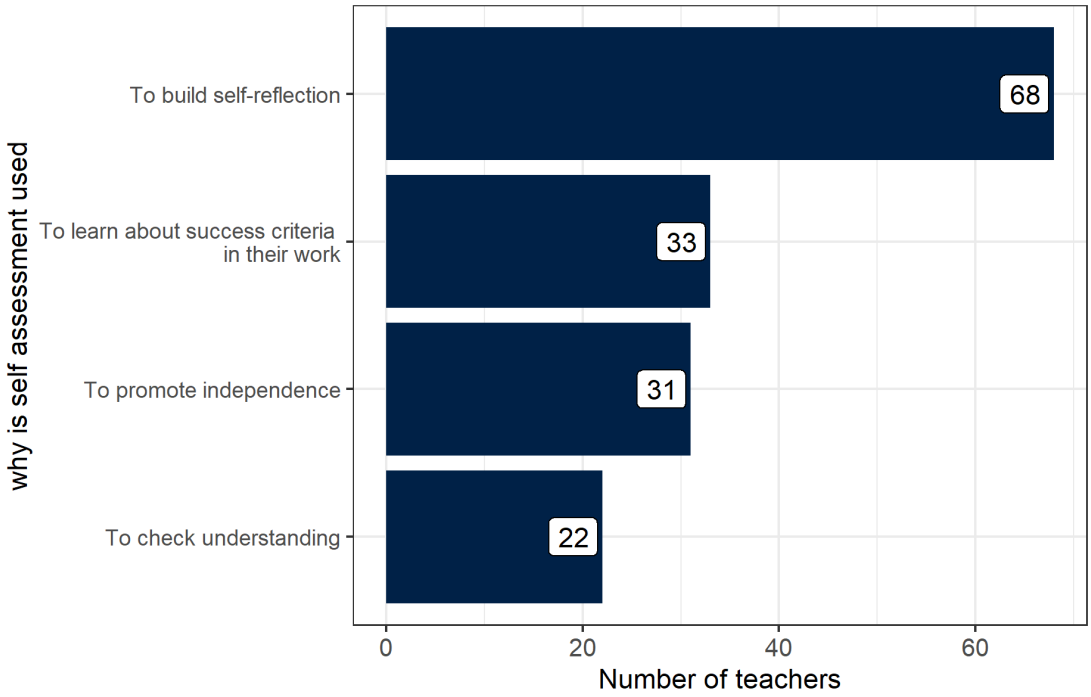
Figure 25: When do you use self-assessment in your classroom?



The teachers believed that self-assessment is important for building self-reflection and independence in each of the students' own learning journeys (Figure 26).

> So children can have ownership and autonomy over their learning. They can see the progress they make when identifying their own celebrations and areas to improve. (Mixed age Key Stage 2 class teacher)

Figure 26: Why do you ask students to self-assess? (Primary)



When asked to consider the challenges associated with using peer and self-assessment, the teachers and leaders from primary schools highlighted honesty as a key theme. This was framed in two ways. Some teachers indicated that self-assessment was difficult as students would not necessarily be honest about their own work. As one teacher put it, the problem is:

> getting children to assess honestly. At the age of 6 they often just say "it's good" (Year 2 teacher)

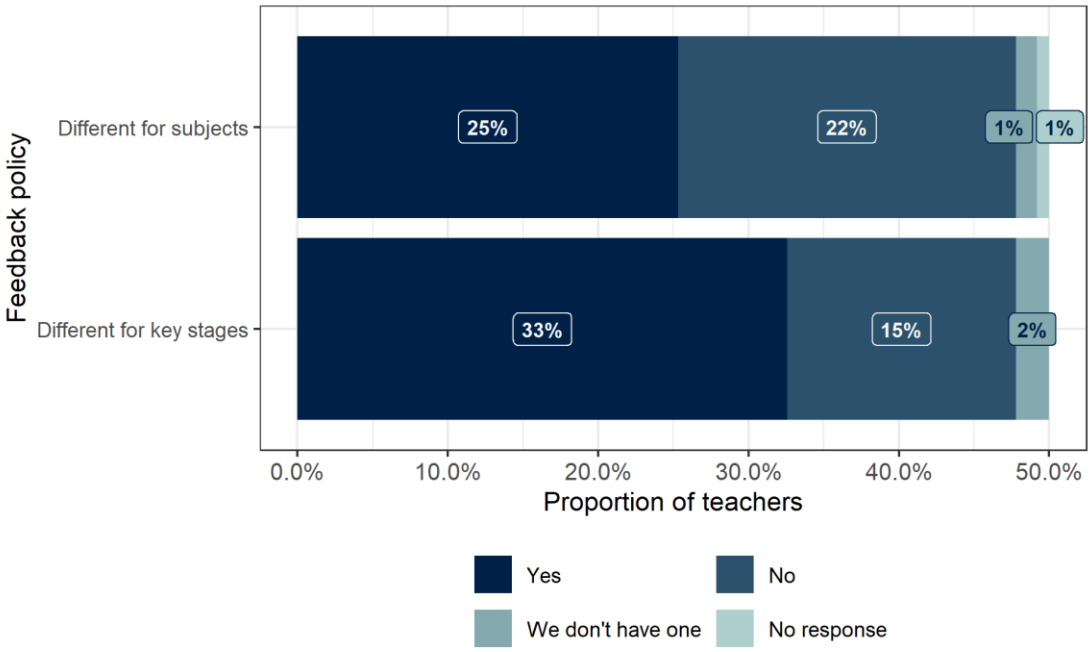
Other teachers intimated that it was difficult to get students to assess each other honestly as they would be worried about their relationships with their peers. The respondents also expressed that it was important to ensure that with both forms of feedback students understand the success criteria for the assessment well, otherwise the tasks would not necessarily be helpful or valuable for the students. This meant that the teachers would need to spend time to ensure that the students were 'trained in the technique' (Teacher, no year given). When using peer assessment, most teachers also highlighted that there was a need to ensure that students were matched by ability to ensure that students are receiving adequate support and the appropriate feedback, 'ensuring it is two way rather than one child who leads and the other being passive' (Year 1 Teacher).

School-level feedback policy

70% of the teachers in this study were aware of a school-wide feedback policy that was in place at their school. For some of the respondents the feedback policy was referred to as a marking policy (27%).

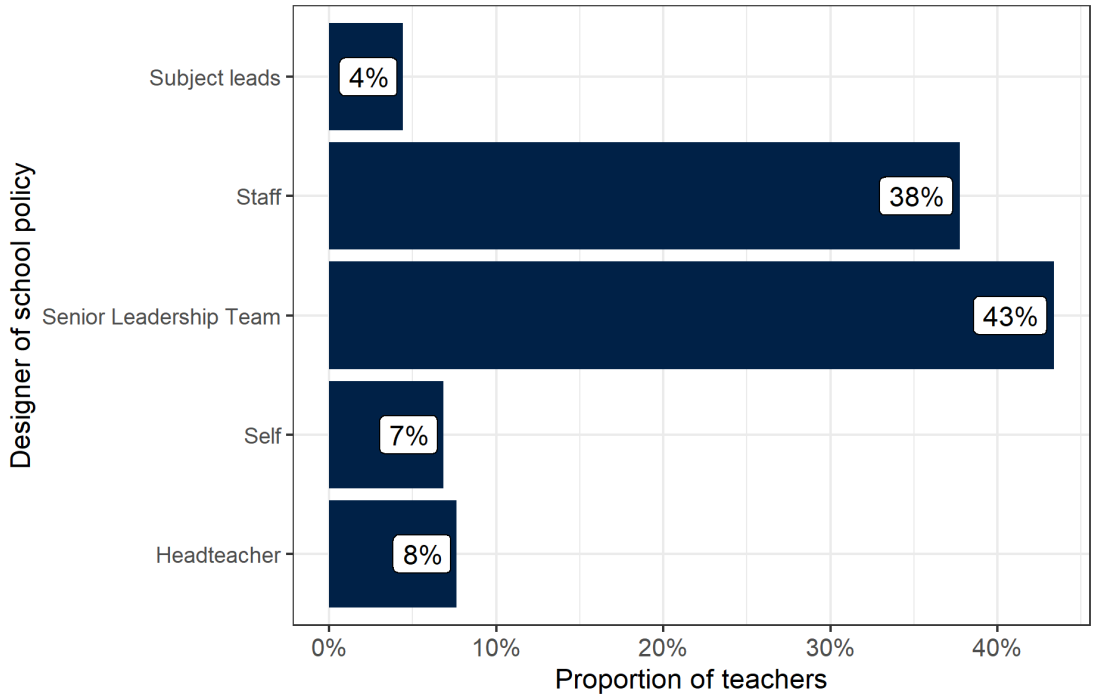
For most of the respondents, the feedback policy was tailored to be different for the different years and stages of the primary schools; and in terms of subjects there was a near even split based on subject type (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Does your feedback policy vary for subjects? And for key stage?



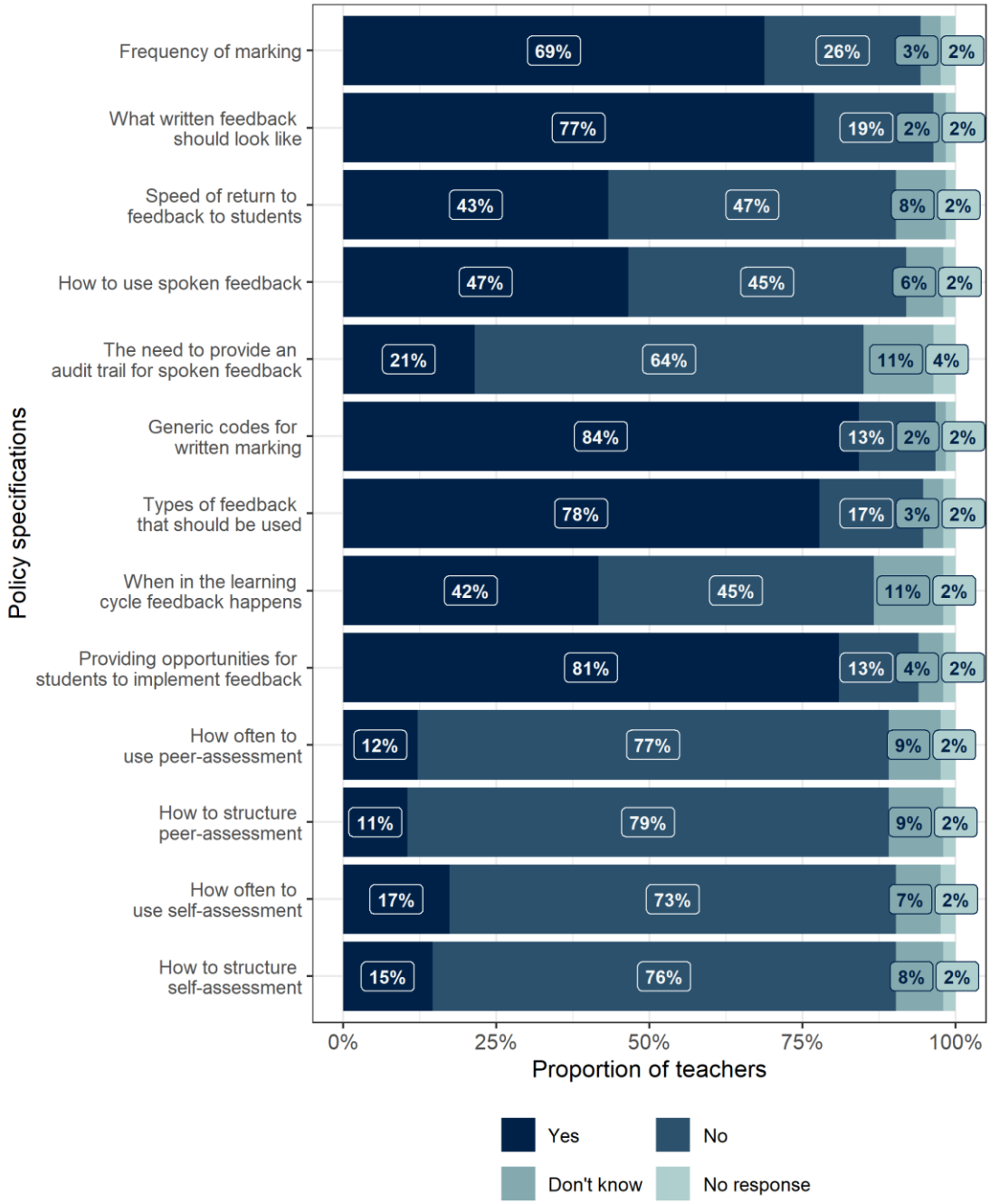
42% of the respondents (Figure 28) knew that the feedback policy in place at the school had been designed by the SLT at their schools. For around 35% of the respondents, the staff influenced the design of the policy. Only a small number were designed by the headteacher acting alone.

Figure 28: Who designed the feedback policy in your school?



Teachers were asked to consider the ways in which the feedback policies at their schools might be specific about certain practice (Figure 29). 68% of the respondents indicated that the policies in their schools were specific about the frequency of marking that they had to provide to their students. Three quarters of the participants also indicated that the policies were specific about what written feedback should look like for students (76%); 77% indicated that their school policies were specific about what types of feedback should be used. Four fifths had policies for how teachers could provide students with opportunities for students to implement feedback (81%).

Figure 29: Does your school feedback policy specify the following? (Primary)



Approximately 76% of the teachers believed that their school-wide policy for feedback could be characterised as 'specific'. When describing the school-wide policies that were labelled as 'specific' teachers described the policy as being clear with specific examples and codes that could be used consistently across all the staff.

> Our feedback policy is based around whole class marking and verbal feedback, our policy reflects this and provides ways to implement this

> however we are expected to use our professional judgement in terms of when and how much. (Year 6 teacher)

However, as is clear from that quotation, even specific policies were thought to allow room for professional judgement (mentioned by 19 respondents out of the 146 who answered the follow-up open question), with only one teacher suggesting that their policy was so prescriptive as to eliminate teacher judgement. Two teachers also mentioned that the specificity of their policy was designed to reduce teacher workload.

Those policies that were labelled as vague were considered by the respondents who answered the follow-up question to be such to allow freedom for professional judgement, or because staff were trusted (15 teachers out of the 38 who answered).

> The policy is designed for teachers to use best judgement about how and why they feedback - it discourages written feedback unless it is purposeful. (Mixed age Key Stage 2 class teacher)

> Teachers are different. Pupils are different. Do what works for you and your pupils. (Mixed age Key Stage 2 class teacher)

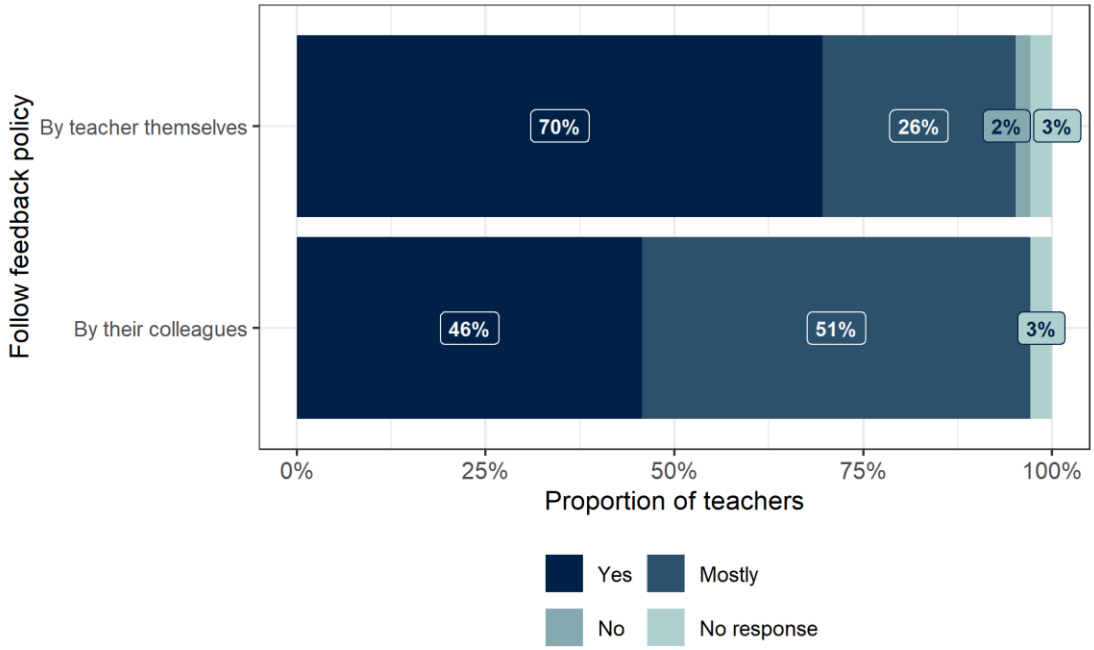
There was a clear sense from those who called their policy vague that they felt a specific one would have limited their capacity to exercise their professional expertise. Two more teachers suggested that the vagueness of the policy prevented it from being too onerous for staff. One teacher in a school with the Ofsted rating 'Requires Improvement' also suggested that the virtue of a vague policy was:

> So it isn't used against us by Ofsted. (Year 5 teacher)

This is a natural corollary to the Ofsted policy, mentioned in the introduction, of only judging assessment and feedback in school against the school's own policy.

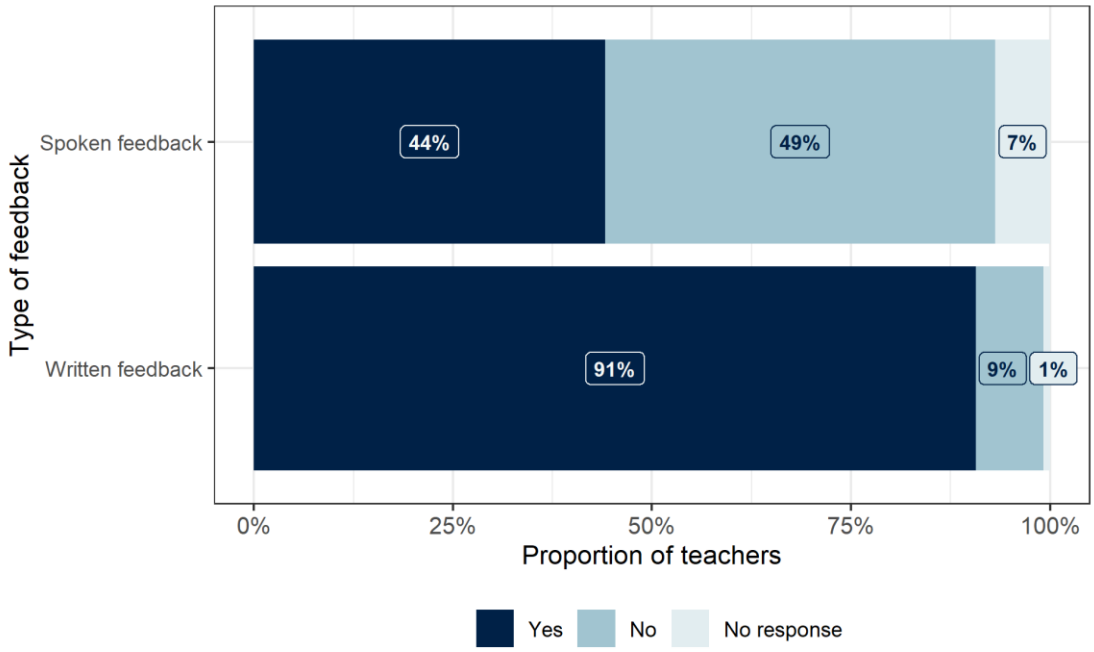
When looking at whether feedback policy was followed (Figure 30) by the teachers themselves and their colleagues at the schools, teachers viewed themselves in a slightly more favourable light than their colleagues. Of the 197 teachers who replied to this question, 150 teachers stated they followed the policy, with a further 45 saying they mostly did. In reference to their colleagues, the proportion was more equal with 98 believing their colleagues did follow the policy strictly and a further 99 answering that their colleagues 'mostly' followed the policy. More than half of respondents (58%) reported having had training on their school's feedback policy specifically; a slightly larger proportion reported receiving continuous professional development) CPD on feedback in general (62%).

Figure 30: Do you follow your school feedback policy? Do your colleagues? (Primary)



44% of the respondents in the study reported that the school monitored their spoken feedback (Figure 31), where in the case of written feedback this number increased significantly to 91% of the respondents.

Figure 31: Does your school monitor spoken and written feedback?



Of 229 teachers who responded to the open question requesting more detail about monitoring of feedback, 120 reported multiple methods of monitoring.

'Book looks' were the most common approach with 196 teachers reporting their use; feedback was also monitored during observations (47) or learning walks and drop-ins (36). Fifty-one teachers reported the use of 'pupil voice', that is leadership team members asking pupils about their feedback, to monitor feedback given. Only seven reported having to use some form of notation that verbal feedback had been given, but as noted in the policy analysis above, this is an activity undertaken purely for monitoring. A more collegiate approach, utilising moderation, peer review and professional dialogue, was reported by 19 teachers. Three respondents said that feedback was only monitored via the progress that students were making, in that if progress was happening then feedback was obviously being given; if students were struggling to make progress the use of feedback would be reviewed among a range of other things.

A large proportion (81%) of respondents noted recent changes to their feedback and marking policy. Of the 194 teachers who responded to the follow-up question to this, 130 said that the changes had been to reduce written marking or shift focus onto verbal feedback instead, with several explicitly linking this to a school-level desire to reduce workload. Two respondents said that despite this, the workload of written marking was still 'onerous', and another said that the theoretical reduction had not been borne out in practice. Nineteen teachers specifically referenced changes being made in order to make feedback more effective or more beneficial for children, which was linked to the use of research evidence.

Impact of research

53% of the respondents across the primary school were unaware of the EEF Toolkit strand on Feedback, where approximately 13% of them were aware of the Toolkit in general. Only 17% of the respondents across the primary schools had read *A Marked Improvement?* (Elliott et al., 2016). However, of the respondents who said yes, 66% of the teachers indicated that on reading the report they had changed feedback practice in the schools or were in the process of doing so. 57% of primary respondents indicated that they integrated research with their practice in general.

Secondary schools

What constitutes good feedback?

Respondents from secondary schools were also asked about what constituted good feedback (Figure 32) and why. The respondents believed it was important for the students to receive feedback that was easy to understand, specific, timely, action oriented, constructive, and tailored to the individual student as much as possible. These characteristics are what would allow for students to be more self-reflective in their work, and make progress as they moved forwards through the curriculum. A constructive framing of feedback meant that students would not have an adverse reaction to it. Feedback needed to be specific and clear so that there would be no ambiguity in what the students needed to do and think about when trying to correct or refine their understanding.

> The feedback needs to be timely, specific and in depth so that the students know how to improve (Maths teacher)

The respondents in the study were then asked to consider what they believed to be the pre-requisites for feedback to be effective. At secondary school level, data from 136 respondents were once again coded inductively (Figure 33) to generate the main ideas the teachers believed were required for effective feedback.

For the respondents, effective feedback was specific and timely, that is, without an unproductive time gap, giving the students detailed comments, with ample time for self-reflection. The teachers also felt that the feedback needed to be based on knowledge of the pupil as well as the subject at hand.

Figure 32: What makes for good feedback? (Secondary)

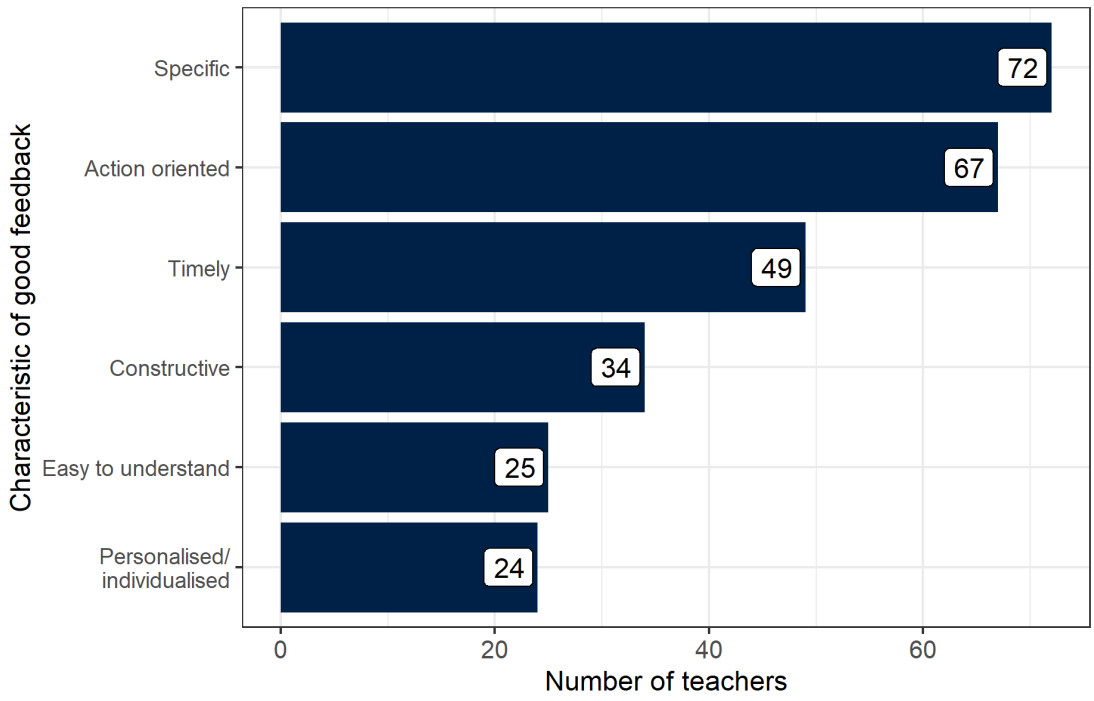
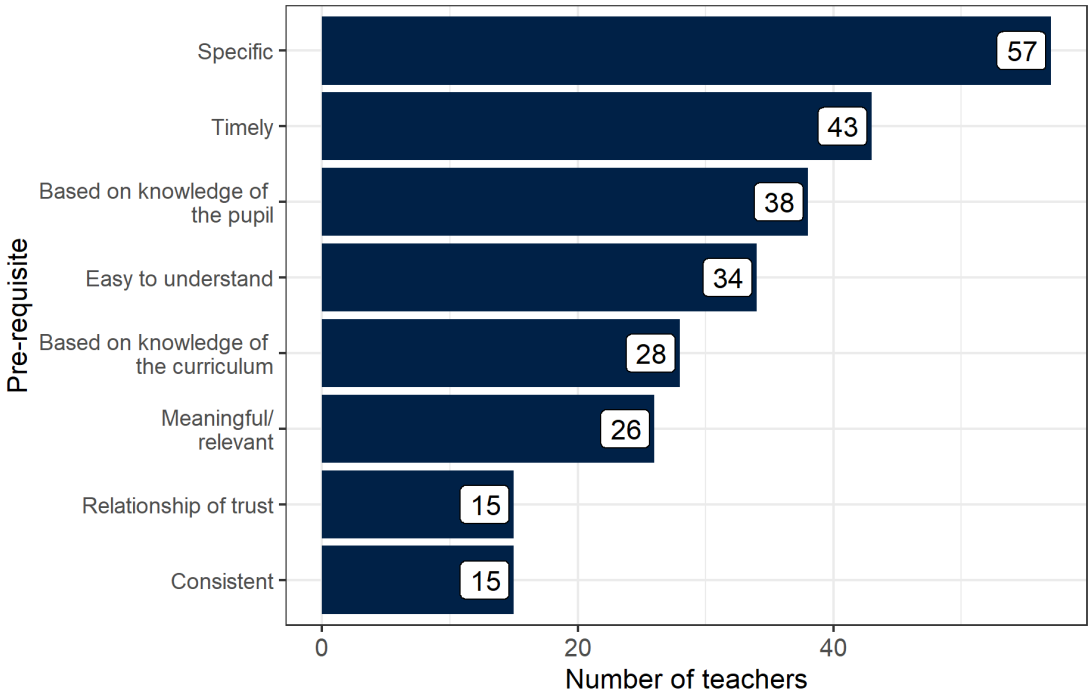


Figure 33: What are the pre-requisites for effective feedback? (Secondary)



Current feedback practices at secondary level

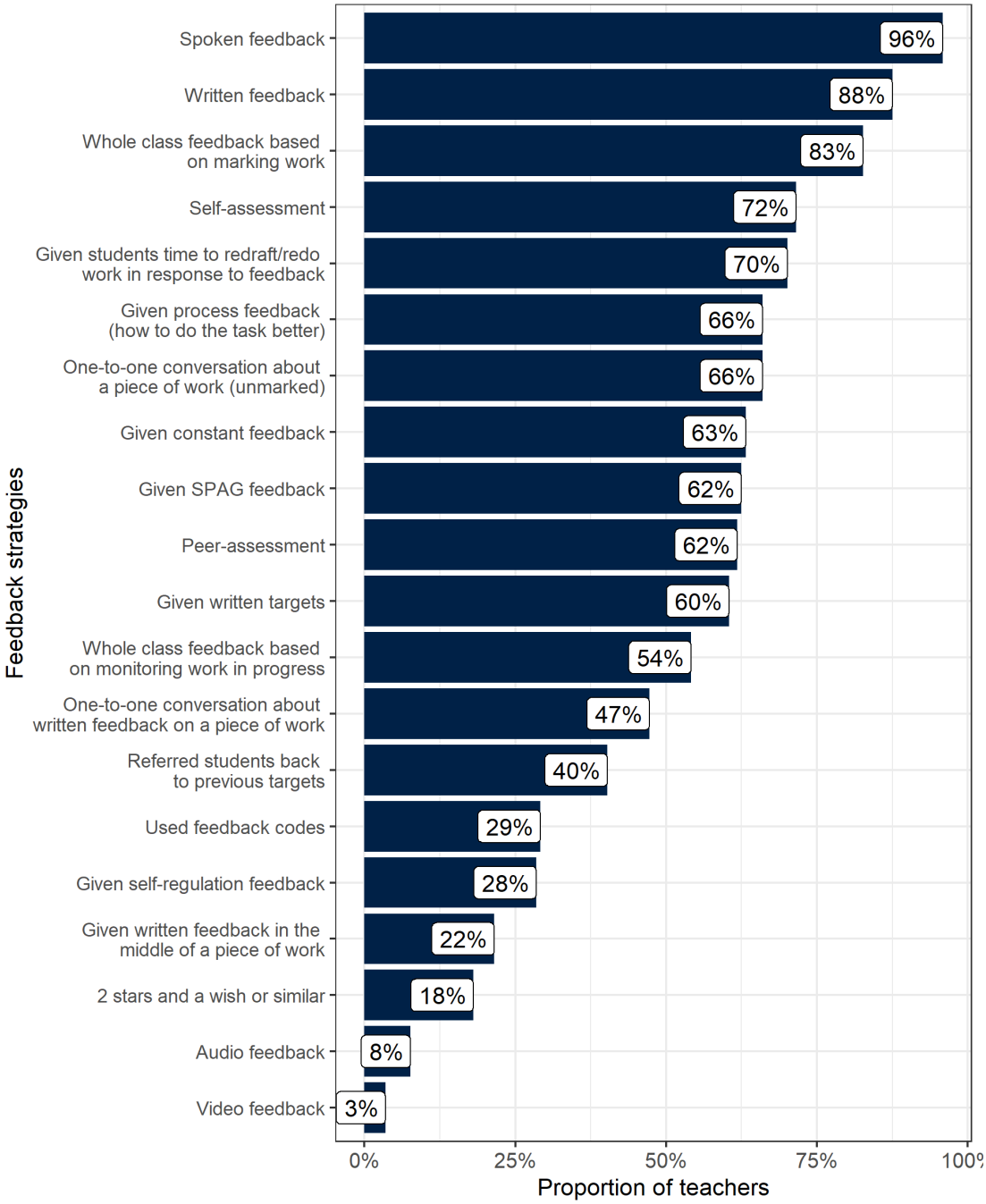
One hundred and forty-one of the teachers and school leaders from the secondary schools in this study gave detailed descriptions of what they had done the last time they had given feedback to their students. Some of the activities that the teachers described included posing questions to students to check conceptions and understanding, verbal feedback given one-to-one, and even written feedback highlighting sections of writing in their classwork books.

> Verbal feedback to the class on a misconception that I had picked up while circulating the class. (Science teacher)

> Today I have marked a set of Year 8 homework tasks and I have given feedback on the content and research that built into it. Questions posed which pupils will respond to. (Geography teacher)

The teachers were asked to consider the types of feedback they had provided to their students in the previous fortnight. Respondents were able to pick more than one option, which has allowed us to ascertain which mode of feedback is used the most by teachers in secondary schools. As can be seen in Figure 34 below, the most used medium of feedback is spoken feedback, followed closely by written feedback. The mathematics teachers in this study never used video feedback, nor had they utilised 'two stars and a wish' or anything similar as a form of feedback. Written feedback was favoured by English teachers (95% of 40 English teachers), and teachers in the more practical subjects (art, drama , PE, music, computing, and technology, total n = 18), where 94% of the teachers indicated a preference for written feedback.

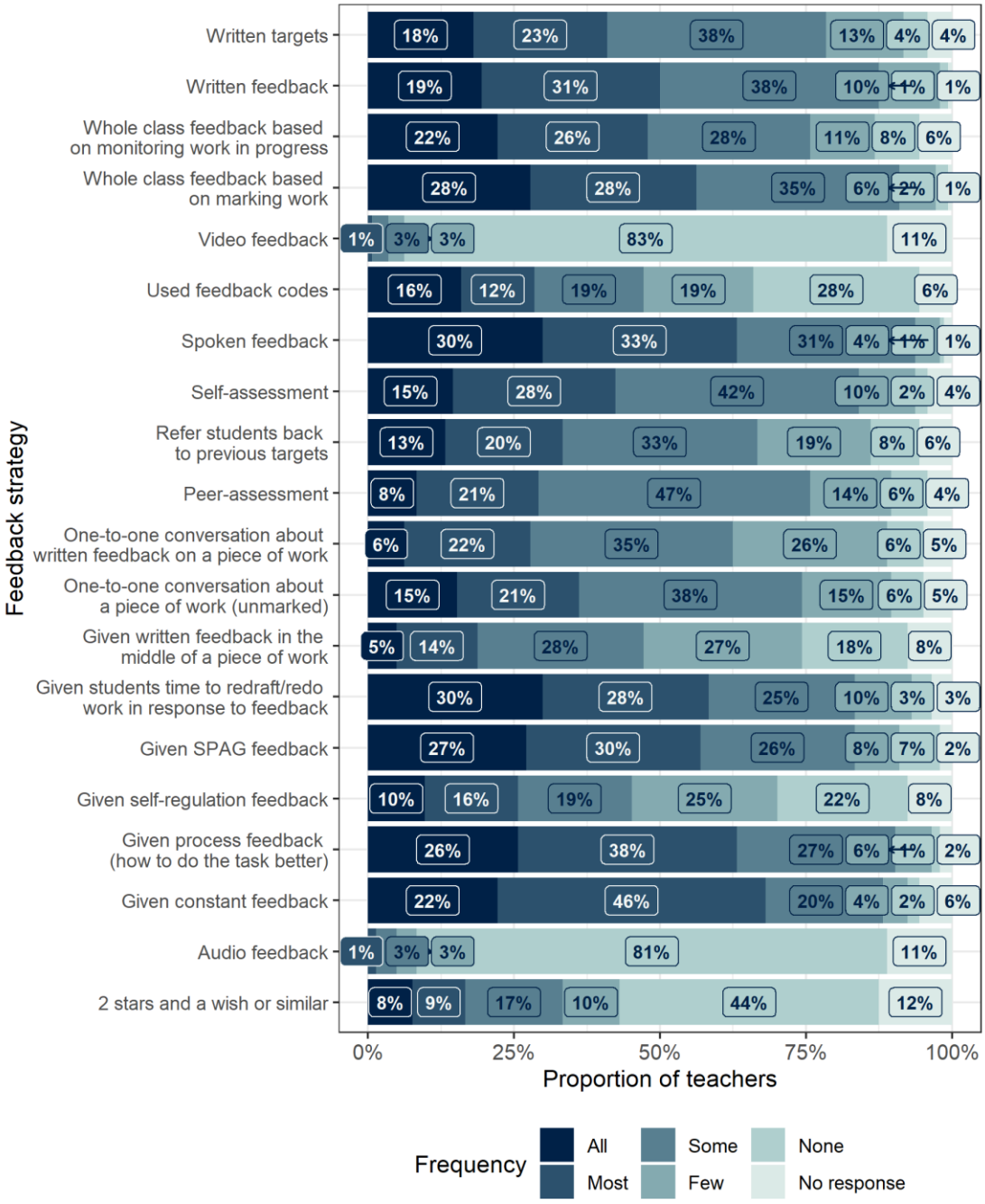
Figure 34: What forms of feedback have you used in the past fortnight? (Secondary)



The respondents were then asked to consider how often they actually used the various types of feedback ranging from spoken to written to process feedback (that is, feedback on the processes which underlie the task being completed, working more generally than at task level; see Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The survey was designed in a manner that participants could only pick one level of use for each type of feedback. As seen in Figure 35, there is very little engagement with audio and video feedback from our respondents (although given the switch to distance learning as a result of school closures due to Covid-

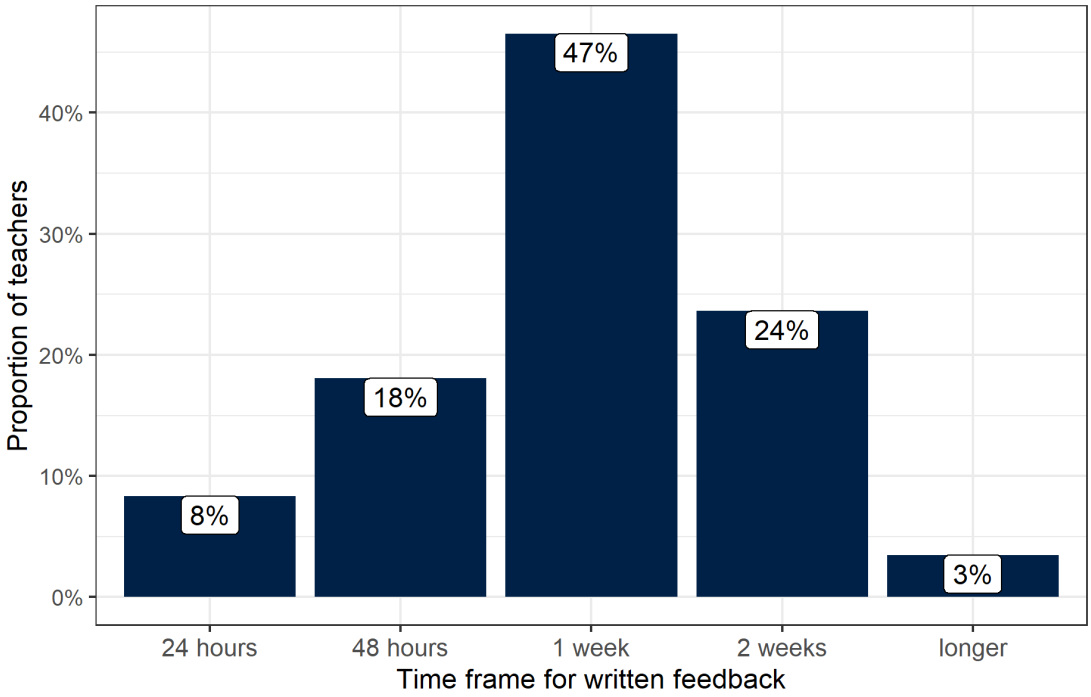
19 this may well have changed since the time of data collection). In the case of spoken feedback, most of the respondents gave this form of feedback to their students. Fewer than 1% of the respondents stated that they never gave their students spoken feedback. Fewer than a fifth of teachers reported using 'two stars and a wish' or a similar practice. Twenty-six of the 40 English teachers from the secondary schools indicated that they would spend all or most of the time on whole class feedback based on marking work. Nine of the 13 mathematics teachers used spoken feedback most or all of the time. Fifteen of the 18 teachers of practical subjects indicated that most or all of their feedback was spoken.

Figure 35: Do you use these forms of feedback for all/ most/ some/ few or no pieces of work? (Secondary)



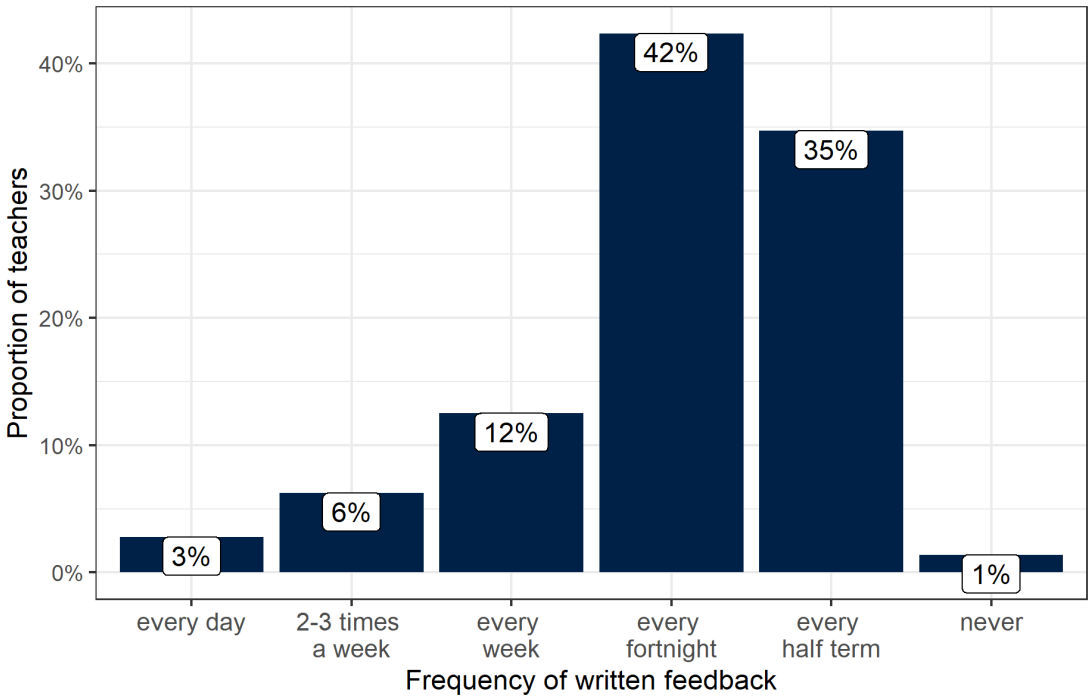
When thinking about the use of written feedback with their students, respondents were asked to consider how quickly they were able to provide written feedback to their students (Figure 36). The most frequent response indicated that teachers aim to provide such feedback to their students within one week (47%).

Figure 36: I give written feedback within: (Secondary)



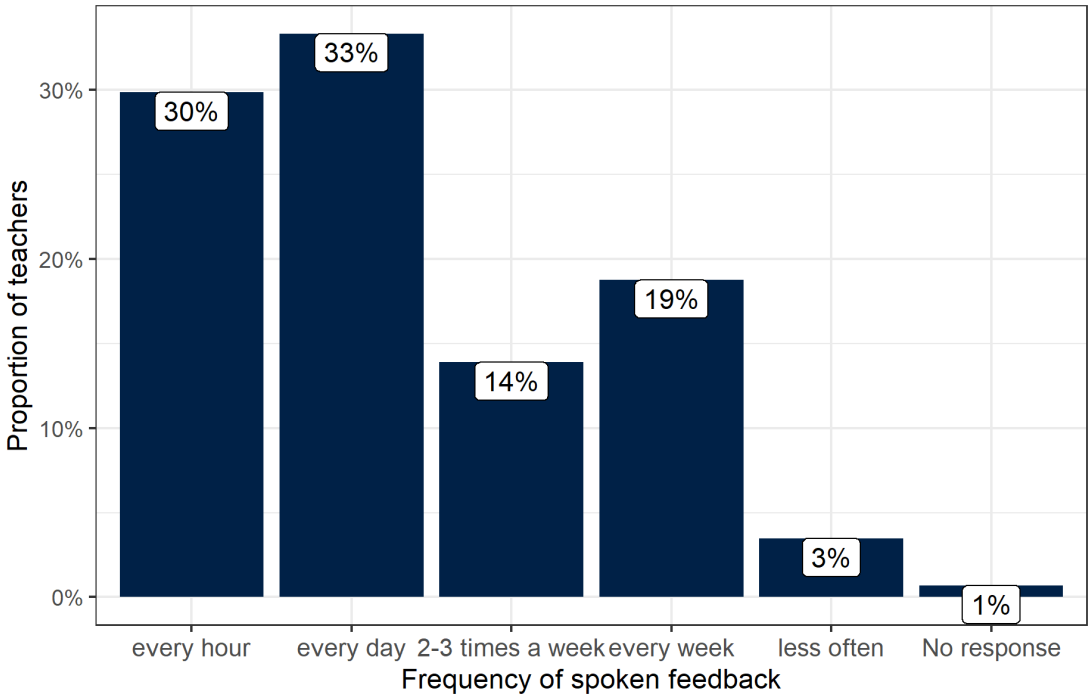
When asked to consider the frequency at which written feedback is given to students (Figure 37), the majority of the respondents in our survey either provided it every fortnight or every half term. (It is natural that this is less frequent than in primary given that secondary teachers do not see their students every day, and indeed may see them no more than once a fortnight.)

Figure 37: How often do you give written feedback? (Secondary)



When thinking about spoken feedback (Figure 38), the majority of respondents (64%) aimed to provide students with spoken feedback either every hour or every day.

Figure 38: How often do you give spoken feedback to all students? (Secondary)



Respondents were also asked to consider if they varied the medium of feedback, based on different groups of students. 62% of the teachers indicated that they did in fact employ different media of feedback for different types of students. The teachers indicated that for those students who are SEND or Pupil Premium, the feedback might be either verbal or written, but would be more precise, or include more structured tasks, making it easier for students to apply generic feedback to their own work. Feedback would be provided in manageable chunks in order not to overwhelm the students, or written feedback might be supported by a conversation. For those students who are EAL, more verbal feedback is used. When talking about feedback to students of different abilities, some teachers did not change the medium of feedback, but did modify the way they expressed it. For example, students who had a higher ability were given more detailed feedback and were held to higher challenges. In some ways the highest attaining and the lowest attaining might have similar needs for feedback:

> Sometimes I will speak further to an individual if something is too complicated for writing or whole class is not appropriate. Often this is students who are either at the very top or less academically able. (English teacher)

The teachers who said they did not vary their medium of feedback believed that the 'type' or grouping of individuals did not contribute to the change in type of feedback. Feedback for them was an individualised process, and so it was only part of the process for them to use different types of feedback for different people:

> My feedback varies dependent on the nature of each student not whether they are set in a particular category such as SEN or EAL etc. (History teacher)

71% of the respondents from secondary schools also expressed that they would vary the expression of their feedback for different groups of students. This variation was mostly explained in terms of age and ability rather than for Pupil Premium or SEND. The teachers shared that they would adapt language for students with lower attainment, build in more scaffolding, and use more positive language as well. A simpler language is also used with the younger students, and their feedback tends to be briefer. For older students, for example, the teachers would provide more detailed feedback, particularly if they were in Key Stage 4, due to the clearer focus required for exam preparation.

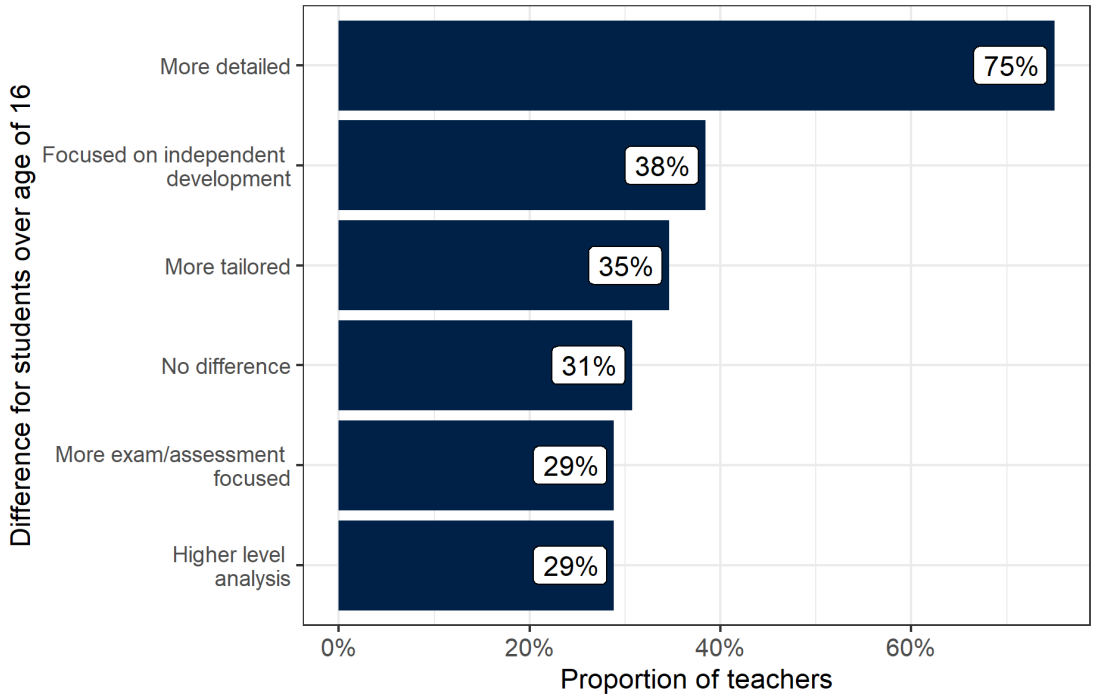
Those who taught post-16 groups of students were asked specifically about how feedback might differ for those students (n = 92). The feedback for these students was described as being more detailed by the majority (75%) of the respondents (Figure 39). The feedback was also described as being more focused on encouraging greater independence in the students' learning journeys, and might also be more exam focused (29%).

> More detailed, specific, technical. Delivery would still be the same as I think this is more personalised to each child and how you know they would manage this. (Drama teacher)

> Tends to be more in-depth and with more scope to students to be independent in their response (History teacher)

Figure 39: How is your feedback different for students over 16?

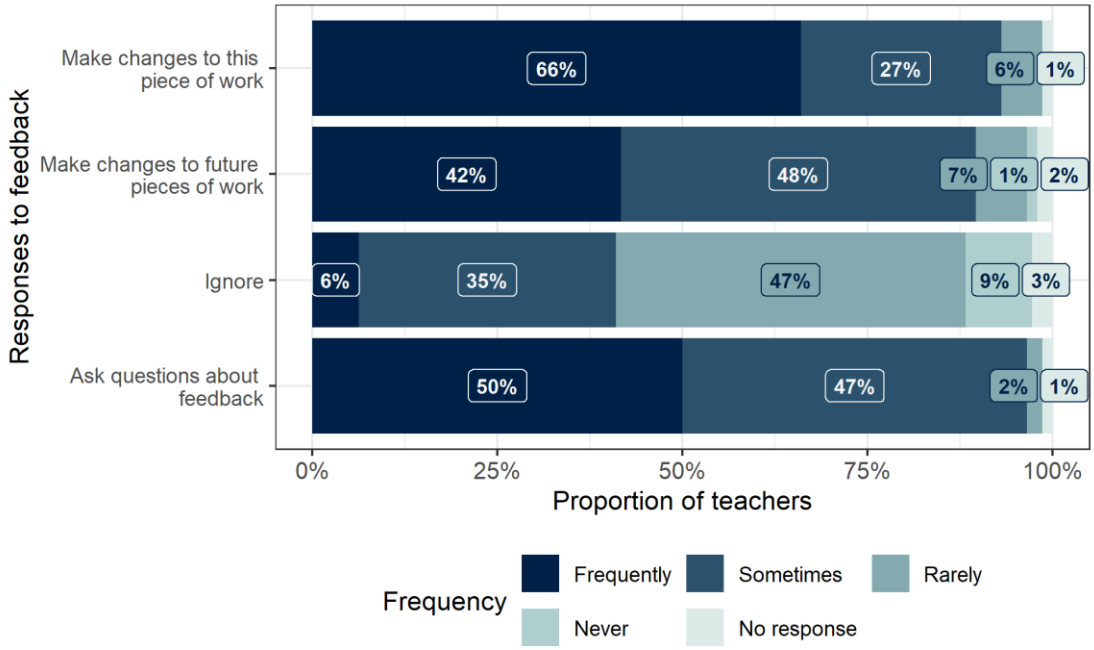
(n = 92)



However, for almost a third of respondents, giving feedback post-16 was no different from the feedback given to younger secondary students.

Two thirds of secondary school respondents felt that when feedback was provided to the students in the classroom, the purpose was frequently to make changes to the piece of work for which feedback was provided (67%). Almost half believed that the aim of the feedback was sometimes to make changes to future pieces of work (48%). Very few teachers believed that students would frequently ignore the feedback that they were given (6%; Figure 40).

Figure 40: Do students in your classes respond to feedback in any of these ways? (Secondary)



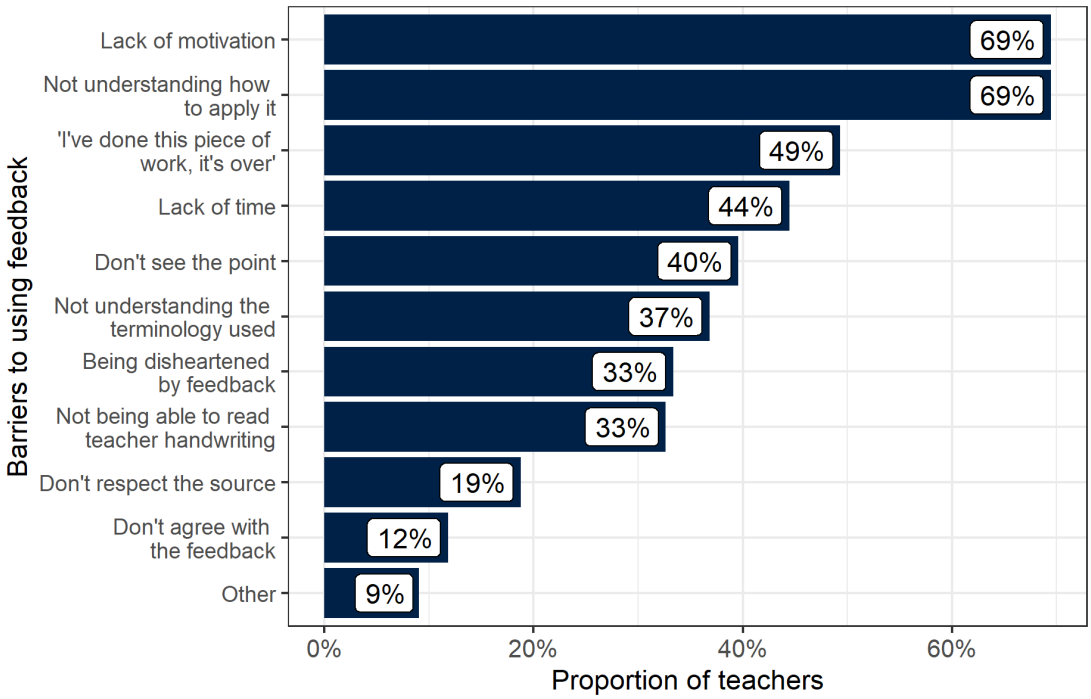
87% of the secondary school teachers described having a mechanism in place that would allow them to ensure that students were responding to the feedback that was given to them. Of the 131 teachers who gave a response to the open question asking them to explain further their use or otherwise of a mechanism to ensure students responded to feedback, 49 suggested that they used DIRT or variants of it (Fix it/ Fix it 5/ Take 5/ Feedback Action Response (FAR)/ Strength Target Action Response (STAR)/ Aim Higher/ MAD Time ('Make a Difference')/ Actions or an unlabelled 'time in lessons'). Four teachers said that homework was used as the time for students to respond to feedback, with a further two saying that either homework or detention was set for those who did not profitably use the time given in the lesson. Four teachers checked that students had responded to feedback the next time they marked, usually in terms of utilising feedback on a previous piece of work to improve the new one. One teacher, however, was resentful of the time intensive checking back on previous low-level responses to feedback in the name of 'compliance' for book scrutinies; the process she described seemed to be so-called 'Triple Impact Marking'. Another teacher remarked that she did not have sufficient time to chase students' responses to feedback. Coloured pens remain a favoured method of identifying responses to feedback: thirty-two teachers mentioned this at their school, with green being the most favoured response (19).

Only one teacher mentioned having a conversation with pupils before getting them to make changes to their work; another teacher, of drama, said that she utilised video and then verbal feedback while watching it with the students, before they went off to rehearse again, which would be a similar process. One

teacher also mentioned that they revisited feedback before starting a new task with the group.

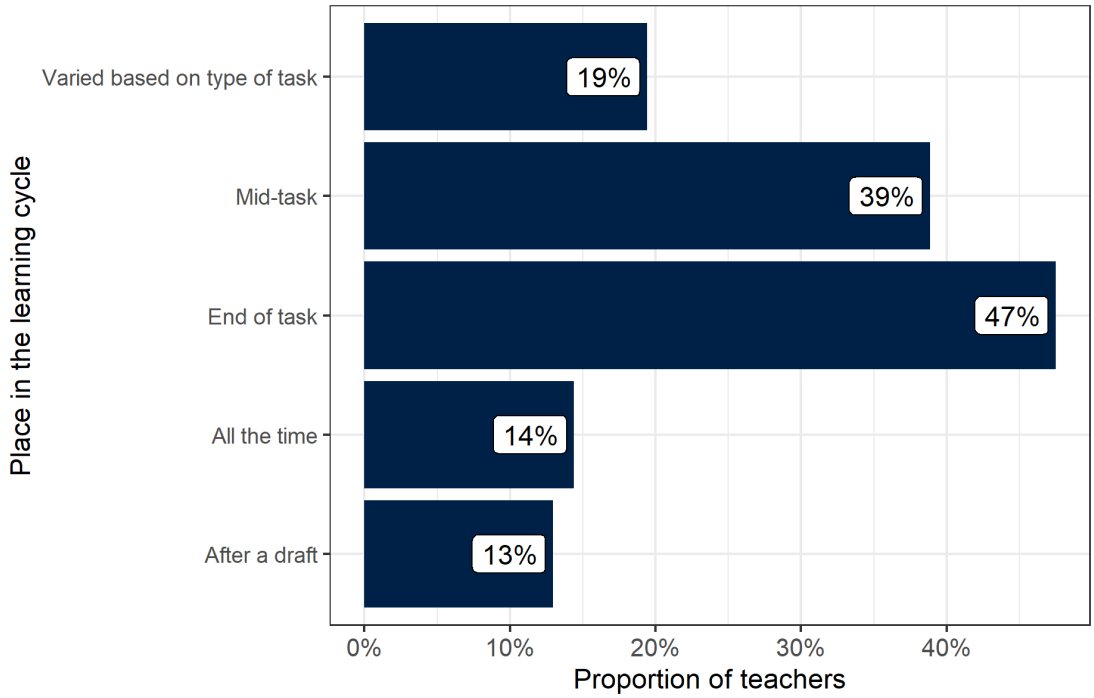
Teachers in this study were also asked (Figure 41) what they believed were the factors that contributed to students not responding to feedback. 70% of respondents cited a lack of motivation and a lack of understanding of how to apply feedback as reasons for students' failure to respond to feedback. Almost half of the teachers (49%) also believed that students might not respond to feedback because of the attitude 'I've done this piece of work, it's over'. Smaller proportions agreed that not respecting the source or not agreeing with the feedback could cause students not to engage.

Figure 41: What stops students using feedback to make progress? (Secondary)



Almost half of the teachers (across all the subjects) in this study (47%) provided feedback to students at the end of a task (Figure 42), followed closely by feedback provided in the middle of a task (39%). Some detailed variations are subject specific (for example, in art feedback is more holistic; in science there are no drafts), but these time-points have been largely identified across the range of subjects. Responses to the open question accompanying this suggested that feedback was provided mid-task to help students think about common pitfalls or to remind them about key elements of the assessment; essentially this was feedback that was more formative in form. Feedback provided at the end of a task tended to be more summative and thorough in nature.

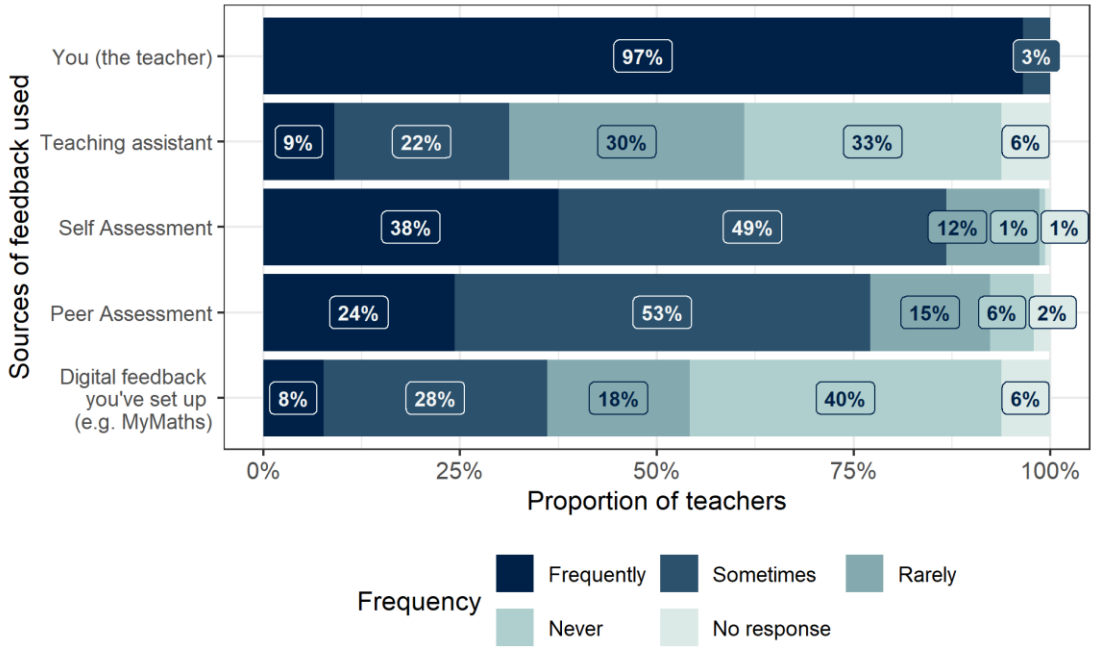
Figure 42: When in the learning cycle do you give feedback? (Secondary)



97% of the respondents in secondary schools used feedback to make changes to the next steps of teaching; 83% used it for teaching the same thing next year.

For the respondents in the survey, they themselves were most frequently the source of feedback in the classroom, whereas digital feedback was used most infrequently. The use of self-assessment was more frequent than the use of peer assessment as a tool (Figure 43).

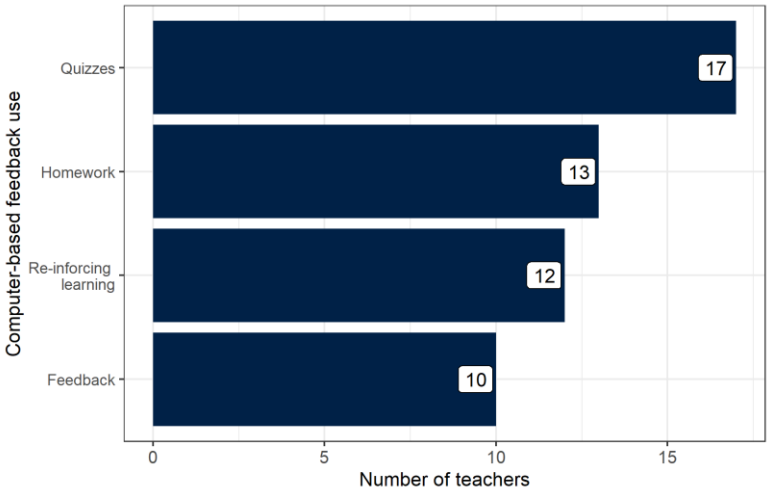
Figure 43: How often are the following sources of feedback used in your classroom? (Secondary)



When asked to consider the use of computer-based feedback, 75 respondents stated that they used it (approximately half). From the responses given, it is evident that the main use of computer-based feedback was for the administration of quizzes and homework (Figure 44).

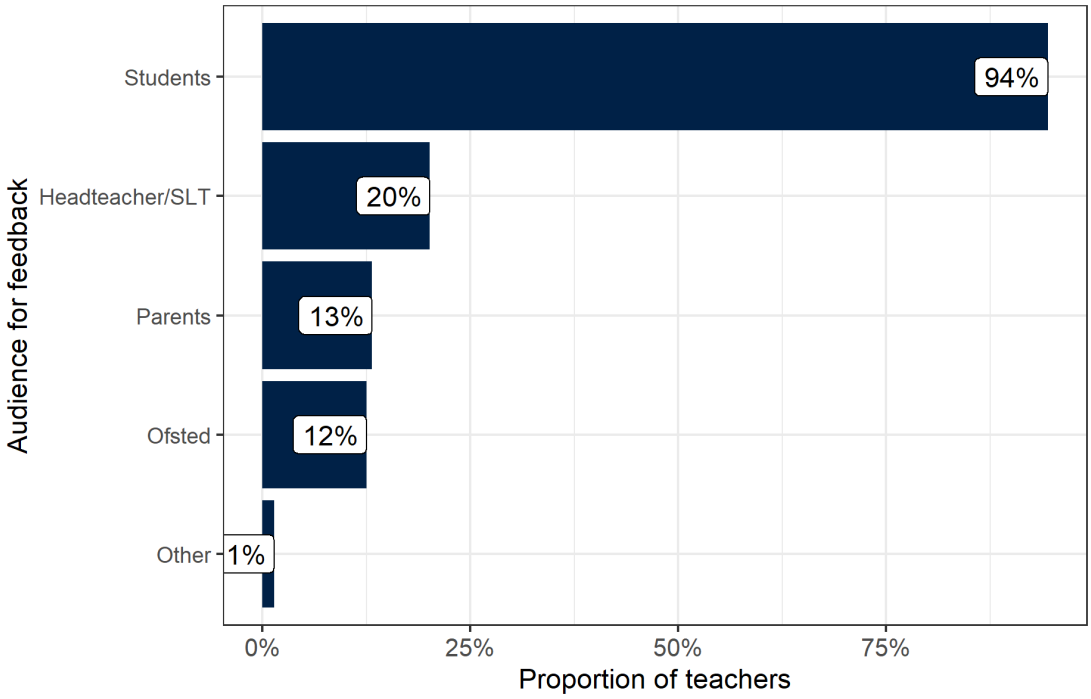
Figure 44: Why do you use computer-based feedback?

(n = 75)



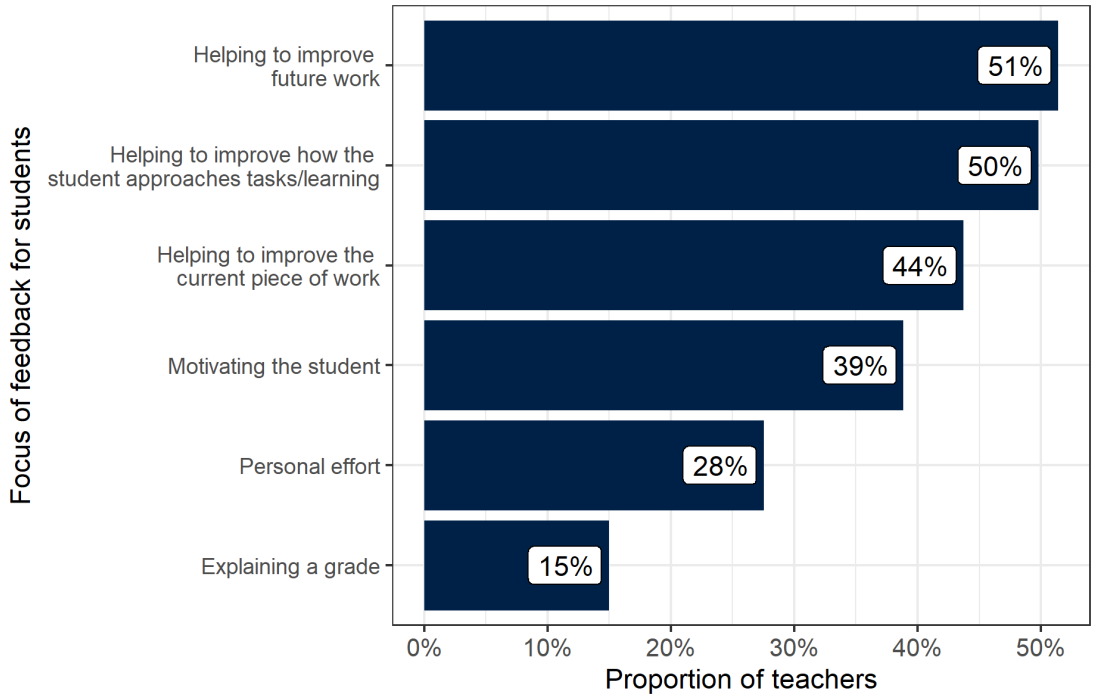
The teachers from the secondary schools were almost unanimous (94% of responses) in considering that when they provide written feedback it is for the benefit of the students versus any other audience (Figure 45). Again, a small proportion mentioned Ofsted, but only 12%, which is smaller than those who mentioned parents.

Figure 45: Who do you write feedback for? (Secondary)



In terms of what feedback should focus on, 88% of the teachers indicated that feedback given to students should focus on helping to improve their future work, and 85% indicated that it was about improving how the student approaches learning (Figure 46).

Figure 46: What should feedback focus on?

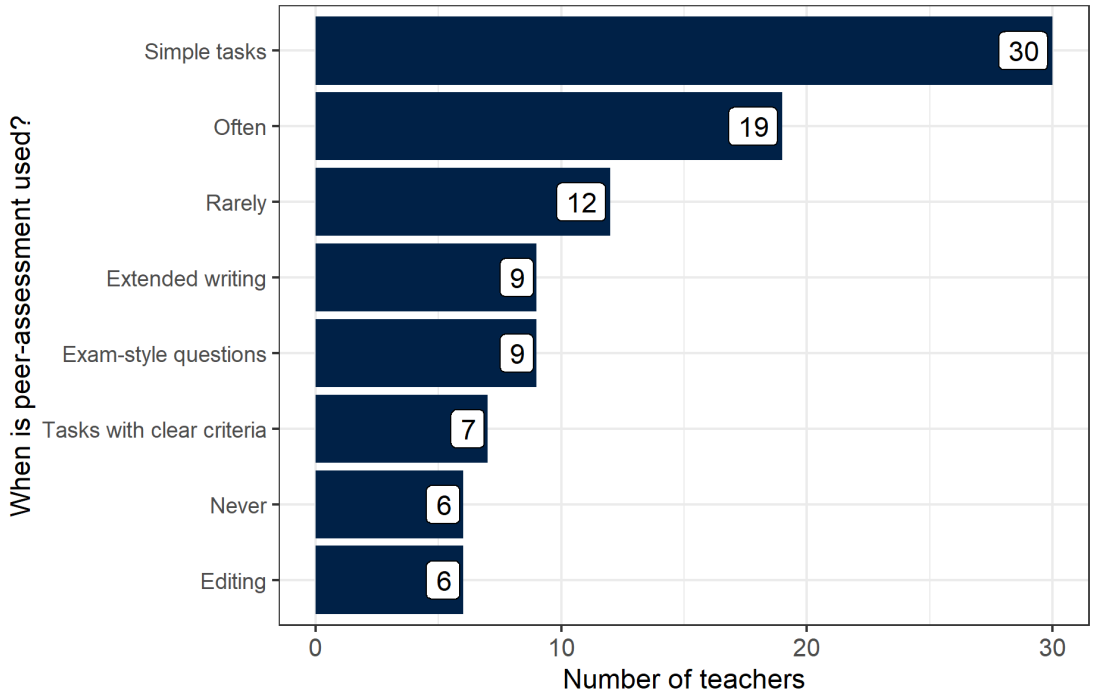


Peer and self-assessment

This section presents teachers' responses on the use of self- and peer assessment in the secondary classroom. Teachers were asked to consider when they might use peer assessment and why they would choose to do so. Of the 137 responses recorded (Figure 47), 22% chose to use peer assessments for simple tasks such as marking yes/no questions or for short quiz activities. (Figure 47 is drawn from the answers to an open question and includes only responses which specified an identifiable task, hence the total number of responses is smaller than half of all respondents.) The responses also suggested that peer assessment, while useful for extended pieces of writing, could only be successful when students had a clear idea of success criteria. Simple, closed activities left very little room for ambiguity, and peer assessment was therefore easier to enact in such situations.

> For quick, low-stakes quizzing. Check & correct. (Mathematics teacher)
>
> Knowledge recall quizzes - done quickly/part of routine (Science teacher)

Figure 47: When do you ask students to peer assess? (Secondary)



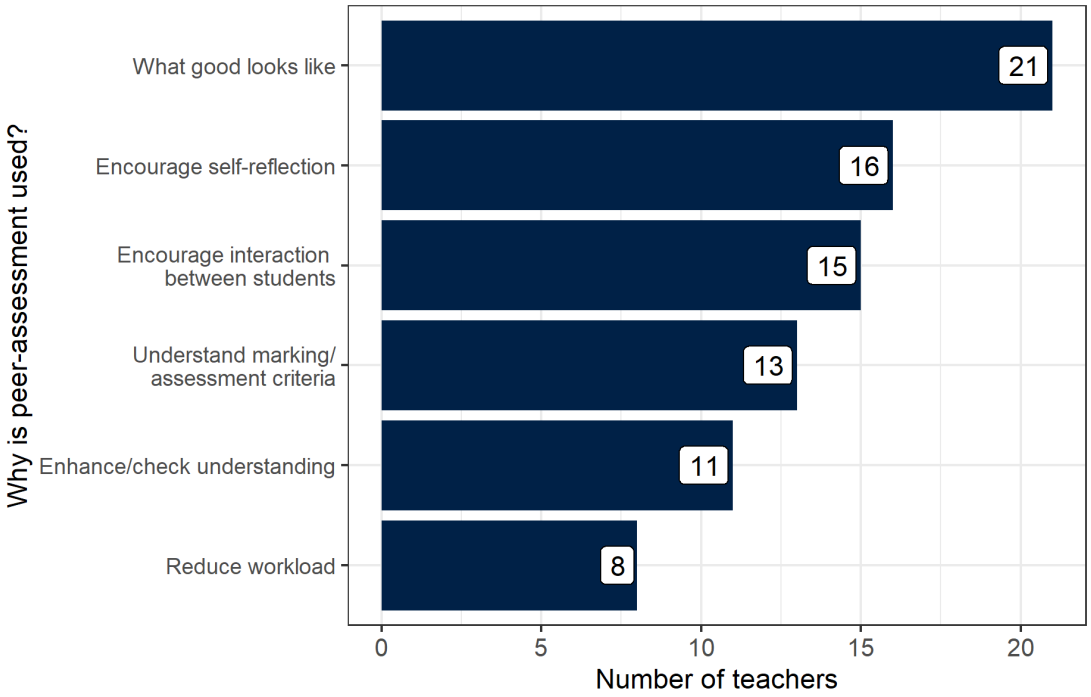
15% of the respondents (Figure 48) stated that peer assessment provided the opportunity for students not only to see a variety of other work, but also to understand 'what good looks like'.

> I would use peer assessment on extended pieces of writing, often in conjunction with teacher feedback. Peer assessment is key to ensuring pupils recognise a good piece of work. Pupils would look to identify the required features in their peers' work. (English teacher)

11% of the respondents also stated that peer assessment would help to encourage self-reflection amongst students, and used it:

> To give pupils a chance to evaluate their learning in a support way. (Teacher across all subjects)

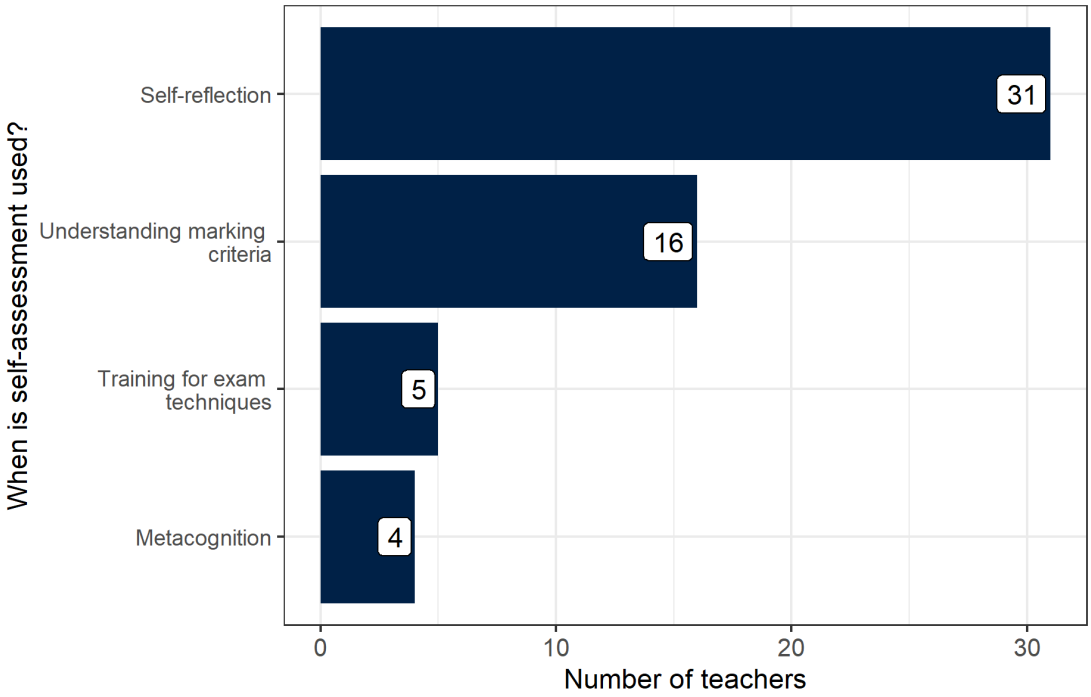
Figure 48: Why do you ask students to peer assess? (Secondary)



When considering self-assessment in the classroom, a small number of respondents used it at the start of a unit (2%), or when looking at exam questions (5%), and a larger number used it for simple quizzes (13%) or short pieces of writing (11%). Approximately one fifth (22%) of the teachers from secondary schools indicated that the reason they felt self-assessment as a form of feedback was important (Figure 49) was that it helped to inculcate in students a sense of self-reflection, one that would make them more independent in understanding and guiding their own learning requirements. This meant using it:

> after a piece of work to encourage reflection/evaluation which will enhance the next piece and develop students' independent skills. (English teacher)

Figure 49: Why do you ask students to self-assess? (Secondary)



When asked to consider the challenges with implementing peer and self-assessment, the teachers from the secondary schools expressed concern around these forms of feedback as unsuitable for challenging misconceptions that students might have, furthermore they do not provide students with the space and opportunity to discuss or correct these misconceptions, leading to further issues in their learning.

> In my subject, learners can sometimes misunderstand or write things based on previous assumptions or what they've been told by parents. Having peer or self-assessment can make correcting or discussing these misconceptions more difficult as students marking might not know or might just tick something that isn't quite correct (Maths teacher)

Some teachers expressed concern about needing to teach their students the right techniques to give effective feedback, giving them a firm grounding of the success criteria and the confidence to think like a teacher.

> Students not understanding what meaningful targets are. They need coaching or modelling before. (English teacher)

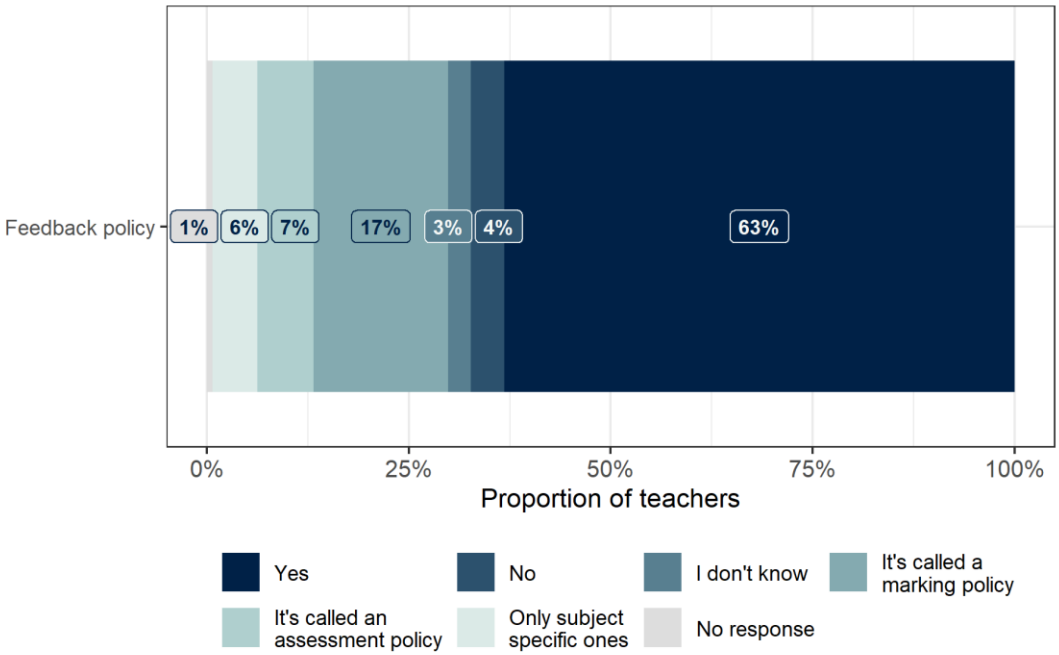
Trust was also a theme that was highlighted by quite a few teachers, such that the teachers were wary of students using peer or self-assessment as they would not necessarily trust themselves or each other to mark fairly:

> Students not understanding the success criteria. Students not trusting each other and then wanting teacher feedback. (English teacher)

School-level feedback policy

63% of the respondents from secondary schools indicated that their schools had a school-wide feedback policy. Only 6% of the respondents indicated that their schools only had feedback policies that were subject-specific (Figure 50). A further 7% and 17% reported that the policy was called an assessment policy or marking policy respectively.

Figure 50: Does your school have a feedback policy?

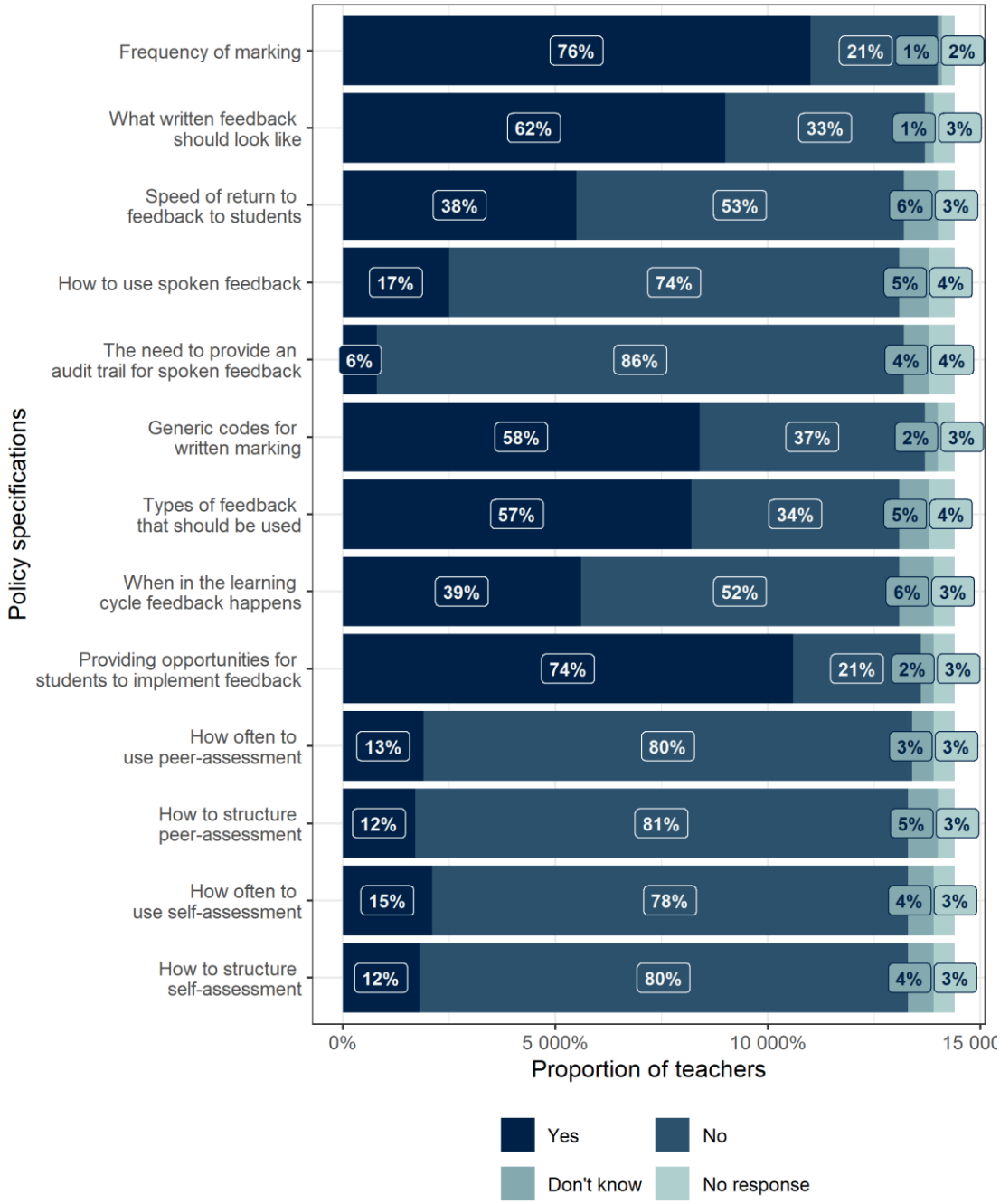


Approximately 61% of the respondents indicated that the feedback policy for the school remained the same across the key stages, whereas just over half of the respondents (56%) indicated that the overall feedback policy in their school differed across subjects.

Only around 7% of the respondents were unaware of who had designed the feedback policy in their schools. The largest proportion (45%) reported that the SLT had designed the policy; a further 16% said their head of department had responsibility for it, with 13% saying a department-collaborative approach had been used.

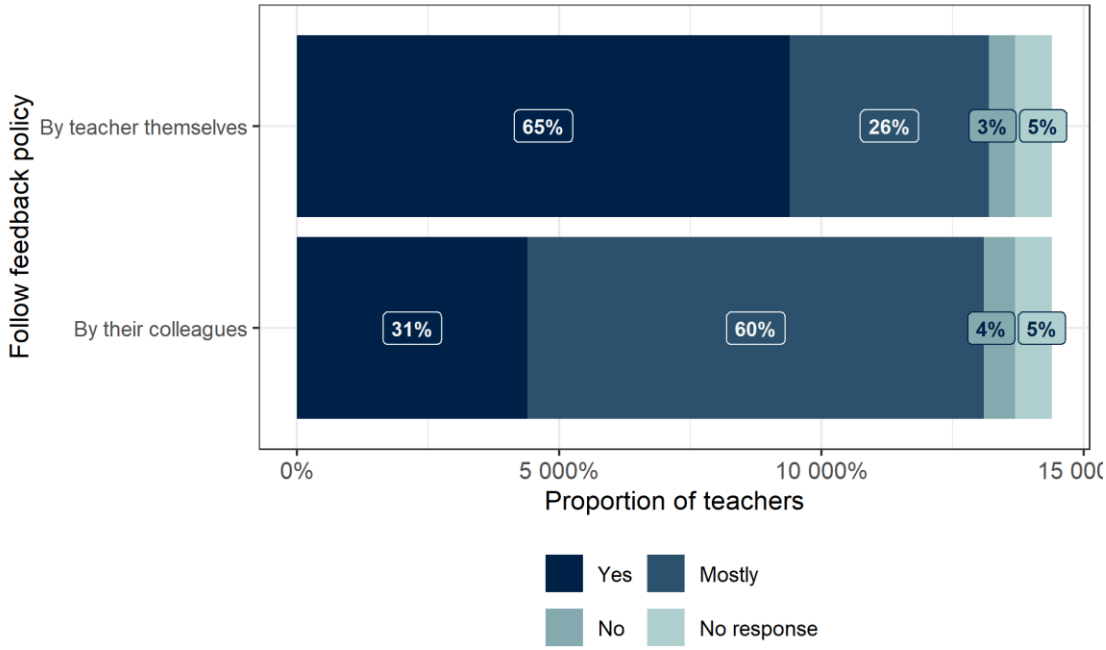
Figure 51 shows the specific contents of school feedback policies as reported by respondents across all subjects. Policies specified the frequency of marking (78%) and specified providing opportunities to the students to implement the feedback given to them (74%). 64% of the respondents indicated that the feedback policies were also explicit about what written feedback needed to look like. It is notable that the need to provide an audit trail for spoken feedback was reported as being required by their school policy by just eight teachers.

Figure 51: Does your school's feedback policy specify the following? (Secondary)



The teachers in the secondary schools, like those in primary schools, also tended to feel that they adhered more to the policy than did their colleagues (Figure 52). Out of 137 teachers who answer the question, 94 claimed that they followed the policy completely, and a further 38 said that they 'mostly' followed it (with five saying 'no'). The proportions of 'yes' and 'mostly' were then almost reversed with reference to colleagues following the policy (with 44 for 'yes'; 87 for 'mostly', 6 for 'no').

Figure 52: Do you follow your school's feedback policy? Do your colleagues? (Secondary)



61% of respondents described their feedback policy as specific rather than vague. Both written and spoken feedback were scrutinised, although more than 90% of respondents reported that written feedback was monitored, as opposed to 28% who reported that spoken feedback was.

Of the 127 teachers who responded to the open question requesting more detail about the monitoring of feedback, the most common approach reported was a 'book look' (112), with a further two reporting the new use of 'deep dives' (one of these was a change of terminology), and a further one reporting the use of a 'mini Ofsted' approach. It is interesting that one of the respondents felt the need to comment that book looks were not 'punitive'. Learning walks or lesson drop-ins were the next most common approach (42) and feedback was also monitored as part of the learning observation process (23). Thirteen teachers reported that leadership team members would ask students about the feedback they had received. Just seven teachers reported a collaborative approach using moderation or departmental professional dialogue. There was no report of 'verbal feedback given' records in books. A teacher with leadership responsibility for feedback as part of Teaching and Learning noted that monitoring sometimes incentivised behaviour which was not required:

> I am still in the process of ensuring that there is a consistent understanding that there may be no evidence of written feedback in books and that is in line with our policy. Unfortunately some heads of faculty and a member of SLT who recently joined from another school are still keen, in some cases, to see a particular frequency and style of written feedback, backed up by comments made by some external 'critical friends' which means that there is still a lack of confidence in applying the policy

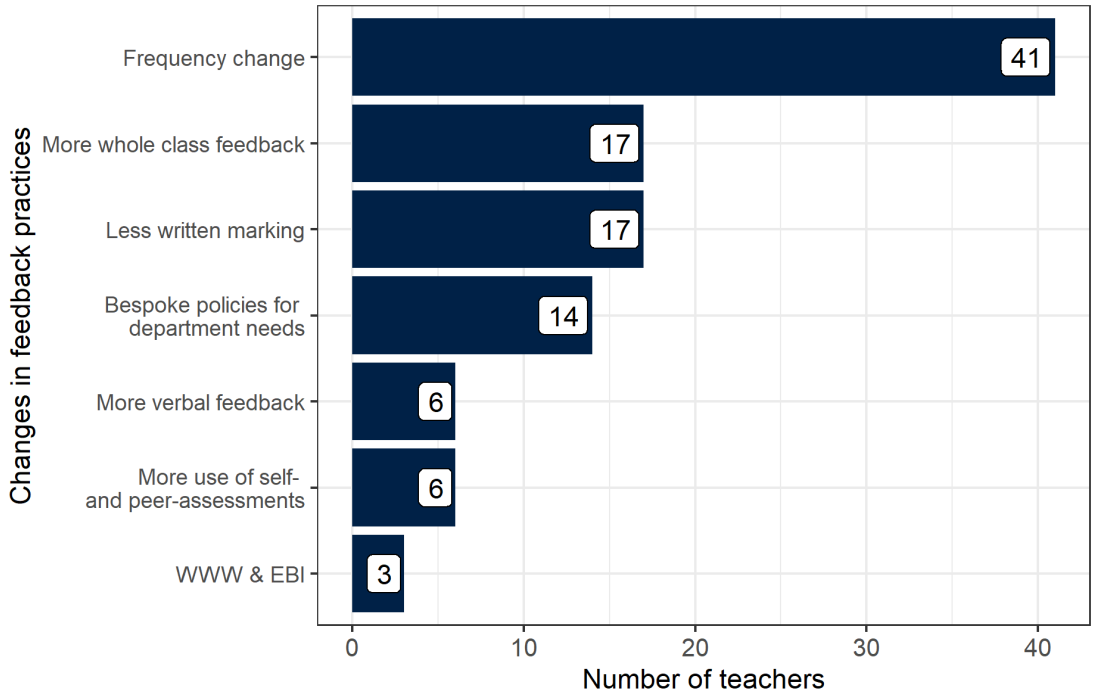
> for many teachers who then default to producing marking simply for work scrutiny.

Two thirds (67%) of secondary respondents indicated that there had been changes to their workload associated with marking and feedback. This was largely in terms of a change in expected frequency of feedback (Figure 53), with some teachers also indicating that there had been a move to whole class feedback over individualised feedback.

> Policy changed from specifying a FAR[7] mark every 6 lessons to leaving it to department discretion (Non-specified subject teacher)

> As a Head of History I have lobbied to be allowed to trial an approach with Y7 that requires more written feedback and focuses on more regular feedback cycles with less workload for the teacher. I have been allowed to carry out this trial. (Head of history)

Figure 53: What changes to feedback policy have reduced workload?



Impact of research

Approximately 44% of the teachers in the secondary schools reported having been aware of the EEF Toolkit strand on Feedback; 35% reported that they had read *A Marked Improvement?* (Elliott et al., 2016). Of those who had read *A Marked Improvement*, 64% indicated that reading it had changed feedback practices in their schools. 93% of the teachers from the secondary schools

[7] Feedback, Action, Response – a type of DIRT marking.

indicated that they either sometimes integrated research in general into their teaching practice or did it to a great extent.

Conclusions from the survey

The teachers who participated in this study at both the primary and secondary school stages represent a diverse set of schools, subjects, teaching experience, and geographical locations. The responses that have been provided through this survey provide a holistic overview of the teachers' engagement with different feedback practices, and also highlight the challenges that they face.

- Teachers at both primary and secondary level consider it key that feedback to students needs to be easy to understand and delivered soon after the completion of a task; instantaneous at best. Good feedback is also considered to be specific in nature, and personalised in form, thereby allowing the students' learning to move forward.
- Both the primary and secondary schools in this study have feedback policies that vary in specificity, frequency, emphasis on different forms of feedback, and even levels within the school at which they are deployed (i.e. school-wide vs department-specific).
- When considering the use of peer and self-assessment as forms of feedback, teachers at both the primary and secondary level identified some common challenges in their implementation. The teachers indicated that there was a need to ensure that students were well trained in the two forms of feedback for it to be effective. It is also important to consider that students may not always be honest when engaging in these types of feedback, either with themselves or with others, and so it is important to manage the students through this process in an innovative manner. Teachers also indicated that peer and self-assessment, while useful to save time, could also be considered as flawed forms of assessment as they may result in the reinforcement of misconceptions, or even result in the breakdown of trust between students or between the students and the teacher.
- Where teachers described feedback policies as vague at their schools, this was done in a light that was mostly positive, such that teachers were given the freedom to enact feedback practices that were fit for purpose for different subjects and at different levels. These policies were considered as providing high autonomy to teachers, reflecting a trust in their judgement.
- Where policies were described as 'specific', there was also an emphasis on teacher judgement and professionalism being at play within these policies.

Interviews

Methods

Eight case study schools (four secondary, three primary and one FE college) were recruited to take part in interviews about their feedback practices. These sites were recruited on the basis of their engagement with research, either through their connections to the EEF or to the Oxford University Department of Education. This means that they cannot be taken to be representative of practice across England, rather they exemplify practices of schools who have engaged with research on marking, feedback and workload.

In each school we interviewed a member of senior leadership with responsibility for feedback policy and practice in the school, and at least two additional members of staff from different age ranges (primary) or subjects (secondary and FE). A total of 32 teachers took part in interviews across the eight case studies. Interviews were semi-structured and explored teachers' practices, their views around feedback, and how schools monitored feedback practices. Data analysis was conducted using qualitative data analysis software (NVivo) to code questions for relevance to the scoping questions and inductively for themes within that. A coding framework was jointly established by two of the researchers, and then one coded the full data set, with the other conducting quality checks. The main themes in the data provide the subheadings below: practices; principles of feedback; prerequisites for effective feedback; the nature of oral feedback; using feedback to improve (students and teachers); workload; practical subjects; monitoring feedback; and outside influences.

In presenting findings below, quotations are usually attributed to a teacher within a school; both schools and teachers are kept anonymous. However, on occasion a teacher was not linked to a particular school in the text below if they would be easily identifiable within their schools to those who know who took part for ethical reasons. Quotations are edited for sense and grammar for ease of reading.

Interview schedule

A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix B. It was designed with reference to the Advisory Group and the literature.

Findings

Practices

All primary and secondary schools in the sample had attempted to reduce the marking workload of teachers in the form of written feedback, principally by moving towards the use of live marking, spoken feedback and whole class feedback lessons, including skimming of subsets of books to identify issues requiring planning and adjustment for next-steps teaching. In one secondary school, however, there was still an emphasis on regular written marking being a

core part of the feedback policy. In the FE college feedback practices varied according to the subject and the context of the course (that is, whether students were attending for a short intensive period as the college-based part of an apprenticeship, provided for employers or an entirely college-based course leading towards assessment and qualification awarded by an external body).

Many participants noted that students did not necessarily regard spoken feedback as 'feedback' but that they valued it anyway. In Secondary School 4 when the move to reduce written marking and focus on book sampling for planning together with spoken feedback was made, a series of assemblies for all year groups had been held to explain the changes, and a letter had been sent home to parents. The member of staff in charge of the new approach said that as a result there had been little or no disquiet about this shift, which had occurred approximately a year before the interviews, as a result of school engagement with research from the EEF and elsewhere.

Table 2: Practices in each of the three primary schools interviewed

Primary School 1	Focus on diagnostic 'hinge' points in lessons, which then immediately influence next steps teaching. A short five- to ten-minute one-to-one conversation with the teacher every two weeks in which the student is challenged to analyse their own work and guided into self-feedback; guided self-regulation. Reading of books for next day planning. Emphasis on developing good peer feedback. Little to no written marking; verbal feedback in lessons might be accompanied by use of coloured pen marking in books to highlight issues. Rapid (same day) intervention by TA in response to problems identified in diagnostic lesson activities.
Primary School 2	Live marking with a focus on spoken feedback. Reading of books for next day planning. Little to no written marking; option is there for extended pieces of writing in Years 5 and 6. Regular small group conferencing where the teacher identifies a group to work with on a particular topic or issue. Mathematics misconceptions addressed same day.

	Teachers have the option of 'verbal feedback, conferencing, self-assessment, peer assessment, live marking, or detailed written marking' but there is an awareness of the 'opportunity cost' and the emphasis is on planning.
Primary School 3	Focus on 'in the moment' feedback. Books read daily; expectation of SPAG errors being identified; used to inform next day planning. Occasional written marking for encouragement and praise.

The practices in the primary schools had in common an emphasis on planning rather than written marking, where books were read to provide diagnostic information for the teacher who would then tailor teaching to include feedback, re-teaching or appropriate next steps the next day. All three schools noted that in early primary, students' reading levels negated the point of written marking in any case; they also noted that this did not mean that written marking had not previously taken place in these years.

'Conferencing' can either refer to a whole class practice or the teacher with one student or a small group of students. It involves reflecting on a piece of work together (via a visualiser with the whole class), analysing and suggesting ways for improvement. The sense given by those who practise it is that it is a collaborative practice in which students have a sense of ownership over the feedback and the development of the piece of work. Some schools will have conferences on work which has had written comments, but more usually it has been read but not written on by the teacher.[8]

Primary School 1 was a small school with mixed age classes, and this caused some challenges for teaching and learning, including feedback practices, in that the older children might be finished with a task well before the younger children, which meant balancing the need to give feedback with the need to keep children progressing. However, the teachers in the school did not feel that this was insuperable, and the focus on spoken feedback supported them.

Table 3: Practices in each of the four secondary schools interviewed

Secondary School 1	'Sample marking' based on 2 higher prior attainers, 2 middle attainers and 2 lower prior attainers and all pupil premium students, at the midpoint of a cycle of 16 lessons. Teachers skim the books and prepare a whole class feedback sheet

[8] See Appendix C: Case Study on pupil conferencing.

	incorporating misconceptions, good work and tasks for next steps. 'Deep' i.e. detailed written marking at the end of the 16 weeks for each individual student. Every student receives verbal feedback in every lesson. Sixth form classes are small enough that 'sample' marking encompasses the whole class but the principle is otherwise the same.
Secondary School 2	Marking must be pertinent. No marking for the sake of marking; no 'tick and flick'. Formative assessments planned for and thought through with feedback given on the basis of 'marking grids' using pre-set success criteria. Spoken feedback expected in all lessons; no set format.
Secondary School 3	Half termly whole class read through of books with strengths and weaknesses identified on class grid for whole class feedback, with a whole class feedback half lesson dedicated to responding to individual targets. Half termly in-depth written marking based on end of unit assessment, with a full lesson dedicated to whole class feedback response after. Circulation with some live marking but an emphasis on verbal feedback in class for all other feedback. Diagnostic assessment using computer system for mathematics.
Secondary School 4	Regular book sampling (c.5 per class chosen strategically) for use to inform planning, for example with a focused whole class feedback or reteach starter activity and task. Spoken feedback in class focusing on immediate feedback. Use of visualisers to model marking and feedback to whole class.

	In-depth written marking and DIRT (Dedicated Improvement and Reflection Time) once per term.

Secondary School 3 had recently transitioned to the model described in the table above from a very intensive written marking policy. The Teaching and Learning Lead agreed that it had reduced workload significantly but also noted that not everyone had adopted the new approach, preferring to use more regular written marking. This had the potential to cause tension, both because students might compare books, but also because book scrutiny, which was used to monitor use of feedback, had to be carefully restricted to what it had been designed to include according to the policy. This school also faced the problem that some members of staff did not mark at all; reducing the demands on staff in this way had not stimulated them to begin marking. In Secondary School 1 one of the teacher interviewees had moved to the school at the beginning of the academic year, in part motivated by the intense workload of written marking demanded at her previous school. Although she believed more written marking would be beneficial for the students, she noted that this system was far more manageable, and that her previous school (rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted) had had a high staff turnover which she attributed to the unsustainable workload. In all four schools an expectation had been raised by the changes to the marking and feedback policy such that more time should now be dedicated to planning, using formative assessment to generate 'feedforward' in the form of changes to next steps planning.

FE practices

There was no single model of practice in the FE college; principles of feedback were given to staff but teachers largely had autonomy. In practical subjects like car mechanics much of the feedback would be spoken and demonstrated physically to students; written feedback was largely confined to reports to employers on their students' progress (but these were also given to students). In courses leading to qualifications where written work was a regular part of classwork, so was written marking; when written work was part of a portfolio assessment for a BTEC, rules about written feedback were set externally, and constrained the ways in and regularity with which written feedback could be given. All lecturers valued spoken feedback.

Principles of feedback

A variety of characteristics were considered to constitute good feedback; there were no identifiable differences between primary and secondary or FE teachers' views in regard to this. Characteristics of good feedback identified by at least five teachers in at least two settings included: clarity; specificity; being actionable (able to be acted on immediately); focusing on something to develop; being timely; being meaningful to the student and causing change in the student. The Head of Primary School 1 summarised good feedback as that which was 'Simple, clear and actionable'.

One secondary school teacher stated that for her marking books did not 'add value' and that it was therefore pointless. Feedback had to be about 'adding value'.

Most schools had timeliness as part of their policy, by which they usually mean rapid feedback which happened as close as possible to the work it referred to; they often emphasised the use of spoken feedback in attaining that. In Secondary School 3, Teacher 1 emphasised the importance of rapid processing of written feedback for the half termly written assessments, focusing on an overnight turnaround where necessary. He similarly focused on the use of peer and self-assessment for receiving corrective or confirmatory feedback on regular classwork, because it could be used at the point of completion. One of the primary schools also reported using an 'honesty' sheet for mathematics for similar reasons, which students could check their answers against for instant feedback. In the primary school context if students had a problem they could approach the teacher; in the secondary school context self-assessment was done as a whole class exercise and instant feedback on what might have gone wrong was given by the teacher on the board where necessary.

In relation to writing, one English teacher in Secondary School 1 and one primary teacher mentioned that the time needed to read and comment on a piece of English work might make written feedback more appropriate, that that feedback would therefore take longer, so that 'timely' did not mean instantaneous if high quality feedback was needed. However, they also reported that students sometimes found it hard to think back to a piece written the previous week. The meaning of 'timely' feedback might therefore depend on the type of task on which feedback was being given, but too long a gap reduced the effectiveness of feedback. Therefore, spending a long time on written marking might be a wasted effort if there was an unproductive gap.

The Teaching and Learning Lead in the FE College raised a point about the relation of feedback to assessment criteria compared to the underlying learning which needs to take place.

> So typically staff will say, 'Okay, you need to go away and do X to meet this merit criteria. You haven't analysed enough. You haven't evaluated enough - Go away and do that. Resubmit and you'll get your merit or distinction'….So I think, in my experience as a generalisation, that lecturers quite often are quite happy and comfortable giving feedback and setting targets in relation to specification criteria, but less so in unpacking the learning skills that underpin a student's development together. (Teaching and Learning Lead, FE College)

Prerequisites for effective feedback

Respondents named a large range of prerequisites for effective feedback. One primary school teacher suggested that having a good understanding of the ways students might attempt a task was essential in being able to unpick their actions and help them through feedback. (This is the aspect of teaching knowledge known as Pedagogical Content Knowledge [Shulman, 1986]). Others cited the

subject knowledge of the teacher. Seven teachers across six settings cited the importance of a culture of feedback in the school, namely that students should be receptive to receiving feedback, and understanding that it was designed to help them develop. One secondary respondent phrased this in terms of 'some students having a sense of failure and sort of resisting a little bit of being told what to do, and how to do it, and why to do it.' There was a sense that this characteristic in itself was something that needed to be worked on by schools:

> there's work on receptivity and honesty and accuracy and understanding that learning isn't a performance, that it's not about pleasing the teacher, it's not about having a complete set of ticks, it's about if you've made a mistake being sort of saying, I've made a mistake, I really genuinely don't understand this and I need some help. (Primary Teacher).

Three teachers in three schools (primary and secondary) suggested that modelling and students having a good understanding of success criteria were important for feedback to be effective; there was a sense that this might also contribute to resistance if students felt that the 'goalposts' were not 'secure' (Secondary Teacher). Two secondary teachers suggested a lack of behavioural issues were important in being able to give feedback at all.

Teachers in all secondary schools mentioned the importance of a good relationship between the student and a teacher in facilitating the effectiveness of feedback. One primary teacher (Primary School 1) who was secondary trained said that she thought feedback was more personalised at primary, and thus became more subjective because it was mediated through the relationship with the teacher. She felt that this personalisation could backfire at the point of transition to secondary school because students would no longer receive the kind of tailored approach to feedback to which they had become accustomed. On principle she felt that it was not the approach that should be taken, but that feedback should be more standardised. No other teacher saw personalisation of feedback and the effect of the relationship between student and teacher as problematic. At Secondary School 1, Teacher 3 characterised feedback as an indication of caring about pupils, and that not giving feedback would be 'an indication of giving up on [them]'.

Participants emphasised the importance of students' trust in the teacher, both in terms of their relationship, that the teacher wanted what was best for the students, and in relation to the strength of the teacher's subject knowledge:

> you have to respect that person who's giving you the feedback, in the first place, so that it kind of works part and parcel with standards of good teaching and learning, that we expect from everyone. (Teaching and Learning Lead, Secondary School 4)

However, this was also a two-way relationship in that students could have their trust in the teacher increased, and the relationship improved, through giving good feedback. A change in the system could affect that trust, however. One

Primary Teacher described the effect on the trust of the pupils when the school switched to no written marking:

> I stopped doing feedback the way they were expecting it, or their parents were expecting it. So they've kind of had to figure out whether they could trust me in terms of, you know, if what I'm saying is accurate, and "why doesn't she break things down for me as much, and is it from the book, is it more serious than she says it". [They have realised that is isn't] just talking for the sake of talking. I think they do hear a lot of noise and they learn to tune this out. But because a lot of the noise they're getting from me is feedback and if they don't pay attention, you know, there's going to be a problem in terms of their progress." (Teacher at Primary School 1)

Two teachers noted the importance of time to respond to feedback: one secondary teacher suggested it was necessary to set aside sufficient time in lessons to 'make [feedback] valuable' and pointed out that outside school there might well be many distractions preventing students from making the most of the feedback.

Four teachers (one in FE, one in secondary and two in primary) mentioned that teacher handwriting could be a problem for students' understanding of written feedback, including the Teaching and Learning Lead in Primary School 3 who said it had been one of the reasons for the redesign of their system.

The nature of oral feedback

Teachers in all the schools agreed that their institution and SLT valued oral feedback ('Any feedback, they love the feedback!' [FE Lecturer 4]); only two teachers in one of the secondary schools hesitated on this point – one said it was not valued while the other observed it did not have the same 'gravitas' as written feedback. Teachers in all the secondary schools and the FE college, as well as one of the primary schools, suggested that pupils valued oral feedback, sometimes more than written. One teacher in Secondary School 3 suggested that some pupils do not like oral feedback because they are focused on finishing, and feedback interrupts that process or requires change. Only one teacher out of all the interviewees said that they used written feedback more than spoken – an English teacher in Secondary School 1.

One of the advantages identified in oral feedback was that teachers could have a discussion with students and identify why an answer was being given. One teacher in Primary School 3 gave this example:

> a child has written seven take away two equals two. If I was marking that I'd have, you know, given it a cross whatever and thought the child doesn't understand. I was able to speak to the child and verbally could understand actually it was five, they knew it was five, they were just writing their five back to front. So what I've actually done is come up to them and said, I'm not sure about that, drawn a green box to put their answer in, saying can you put your answer in again, just check that. They put the same thing

> again, a two, and I've said what's your answer and they said five, and I can just see, they understand, the problem is their number formation. So you know, if that was end of the day marking, I'd have misunderstood, and I can see that their next step is their number formation and not their Arithmetic.

Oral feedback could therefore be more diagnostic than written feedback. In addition, that teacher noted, talking to a student about their error made it more likely that she would remember who had the problem, as opposed to written marking and feedback, when she would not necessarily remember which book was whose. Similarly, an FE teacher reflected that using oral feedback meant being able to scaffold appropriately and give just the right amount of feedback.

> If you're giving verbal feedback, like "You're not doing this quite right, you need to do this". If they then still don't understand they can then ask and you can give them a bit more. And if you're giving verbal feedback you can see by looking at them if they understand or not. (FE Lecturer 3)

Other teachers suggested that the value of spoken feedback lay both in the regard with which students held it but also the ability to elicit understanding and ensure students understood what they were supposed to be doing:

> when you have a conversation with them, they take it more seriously than when they just read it on a sheet, I find. And you can also clarify whether they actually understand what you mean by their target because sometimes they don't. So, having that conversation with them, you know, and often saying right, so repeat back to me what is your target, what are you going to write down, and then making sure they just really know how to improve, I guess. (Secondary School 1, Teacher 2)

Oral feedback was seen as potentially a lower stakes way to deliver feedback, with teachers in three of the four secondary schools saying that pupils did not necessarily see it as feedback. (In the fourth, the change in policy to focus on spoken feedback had involved assemblies with every year group, so the staff were sure that students were clear that spoken feedback was feedback.) One of the FE teachers justified why she used more spoken than written feedback in relation to this:

> I use more the discussions and the oral feedback. They like it. So I think that way they really like ... they're not being, you know, like pressurised and they don't have that ... the ticks and crosses on paper, they seem to be finding it more positive I think. They don't see it as feedback, which is good. So they think that we're just having a conversation and a discussion. But they do remember what we have spoken about. When it's on paper they don't seem to remember what they need to be revising on, the weaknesses. So they remember things that we discuss and that's why I'd use that more. (FE Lecturer 2)

Another teacher in the secondary context also remarked that she did not think that students read written feedback thoroughly enough to take in its relevance.

Spoken feedback was especially valued in relation to the building and sustaining of good working relationships between students and teachers:

> Yeah it is valued because sometimes there's feedback that you cannot be putting on paper because it's kind of personalised, like you want to say to someone, well done for doing this. You want them to understand that you're valuing them as people. Sometimes you cannot put that on paper. So it is valued by the student because they think that you really value them as a person and they then respect you back. (FE Lecturer 2)

This element was also reflected by one of the primary teachers in Primary School 3, who talked about the use of feedback discussions to enable students to make decisions about their next steps, and be reflective about their learning, which they valued because 'they loved being mature about things and feeling like they're quite grown up about it.' A teacher in Secondary School 2 suggested that students 'respond to [oral feedback] hugely because they know that it's not just a generic thing that everyone's getting, but actually it's something they specifically need to work on.'

In the FE context several teachers talked about using oral feedback as well as required written feedback in order to maximise the value of the feedback, to ensure that students felt rewarded, and to emphasise the learning point. When working with apprentices on 'block' placement with the college from their employers, FE Lecturer 4 described changing the way that he was giving them end of block written feedback. Previously students had been given the written feedback and left to process it individually, with a few general comments to the group. Instead, most recently he had taken individual students for a one-to-one conference about their feedback, which had been a major investment of time (an entire morning to cover all the students) but which he reflected to be worth it, because it had enabled instructors to emphasise the learning aspect of feedback rather than the judgement aspect, and to discuss students' progress with them in detail.

Similarly, another lecturer working on a BTEC course tended to give spoken feedback as well as the required written feedback, which was constrained by BTEC regulations.

> it's a nice thing to do I suppose and to acknowledge as well because they've put work into this assignment and I'm sure you've done assignments yourself and if you get one line of feedback back you think "I've put all those hours into that, have you read it?" So yeah, to actually give because I'm giving it to them, to actually say something as you are, it just kind of comes naturally. But also to, yeah to just, just to kind of show that you bothered for that work that they've put into it. And also you see that reaction as well so to say "That bit that you did on this bit, psst, don't tell anyone else, it was the best in the class", then they like, they absolutely light up and beam and it just kind of, I don't know, I suppose it gives them a boost for the next one doesn't it? (FE Lecturer 3)

The headteacher of Primary School 1 also described talking with students about their written feedback so that they could tease out what the key learning points were.

Using feedback to improve – students

All of the secondary schools had systems in place to ensure that students utilised the written feedback which they had received, usually incorporating a number of specific tasks which could be assigned to appropriate groups of students during a follow-up feedback lesson. Where written feedback was given in primary schools, simple systems to show where some response was expected, such as a double green arrow (Primary School 3) were utilised.

A teacher in Secondary School 1 reported having done a small research project the year before withholding marks and grades from KS4 RE students until they had engaged with their feedback; she had found students much more committed to undertaking feedback response and engaging with the process, but had also found it very difficult to find ways to produce that information, delay its delivery and then give it accurately for different questions within a reasonable time period.

There were no identifiable patterns in how different students responded to feedback, according to teachers. One secondary teacher suggested that some students were less engaged with feedback in general and would not be willing to make changes but might be more inclined to engage with oral than written feedback; another that lower attaining students would find it a challenge to understand the generic marking grids which were being used in their school. One or two teachers indicated a Matthew effect, in that those who were high attaining were more likely to engage with feedback, and then use it to improve. Students' responding to feedback was valued by teachers. One interviewee, at Secondary School 2, said that it was:

> The easiest school to teach at, that I've ever taught at, so to actually teach, and I mean teaching in terms of delivering, feedback, marking, all of those elements, because actually, it is an expectation that is embedded into the students, that you will have your work marked, and responding to that feedback, is what we do here.

Using feedback to improve – teachers

Most teachers admitted generally thinking back to previous teaching of a topic when planning that scheme of work for a new class, but all regarded the use of feedback to adapt teaching to be an immediate procedure for a particular student or group. The need to adapt teaching to each new group meant that feedback given to a previous year group would not necessarily apply to the teaching of the new year group whose characteristics, needs, and prior attainment would be different.

All teachers reported using the feedback they gave to pupils to inform next steps teaching, either in that lesson or the next. Feedback is happening mid-task

> because that's informing where my teaching's going, and I need to know whether they've grasped it, before I can move on, so I need to constantly be aware of where they're at, and there's always a spread, obviously. But, yes, if I just blindly, sort of, carried on and waiting 'til the end of the lesson, which I have, admittedly, done in the past, and at the end of the lesson, you'd take the books and you think, oh, no, none of them got it. So, yes, I need to be doing it as I'm going along. (Primary School 1, Teacher 3)

Workload

All the teachers in the schools where recent changes to reduce written marking had taken place agreed that it had had a beneficial effect on their workloads. Almost every teacher agreed that they spent a large part of their time in the classroom giving spoken feedback, and that it could make for a more intensive teaching experience:

> And it's exhausting for teachers, it's exhausting in a good way, it's exhausting for the reason that we all got into the job, which is helping children. It's not exhausting because I'm marking 90 books and it's seven o'clock in the evening. (Teacher at Primary School 3)

This teacher, who had some leadership responsibility, also noted that prior to the change to live marking and emphasis on spoken feedback,

> teachers very much used to deliver children work and sit at their desk. Because they knew they were exhausted because when 3.30 comes they've got three hours of marking to do. So the workload has changed and, you know, some people are able to go home a little bit earlier, which is a good thing. I think they're just as tired when they go home though. I think they're more productive in a lesson. (Teacher at Primary School 3)

A shift had taken place to emphasise adaptive planning as opposed to written marking, with a strong belief evidenced by senior staff at Primary School 3 that this was of more benefit to students than extensive written marking. This adaptive planning was still conceptualised as a form of feedback, in that it was a response to students' work and levels of understanding that directed their next steps learning to close the gap. One primary leader noted the change in expectations that had happened: 'dropping into classrooms after school, if someone is sitting there with 30 books and doing detailed written marking, I don't think that's having an impact on pupil outcomes. I don't think that's as effective as them planning a response' (SLT at Primary School 3). This suggestion that the time was shifting from marking to planning was also made at three of the secondary schools.

Although in Secondary School 2 regular written marking with grids was still taking place, teachers estimated that the time to do it was halved compared with the previous system, and this allowed them to devote more time to planning. Conversely, planning lessons was also quicker because the marking was focused on diagnostic assessment to inform next steps planning. One headteacher stated that he simply expected teachers to do their marking as it was part of their job –

but this was in a school which had considerably reduced the marking load. One secondary headteacher suggested that while she complained about marking, it was actually not as heavy as it had been and in any case:

> it's like going to be a body builder and complaining about having to lift heavy things. Like, it has to be, you have to give the child feedback because that's, that's, it's like a gateway to learning. Otherwise they're kind of, they're walking in the dark. (Headteacher at Secondary School 3)

In the FE College written marking was seen as a considerable part of the workload for teachers who were working on courses where it was necessary. It was also identified as an issue in terms of recruitment and retention, as many FE lecturers are professionals who move into lecturing rather than continue practising; the expectation of marking in evenings and weekends can come as a shock to some.

Comments about workload and feedback or marking throughout suggest that changing systems to reduce the amount of written marking is popular with staff and seen as effective for learning; however, written marking is always, at least in secondary and FE contexts, a necessary part of the job.

Practical subjects

Among the sample of secondary teachers were art and photography teachers (2) and an engineering teacher, and one of the FE teachers was a motor vehicle engineering teacher. Senior leaders also mentioned music and drama. In terms of practical subjects there was often a sense that school-wide feedback and marking policies were not appropriate, and whether staff attempted to conform to them varied. The FE senior leader suggested that lecturers who had come from practical professional contexts into teaching were 'better at giving instant, formative feedback in practical settings' while in the other subjects those from teaching backgrounds on what he termed 'study programmes' (i.e. non practical subjects) were better at giving written feedback.

Feedback in practical subjects could take a number of different forms, including demonstrating technique for a student. In art, written feedback can be problematic because of the risks of writing or drawing on a student's personal piece of work; alternative approaches such as writing on the reverse, offering spoken tutorials, or using powerpoints of photographs where computer-based feedback tools could be undone if necessary. However, the art teachers were also willing to correct a line on a preliminary piece of work, to enable the student to progress where getting the outline wrong would have a knock-on effect. Giving written feedback in the form of 'even better if' might only work if there was some clear physical indication to which part of the art work the feedback referred (the equivalent of marginal feedback in a written subject). Interestingly one of the art and photography teachers interviewed was the only teacher interviewed in her school to feel that oral feedback (which she predominantly used) was not valued as much as written feedback.

Practical subjects were sometimes taught on a carousel timetable, which inhibited the giving of feedback on the final piece or project, because the student had moved on. The engineering teacher had prioritised enabling practical work earlier in the teaching cycle so that students could receive feedback on that element of the subject, which he felt was likely to reward different students to those who did well on theory driven aspects. The use of visualisers which was widespread in all subjects was also mentioned as being useful in art for whole class feedback.

One senior leader suggested that staff in music had expected him to require them to stick tightly to the feedback policy, when in fact he was willing to give them more flexibility. He had corrected this assumption because of his belief that:

> written feedback is not as impactful for music, because actually music is done via the member of staff walking around and listening to pieces and giving that feedback on the fly, you can't ... yes, I can create something within the curriculum where we have some written assessment, but actually I don't want students in Year 7 and Year 8 to get a lump of music and learn to play, they're not going to do that by writing down about a classical piece of music every week, they need to do other things. So that member of staff has more of a list, a bit like the whole class feedback, so you'll make a list of the students and you speak to them, make sure you checked off in the next week. (Principal, Secondary School 3)

Three of the four secondary schools mentioned giving more flexibility to practical subjects in the ways that they implemented the feedback policy of the school in relation to written feedback; the fourth was confident that the policy could be applied equally to all subjects. One of the three gave flexibility in Key Stage 3 but commented that since in music and drama in Key Stage 4 large amounts of written work were required anyway, there were plenty of opportunities for written feedback of the limited sorts required by the policy. Another reason for flexibility was that practical work might well be sent to an external moderator if it formed part of a portfolio for a qualification, and using school-mandated feedback approaches might not be comprehensible in that context. One of the engineering teachers suggested that the regimented times for giving written feedback, twice per half term, would not be particularly helpful at certain points in the GCSE course, when students were manufacturing items, and feedback therefore had to be much more regular at those times, but also more personalised because of the individual nature of the items they were making.

Monitoring feedback

All secondary schools and one primary school reported using work scrutiny (or 'book looks') by SLTs to monitor the giving of feedback. In one secondary school 'book bingo' was the system, in which during form time a member of the SLT would ask every child in (for example) position number 10 on the register to report with their books to the office for their books to be looked at. In another the work scrutinies were applied at subject level to look at specific demographic groups, such as those underachieving or those in receipt of pupil premium. In two secondary schools SLT action was supplemented with departmental work

scrutinies. These schools also all reported the use of learning walks as the primary method to know what was happening in classrooms. Primary School 1 had replaced all formal methods of monitoring with a coaching approach, which would pick up on feedback among other things but which was not seen as a punitive or hierarchical approach by staff or leadership.

However, the Teaching and Learning Lead in Secondary School 4 reported that one of the principles of their policy redesign 'was that the driver for the feedback policy should not be the means of checking it.' Similarly, staff at Primary School 1 specifically rejected the idea of using 'verbal feedback given' stamps or the equivalent, on the basis that accountability is not the main purpose of feedback. However, one of their teachers did record it, and one other primary school teacher and one other secondary school teacher reported recording that it had been given, or requiring secondary students to record what had been said, mostly in order to check for impact, or to ensure for themselves that they were seeing every child.

Two primary teachers in two schools and five secondary teachers in three schools said that the main way in which the school knew if verbal feedback or live marking was occurring was in terms of the progress that could be seen in students' books, or the lack of progress demonstrated when the same mistake continued uncorrected. 'It should be evident from the improvement on the diagnostics over time, that they've had feedback' (Teacher 3, Primary School 1). One secondary school used green pen extensively by students to do any correction or alteration that was the result of teacher feedback.

Three teachers mentioned the idea of trust when it came to being asked about close monitoring of feedback. Their viewpoint can be summarised by the Teaching and Learning Lead in the FE setting:

> I suppose you have got to ask yourself why you're taking that tack in terms of the power relationship and trust. I think in the sector, the wider sector, the school sector and the ethics sector, there is a perception among the body of staff, that they are not trusted. That they are, all the time now, being evaluated. I am not sure that's always a positive thing to be honest in terms of getting the best out of people. (Teaching and Learning Lead, FE College)

This was closely echoed by a Head of Maths in one of the secondary schools.

Outside influence

Participants were asked if they felt that any external factors affected the feedback they gave. The most common response in secondary schools was 'no'; four primary teachers in two schools and four secondary teachers in three schools specifically said that Ofsted was not a factor that affected the feedback they gave. Three of the primary teachers who said this also reflected that Ofsted (or perceptions of Ofsted) had previously been a factor in promoting deep written marking. This was also commented on by a secondary teacher in relation to her previous school.

In one of the secondary schools the multi-academy trust (MAT) context was mentioned by several teachers as an external factor which might affect their feedback, partly in the context of the MAT providing the feedback policy and partly because of close scrutiny the school was under with visits from MAT representatives. However, in terms of scrutiny, like with Ofsted, staff were confident in being able to justify what they were doing in terms of its value for students, and that therefore this would be acceptable.

Several teachers in one primary school and one in a secondary school suggested that the most important factor which affected the way feedback was given in their school was research, drawn from experience as part of school leader training, school visits, and wider research reading. Research provided a sense of confidence in relation to external agencies.

> I'd say the big external factor that affects us is research, and if the research is driving what we're doing, other things like Ofsted, well, I think if we're confident in the strategy and the approach that we're using, then we should be able to justify it to them, so it shouldn't be an issue. (Teacher, Primary School 1)

Parents were mentioned by most primary schools as a potential factor, and by one secondary school teacher. Where practices had changed dramatically, some schools had communicated directly to the parents that things would change. Primary School 3 collaborated with a group of schools to reduce written marking, and held open evenings to illustrate the changes. Since then, the Teaching and Learning Lead said, they have not had a single comment from parents on written feedback in books, whether positive or negative. Other schools sent home newsletters or copies of the new policy, and this eliminated parental concerns. One primary teacher mentioned that she had had to change her personal approach to marking homework, because as a new teacher to the school she had had to earn parents' trust. Another suggested that parents appreciated 'a mark' on work in which they were particularly invested, namely their child's spelling tests and homework.

The Teaching and Learning Lead at the FE College raised the issue of conflicting priorities for feedback from a practice, student-centred point of view, and external influences from elsewhere, and the tensions that raised for practitioners:

> What I found is that sometimes whatever expectations the college has, SLT have, we have, in terms of an operational sense, that is sometimes contradicted by the awarding bodies, in that the assessment rules say that you can't give prescriptive feedback. So you can highlight which criteria they haven't met, but you can't give prescriptive feedback to allow them to improve, because that will prevent them from resubmitting to get an additional grade, a higher grade. So that policy would seem to me to be contrary to the rules of what good feedback is. So, we have bits of the machine sometimes working against us I think. Now, that's not of their making, I am sure that's probably a directive perhaps from Ofqual or elsewhere. So the different bits of the machine from Ofqual, to awarding

> bodies to colleges, to schools, don't seem to be working together to say, "Okay, good feedback is *this*. This is what we should be doing." (Teaching and Learning Lead, FE College)

One aspect of influence on marking that was mentioned by several participants was the psychological safety of having extensive written feedback, or a record of verbal feedback. A seconded advisor associated with Primary School 1 suggested that extensive written marking was integrated into some teachers' sense of 'professionalism' and that it was hard to get them to move away from that when changing feedback policies. A teacher at a different primary said 'there's quite a nice feeling you get from working, which is a totally kind of false one really, of working through a pile of books and marking them, needing to be working hard doing that' (Teacher, Primary School 3). A different teacher at the same school suggested that writing 'verbal feedback given' on books 'definitely makes you feel safe' while also arguing it had its uses. Other teachers also liked having some record of verbal feedback in books. One, however, remarked that during his PGCE year his mentor had said the school expected about a third of books to have verbal feedback as opposed to written, so after marking two thirds of the class, he was instructed to simply write 'VF' on the bottom of the page for the rest of the books.

Conclusions from interviews

- Teachers in the eight schools felt that spoken feedback was in general more powerful than written feedback, and that a combination of the two was helpful in creating understanding, and strengthening relationships.
- Spoken feedback was valued across teachers and leadership as being a rapid response to misunderstandings and more easily understood by pupils in terms of both terminology and handwriting.
- In those schools where policies had been revamped in order to reduce workload via reducing regular written marking, the time had shifted to create an emphasis on planning next steps learning, and 'closing the feedback loop'.
- Schools had mechanisms in place to ensure written feedback was responded to when it was given; responses to spoken feedback could be seen instantly.
- While schools monitor feedback in a number of ways, a number of our interviewees mentioned that teachers feeling trusted was important, that monitoring should not be the driver of policy. Almost no-one considered Ofsted as an influence on their feedback.
- Practical subjects often need flexibility in terms of how school-wide policies apply to them: most teachers in these subjects feel that they have that flexibility, or that policies which have reduced written marking to once or twice per half term are sufficiently flexible for them.

Conclusions

This section draws together evidence from the three strands of this study to consider what we know about feedback practices in English schools today and what lessons can be learned for practitioners and school leaders.

Across the board the value of spoken feedback is acknowledged. While there are still some institutions where there is a requirement to note when this is given, indicating a nervousness about monitoring the giving of spoken feedback, largely it is considered to be constant, and a vital part of teaching and learning. When asked how long they spent on feedback, teachers in the interviews were taken aback: it was almost constant during teaching. This is in line with Ruiz-Primo's (2011) suggestion that almost any communication in a classroom is an opportunity for feedback; it suggests that further observational studies of classroom feedback are needed to confirm this as practice as well as belief, given the limited support shown in the (also limited) literature. Spoken feedback is valued by teachers because it is consistent with their views of good feedback, namely that it should be given in the moment as close as possible to the point of the student doing the work, that it is possible to tune spoken feedback to the student based on their understanding in the moment, that it focuses on next steps, and that it avoids some of the problems associated with written marking in terms of communication and the stamina of the student. It is further valued because of its connection to the personal relationship between student and teacher, which is considered to be important as a factor in feedback as seen in the interviews (and teachers consider that they change their feedback to suit individuals rather than groups, as seen in the survey).

In both the interviews and the survey there is evidence of a decline in written feedback in the form of long-form written marking and that schools are revising their policies in an attempt to reduce workload; this study supports the findings of the Teacher Workload Survey 2019 which suggests attempts on the part of schools to revise their requirements in marking and feedback in order to reduce workload has had mixed success (Walker, Worth & Van den Brande, 2019). There was no evidence for 'triple impact marking' which 23% of teachers were doing for all or most pieces of work in 2016 (Elliott et al., 2016). However, many teachers are still finding written marking to be a major issue for their workload, as per the TALIS 2018 findings where 65% of secondary teachers and 58% of primary teachers thought that there was 'too much' or 'far too much' marking required (Jerrim & Sims, 2019). Shifts since 2016 are over a wide range of areas; where schools have opted for drastic reduction in written feedback in favour of vastly increased spoken feedback and live marking there has been a shift to using this feedback as part of adaptive planning so that next steps teaching is more informed by how students are progressing. Successful major changes to feedback policy in the interview schools were accompanied by a 'public information' campaign to parents and students to ensure they understood the changes that were happening. This is important because for some parents written marking is the way they monitor how the school is teaching their child

even though teachers themselves view students as by far the most important audience for their feedback.

There is awareness of multiple audiences for feedback, however, and written feedback is widely monitored through a combination of 'book looks', learning walks and observations. Spoken feedback may also be monitored, but it is not so common. The 'verbal feedback given' stamp was rarely in evidence in our data, although stamps to enable more rapid marking were mentioned by a handful of teachers. Teachers in the interviews spoke of the importance of being trusted; Teaching and Learning leaders acknowledged this also. Feedback is not only for the audience of the student: some teachers are also aware of the audiences of the SLT and parents. Some also still see the spectre of Ofsted when giving written feedback; teachers in schools where major changes had been made, however, were confident in interview about their ability to explain the rationale behind the system to Ofsted and were aware of guidance from the inspectorate relating to feedback and marking. Despite monitoring, teachers in the survey tended to believe that they were sticking more closely to the feedback policy than their colleagues.

The vast majority of schools had a feedback policy, although some still have marking or assessment policies instead, suggesting a shift in focus onto feedback (that is, on to the effectiveness of marking or assessment for pupils' learning) has not happened. More teachers reported feedback/assessment policies than was suggested by the policy analysis, where fewer than half of schools had a publicly available policy. Policies were mainly whole school focused, although in secondary schools a significant minority of schools devolved feedback policy down to subject areas. Most policies were specific about items such as regularity of feedback, the form it should take and its purpose. The survey data support the policy analysis conclusion that feedback policies are often an embodiment of school level values about teaching and learning. Where they get it, teachers are appreciative of some level of flexibility to tailor policies to their subjects. Deployment of strategies, such as peer and self-assessment, varies across subjects in terms of when they are most appropriate. Policies are important in that they are the bar against which Ofsted measures feedback in schools; they can be a burden on teachers but equally a defence to justify what is being done. Changes in interview schools suggested buy-in from the teachers had been high, and these schools may offer lessons for how changes can be made.

There is an awareness of research and how it applies to feedback; this is more secure in the secondary schools than the primary for the most part, but on an individual teacher level there is sometimes an awareness that research is out there but that they do not have time to engage with it. Policies do often draw on the research of the last few years, or on action research projects within the schools, where staff are trying and evaluating changes to feedback, but this is not always clear to everyone. Most policies are implemented in a top-down manner, which means only a very small number of staff may know their origin. (Although in some interviews even when the research origin was stated in the policy, staff said they had not heard of the particular piece of research cited.) Most teachers

had had training in their school feedback policy, either as a whole school activity associated with a change, or on entering the school. Many had also had more generic CPD on feedback, suggesting it is a 'hot' topic.

In Key Stage 1 feedback is largely spoken; in Key Stage 2 written feedback becomes more common, particularly in Year 6. In secondary schools there were no significant differences in the approaches between Key Stages, although some teachers suggested written feedback of greater depth and detail for post-16s. Smaller class sizes support this. In the FE College there was an awareness of the differing needs of learners in the vocational sector, and how feedback might be for different purposes, so that written feedback might well be aligned with qualification regulations or with employer needs for apprentices, and that this could be augmented with spoken feedback to support the student better.

Almost all settings in all three strands of the study had mechanisms in place to enable students to engage with the feedback they had received. It was generally seen to be more useful mid-task/mid-topic than at the end of a task or topic (depending on subject context) because it could be instantly implemented. Written feedback often triggered 'DIRT' at the beginning of the following lesson, or a full feedback lesson where written feedback was a once or twice per half term event. Further research into the different forms of the whole class feedback lesson would be beneficial to examine the different ways in which this is accomplished and which strategies help students the most.

Teachers were generally optimistic about students' engagement with feedback and tended to attribute a lack of engagement to problems with the feedback itself (such as understanding what to do, or being able to read it); a small number indicated lack of motivation or a sense that a piece of work was 'done' could also be a hindrance. There was a strong sense from the interviews that teachers were keen to give feedback in ways that were effective for progress, and not to engage in activities that they saw as pointless or overly time-intensive for little gain. That many felt their schools supported them in this (or indeed that it was policy) is a shift from the position indicated by the Workload Review and *A Marked Improvement?* in 2016.

It is important to acknowledge that schools around the world are, in the summer of 2020, in a completely new world of mass distance learning, due to Covid-19 school closures. It is inevitable that feedback practices will change at this time along with many other pedagogical practices. Teachers and students are feeling their way. On the basis of this study, many of the most valued feedback practices – namely spoken, instant feedback and engagement with work as it is happening – will not be occurring. While technology in learning has become suddenly more widespread, it will be important to ensure that these valued feedback practices are not lost as a result.

Feedback practices are well established in schools in England, and developing all the time to reduce workload while supporting students to develop and improve. While there is still work to be done in many schools in terms of reducing the

burden of written marking, some schools have demonstrated a possible way forward. Schools innovate and share practice, and they work hard to ensure feedback is time effective and that the 'feedback loop' is closed for individual students. Developing feedback practices requires an investment of time and thought by all teachers, not just on the part of a small group of SLT staff writing a new policy, and many teachers have demonstrated their willingness to do that.

Limitations

As with all research projects, there are limitations. Through both surveys and interviews we largely relied on self-reporting of activity and risked social acceptability bias (Robson, 2002), in that participants might seek to give answers acceptable to the researchers, though this is somewhat alleviated in a large-scale anonymous survey. Given that the majority of the survey respondents were volunteers, there is also the possibility of bias towards those who are particularly interested in feedback; the spread of the sample over age ranges, subjects and geographical location suggests that there is not systematic bias in the sample in other regards. The limited sample size also means that there are not sufficient samples in most secondary subjects to conduct analyses broken down by subject.

In terms of the interviews we deliberately sought schools with an interest in research for the interviews, which while a design choice, also limits their representativeness across the range of schools in the country. This study did not go as far as observing feedback practice in classrooms; there is a gap in the literature about current feedback practices and even more so in terms of observed compared to reported practices.

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Appendix A – Survey Instruments

Primary School Survey

Page 2 - About You and Your school

1: What kind of school do you teach at?

- Top of Form
- Bottom of Form
- A small primary (under 100 students)
- A special school
- A primary or junior and infant school

2: What is your school postcode? (We only use this to make sure we aren't overweighting the same answers from different people in the same school.)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

3: What Ofsted grade is your school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Special measures

4: What year do you teach?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- Mixed age classes - KS1
- Mixed age classes - KS2

5: Do you have a subject specialism?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Maths
- Science
- English
- Foreign Languages
- Art
- Drama
- Music
- Technology
- History
- Geography
- Computing
- Other

6: Do you have a leadership responsibility?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- For feedback (on its own or as part of teaching and learning)
- Other
- No

7: How many years have you been teaching?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- NQT
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6-8
- 9-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+

8: Do you use ability grouping in your classes?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- The classes are set
- We group within classes for ability
- We group within classes for ability for some subjects only

- We have mixed ability throughout

9: What do you think makes good feedback and why?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

10: What do you think are the pre-requisites for feedback to be effective?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 3 - Your current feedback practice

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

We are defining feedback as 'information directly communicated to the learner by the teacher, or indirectly provided through an activity organised by the teacher, that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning.'

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

11: Can you describe what you did the last time you gave feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

12: Can you describe giving feedback for work in a practical subject? (Like music, drama, cooking, PE etc)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

13: Which of these have you done or used in the last fortnight?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Spoken feedback
- Video feedback
- Audio feedback

- Written feedback
- Whole Class Feedback based on marking work
- Whole Class Feedback based on monitoring work in progress
- Given written targets
- Referred students back to previous targets
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- One to one conversations about a piece of work (unmarked)
- One to one conversations about written feedback on a piece of work
- 2 stars and a wish or similar
- Given students time to redraft/redo work in response to feedback
- Given written feedback in the middle of a piece of work
- Given SPAG feedback
- Given content feedback
- Given process feedback (how to do the task better)
- Given self-regulation feedback (e.g. if the person you are sitting next to is distracting you, what can you do to focus more?)
- Used feedback codes (symbols to represent longer feedback)

14: I do this for all pieces of work students complete /most/some/few/none.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	All	Most	Some	Few	None
Spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Video feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audio feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whole Class Feedback based on marking work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whole Class Feedback based on monitoring work in progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Refer students back to previous targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One to one conversations about a piece of work (unmarked)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One to one conversations about written feedback on a piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 stars and a wish or similar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give students time to redraft/redo work in response to feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give written feedback in the middle of a piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give SPAG feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give content feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give process feedback (e.g. how to do the task better)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give self-regulation feedback (e.g. if the person you are sitting next to is distracting you, what can you do to focus more?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Used feedback codes (symbols to represent longer feedback)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15: I give written feedback to students within

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- 24 hours
- 48 hours
- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- longer

16: I give written feedback to students

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- every day
- 2-3 times a week
- every week
- every fortnight
- every half term
- never

17: I give spoken feedback to all students

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- every hour
- every day
- 2-3 week
- every week
- less often

18: Do you vary the medium of feedback for different types of students? (e.g. SEN, by gender, EAL, attainment, levels of motivation)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

19: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

20: Do you vary the way you express feedback for different groups of students?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

21: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

22: Do students in your classroom respond to feedback in any of these ways?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Make changes to this piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make changes to future pieces of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ask questions about feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ignore	☐	☐	☐	☐

23: Do you have a mechanism in place for making sure students respond to feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

24: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

25: What stops students using feedback to make progress?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Not being able to read teacher handwriting
- Not understanding the terminology used
- Not understanding how to apply it

- Don't agree with the feedback
- Don't respect the source (e.g. TA, peer assessment)
- Don't see the point
- 'I've done this piece of work, it's over'
- Lack of motivation
- Being disheartened by feedback
- Lack of time
- Other

26: If you said 'other' please specify.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

27: When in the learning cycle do you provide feedback? (Mid-task, after a draft, at the end?) Why?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

28: Do you use the feedback you give to students to make changes

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No
For next steps teaching	☐	☐
For teaching the same thing next year	☐	☐

29: How often are the following sources of feedback used in your classroom?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
You (the teacher)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teaching Assistant	☐	☐	☐	☐

Peer Assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self Assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐
Digital feedback you've set up (e.g. MyMaths)	☐	☐	☐	☐

30: Do you use any forms of computer based feedback? If so, please can you provide details (such as use of commercial programmes, when and why you use it).

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

31: If you use video or audio feedback can you explain how and why and when you do so?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

32: Who is the audience you are writing for when you give written feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Students
- Parents
- Headteacher/ SLT
- Ofsted
- Other

A - If you selected Other, please specify:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

33: Feedback should focus on:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Explaining a grade
- Helping to improve the current piece of work

- Helping to improve future work
- Helping to improve how the student approaches tasks/ learning
- Personal effort
- Motivating the student

Page 4 - Peer and Self Assessment

34: When and why would you use peer assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

35: When and why would you use self assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

36: What are the challenges for successful self- or peer assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 5: Your school's feedback

37: Does your school have a feedback policy?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- It's called a marking policy
- It's called an assessment policy
- Only subject specific ones

38: Does the feedback policy differ for different key stages?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- We don't have one

39: Does the feedback policy differ for different subjects?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- We don't have one

40: Do you know who designed the feedback policy or where it came from?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

41: Does your feedback policy specify the following?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No	Don't know
Frequency of marking	☐	☐	☐
What written feedback should look like	☐	☐	☐
Speed of return of feedback to students	☐	☐	☐
How to use spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐
The need to provide an audit trail for spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐
Generic codes for written marking	☐	☐	☐
Types of feedback that should be used	☐	☐	☐
When in the learning cycle feedback happens	☐	☐	☐
Providing opportunities for students to implement feedback	☐	☐	☐
How often to use peer assessment	☐	☐	☐

How to structure peer assessment	☐ ☐ ☐
How often to use self assessment	☐ ☐ ☐
How to structure self assessment	☐ ☐ ☐

42: Would you categorise your school feedback policy as:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Vague
- Specific

43: Why is this?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

44: Does your feedback policy get followed?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	Mostly	No
By me	☐	☐	☐
By my colleagues	☐	☐	☐

45: I have had CPD or training on:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- my school's feedback policy
- feedback in general

46: Does your school monitor/ scrutinise

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No
Spoken feedback	☐	☐
Written feedback	☐	☐

47: How do they do this?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

48: Has your school made changes to reduce the workload associated with marking and feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

49: If you answered 'yes', please explain:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 6 - Previous EEF Feedback Work

50: Are you aware of the EEF Toolkit strand on Feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- Aware of the Toolkit in general

51: Have you read A Marked Improvement, the EEF report on marking?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- Have heard of it but not read it

52: If yes, did A Marked Improvement change practice in your school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

53: Can you explain your answer to the last question?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

54: Are you aware of any other research about feedback or marking? Can you specify?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 7 - And finally...

55: Do you integrate research into your teaching practice?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes - lots
- Sometimes
- When the school asks us to
- No

56: Where do you find research about pedagogy and education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Books
- Twitter

- Facebook
- TES
- Academic articles
- Google
- EEF website
- Newsletters from research organisations
- EEF Research schools
- Other (please specify)

57: If you answered 'other' above, please specify.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

58: How confident are you to use research about pedagogy/ education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Not at all confident
- Confident
- Very confident

59: How do you evaluate the quality of research about education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Secondary survey instrument

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 2 - About You and Your School

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

1: What kind of school do you teach at?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- A comprehensive
- A special school
- A selective state school
- A comprehensive in a selective area

2: What is your school postcode? (We only use this to make sure we aren't overweighting the same answers from different people in the same school.)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

3: What Ofsted grade is your school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires Improvement
- Special Measures

4: What subject do you teach?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Maths
- Science
- English
- MFL
- Art
- Drama
- Music

- Technology
- History
- Geography
- Computing
- PE
- RE
- Classics
- Food Technology
- Business Studies/ Economics
- Media
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

5: Do you have a leadership responsibility?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- For whole school feedback (on its own or as part of Teaching and Learning
- Other SLT
- For department feedback (on its own or as part of Teaching and Learning)
- Other subject responsibility
- Other whole school responsibility

6: How many years have you been teaching?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- NQT
- 2-3
- 4-5
- 6-8
- 9-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 20+

7: Do you use ability grouping in your school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- All subjects are set
- My subject is set
- Other subjects are set but mine is not
- We have mixed ability throughout
- We set in KS4 only
- It's complicated

8: What do you think makes good feedback and why?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

9: What do you think are the pre-requisites for feedback to be effective?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 3 - Your current feedback practice

We are defining feedback as 'information directly communicated to the learner by the teacher, or indirectly provided through an activity organised by the teacher, that is intended to modify his or her thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning.'

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

10: Can you describe what you did the last time you gave feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

11: Which of these have you done or used in the last fortnight?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Spoken feedback
- Video feedback
- Audio feedback
- Written feedback

- Whole Class Feedback based on marking work
- Whole Class Feedback based on monitoring work in progress
- Given written targets
- Referred students back to previous targets
- Self-assessment
- Peer assessment
- One to one conversations about a piece of work (unmarked)
- One to one conversations about written feedback on a piece of work
- 2 stars and a wish or similar
- Given students time to redraft/redo work in response to feedback
- Given written feedback in the middle of a piece of work
- Given SPAG feedback
- Given content feedback
- Given process feedback (how to do the task better)
- Given self-regulation feedback (e.g. if the person you are sitting next to is distracting you, what can you do to focus more?)
- Used feedback codes (symbols to represent longer feedback)

12: I do this for all pieces of work students complete /most/some/few/none.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	All	Most	Some	Few	None
Spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Video feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Audio feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whole Class Feedback based on marking work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Whole Class Feedback based on monitoring work in progress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Written targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Refer students back to previous targets	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Self-assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Peer assessment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One to one conversations about a piece of work (unmarked)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
One to one conversations about written feedback on a piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2 stars and a wish or similar	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give students time to redraft/redo work in response to feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give written feedback in the middle of a piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give SPAG feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give content feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give process feedback (e.g. how to do the task better)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Give self-regulation feedback (e.g. if the person you are sitting next to is distracting you, what can you do to focus more?)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Used feedback codes (symbols to represent longer feedback)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13: I give written feedback to students within

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- 24 hours
- 48 hours
- 1 week
- 2 weeks
- longer

14: I give written feedback to students

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- every day
- 2-3 times a week
- every week
- every fortnight
- every half term
- never

15: I give spoken feedback to all students

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- every hour
- every day
- 2-3 week
- every week
- less often

16: Do you vary the medium of feedback for different types of students? (e.g. SEN, by gender, EAL, age, attainment, levels of motivation)

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

17: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

18: Do you vary the way you express feedback for different groups of students?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

19: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

20: What are the differences when giving feedback to learners over 16 compared to lower down the school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

21: Do students in your classroom respond to feedback in any of these ways?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Make changes to this piece of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Make changes to future pieces of work	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ask questions about feedback	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ignore	☐	☐	☐	☐

22: Do you have a mechanism in place for making sure students respond to feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

23: Can you explain your answer?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

24: What stops students using feedback to make progress?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Not being able to read teacher handwriting
- Not understanding the terminology used
- Not understanding how to apply it
- Don't agree with the feedback
- Don't respect the source (e.g. TA, peer assessment)
- Don't see the point
- 'I've done this piece of work, it's over'
- Lack of motivation
- Being disheartened by feedback
- Lack of time
- Other

25: If you said 'other' please specify.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

26: When in the learning cycle do you provide feedback? (Mid-task, after a draft, at the end?) Why?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

27: Do you use the feedback you give to students to make changes

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No
For next steps teaching	□□	□□
For teaching the same thing next year	□□	□□

28: How often are the following sources of feedback used in your classroom?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
You (the teacher)	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐
Teaching Assistant	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐
Peer Assessment	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐
Self Assessment	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐
Digital feedback you've set up (e.g. MyMaths)	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐	☐☐

29: Do you use any forms of computer based feedback? If so, please can you provide details (such as use of commercial programmes, when and why you use it).

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

30: If you use video or audio feedback can you explain how and why and when you do so?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

31: Who is the audience you are writing for when you give written feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Students
- Parents
- Headteacher/ SLT
- Ofsted
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

32: Feedback should focus on:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Explaining a grade
- Helping to improve the current piece of work
- Helping to improve future work
- Helping to improve how the student approaches tasks/ learning
- Personal effort
- Motivating the student

Page 4 - Peer and Self-Assessment

33: When and why would you use peer assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

34: When and why would you use self-assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

35: What are the challenges for successful self- or peer assessment?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 5 - Your school's Feedback

36: Does your school have a feedback policy?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- I don't know
- It's called a marking policy
- It's called an assessment policy
- Only subject specific ones

37: Does the feedback policy differ for different key stages?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- We don't have one

38: Does the feedback policy differ for different subjects?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- We don't have one

39: Do you know who designed the feedback policy or where it came from?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

40: Does your feedback policy specify the following?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No	Don't know
Frequency of marking	☐	☐	☐
What written feedback should look like	☐	☐	☐
Speed of return of feedback to students	☐	☐	☐
How to use spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐
The need to provide an audit trail for spoken feedback	☐	☐	☐
Generic codes for written marking	☐	☐	☐
Types of feedback that should be used	☐	☐	☐

When in the learning cycle feedback happens	☐	☐	☐
Providing opportunities for students to implement feedback	☐	☐	☐
How often to use peer assessment	☐	☐	☐
How to structure peer assessment	☐	☐	☐
How often to use self-assessment	☐	☐	☐
How to structure self-assessment	☐	☐	☐

41: Would you categorise your school feedback policy as:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Vague
- Specific

42: Why is this?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

43: Does your feedback policy get followed?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	Mostly	No
By me	☐	☐	☐
By my colleagues	☐	☐	☐

44: I have had CPD or training on:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- my school's feedback policy
- feedback in general

45: Does your school monitor/ scrutinise

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

	Yes	No
Spoken feedback	☐	☐
Written feedback	☐	☐

46: How do they do this?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

47: Has your school made changes to reduce the workload associated with marking and feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

48: If yes, please explain:

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Page 6 - Previous EEF feedback work

49: Are you aware of the EEF Toolkit strand on Feedback?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes

- No
- Aware of the Toolkit in general

50: Have you read A Marked Improvement, the EEF report on marking?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No
- Have heard of it but not read it

51: If yes, did A Marked Improvement change practice in your school?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes
- No

52: Can you explain your answer to the last question?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

53: Are you aware of any other research about feedback or marking? Can you specify? Bottom of Form

Page 7 - And finally...

54: Do you integrate research into your teaching practice?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Yes - lots
- Sometimes
- When the school asks us to
- No

55: Where do you find research about pedagogy and education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Books
- Twitter
- Facebook
- TES
- Academic articles
- Google
- EEF website
- Newsletters from research organisations
- EEF Research schools
- Other (please specify)

56: If you answered 'other' above, please specify.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

57: How confident are you to use research about pedagogy/ education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

- Not at all confident
- Confident
- Very confident

58: How do you evaluate the quality of research about education?

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

Appendix B – Indicative interview schedule

- What is your role in the school? (subject, age range, responsibilities)

- Can you tell me about the types of feedback you've given to students this week?

- Do you use written or spoken feedback more?

- Is oral feedback valued in this school? How do SLT know it is happening?

- What happens when written feedback is returned to students?

- How do your students respond to feedback of different kinds? Does it vary between types of students?

- To what extent is your feedback affected by external factors? Who do you give feedback for?

- How much time do you spend on giving feedback? (inside// outside lessons)

- Does feedback to a given class affect how you teach that bit of the spec the following year?

- Have you had CPD on feedback?

- What do you think makes for effective feedback?

- How have you come to this conclusion?

- What is your feedback policy in school? Does it differ for different subjects or age ranges?

- How closely aligned is it to practice?

- How was it designed? Who is in charge of it? Has it changed recently? Did you receive training in implementing the feedback policy? Or other training?

- Does your school monitor feedback in any way?

- Have you seen the EEF toolkit strand on feedback?

- Have you seen A Marked Improvement?

- Are you aware of research about feedback?

- How do you find research about pedagogy/ education?

- How confident are you to use research about pedagogy and education?

Appendix C – Case studies

One-to-one tutorials – Sandringham School (secondary)

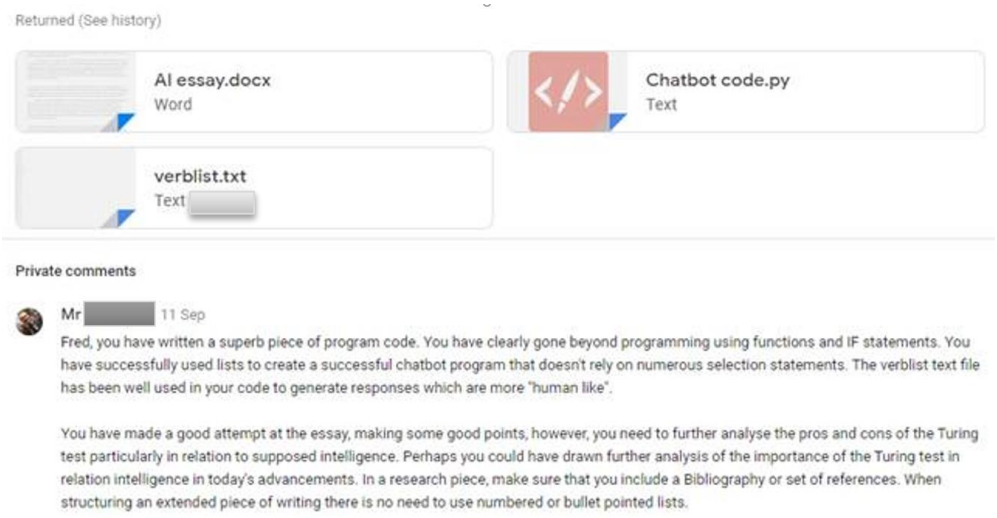
At Sandringham School, each faculty member was asked to engage with the research evidence and consider how it could be applied in their context. This meant that decisions about the most appropriate feedback were based on the evidence, and not pressure to mark in a certain way. As one of the Senior Leadership Team members of staff said, the primary consideration was 'what can we do to actually have an impact on children rather than just marking things in a book.'

In art, students often work on thematic projects across several lessons. The art teachers at Sandringham School use one-to-one tutorials during lessons to talk through with the students how their own interests may combine with the current theme to develop their portfolios, and this feedback is ongoing throughout the projects. These tutorials include verbal feedback as part of a conversation where both teachers and students make suggestions as to what to work on next in a way that builds on what they have done so far. These tutorials are recorded electronically on a shared document that both the teacher and the students can add to as the projects develop. In particular, when something has been achieved in a piece of work, the teacher will add references to the assessment criteria to show they have been met.

These tutorials aim to enable and support students to take a creative and personal response to the set theme. They also enable the teacher to share examples of relevant work from students in other classes to illustrate what the students might aim for. This includes sharing work produced by older students. The teachers find that this helps the feedback to be personalised and timely, enabling the students to adapt what they are working on at the time rather than wait until the work is submitted. The dynamic nature of the electronic record also supports students in responding to the feedback as they work on their personal art work at home.

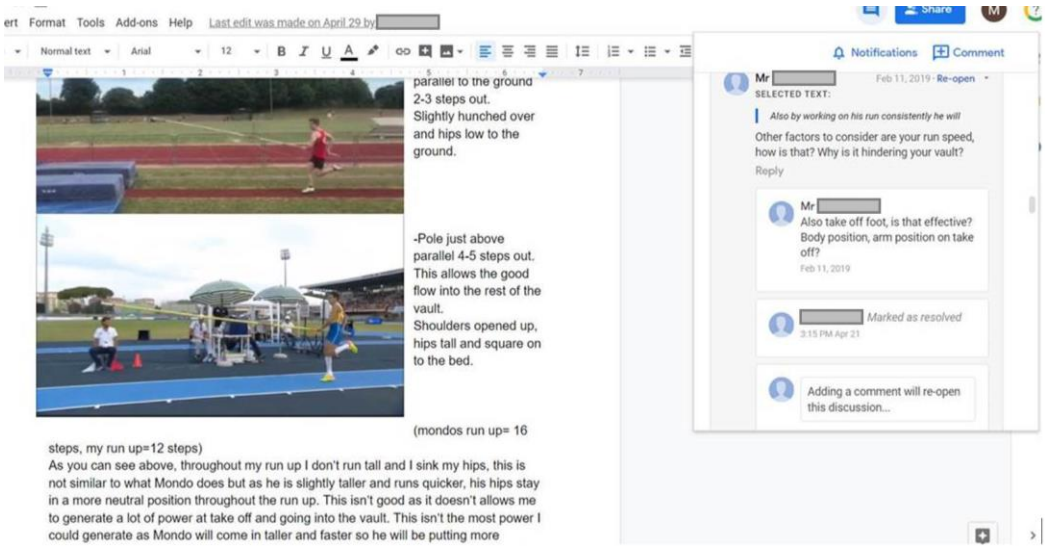
Online feedback – Sandringham School (secondary)

With digital technology becoming more embedded in students' everyday lives, many schools are now taking advantage of the range of technology available to their students. At the beginning of the year Sandringham School sets up Google Classroom for every teacher. Students can then submit their work through Google Classroom and their teachers provide feedback through the same medium. This enables students to submit a range of types of work, including photographs, computer programs, websites and videos.



The feedback from teachers also takes a variety of forms, from simple annotations of the students' work or annotated assessment criteria, to short videos offering a worked through answer or a more detailed explanation of what the student did not understand. Some teachers also give audio recordings of their feedback.

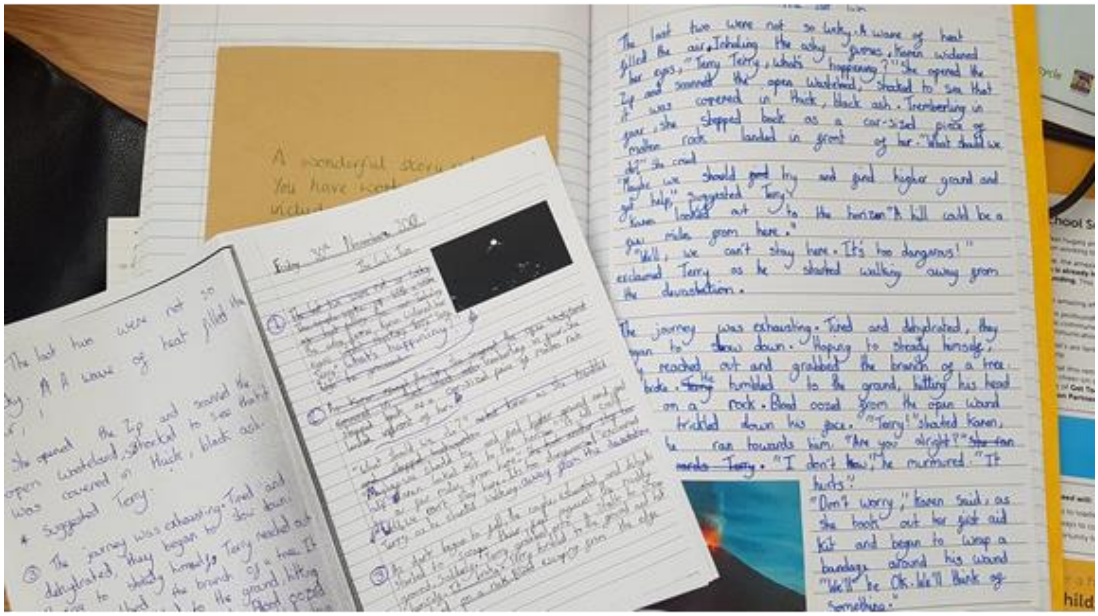
Students can then use the system's built-in tools to respond to feedback. In a similar way to how the school works with whole class feedback, students are encouraged to take notes in order to help them to actively engage with the feedback being given and to act upon it, as well as enable them to return to it at a later date. This was a change from the previous practice where student notes were often simply used to evidence that feedback that happened.



It is possible with online systems for feedback to be given at the same time that the students are working on a task, either during lessons or during home-based learning. However, the teachers at Sandringham School found that this resulted in feedback often focusing on superficial aspects of the work or issues with spelling, punctuation and grammar rather than a more holistic view focusing on the success criteria. It can also lead to some students expecting instant feedback on a more regular basis during their home-based learning.

Pupil conferencing – Ash Grove School (primary)

One-to-one teacher-pupil discussions of pieces of work can seem a large investment of time, but many schools are finding them worthwhile. In Ash Grove primary school in Macclesfield, they have introduced pupil conferences into all their writing pieces. Pupils draft a piece of work on file paper, with as many crossings out and edits as they like, before discussing their work with their teacher. After a detailed feedback conversation on how to take their writing forward, students edit their draft with purple pen, before copying out a final copy in their neat books. The draft is put in a brown envelope glued opposite the final piece (keeping an evidence trail for the moderation of writing assessment), and the final written marking is a simple comment on the effort the child has put in (see photo).



These pupil conferences mean that feedback happens in the middle of the writing process – where evidence suggests it can do the most good. It takes time in lessons while other students are working independently. Teachers at Ash Grove suggest one of the key skills needed for this approach is being able to set valuable work which students can do independently, rather than time fillers, while conferencing happens. Each student has a detailed conversation once every couple of weeks, and the writing is not only for literacy but also on historical topics, for example.

Pupils comment on how much it makes them feel their work is valued, and teachers prefer the approach to deep marking on drafts. The conversation process means they can tailor feedback to individuals, particularly in terms of handling emotional reactions to feedback. The whole process puts a powerful emphasis on drafting and editing, thereby enabling students to take control of that process.

Ash Grove primary school also uses this approach for mathematics for same day interventions, targeting individual children or small groups who need to embed a particular section of that day's lesson, or children who have shown they can take the day's lesson further.

Timing of feedback – John Mason School (secondary)

When to give feedback so that it is meaningful and useful to students is something that schools are considering thoroughly. The widespread use of verbal feedback in many schools enables them to get that feedback very quickly to the students and allows students to edit and improve their work whilst they are working on it.

In the mathematics department at John Mason School they have thought very carefully about when to give different types of feedback to their students following an assessment. The teachers mark the assessment and record the marks for individual questions for each student, but the assessments are returned to the students without any comments or annotations, or any marks in the following lesson. The class then work on the assessment in a variety of ways, working through some questions as a whole class and others in small groups, for example, so that the students can identify for themselves how well they did on the different questions within the assessment. They then need to identify for each of the questions where they have not awarded themselves full marks whether it was because of a careless mistake, because it is a topic they need to work on some more, or whether it is a topic they have not really understood and they therefore need help from the teacher. For topics they choose to work on some more on their own, the self-assessment sheet directs them to a video clip that explains the topic which they can view during their home-based learning.

Self - Assessment: Name _____ Class: 11xy/LD

Year 11 Higher Sept assessment (June 2018 paper)		Clip Number	Out Of	My marks	I was careless	Needs work	Please help
01a	Use law of indices for multiplication	82	1				
01b	Use laws of indices for powers	82	2				
01c	Simplify fractions using index laws	82	2				
02a	Find the lowest common multiple of two numbers	80	2				
02b	Find the highest common factor of two numbers given as a product of their prime factors	79	1				
03	Find the equation of a straight line from a graph	159a	3				
04	Solve problems involving percentage increase and ratio	109	5				
05a	Complete a table of values for a quadratic expression	98	2				
05b	Plot the graph of a quadratic	98	2				
05c	Use a quadratic graph to solve an equation	140	2				
07	Enlarge a shape by a fractional scale factor	148	2				
08	Find a probability by using a two way table	61	4				

The teachers feel that has also led to the revision classes or drop-in mathematics sessions being more focussed on what the students are struggling with and that this enables them to work on those topics that the student feels they need the teacher's help with.

Assessment Feedback:

Class: :

Year 11 Higher Sept assessment (June 2018 paper)

		Clip Number	Type	Out Of	Result
01a	Use law of indices for multiplication	82		1	
01b	Use laws of indices for powers	82		2	
01c	Simplify fractions using index laws	82		2	
02a	Find the lowest common multiple of two numbers	80		2	
02b	Find the highest common factor of two numbers given as a product of their prime factors	79		1	
03	Find the equation of a straight line from a graph	159a		3	
04	Solve problems involving percentage increase and ratio	109		5	
05a	Complete a table of values for a quadratic expression	98		2	
05b	Plot the graph of a quadratic	98		2	
05c	Use a quadratic graph to solve an equation	140		2	
07	Enlarge a shape by a fractional scale factor	148		2	
08	Find a probability by using a two way table	61		4	
09	Find a percentage increase from the original and new amount	109		4	
12	Recognise graphs of types of proportionality	199		2	
13a	Use circle theorems to find expression for angles	183		3	
13b	Understand the limitations of angles related to circles	183		1	
15a	Complete a conditional probability tree diagram	175		2	
15b	Calculate probabilities from a tree diagram	151		3	
17a	Complete a frequency table from a histogram	205		2	
17b	Use a histogram to estimate the lower quartile	187		2	
19	Find the surface area of a sphere given the volume	169		5	
20a	Find a mistake in a surd calculation to rationalise a denominator	207c		1	
20b	Find a mistake in a surd simplification	207a		1	
21	Use upper and lower bounds in calculations, choosing a suitable degree of accuracy for your answer	206		5	

Action points:

In a later lesson the students are then given feedback by the teacher in the form of colour coding for each of the questions. A green box means that all the marks were awarded, whilst a red box means that none of the marks were awarded, and amber and light green meaning that some of the marks were awarded. At no point are the students, or their parents, given the marks for the assessment. Instead they have clear feedback about what topics they did well on and which topics they need to work on some more.

Class conferencing - The Grove School (primary)

Class conferencing is a form of whole class feedback. Instead of discussing pupils' work individually with each of them, teachers use visualisers to share and dissect the whole class's responses including sharing some specific examples of work with the class. To prepare, teachers read books but rarely write in them.

Teachers use a handwritten sheet of comments which summarises the strengths and targets for the entire class, and names a number of students, before moving on to examples from books. In the younger classes some students will be chosen for their excellent work and named as their work is shared, as well as being rewarded with a gold star sticker. The teacher guides the students to pick the good points out of these examples.

An 'even better if' example is also shared from the class, but usually anonymously. The class might then switch to paired talk to identify (for example) where full stops should go. If necessary, a teaching assistant will take a small group who need a written copy in front of them instead of on the board and work separately with them. After eliciting improvements from the class, the teacher and the children all work together to model an improved version of the writing via the visualiser.

In an older class a greater range of work might be shared, with strengths and targets identified from the same pupils, who are considered mature enough to be able to share their weaknesses as well as their strengths. This is supported with praise and careful framing of critique to support pupils' developing relationship with feedback. Students might then be individually set a specific target from a range of pre-set examples to follow on from the class conference.

One key aspect of the feedback sheet is that pupils who have responded to previous feedback and implemented changes are named publicly and praised. In the younger classes this might be accompanied by a reward such as being allowed to use a special pencil to complete their next work. The public praise, however, is used throughout the school, and students like to have their names appear on the sheet. The school has an established culture of all learning together so that pupils do not feel threatened by the use of their work to model together; it is framed as 'helping the others' which echoes the collaborative approach of class conferencing. Teachers at The Grove School emphasised the importance of this relationship along with the tool of the visualiser to this process.

Teachers reported the class conferencing approach was quicker than written marking for them, but that it made them (and the pupils) think more deeply about the work, because of the need to talk about it in public and do something with it. It also, they reported, shifted the mindset about 'finished' work; a piece of writing would become part of a longer process including editing and learning from each other to constantly improve.

Learning surgery – Shirelands School (primary)

One of the main benefits of feedback is the possibility of using it to close the attainment gap. 'Same day intervention' is an important tool in primary to ensure that key learning is not missed and to prevent gaps forming in the first place. One of the difficulties, however, is finding the time in the day for the teacher to implement same day intervention, particularly if they do not have the support of a teaching assistant. Shirelands School came up with an innovative way to ensure time was made, by shifting their school day to generate a daily 20-minute time for 'learning surgeries'. To do this they moved to an extended school day from Monday to Thursday (8.30 am to 3.45 pm), and an early finish on Fridays to allow for enrichment activities. In doing so, the school has shifted marking to being an 'in school' activity rather than taking place after school and moving feedback to the following day.

The 20-minute slot is timetabled after lunch, which means that teachers have had a chance to review learning from the morning and identify which students need intervention and how. On any given day the learning surgery might look different, depending on the needs of the class and the individuals within it; teachers might work with individuals or smaller groups to give feedback from the morning's work and move students on by re-teaching or working through extra practice. As the system is based on need, while many sessions might be used for closing gaps, they can also be used to push individual students further. Children can also put themselves forward for a learning surgery.

As well as ensuring time is dedicated to this, Shirelands School has worked to develop a set of different learning activities that the rest of the class can work on independently during this time in order to allow the teacher to give focused input to the student or students in the learning surgery. These activities are often based on the same work that the learning surgery covers, as children work independently to edit their writing, for example. Each day every child is aware of the 20-minute slot allocated to acting on feedback and closing the learning loop.

Live marking – Charles Dickens Primary School

Charles Dickens Primary School rapidly overhauled their feedback policy as a result of the school journal club reading *A Marked Improvement* (Elliott et al., 2016) shortly after it was published. The staff wanted to prioritise moving feedback as close to the point of work as possible, and certainly into the school day, and to moving responsibility for assessment and response to feedback onto the students themselves. After an initial period of experimentation with only spoken feedback, the group agreed to incorporate live marking into their range of strategies.

Live marking is marking books within lessons to give pupils immediate feedback. This can conjure up visions of queues of pupils waiting for attention at the teacher's desk. Instead, live marking involves the teacher moving around the room, reviewing work and giving instant feedback with more or less writing in books as required. It operates as part of a range of strategies, including deep feedback conversations, to prevent feedback becoming solely concerned with surface features. Shifting to live marking during the lesson can require some adjustment to the structure of lessons. Charles Dickens Primary School found it was much easier for teachers with support staff who could take groups or read a story to the class while the teacher worked on live feedback with specific students.

Teachers at Charles Dickens Primary School report feeling more confident about knowing how their classes were progressing with the lesson, what needed instant re-teaching, who needed consolidation, and when they could move on. Another major benefit was that because the live marking was accompanied by spoken feedback, all students understood what it meant and were able to act on it, rather than having problems with understanding handwriting or what was meant. The shift to giving feedback on work during lessons also meant that at the end of the school day teachers could spend time planning responsively to pupils' needs, rather than sitting down with a pile of books to mark.

One issue that they noted with high attaining pupils was that they felt they were doing less work, to 'make room' for marking, reviewing and editing within lessons. Helping students to see this as a key part of work and progress enables a larger amount of buy-in from them. Teachers reported that higher attaining pupils also found it difficult to receive feedback where other students could hear, which might mean helping students to reframe how they see feedback. On the other hand, students appeared to enjoy being able to see immediate improvements and always understanding their feedback.

To find out more the *Mark Less, Mark Better!* booklet developed out of the project led by Charles Dickens Primary School with other schools in Southwark is available online with examples, from https://www.londonsouthtsa.org.uk/perch/resources/mark-less-mark-better.pdf

Target setting for academic and vocational courses – Nelson and Colne College

Over the last year, colleagues at Nelson and Colne College have been overhauling their target setting systems on both academic and vocational tracks. Previously the college found that students had not felt ownership over targets, and they had not been 'closing the loop' to return to them. Targets had been focused on single pieces of work instead of overall student progression.

The system on the academic track has been redesigned via the introduction of a standardised feedback sheet known as an 'exam wrapper'. Students complete a timed assessment piece in class every four weeks; under the new system they then complete the first part which asks them to make a self-assessment, to comment on how they revised, and what their targets were from the last assignment that they have carried forward. When the piece is marked, the students fill in the rest of the exam wrapper to reflect on the marking and set targets. It is a 'wrapper' in that it wraps around both before and after the marking process.

The exam wrapper shifts the ownership and responsibility for target setting and monitoring onto the students. They use the feedback and marking to help them, along with assessment objectives for their subjects. The reported response from students and staff has been extremely positive. Fionnuala Swann, Assistant Principal for the Academic Curriculum notes that there has been a real shift to feeling that targets are meaningful and that they are revisited – so setting them is not a question of jumping through hoops.

On the vocational track things look slightly different. Their problem was ensuring that students' targets focused on knowledge, behaviour and skills, not just the qualification. The new system does not focus on 'what do I need to do to pass this assignment'; instead the attitude is 'what do I need to do to be a better engineer or hairdresser', and targets are therefore triangulated from across the study programme. Some targets are specific but most draw from an overview.

In the vocational track the system is mediated through the personal tutor, with the use of the computer-based monitoring system to gather the information needed to set and review SMART targets. As with the academic track a feedback sheet from the tutor accompanies all assignments. The information from this is also fed into ProMonitor, the college's data system. Students then have a one-to-one meeting with their personal tutor to review all their feedback sheets; together the two pick out themes from feedback and consider half-term grades, then use these to set effective targets. These targets are highlighted automatically for review by the system so that students can 'close the loop'. The college has worked to train tutors in helping students to set the right kind of targets, and to consider what is the right number – too many becomes overwhelming for the student. The meetings with personal tutors happen a minimum of three times a year, but students see their personal tutors far more

often than that, and also have access to the system to monitor and update their progress against targets.

Morag Davis, Assistant Principal for the Technical Curriculum at Nelson and Colne College, says 'it's about using systems effectively to make sure it's happening. It's not complicated.'

The principles for both sides of the curriculum are to ensure targets are focused on overall progression, not individual assignments, and that they are revisited to ensure that the feedback 'loop' is closed.