**Approaches to Feedback and Marking**

At Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy (MVLA) we want to ensure that teaching staff have the maximum possible time to directly support students and that we minimize unnecessary workload.

We previously had a system in place which required staff to spend a lot of time marking and providing written feedback to students. When we evaluated this, we decided that

The Department for Education’s report on ‘eliminating unnecessary workload around marking’ notes that:

* Written feedback in school has become disproportionately valued by schools and is unnecessarily burdensome for teachers.
* The quantity of feedback should not be confused with quality.
* There is little evidence that extensive written comments on every piece of work improves pupil outcomes in the long term.
* The skewed dominance of written feedback means that teachers have less time to focus teaching.
* Marking should be meaningful, manageable and motivating.
* Marking should serve a single purpose – to advance pupil progress and outcomes.
* Feedback can take the form of spoken and written marking, peer marking and self-assessments.

The National Education Union have noted that:

* Giving feedback to pupils is vital for learning: written marking isn’t.
* Spending hours marking does not make you a good teacher.
* Writing pages of feedback do not make you more effective as a teacher.
* There is no obvious link between the quantity of marking and pupil progress.
* There is no guidance from Government or Ofsted that says teachers must provide written feedback and that pupils should respond in writing. Not even in the Teacher Standards.
* Marking doesn’t need its own policy – it is a part of assessment.
* An important element of marking is to acknowledge the work that a pupil has done, to value their efforts and achievement and to celebrate progress

Ofsted does not expect to see any specific frequency, type and volume of marking and feedback.

With all of the above in mind, we reflected on practices MVLA and the following observations were made:

* Students are less likely to respond to written feedback than that which is given in person.
* The amount of time spent on marking is not an effective use of teacher’s time and this time would be better spent on effective planning and helping students to understand what their next steps are.
* That written feedback is more effective when it is done with the pupil present.
* That our students sometimes struggle to articulate what their next steps are and that teachers should make it a priority for them to understand this.

In response to this we have agreed the following approaches:

* It will not be necessary for staff to mark every piece of work that a pupil completes.
* Teaching staff should choose when it is appropriate to complete written marking. When they do decide to do this then there will be no specific requirements that teachers need to fulfil – they are free to use whichever approaches and systems that they feel are beneficial to their students.
* That pupils will be taught how to self-assess their own work more effectively.
* That every pupil in every subject will be given more detailed verbal feedback at least once per term.
* That staff will use DCPro to track the progress and gaps in knowledge of individual students and will plan lessons and support according to the outcomes of this.

It is expected that staff will increasingly foster students’ understanding and use of metacognition and self-reflective approaches and this will empower students to think about their own learning independently and think about their own learning more explicitly. With increased independence, we strive to make feedback more collaborative and meaningful.