Feedback, Assessment and Homework Policy (Senior School)
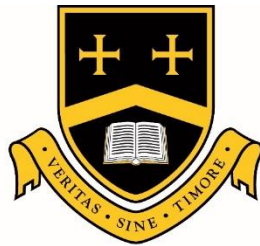

Policy Author: Rob Salem, Sam Webster

Date Reviewed By Author: September 2025

Next Review Due: September 2026

Policy Statement

At Caterham School we are committed to providing an environment in which all pupils are challenged to be the best they can be and one in which pastoral care and well-being underpin academic, co-curricular and sporting excellence. Learning how to learn is a key facet of a Caterham education and we believe that a truly excellent school is about more than academic achievement alone: it is also about developing a passion for learning, a capacity for independent and critical thinking, self-awareness and resilience, self-confidence without arrogance and genuine interests that extend beyond the confines of the classroom. We are committed to providing a rigorous academic and intellectual education which will challenge and engage pupils, offer continuity and progression of learning to foster a life-long love of learning for its own sake and provide them with a secure foundation on which to continue into Higher Education and into the careers of their choice.

To these ends, effective assessment and feedback play a crucial role. They allow teachers to have a clear understanding of their pupils' abilities, strengths and weaknesses. This in turn helps teachers guide their pupils to make good progress and develop a more independent approach to their own studies, taking responsibility for their own learning. It allows for pupils to be both stretched and supported appropriately.

'Feedback is what is received, not what is given.'

We believe that assessment and feedback should be based on a continuum. This means that the type of feedback given will depend on where a pupil is in a particular unit of study at a particular time. For example, at the start of a unit of work a teacher might give detailed feedback to encode success. Once a pupil is aware of what 'correct' might look like, the teacher is more likely to employ strategies such as delayed feedback (using a marking code, partial feedback etc.). This also means that teachers are not expected to mark everything in the same detail, nor do they have to mark every set of notes.

Feedback should be…

Constructive
- Comments should indicate, either in the body of the work or at the end, the main strengths and weaknesses of the piece (including literacy errors). Wherever possible, comments should include a target for improvement.
- Mistakes (including spelling mistakes) should be indicated clearly but too many mistakes pointed out can be counter-productive. E.g., three spellings per page are probably enough. Drawing attention to one or two key weaknesses to be worked on is less confusing and far more constructive.
- Even if a piece is so poor that it has to be repeated, teachers should try to offer some encouraging comment.
- There is no need to comment at great length, nor is it important to write whole sentences. Pupils, especially lower down the school, are more likely to be able to act on one or two targets rather than three or four.

Prompt
- Assignments should normally be marked and returned within a week of receipt so that feedback can be given and acted on while the issues are still fresh. If work does have to be repeated or corrected it is much more effective if this is done as soon as possible after the work has been handed in.
- This will not normally be possible for major coursework pieces.

Regular
- Pupils in most subjects for most of the time can expect to have their work marked weekly. However, there is no expectation that teachers should regularly mark notes or rough work.

Consistent
- The work of all pupils in a group should receive similar attention.

Accurate
- Where marks are awarded this should be done with care and should accurately reflect the quality of the work without artificial inflation or deflation. For examination classes it may not always be advisable or constructive to award grades which relate sharply to exam grades (e.g., at the start of a course or in certain subject areas), but there should be plenty of opportunities for pupils to be given an accurate picture of the standard of their work against objective standards.
- Marks do not need to be awarded on every occasion. Feedback and the opportunity to digest and act on that feedback is more important.

Reflected upon
- Pupils should be given time in lessons or as part of their homework to reflect on the feedback given, make literacy corrections and ask questions.

According to policy
- Each department will have its own marking conventions which will augment (but not conflict with) school policy. All department staff must be aware of these and must use them. It is helpful if they are clearly explained to pupils.

Verbal / Group feedback

Teachers may choose to give feedback orally; this could be delivered in a lesson or using technology. Feedback may also sometimes be given generically, as long as it is clear that students are able to apply the feedback to their own work, e.g., there is a follow-up activity where students reflect on the generic comments and how they might be relevant to their own work.

Peer feedback

Giving and receiving feedback from a peer can improve pupils' understanding of success criteria and help them to become more engaged in learning. However, it should only form part of a teacher's toolkit for assessment, and never take the place of informed feedback from the subject specialist.

Pupil feedback

We believe strongly in the power and relevance of the pupil voice. Teachers are also encouraged to use questionnaires and Q&A sessions to seek their pupils' views. HoDs, in collaboration with the Deputy Heads (Academic, Innovation and Director of Studies), to one of whom each reports, then will evaluate the feedback and use it to identify development objectives for their staff.

Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning

The primary aim of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is to support and to challenge our teaching staff, and to facilitate the sharing of good practice. This is done in a range of ways including whole school INSET, lesson observation and drop-ins, and Appraisal. The Deputy Head (Academic) along with the Deputy Head (Innovation) and Deputy Head (Director of Studies) have SLT oversight, supported by the Director of Training and Research.

Scrutiny of Work

All departments have their own marking policies, in addition to the categories already anatomized above (constructive, prompt, regular, consistent, accurate, reflected upon, according to policy). The primary responsibility for work scrutiny lies with HoDs, with sample checks made by the Deputy Heads (Academic, Innovation and Director of Studies).

Sharing Good Practice

Sharing good practice is a salient feature of learning and teaching at Caterham School. Sharing good practice is done in the following ways:

- Informal discussion and sharing of ideas
- Department meetings and Departmental twinning
- Peer observation
- Line Manager observations
- SMT observations
- Pupil questionnaires
- HoDs' meetings
- Curriculum Committee meetings
- Staff development and INSET (including Staff Training Webinars & Teaching on Toast events)

Homework

Homework should enhance learning through challenge, consolidation, enrichment or developing independence. Homework should not be issued if there is no meaningful task to set; of greater importance is having pupils rested and enthusiastic to learn every morning. Nevertheless, it is expected that homework is set according to the Homework Timetable more often than not.

All homework for all year groups must be set on Teams.

Homework is to be set according to the Homework Timetable which is shared by the start of the academic year. Project work may be set to cover a number of homework periods. It must be made clear to pupils what work they are expected to be doing for homework and when its completion is expected. As a general principle, written homework should get feedback, being marked, corrected or tested, and pupils should know that this will be the case.

Pupils who fail to produce homework/prep should be reported to the Head of Department.

Marking should, whenever possible, be positive, constructive and in line with the guidance above.

Spelling mistakes should be corrected in a proportionate way that enables pupils to progress.

Given the fact that many of our First Year pupils have not done homework since their 11+ exams and some have little to no experience of homework, we want to ease this year group into their homework routines. To this end, no homework at all is set before the second full week of term. For the three weeks that follow, there will be a modified First Year homework timetable that excludes homework from the creative/practical subjects and limits subjects that normally have two homeworks a week to just one.

First and Second Year pupils should expect an average of about one hour of homework a night (with a lighter load on turnouts night).

Third Year pupils should expect an average of about one and a half hours of homework a night (with a lighter load on turnouts/CCF nights).

Fourth and Fifth Year pupils should expect an average of about two hours of homework a night (with a lighter load on turnouts/CCF nights).

Lower and Upper Sixth pupils should expect to do a minimum of five hours work a week outside lesson time per subject. This will not always be homework that is set but the time should be made up with independent reading and research.

AI
The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in homework requires thoughtful management to uphold academic integrity, support student learning, and ensure responsible technology use. Pupils must not use ChatGPT or other public generative AI tools for homework. RileyBot is the only approved AI tool for pupil use.

Staff should adhere to the following guidance:
- Clearly communicate to pupils whether RileyBot may be used for a homework task. Specify the nature and extent of permitted support (e.g., brainstorming ideas vs. writing full responses).
- Pupils should declare if and how AI tools have supported their homework. This includes stating whether RileyBot was used and for what purpose (e.g., structuring a plan, checking grammar, etc.).
- Consider setting tasks that prioritise originality, reflection, and personal engagement to reduce the temptation or ability to misuse AI.
- Be alert to work that may have been AI-assisted beyond what is allowed. If concerns arise, speak with the pupil to clarify their process and provide support if needed.
- Encourage discussions about academic honesty, AI limitations, and the importance of developing one's own ideas, voice, and reasoning.

Reporting and Grades

Reporting Policy

All pupils will receive one full set of subject reports, one full set of subject comments, two tutor reports and two parents evening per year. For the First to Third year, one of these parents evenings is with the tutor. Additionally, Grades Reports are issued at half terms, with grades awarded for attainment and effort (homework and classwork graded separately) and an optional short comment box available to the subject teachers. First Years are not awarded attainment grades in their October half term and Fifth and Upper Sixth years do not receive a Grades Report in the Summer term.

Subject Reports

Subject reports include a written comment, an effort grade and an attainment grade. Tutors and Year Heads also have the opportunity to comment on these reports. Teachers are encouraged to use the language of learning habits in their written reports (e.g., focus, participation, curiosity, initiative, creativity, organisation, rigour, collaboration, resilience, reflection etc.)

Grades on Reports

The descriptors issued for half term grades apply. Attainment grades for examination classes will be determined by HoDs; all colleagues should check with their HoD before entering these.

Additional Subject Reports

Reports for SEND, EAL, Music lessons, Sports et al also feature in the reporting schedule.

The Tutor Report (All Years)

The Tutor reports and Tutor parents evenings are a particularly important part of the academic process. The Tutor is the person who knows the pupil best and can take an overview of each pupil's academic progress, co-curricular programme and social development. It is essential that the Tutor's report is neither a mere summary of their academic progress, nor a simple statement of their extra-curricular involvement, but a combination of both which demonstrates to parents our concern for the whole person.

Effort and Attainment Grades

Effort grades

There will also be two Effort grades (A* to C) for each subject: one for Classwork and one for Homework.

> **A*** *– consistently excellent effort*
> **A** *– very good effort*
> **B** *– generally good effort*
> **C** *– limited effort*

The Comment Box is for use by teachers in exceptional circumstances if teachers feel there is more to communicate. C grades for effort and 4 grades for attainment will require a comment.

First to Third Years - Attainment Grade level descriptors

The grades reflect the pupil's performance on their work over the last half term. Grades are a best fit according to the professional judgement of the teachers.

* - Consistently produces work of **the highest** quality across a range of activities and assessment, showing **excellent** understanding and knowledge of the concepts, skills and material covered in the course. Work is communicated in a **fluent and convincing** manner, and uses appropriate subject-specific language effectively. Attainment is at the **top of the range** of expectations for Caterham pupils.

1 – Regularly produces work of **high** quality across a range of activities and assessment, showing a **strong** level of understanding and knowledge of most or all of the concepts, skills and material covered. Work is communicated in a **precise** manner and uses appropriate subject-specific language effectively. Attainment is **strong** relative to expectations of Caterham pupils.

2 – **Generally** produces work of **good** quality across a range of activities and assessment, showing a **good** level of understanding and knowledge of most of the concepts, skills and material covered. Work is communicated **clearly** and uses some appropriate subject-specific language effectively but **may require more depth and/or precision**. Attainment **generally meets** the expectations of Caterham pupils.

3 – Produces work of **reasonable** quality but is **inconsistent** across a range of activities and assessment, **sometimes showing a lack of understanding** or knowledge of the concepts, skills and material covered. Work is communicated with **some clarity and accuracy** but **requires more depth and precision**. Attainment is generally **below** expectations of Caterham pupils.

4 – Consistently produces work of **limited** quality across a range of activities and assessment, **often not showing evidence of understanding** and/or knowledge of the concepts, skills and material covered. Work is communicated in a manner that **lacks sufficient clarity and accuracy**. A **cause for concern** relative to expectations of Caterham pupils.

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Form Attainment Grade level descriptors

Grades are not predictive of future performance at GCSE or A level. They indicate the pupil's performance on their work over the last half term and are relative to the progress we would expect to see at this stage of the course.

The scale is as follows:

GRADE	Indicative A Level standard	Indicative GCSE standard
*	A*	9
1	A	8
2	B	7
3	C	6
4	D or below	5 or below

NB: Note to A Level and GCSE teachers – *Please adjust your grading to allow for the typical rate of development. I.e., in 4th and L6, 'indicative' does not mean the grade they would get if they sat a GCSE/A Level exam at that point in time as this is simply unrealistic. If they could not do any better with the tasks set then they can still receive a *. Professional judgement should be used but we would expect to see fewer top grades at the start of the course than we would at the end. Pupils should not be given an attainment grade that indicates they will do better than the GCSE/A Level grade it is thought they will actually achieve.*

HoDs should check that the proportion of grades awarded is reasonable. Colleagues are encouraged to check with HoDs before awarding low attainment grades to pupils in high sets or bands, or high attainment grades in lower sets or bands.