



Help your children to learn

GETTING THE MOST FROM SCHOOL REPORTS

For both primary and secondary parents

department for
education and skills

Resources for
parents by parents

Research shows that your interest and involvement in your child's learning and education is more important than anything else in helping your child fulfil their potential. As parents, you are the people who go with your child on their learning journey, from the day they are born to the time they become an adult.

You, as the parent, carer or guardian know your child best. These leaflets give ideas and suggestions for you to choose from – you will know which ones suit you, your child and the school. All of the ideas in the leaflet have been developed by parents and can be used with, or adapted for, both primary and secondary age children and young people.

There are many sorts of schools in England – the ideas and suggestions made in these leaflets do not necessarily reflect DfES policy or school policy and should be viewed simply as support for parents in helping their children to learn. Your school may not have seen this leaflet before and it may be helpful to tell them that you are going to use it. All schools have a home school agreement and by signing this agreement you will be acknowledging your partnership with the school to help educate your child. Working in partnership with the school will help your child become a successful learner and a rounded person.



Getting the most from school reports

Every year you will get a report on your child from the school, giving you information about your child's achievements, progress, areas for improvement, behaviour and attendance.

Like many parents, you might read through the report, hopefully give your child plenty of praise and encouragement for his or her achievements and improvements, and then put the report away until next year.

But you can help your child get a lot more from a school report than this. This booklet looks at how you can do this, by:

- working out what a report says and what this might mean for your child
- comparing reports year to year
- using reports to help encourage your child and set targets for him or her
- sharing reports with family members.

Meeting with teachers

In some schools, you are always invited to see the teacher after the reports have been issued so that you can discuss progress. The teacher will want to talk with you about how your child's performance is changing and how you can work with him or her either to maintain good performance or to improve performance if this is needed.

If there isn't usually a meeting about the school report and there is a marked difference in performance from one year to the next, the teacher will probably ask you to make an appointment to come in with or without your child to talk about what is happening. If you notice a big change, and the teacher doesn't ask to see you, make an appointment to go in.

Two other booklets in this series, *Formal meetings with teachers* and *Making the most of parents' evenings*, look at meetings with teachers in more detail.

Working out what a report means

When you get your child's report, you might find it difficult to see at first what the teacher is saying about your child. Some comments are quite general, describing the curriculum covered, while others are more individual, describing your child's specific abilities and progress.

To get more out of the report, you might want to make notes under these headings:

- areas (add child's name) has done well in
- areas (child's name) could improve in
- what (child's name) can do to improve
- what might happen if (child's name) doesn't improve.



Try to extract the key points about your child from the report.
This will help to:

- give you a better understanding of how your child is doing
- give you a clearer idea of what you can do to help your child
- allow your child to see the bigger picture and know how they can work to improve
- give you some key points to discuss if you meet with your child's teachers.



Here are the notes one parent made on his 10-year-old son's report.

Areas Connor is doing well in	Areas Connor could improve in
<p>Very strong in all areas of maths, apart from geometry</p> <p>Bright, well-liked member of the class</p> <p>Excellent sportsman; inspires in the team</p> <p>Helps others in class, especially in computing</p> <p>Did an excellent science project</p>	<p>Poor handwriting and spelling</p> <p>Enjoys writing long stories but ideas are often not clear and vocabulary is limited</p> <p>Can be easily distracted by others</p>
What Connor can do to improve	What might happen if Connor doesn't improve
<p>To improve English and get up to scratch for Key Stage 2 tests</p> <p>To encourage him to speak up in class when he has something to say</p> <p>To relate to others in class without having to be distracted</p>	<p>Likely to get a Level 3 in English unless he improves</p> <p>Continued distraction will prevent him from doing as well as he could</p>

If you still have questions about what the report means, you could make a note of them and make an appointment to see the teacher, if you haven't already been invited to go in.



Here are some notes another parent made after reading through her 13-year-old daughter's report.

What the report said	Questions I want to ask
She is making fairly good progress in maths	In which areas specifically is she having problems? Is there a homework club where she can go for help? Can you recommend a good website?
She needs to exercise a little more self-discipline at times	Tell me more about her discipline problems. Is it during a specific class, or with a specific group of friends?
She worked steadily with pleasing results	The pleasing results were mainly Bs and Cs. What does she need to do to improve to the next level?
She can work well but needs to ensure she is always making the maximum effort	When exactly does she work well? If she put in maximum effort, what sort of grades do you think she would achieve?
Her investigation was satisfactory	She got a C+ for the investigation. What more should she have done? How might I help her next time?

Comparing reports year to year

You might find it helps to look at reports from previous years so that you can see how your child is progressing. Remember to praise and encourage your child for any improvements, no matter how small.

If your child is at primary school, the reports may only give comments rather than grades or marks for each subject but you can still look at how these comments over the years and try to spot any changes.

If your child is at secondary school, the reports may also give grades or marks for each subject. This will allow you to see more precisely whether there is a change in your child's performance.





If you want to try to compare reports year to year, look at the example on the next page to see how to do it. These are the reports for a Year 10 pupil at secondary school.

Example of comparison of reports year to year

Subject	Report 2001	Report 2002	Trend
English	B	B	No change
Maths	B+	C+	Down
Science	B	B	No change
German	C+	B	Up
Music	B	A	Up
Other			
No. of absences	20	12	Down
No. of unauthorised absences	0	0	No change
Lates	1	3	Up
Detentions	0	0	No change

Using reports for target setting

All schools set **targets** for children. Targets are the goals children should aim to reach in order to move on to the next stage. Parents can help children reach their targets by discussing their reports with them and helping them understand what they have to do to improve.

At primary school, children at KS1 (age 7) and KS2 (age 11) will be aiming for different levels in their National Curriculum assessments and tests. At secondary school, children will be aiming for different levels in their KS3 (age 14) National Curriculum assessments and tests and for different grades in their GCSEs in Years 10 and 11 (age 14-16) and in their AS and A levels in Years 12 and 13 (age 16-18).

Any targets schools set for children should be:

- **realistic** – children should be able to achieve them
- **measurable** – there should be a way of working out whether children have achieved them or not.

Target setting is helpful for everyone involved because it allows time to reflect and to set realistic expectations and goals for individual children.

Many secondary schools have a **target setting day** when parents, children and teachers meet to set targets together.

Once targets have been set, you, your child and the school can agree what you will all do to help your child reach those targets – these are sometimes called **actions** or **action plans**.

Overleaf is the example from page 7 again, but this time with a column for target results and another column for action plans. This last column lists all the things the student has agreed to do to enable him to meet the target result.



Subject	Report 2001	Report 2002
English	B	B
Maths	B+	C+
Science	B	B
German	C+	B
Music	B	A
Other		
No. of absences	20	12
No. of unauthorised absences	0	0
Lates	1	3
Detentions	0	0

Trend	Target result	Action Plan
No change	B+	Need to write longer essays and focus on correct grammar and spelling. Need to use wider vocabulary. Mum will encourage him to read more: books, newspapers etc.
Down	A	Join after-school homework club. Teacher will give extra help in specific areas of algebra and statistics. Help needed with planning time during tests as this is the area where he is failing. Class work is fine.
No change	A	Need to write up work in more organised way. More detail required. Dad will act as homework monitor and check the quality of the work before it is handed in.
Up	B+	Learn vocabulary more thoroughly. Make more use of German website. Learn vocabulary and practise pronunciation.
Up	A	Continue daily instrument practice and membership of the Orchestra.
Other		
Down	6	Well done – a real improvement.
No change	0	Keep this up.
Up	0	Keep using the alarm clock.
No change	0	Keep this up.

For the example of Connor, the primary school pupil on page 4, the actions agreed are listed below.

Actions

1. Weekly handwriting and spelling practice with dad.
2. Remove TV from bedroom and re-organise to create a quiet study corner.
3. Uncle has agreed to help him with Geometry.
4. Co-read a book of his choice with his aunt to help improve his vocabulary and writing style.
5. Agree with teacher to move him to front of class to prevent the distraction.

Sharing the report with other family members

If your child is happy to do so, sharing your child's school report with members of the extended family can often be very positive. They can boost your child's confidence by praising them for their progress and encouraging them to meet their potential.

If there are concerns, family members might be able to make valuable suggestions or contributions.

For example, a grandparent might offer to help a grandchild with spellings or a school project. Your child might be able to help you with IT skills, or a family member might be able to help your child with maths. There are many opportunities like these for sharing knowledge and understanding within families.

Another booklet in this series, *Making the most of time with your child*, looks at how you can support, praise and encourage your child.





Help your children to learn
Resources for parents

Reference HYCL



Help your children to learn
**Making the most of
time with your child**

Reference HYCL/4



Help your children to learn
**Parents meetings
with teachers**

Reference HYCL/1



Help your children to learn
**How is your child doing
at school?**

Reference HYCL/5



Help your children to learn
**Formal meetings
with teachers**

Reference HYCL/2

Other leaflets in the series
are also available.

If you would like to share your experiences, or you have any queries or require further information, please visit our website
www.dfes.gov.uk/parents

The information in this leaflet was written by 'Strikers' a parent support group. Further copies of this leaflet, and others in the 'Help your children to learn' series, can be obtained from Prolog: 0845 60 222 60 quoting reference HYCL/3 for this leaflet and the references shown above for others in this series.