Reporting children’s progress in primary schools: Background paper

For discussion at
Council

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Introduction

The purpose of this background paper is to provide an overview of recent trends and developments in reporting policies and practices as they relate to the progress of primary school pupils. Information has been gathered from twelve jurisdictions: Australia (Queensland), Canada (British Columbia), England and Wales, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Sweden. The information presented in this background paper provides a useful first step for the NCCA in beginning to design draft report card templates, which will be refined and developed in close collaboration with schools.

The paper is organised in two sections. The first section is entitled, Reporting policies and practices. Detailed information on reporting policies and practices is provided for six of the countries listed above (British Columbia, Australia [Queensland], Scotland, Sweden, New Zealand and Northern Ireland) and summary information is provided for four countries (Finland, Germany, Japan and the Netherlands). Additional information is provided in Appendix A.

The second section is entitled, Reporting trends. In this section, policies and practices for reporting children’s progress are compared and contrasted across the different countries discussed in Section 1. For example, one notable trend across many of the countries surveyed is the increase in the amount of information provided to parents. Many of the countries surveyed now have a legislative basis for providing parents with access to reports on their children’s progress, e.g. Australia (Queensland), Canada (British Columbia), Ireland¹ and Scotland. In countries such as New Zealand and Scotland, parent information websites (supported by state education authorities) promote active involvement by parents in the follow-up to school reports. In Northern Ireland, parents have been consulted in the process of reforming reporting policy, through the completion of evaluation questionnaires and participation in focus groups during the trialling of the Pupil Profile during 2005. Similarly, in Australia (Queensland), in 2004, the Department of Education and the Arts sought the responses of parents to a number of proposals for change in the way schools report.

¹ Education Act, 1998
The second section of the paper presents a number of trends and developments in international reporting policies and practices under the following six headings:

- Content of reports
- Representing progress and attainment
- Format and design of reports
- Parent and child involvement
- Frequency of reporting
- Reports at the end of primary school.

This background paper concludes with a status of the NCCA’s current work in developing report card templates for primary schools.
Reporting policies and practices

Canada: British Columbia

In British Columbia, the policy for reporting on children’s progress is based on ministerial orders and regulations authorised under the School Act (1996). This Act outlines requirements for formal and informal reporting. At a minimum, three formal written report cards and two informal reports to parents are required each year. Teacher’s comments are required in reports from Kindergarten to Grade 3. From Grade 4 to Grade 7, criterion-referenced letter grades will appear on the report cards unless the district chooses an alternative way of communicating them to parents. From Grades 8 to 12, letter grades must appear on the report cards.

Comments in a (formal) student progress report must relate the child’s progress in learning to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum and to the expected development for students in a similar age range. In addition, the report must include written comments describing the child’s behaviour, including his/her attendance record. (A sample report card template from British Columbia is provided in Appendix B).

There are modified forms of reporting for students with special needs, and for those with English as a second language, with comments required to report progress in relation to goals set out in the child’s Individual Education Plan. Informal reports are expected to contain similar information to that in the formal report; however, informal reports may be made via a telephone call, or as an oral interim report or as a conference with parents and possibly the child. Parents must be given the opportunity to meet formally with the teacher at least once in the school year (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2005).

Australia: Queensland

The Minister for Education and the Arts in Queensland engaged in a statewide consultation process on reporting in 2003, involving education personnel, parents, employer groups and the general public. This resulted in the publication of the
government document *Changes to Schools Reporting*\(^2\) in October 2004. Implementation of the changes was scheduled for the 2005-06 school year. The principal features of the changes to schools’ reporting practices are:

- Parents are to receive a written report card at least twice per year, either in hard copy or online. Every school must comply.
- Mandating a common framework for school report cards with a consistent 5-point results scale is to be the subject of further consideration in the context of aligning curriculum, teaching, assessment and reporting across Queensland. However, the intention is that such a framework will eventually be implemented. The public’s complaint in the consultation process was that there was little consistency in present reporting formats or practices.
- All schools must provide opportunities for parents to meet with teachers each semester.
- Each school must publish an annual report on its activities and on its outcomes in literacy and numeracy tests.
- All parents must have the opportunity to be involved in the development, implementation and review of reporting practices at their school.
- Reporting must be responsive to individual needs and be used to plan future learning.

**Scotland**

The Scottish Executive initiated a large-scale consultation process on assessment, testing and reporting for children aged 3-14 in 2003. The consultation was prompted in part by the Executive’s concerns that the national standardised assessments were having detrimental effects on teaching and learning. This has led to a significant overhaul of the way children are assessed in Scotland’s schools.

The major shift has been towards an emphasis on *personal learning plans* for children, and this is being supported by the *Assessment is for Learning* (AifL) initiative, which

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\(^2\) Changes to school reporting are discussed on the Government of Queensland Department of Education and the Arts website available online at: [http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/reporting](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/reporting)
has been gradually introduced into the schools since 2002. The reporting of children’s progress is to be carried out in a suitable format agreed by the school or centre…at appropriate times during each session (Scottish Executive, 2005). The written report will sum up what the child has aimed for and achieved during the year, and set out for children, parents/carers and the next teacher what needs to be done to ensure continued progress into the next stage of education (Scottish Executive, 2005).

National Guidelines within the 5-14 Curriculum (covering P1 to S2) advise that education authorities and schools should adopt a format for school reports that enables teachers to:

- comment concisely to parents on pupils’ strengths and development needs in each subject or area of the curriculum, and in aspects of personal and social development, including attendance
- provide an overall assessment of pupils’ level(s) of attainment in classwork and, where appropriate, in national tests
- identify suitable next steps in pupils' work
- give parents the opportunity to react to the report and raise their own points for discussion
- specify a contact teacher for parents.

The Guidelines also recommend that each primary school child should receive a brief update report some way into the first term of each school year and a full report towards the end of the school session. The full report will link with, and form the basis of, the brief update report in the following session.

**Sweden**

Teachers and parents meet every semester for a *performance review* during the period of compulsory schooling in Sweden (i.e. ages 7 to 16) These reviews are termed *personal development dialogues*, and the Swedish National Agency for Education website describes them thus:

3 The Swedish National Agency for Education website is available online at: [http://www.skolverket.se](http://www.skolverket.se)
On at least one occasion per school term, the teacher, student and student’s parent or guardian shall meet to discuss how the student’s learning- and social development can best be promoted. This dialogue shall give students a voice, allow them to take responsibility, and empower them in their school situation and the planning of their studies. Parents receive the necessary information on the objectives of the school and how schoolwork is organized in order to provide their child with proper support. Teachers are given an opportunity to find out about how the student and parents see and experience things, and an opportunity to motivate how their teaching is organized, and how they assess the student’s work and progress.

Reporting templates are not provided for schools. Each school is free to determine the best ways of communicating with parents.

New Zealand

In New Zealand, a range of assessment tools is used by teachers through primary schooling, but the major emphasis is on assessment for learning⁴. Parents have been advised of the move away from grades, as these provided little assistance to children in improving their learning. Instead assessment for learning is hailed as being a proven approach that results in better learning and higher levels of attainment.

Every school is required to report to children and parents on the achievement of individual children. However the exact nature of this reporting is not mandated. Schools usually provide a written school report for each child, showing the child’s level of achievement in each subject. However, there are no regulations about what the report should contain. Most schools hold parent-teacher interviews, but schools are allowed to make local arrangements. Schools are also required to report to the school community about the achievement of their children as a group. They generally do this through newsletters and school magazines.

⁴ The Ministry of Education of New Zealand website is available online at: www.minedu.govt.nz/
Every school is also required to have a policy on assessment and make it available to parents. A range of assessment exemplars is provided online to support teachers and to inform parents about the standards they should be expecting of their child⁵.

Northern Ireland

Two years ago, the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) was commissioned to develop and trial a Pupil Profile report system. The purpose of the Pupil Profile is to reflect each child’s individual progress and achievement every year, as well as to support and inform decisions made throughout their school education (CCEA, 2005). It is also intended that the Pupil Profile will provide consistency in reporting within and between schools. CCEA has been working with parents, teachers and other educational partners to produce and trial a range of profile formats as well as software solutions. The implementation of the Pupil Profile is planned to begin with Year 5 (Key Stage 2) in 2007-08. Up to June 2005, CCEA had researched, developed and trialled Pupil Profile layouts with teachers and pupils at Foundation Stage, and at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. (Exemplars are included in Appendix C and are available on the CCEA website at www.ccea.org.uk/).

In the Foundation Stage Pupil Profile, the teachers involved were required to report achievement using a standardised format as follows:

- Foundations for Learning
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Interests and Strengths
- Focus for Development
- Me as a Learner (child’s comments).

In the Key Stage 1 and 2 Pupil Profile, teachers were required to report achievement using a standardised format as follows:

⁵ The Ministry of Education of New Zealand Assessment Information website is available online at: www.tki.org.nz/r/assessment/parents/
- Assessment of skills in Literacy (Reading, Writing, Talking and Listening), Numeracy and ICT using a five-level scale
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Progress within the Curricular Areas
- Attitudes, Aptitudes and Interests
- Focus for Development.

Work is continuing on the development of the Profiles. CCEA is strongly insisting that the Pupil Profiles are not intended for use as a means of academic selection, following the ending of the 11-Plus examination. The Council is consulting with post-primary interests in the trialling of the Pupil Profile templates.

The following summaries are drawn from information in the Thematic Probe Transition from Primary to Secondary Education in Selected Countries of the INCA Website, (NFER, 2003).

Finland (summary)

Throughout compulsory schooling, a school report is issued at the end of the school year, an intermediate report may be given during the school year, and a ‘school leaving certificate’ is given to children who have completed the entire compulsory education syllabus. Reports may include comments but, from Year 8 (age 14), a numerical grade is compulsory. The grades reflect knowledge and skills at 7 levels: fail, fair, passable, satisfactory, good, very good, excellent.

Germany (summary)

From grade 2 (age seven) onwards, half-yearly reports are issued which include comments on a child’s progress and marks. This information compares each child’s performance with that of others in the class. There is a trend towards reporting on learning processes and performance, and on class participation and social conduct in school. There is no primary leaving examination other than the regular end-of-year report.
Japan (summary)

Schools determine the name, content and frequency of reports. However, most schools provide non-statutory termly reports for children and parents called a *Tsuchihyo*. Some local boards of education prescribe a standardised format of *Tsuchihyo*. A leaving certificate is usually presented to children who have satisfactorily completed the whole elementary level programme of study.

Netherlands (summary)

There are no statutory regulations governing reports, but the evaluation of schools by the Inspectorate focuses on how schools arrange contact with parents. In general, a report (issued at least 3 times a year) is followed by a parents’ evening where parents can discuss the results with the teacher. Most schools report more than just learning results.
Reporting trends and developments

Content of reports

The information provided in reports of children’s progress in the countries and regions examined generally relates to:

- a child’s level of attainment in subjects or areas of learning, including standardised test results, typically in literacy and numeracy
- a child’s learning strengths and weaknesses
- recommendations on how teachers and parents can support the child’s learning, and/or on the need for specific interventions or supports.

Reports also usually provide information on a child’s learning dispositions and social and personal development, e.g. behaviour, work habits, effort, attendance record and punctuality. For example, Power and Clark (2000) noted that over the past 30 years the mode of reporting in the UK has become less concerned with test scores and class positions and more concerned with individual development (p.26).

The minimum content for reports is prescribed in some countries. In England and Wales, the Department for Education and Skills has identified the following minimum requirements:

- Information on achievements in all subjects and other activities forming part of the school curriculum
- Comments on general progress
- Attendance record during the period to which the report relates
- Result(s) of any National Curriculum tests taken in the year.

Similarly, minimum requirements are also specified in British Columbia. Written comments in a formal student progress report must describe, in relation to expected learning outcomes set out in the curriculum:
- What a child is able to do
- Areas of learning that require further attention or development
- Ways the teacher is supporting the child’s learning needs (and where appropriate, ways the child or parents might support the learning).

The report must also provide comments on student progress with reference to the expected development for students in a similar age range, and must include written comments on student behaviour, and attendance records.

The Annual Pupil Profile currently being trialled in Northern Ireland (CCEA, 2005) also requires schools to report on key indicators of learning including:

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- ICT
- Thinking Skills and Personal Capabilities
- Curricular Areas.

Variations of the profile template are being designed for the Foundation Stage and for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. (Samples profiles are included in Appendix C).

Representing progress and attainment

The content of reports will include information about a child’s progress in learning. In most countries surveyed, criterion referenced assessment was used to report on children’s progress. This form of reporting indicates a child’s attainment relative to age or class-level standards, to curriculum objectives or to expected learning outcomes. Comments or narrative reports are generally provided for younger children, with additional information on a child’s grades included from middle of primary onwards (e.g. British Columbia, Finland, Hungary, New Zealand, Sweden,). The Annual Pupil Profile being trialled in Northern Ireland uses a ‘level’ (ranging from 1 to 5) to indicate the extent of a child’s progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, and the average level achieved by most pupils by the end of that Year (CCEA, 2005).
In countries where grades are provided on reports, they are represented by letters or numbers. These may relate to percentages (as in British Columbia), or more often to the child’s attainment of targets or objectives (see Appendix B). The use of verbal terms such as good or satisfactory is not recommended in any of the jurisdictions surveyed, unless it refers to the child’s attainment of objectives. In Victoria (Australia), a visual representation of a child’s performance relative to the expected age-group/class standard and to the state’s benchmark performance level is provided for parents (see Appendix D).

In British Columbia, alternative forms of reporting are proposed for students with special needs and students with English as a second language. Where a child is working on a modified curriculum, with outcomes that are different from the prescribed curriculum, the Ministry of Education recommends that the report should use anecdotal comments to describe student progress in relation to the outcomes of the modified curriculum, but that grades or percentages should not be used. In Scotland, reporting is being linked to the development of Personal Learning Plans for each child. Where a child requires additional support, schools will be required to report on progress towards the learning outcomes specified in his or her Personal Learning Plan (short term support) or in a co-ordinated support plan (for children who require significant long-term support).

An increasing use of computerised or automated reporting systems, where teachers build the report by selecting from a bank of statements about children’s learning, has been reported from England and Wales (Power and Clark, 2000, p.31). Parents and teachers expressed mixed views on this kind of reporting. Some parents commented that the reports lacked the personal touch; others found the process distasteful. Power and Clark noted the fear that the technology rather than the teacher controlled the content. As one father reported, I think they look at the phrase first and then the child second rather than the child first and then the phrase. However the computer-generated reports also had their supporters. Some parents felt they provided more detail, were easier to read, and were legible. Some parents felt that the system had become more sensitive since it started, with reports being more personal. About 40% of schools in Power and Clark’s study used computer statement banks to construct reports. Most of these schools were very favourable towards the use of the system.
Format and design of reports

A thematic probe by the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks (INCA), (NFER, 2003) noted that the form of reports was seldom prescribed. Templates were most often provided at district or school level. However, there was some level of prescription regarding what the report must contain, at least in terms of minimum content. In British Columbia the report form (although locally designed) must be approved by the Education Minister or the education authority, while in Scotland, local education authorities are expected to ensure that school reports include minimum content and meet certain requirements. Prior to the current trialling of the Annual Pupil Profile, the Department of Education in Northern Ireland had provided a range of templates for reporting, but their use was not obligatory. However, the Annual Pupil Profile is now intended to provide consistency in reporting within and between schools (CCEA, 2005).

Parent and child involvement

Reports are increasingly expected to provide advice to parents on the next stage in the child’s learning (often termed next steps) to help parents support their child more effectively (e.g. Sweden, Scotland, New Zealand, Northern Ireland). Parents may be informed about their child’s learning objectives, and take part in reviewing progress towards them. This is done in Sweden where the teacher, child and parents meet together once each term to discuss planned learning objectives, as well as how learning will be organised, and subsequently meet to discuss progress. Parents and children may be involved in discussing report cards with the teacher in a 3-way process (e.g. Australia, New Zealand, Scotland).

Policy documents and websites in a number of countries reviewed refer to the requirement that teachers make themselves available to parents for meetings, generally after reports have issued to parents. One of the functions of the parent/teacher meeting is to ensure that parents have a clear understanding of the comments or grades used in the report. Parent support websites in some countries

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(e.g. England and Wales, New Zealand, Scotland) offer guidance to parents in making the most of their meeting time with their child’s teacher. For example, Scottish parents are told how to use the Next Steps section of their child’s report in their meeting with the child’s teacher. Parents in England and Wales are advised to make notes about the content of their child’s report in order to make the meeting with the teacher more productive. In New Zealand, parents are also encouraged to discuss the specifics of their child’s progress and/or difficulties with the teacher using questions such as:

- What is my child learning now?
- What will he/she be learning next?
- Is he/she struggling with anything? How do you know?
- Can I see some of my child’s work?

Children may also contribute to reports on their own progress (e.g. New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Sweden) as a form of student self-assessment. For example, children may read the report and provide comments before it issues to parents (in Scotland) or they may sit in with their parents and teacher for the discussion on progress and next steps (Sweden).

In England and Wales, Power and Clark (2000) found that incorporating some form of pupil self-evaluation in reports was the norm rather than the exception. Swedish practice is to give students a voice, allow them to take responsibility, and empower them. However, it appears that in the countries surveyed, individual school practice varies in regard to involving children. A recent survey of parental opinion by the CCEA in Northern Ireland found that 93% of parents wanted to have an opportunity to comment on their child’s report, and 79% believed that their child should have an opportunity to provide information for the report (CCEA, 2005). Interestingly, in her small-scale 1996 Irish study, Flynn found that few parents wanted their children to be involved in the parent-teacher meetings (Flynn, 1996, p.115).

Power and Clark (2000) also reported the practice of some schools in England and Wales of offering translations of reports to non-English speaking parents. They also

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7 One example of student involvement is provided in action research case studies from Scotland, available online at: http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess/casestudies/index.asp.
8 Further information is provided on the Swedish National Agency for Education website, available online at: http://www.skolverket.se
noted that where parents were living apart, some schools made copies of reports available to both parents.

**Frequency of reporting**

Reporting frequency varies in the countries reviewed. The general requirement is to produce at least two reports annually, up to as many as five (e.g. British Columbia). Reporting is both written and verbal. Formal or informal reports may be recommended for appropriate situations. For example, British Columbia requires three formal written reports and two informal reports, spread across the school year. The informal report usually serves as an update to parents. In Wichita (Kansas) Public School System, the child receives a separate report card each 9-week period. Sweden requires teachers to engage in *personal development dialogues* with parents at least once every school term. The Netherlands does not have statutory regulations governing reports but expects schools to issue reports 3 times in the school year. From age seven, children in German schools receive a half-yearly report.

Interim reports are issued earlier in the year in some countries surveyed, followed by a comprehensive report at the end of the year. In Scotland, the *National Guidelines within the 5-14 Curriculum* recommend that the parents of each primary school child should receive a *brief update* report during the first term of each school year and a full report towards the end of the school year. Finland also recommends an 'intermediate' mid-year report. Power and Clark (2000) in their UK study noted that *interim reports were frequently in the form of a standardised tick box sheet, while fuller reports, summarising annual progress were less structured.*

**Reports at the end of primary school**

Some countries issue a specific *school leaving report* at the end of primary education; others issue the regular report. In Tasmania and Japan, records of children's progress each year *become a cumulative history and portrait of the child* (NFER, 2003, p.7). The records contain samples of student work, and ultimately present a comprehensive record of the child’s learning (for ages 6 to 12 in Japan; ages 5 to 18 in Tasmania).
The NFER/INCA Thematic Probe (NFER, 2003) noted that the role of the end-of-primary report is dependent on arrangements for entry to post-primary education. In general, the report assumes greater importance where the second-level system is selective or differentiated (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore), and less where children automatically transfer to an inclusive secondary school system (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Japan).

In Australian schools, Cumming and Maxwell (2004) commented that formal centralised certification at the end of primary and lower secondary has eroded, in keeping with increases in legal school leaving ages (p.93). The same remark may well apply to many countries, including Ireland. In Northern Ireland, as the 11-plus era ends, the CCEA emphasises that its still-evolving Pupil Profile will help parents to make informed and appropriate choices of post-primary school for their child, but [the Profile] is not intended to be used as a means for academic selection (CCEA, 2005).
Conclusion

This background paper on reporting policies and practices internationally provides a reference point for the Assessment Team in designing and developing report card templates for primary schools. The impetus for this work arises from the NCCA’s advice to the Minister for Education and Science on Standardised Testing in Compulsory Schooling (April 2005) and the recommendation that the NCCA would develop report card templates for recording assessment information and reporting to parents.

This paper provides a starting point for the Assessment Team in developing draft report card templates which will be presented to Council later this year. The NCCA will work with teachers, principals, parents and children during the 2006-07 school year to further develop the report card templates ensuring their practicality and usefulness in different school settings. This school-based work will also enable the NCCA to explore the suitability of different templates for use at the four class levels. The outcomes of this school-based work will be reported to Council in Spring 2007.

The development of report card templates is a key strand of the NCCA’s work in supporting assessment in primary schools. This work will inform the development of general guidelines on assessment for primary school teachers as well as the development of summaries of achievement for each subject in the Primary School Curriculum (1999). Following the launch of the NCCA’s DVD for parents in Spring 2006, the report card templates will also provide further support for teachers and schools in involving parents in their child’s learning.
References


Ireland (1998), The Education Act, Dublin: The Stationery Office


Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill (2005). Text of this bill and related discussions are available online at: http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/billsInProgress/schools.htm
Appendix A: Additional information on reporting practice

British Columbia

**Letter grades**

These are defined by the *Provincial Letter Grade Order*, and are as follows (with prescribed percentage equivalents in brackets):

- **A** (86-100%)
- **B** (73-85%)
- **C+** (67-72%)
- **C** (60-66%)
- **C-** (50-59%)
- **F** (0-49%).

The school must include a definition of the Letter Grades on the Report. In performance terms, the grades are each defined as follows:

- **A**: The student demonstrates excellent or outstanding performance in relation to the learning outcomes for the course or subject and grade.
- **B**: Very good performance ……
- **C+**: Good performance ………
- **C**: Satisfactory performance …….
- **Any grade below C**: minimally acceptable performance
- **I**: Grade 'I' is used to denote work *In progress or Incomplete*, and implies that the student is *not demonstrating minimally acceptable performance in relation to learning outcomes*.
- **F**: Failed or failing denotes that the student has *not demonstrated, or is not demonstrating, minimally acceptable performance*. Grade F may only be assigned if a Grade ‘I’ has been previously assigned, giving due notice to parents of difficulties.

**Performance Standards**
British Columbia’s education authorities have also developed what they term the BC Performance Standards – these are for voluntary use in schools. They are intended as a resource to support ongoing instruction and assessment. They are recommended for describing levels of achievement in key areas of learning (reading, writing, numeracy, social responsibility and ICTI) and come in four levels—

- Not yet within expectations
- Minimally meets expectations
- Fully meets expectations
- Exceeds expectations

The BC Performance Standards focus exclusively on performance assessment, where children are asked to apply skills and concepts they have learned to complete complex, realistic tasks. Thus they are meant to be one of a range of assessment approaches. To illustrate the use of the Performance Standards, the BC website provides exemplars of children’s work at the four levels of performance, with teacher’s observations included. The observations include the indicators that determine why the child’s work is judged to be at that level.

Scotland

Actual practice in relation to reporting seems to vary considerably across authorities and schools. A range of primary and post-primary schools have taken part in action research within the Assessment is for Learning initiative, trying out different approaches in their own schools to involving children and their parents in the assessment and reporting processes. Schools have indicated that they want to implement new reporting practices and formats only in conjunction with the implementation of the new formative assessment policies and practices over the next few years. The Executive supports this view, and has decided not to prescribe detailed reporting procedures or formats, instead leaving it to schools to adapt the guidelines to their own local setting or context (Scottish Executive, 2004).

Parental involvement

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9 The British Columbia Education website, Canada is available online at: [http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca)
The *Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Bill* currently making its way through the Scottish Parliament, greatly increases parental rights in education\(^\text{10}\). Furthermore, parents are being encouraged to become involved in the planning of curriculum objectives for their own children, in the review of how their children have attained objectives, and in planning ‘Next Steps’ in the child’s learning. The website to support parents\(^\text{11}\) points out that the child’s report is only one of several forms of communication between home and school, but *it is a useful tool to help teachers and parents focus on pupils' progress and needs. It is also helpful for pupils in summarising their progress and in identifying possible future aims.*

### Northern Ireland

The CCEA has also published the Research Evaluation Reports on its trialling work to date. Among its main findings are:

- the majority of teachers supported the purposes and principles of the Profiles, while the majority of parents were also pleased with the layout and content of the Profiles.
- there were significant problems with the software provided to facilitate the completion and production of the Profiles.
- teachers felt they needed more in-service training to support their use of the Pupil Profile.
- parents felt they needed more explanations of the meaning, significance and use of the information reported in the Profiles.
- some of the terms used in the Profiles were felt to be complicated and difficult for parents and pupils to access.

### Sweden

\(^\text{10}\) The Parental Involvement bill is discussed on the Scottish Parliament website available online at: [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/billsInProgress/schools.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/bills/billsInProgress/schools.htm)

\(^\text{11}\) The Parentzone website hosted by Learning and Teaching Scotland is available online at: [http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)
Grades are awarded for each term (for each subject) in year 8 (age 15), at the end of the Autumn term in year 9 (term report) and when mandatory school attendance ends (final grade or 'leaving certificate'). When grading begins, grades are set by the teacher, and comprise one of the following possible grades: Pass (G), Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass with Special Distinction (MVG). Assignment of term grades is done in relation to the locally determined objectives for a particular subject. In cases where a child fails to achieve a passing grade in a subject, no grade is given.
Appendix B

Reporting template from British Columbia

Introduction

The following sample Report Card template from British Columbia illustrates key features of reporting practice at the junior level of a child’s primary education (primary, Grade 2).

Information is presented on the sample Report Card template using comments, emphasising what the child can do. Grades are not used at this stage. Comments are provided in relation to attitudes, effort, work habits and social responsibility; also in relation to academic achievement, as well as other areas such as physical education and visual arts. Some indication is given of next steps for the child’s learning, and the child’s parents are given some suggestions for how they might support their child’s learning.
Appendix C

Reporting templates from Northern Ireland

Introduction

The following three report card templates from Northern Ireland are sample Annual Pupil Profiles which CCEA are currently developing for primary schools. The three samples reflect different stages in the child’s primary school career:

- Foundation Stage (3-5 years)
- Key Stage 1 (5-8 years)
- Key Stage 2 (8-11 years).

In the case of the Foundation Stage Sample Pupil Profile, the child's progress (in Year 2) is represented under the headings **Foundations for Learning, Skills and Capabilities, Interests and Strengths, Focus for Development** and **Me as a Learner**. In addition, the teacher has an opportunity to include additional comments. The child inserts the content of **Me as a Learner**.

In the Key Stages 1 and 2 sample Pupil Profiles, the children have an opportunity to add their written comments to the report, while parents are also invited to comment.
Appendix D
Reporting template from Victoria, Australia

Introduction

This appendix presents a Student Report Card currently used in Victoria, Australia to record and report on a child’s progress and achievement in learning. The content of the child’s learning is presented using a variety of headings including learning areas, work habits, areas for improvement/future learning, how the teacher will support future learning and what the parents can do to support future learning. Exemplification is provided under each heading.

A Primary Student Report Card
Sample only [Descriptions are marked in italics]

Primary School Student Report
John Surname.
Year 4 Semester 2.

Below is an image of the table that contains assessment data on your child.
In the first column is a list of areas where your child’s performance has been assessed. The second column has a rating of your child’s achievement against what is expected for this time of year. This is written as a grade of A to E which means:

Performance ratings:
A. Well above the standard expected at this time of year
B. Above standard expected at this time of year
C. At the standard expected at this time of year
D. Below the standard expected at this time of year
E. Well below the standard expected at this time of year

The third column is headed with the year below your child’s current year. The fourth column is headed with your child’s current year. The fifth column is headed the year ahead of your child’s current year.

On the table is an open circle for each area your child studies that shows the achievement of your child last year. The table has a vertical shaded bar that shows the level of achievement expected of all students in Victoria at this year level. On the table is a solid dot for each area your child studies that shows the achievement of your child this year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Learning</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking &amp; Listening</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design, Creativity &amp; Technology</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information &amp; Communications Technology</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend
Your child’s achievement last year is represented by an open circle
Your child’s achievement this year is represented by a solid dot
Your child’s progress since last year is represented by a dotted line joining the circle and dot
The expected level of achievement is represented by a vertical shaded bar.

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Work habits
The next image is of a graph titled ‘Work Habits’ that contains performance ratings. It has ratings for ‘Effort’ and ‘Class Behaviour’ The ratings are presented as a horizontal coloured bar. The ratings are ‘needs attention’ ‘acceptable’ and ‘excellent’. The bar can stop at any point across the graph, either on or between the ratings labels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Needs attention</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What John has achieved
This section lists what your child has achieved in class.
John writes interesting stories with good use of punctuation and spelling. He uses the internet to find information and uses this effectively in his work. He listens attentively and asks questions to clarify ideas and he works well with others to resolve disagreements.

Areas for improvement/future learning
This section lists what your child needs to do to improve or to increase their future learning.

- John needs to focus more on keeping on task and ensuring he completes his work.
- He needs to practice telling the time and thinking more about how to write numbers as fractions.
- He also needs to practise his addition and subtraction sums.
- John needs to pay more attention during science to ensure he understands what is being taught.

The teacher will do the following to support John in his learning
This section lists what the teacher will do to support this improvement.

- Provide extra assistance in maths to help him understand fractions and time.
- Provide extra activities which will assist John with addition and subtraction.
- Provide additional work in science to help John understand the differences between solids, liquids and gases.
- Provide additional assistance to help John think ahead to plan his work and to complete his work on time.

What you can do at home to help John’s progress
This section lists ideas for what you can do at home to help your child’s learning.

- Set John tasks to do at home which need him to think ahead and plan how he will complete the tasks on time.
- Find a range of objects around the house that John can sort into solids, liquids and gases.
- Ask John to keep a diary during the week that lists the times that he has breakfast and dinner.
• Have John help with cooking, particularly when it involves measuring ingredients using fractions such as one-half, one-quarter and one-third.
• Help John with the addition and subtraction sums that he is given for homework.

Teacher comment
This section is a summary comment from the teacher about your child’s progress and achievement.
John is achieving very well in using computers and the internet, in his art work and in speaking and listening in class. He needs to focus more carefully on his maths, particularly on learning about fractions and telling the time. He also needs to think more carefully when he does his addition and subtraction sums. John will receive additional assistance in these areas next year. John works very effectively with other students in the class. If disagreements occur, he is able to listen to other students’ points of view and help to reach a solution. He has a good attitude to his work and can be relied on to give of his best at most times.

Student comment
This section is your child’s comments.
I have enjoyed using the computers at school and find the internet helpful in finding information for my projects. Fractions are hard for me to understand but I hope to learn more about them next year.

Attendance
This section is information about the attendance of your child at school.
John has been absent for 1 day this year.

Parent comment [please insert your comments, sign the report card and send it back to the school]
This section is for your comments.
We are happy with how John has worked in school this year. He is having trouble with maths but we are trying to help him with this at home. He has enjoyed being in class and is looking forward to learning more next year.