**Appendix 17**

**Guidance on reporting to parents.**

Schools should adapt it to suit their particular situation.

Front Page:

* + the child’s name
  + the date on which the report is written
  + the child’s date of birth
  + his or her age – in years and completed months – at the time the report is written
  + his or her school group: e.g. Primary 2, Primary 3 etc
  + the class name
* For children in Nursery, you comment about their learning in each strand of the IPC Early Years Programme.
* For children in P1, you comment about their learning in each strand of the IPC Early Years Programme and in language and mathematics.
* For children in P2 – P8 you write comments about children’s learning in each subject.
* Be as specific as possible in your comments. Comments about a child enjoying, taking an interest in, working hard and having a positive attitude towards a subject are useful. But they are not enough. You should also give specific examples and explanations and say what, and how well, the child has actually learned. For example: ‘… worked well to understand magnetism’, ‘… has improved his understanding of chronology but hasn’t yet grasped the idea of there being different interpretations of historical events’, ‘her number skills are better than expected for children of her age.’
* For language and mathematics, relate your comments to the National Curriculum attainment targets, the learning objectives in the Primary Framework literacy and mathematics strategies, the Kerndoelen or any appropriate tussendoelen. This way you can give clear and supported judgements about whether a child is achieving what is expected of children of a similar age.
* For all other subjects, relate your comments to the IPC learning goals and learning targets. Again, this will mean that you can give clear and supported judgements about whether a child is achieving what is expected of children of a similar age.
* if you teach a subject outside, or in addition to, the IPC units of work, you comments should still relate to the IPC learning goals.
* In addition to prose comments, your school might also a use a key to indicate how well children have learned in each subject. For IPC subjects – and possibly for language and maths – this will involve making judgements about whether a child is ‘beginning’, ‘developing’ or ‘mastering’ in each subject. You should make these judgements in relation to the IPC learning goals, making use of the IPC Assessment for Learning Programme and any other IPC rubrics the school might be using.
* In the sections on personal and international development relate your comments to the appropriate IPC learning goals and learning targets.
* You can use the ‘Other Comments’ section to include something about the child’s context – first language, special educational needs, absences, progress during the year and so on.
* Remember that parents should be able to read the report and get a clear view about whether their child is doing as well as other children and as well as he or she is able. Wherever possible and appropriate, comment on how the child’s achievement compares with previous performance; that of other children in the class and the standards set by the school.
* Parents should also be able to read the report and get a clear view about how their child’s achievement and progress relate to his or her potential and about relative strengths and weaknesses and any particular successes.
* Reports should be concerned with the future as well as the past. You should use them to make recommendations about what needs to be done – by the school and the parents as well as by the child. These recommendations provide useful points for discussion with the parents and help in the setting of targets.
* The final page of the report should provide an opportunity for children and parents to make their own comments about what you have written. Your school will have its own procedures for dealing with this. One possibility is that parents are invited to detach this page and return it to school either before or after they have discussed the report with you.
* Your school will have its own arrangements for sending reports to parents and for keeping a copy in the school files.
* Although some of them might seem very obvious, here are some additional points of guidance about report writing:
  + Keep notes on each child during the year using the report format. When the time comes you can transfer these to the actual report
  + Don’t spring surprises. When they read the end of year report this shouldn’t be the first time that parents hear about any particular difficulties – or successes. There are plenty of opportunities for communication and a report can be regarded as a summary of what has been discussed previously
  + Pay attention to language and style. Make sure that what you write is easily read and understood. Check your spelling and punctuation and avoid long words, jargon and waffle
  + Don’t use meaningless and hackneyed phrases such as ‘could do better’
  + Be honest even though the truth might hurt. It’s better in the long run – for the child’s future teachers as well as the parents. Just make sure that you have the evidence to support what you say – and remember that you shouldn’t be springing surprises anyway.