UNDERSTANDING STUDENT REPORTS – PREP TO YEAR 10

Introduction
The handwritten “report card” we all recall pulling out of our school bag at the end of each year and handing to our own parents has undergone a significant makeover since we were at school. But so too has the curriculum and the standards our children are now required to meet.

A New National Curriculum
For starters we now have a new national curriculum that is being taught in schools across the country.

Previously each state and territory had their own individual curriculums which they taught and assessed student achievement against.

Since 2012 the Australian Curriculum has been progressively introduced into schools as new subject areas are completed by the nation’s peak curriculum development body - the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

The Australian Curriculum sets consistent and high standards for what all young Australians should be taught and what they should know and be able to do as they progress through school.

This change in what students learn has resulted in a change to the standards and criteria they are being assessed against.

Nationally agreed Achievement Standards have now been set for each subject area.

These standards describe in plain English what students should typically be able to know, understand and do by the end of each year level. Students are then judged or marked against these standards.

Parents are encouraged to read through the standards for each subject area and when students are expected to achieve them on the Australian Curriculum website http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/. The site also includes helpful examples of student work at different achievement levels.
Reporting Student Progress to Parents

It’s a requirement for all schools in Queensland to provide parents with regular updates on their child’s progress at school.

Under the Australian Education Act Regulation 2013 all schools are required to:

- provide parents and carers with two written reports each year reporting on all subjects studied by their children
- provide reports that:
  - use plain language and are clear and easy to understand; and
  - are based on a five-point achievement scale.

While no specific dates have been mandated, most schools choose to provide reports to parents at the end of Semester 1 and at the end of the school year.

In Years 1-10 these reports are based on a five-point achievement scale, usually from A-E, supported by a description of what this means in relation to their progress against the achievement standard.

In Prep it’s up to individual schools to determine how they will report on the progress of children in this important foundation year. Some schools may still choose to use a 5-point scale but with more descriptive wording about how far the child has travelled in their learning over the course of the year.

**Example 5: Point Reporting Scale in Years 1-10**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>Beginning to work towards the achievement standard</th>
<th>Working towards the achievement standard</th>
<th>Meeting or demonstrating the requirements of the Australian Curriculum achievement standard</th>
<th>Working beyond the achievement standard</th>
<th>Extending with depth beyond the achievement standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SCALE</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers at mid Semester and at the end of the year will make judgements based on the work students have completed up to these points to determine whether a student is demonstrating features of an A, B, C, D or E grade.

Typically a “C” means a child is working and achieving what is expected of them at that point in their learning. It means the child is on par with a “typical” child in Australia which is a considerable achievement.
What teachers are now looking for in an “A” student is a child who has shown a deep understanding of a topic and possesses the ability to apply that information in an unfamiliar context without adult assistance.

Simply achieving 100% or close to it on a spelling or maths test doesn’t automatically equate to an “A”.

Parents need to keep these changes in mind when reading their child’s report.

Teachers will also often include their observations of a child’s overall achievement at school as well as their behaviour and relationships with their peers to give parents a more holistic view of their child’s progress at school.

Parents of gifted and talented students or students with specific learning needs or a disability should be involved in the decisions around their child’s learning program and understand what year level standards their child is being assessed against.

Students in multi-age classes must still be assessed against the year level they are learning. Parents should be consulted about any variations to this.

Further Information

Independent schools pride themselves on the relationships they build with their parents and students.

If you have any questions about your child’s progress at school or what is contained in their student report, call or email your child’s teacher to set up an opportunity to talk on the phone or meet in person.

Just remember to approach any discussions on your child’s progress with an open mind and with the understanding that what we were taught and how we were graded at school has changed.

For more detailed information about the Australian Curriculum and the new Achievement Standards visit http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au