

How to read the NAPLAN report: the four levels, and what to do about each

What the individual student report shows, for each of the five areas

- [] The proficiency level: Exceeding, Strong, Developing or Needs additional support
- [] Your child's dot on one scale that runs from Year 3 to Year 9 (it should move right every two years)
- [] The national average for the year level, and the shaded middle 60%
- [] No percentage, no rank, no raw mark; the test is adaptive, so the number right is not the score

The four levels

Level	What it means	About how many children	What to do before 10 March 2027
Exceeding	Well above the year level's expectations	Top 15% or so	Nothing for NAPLAN; for OC, selective, SEAL or GATE, teach above the year level now
Strong	Meets the expectations: the standard	Around half	Find the missing topic with a practice test marked by topic; four to six weeks of two classes a week
Developing	Some of the year's skills, not others	About a quarter	A diagnostic, then a term on the missing topics in the school's order; number facts automatic; a term of 1-on-1 moves a level
Needs additional support	Not yet meeting the expectations; the school must respond	About one in ten	Ask the school what support, from when; teaching that starts a year below and counts up; March 2027 is a checkpoint

The cut points were set in 2023 against the Australian Curriculum and do not move year to year; the Year 5 standard is higher than Year 3's, so a child who was Strong in Year 3 and did not move on the scale is Developing in Year 5. The dot says whether the child moved; the word says where the child is against the standard.

Where marks go, by area

Area	The usual cause of a lower level	The fix
Numeracy	The topics school reaches late in the year (fractions and time in Year 3; decimals, area, angles in Year 5; ratio and algebra in Year 7); facts not automatic	Teach the rest of the strand a term ahead; ten minutes of facts a day
Reading	Answering from memory instead of the text; not reading for pleasure	Go back to the text for evidence; a book a week
Writing	A good writer who freezes under a 40-minute prompt	Two timed prompts in February marked to the ten criteria
Spelling, grammar, punctuation	Ten spelling patterns; apostrophes, commas, subject-verb agreement	Ten words a week; four classes on the rules

The worksheet: your child's report, and the plan

Fill in from the report

Area	Level (E / S / D / N)	Dot moved right since last time? (Y / N)	Against the national average (above / at / below)	Next term's step
Reading				
Writing				
Spelling				
Grammar and punctuation				
Numeracy				

Questions to ask the school

- [] For a Developing or Needs additional support level: what support is the school providing, from when, and who is giving it?
- [] Which strand or skill cost the level? (The report does not say; the school's data often does)
- [] Can we see the school's average for the year level and the child's position in the class?
- [] For an Exceeding child: what extension is available, and is the child a candidate for OC, selective, SEAL or GATE?

The plan before 10 March 2027

The area to fix first:

The topics, from a practice test marked by topic:

Classes a week, and from when:

Practice test dates (Term 4, February, test week):

Writing prompts (two, timed, in February):

From sciencewithshobha.com/blog/naplan-results-2026-how-to-read-the-report-and-what-the-bands-mean/