

## Why should we be careful about how we praise our pupils?

### Research taster

It's important to give pupils feedback, but you need to be wary of the potential for negative effects. When feedback is focused on pupils' self-esteem or self-image, as is the case when marks are given out or when praise focuses on the child rather than the learning, feedback can make pupils' feel and perform worse. Praise can make pupils feel good, but it may not help their learning unless it is explicit about what the pupil has done well.

### Your evidence

To find out how effectively you praise your pupils you might like to work with a colleague to observe each other's lessons, and note:

- how often you praised your pupils;
- which pupils you praised;
- what you praised your pupils for; and
- the words and phrases that you used when praising your pupils.

Afterwards, you could discuss with each other how far your praise helped your pupils' learning.

### Moving forward

Now that you have a picture of the way you praise and the likely effects on your pupils' learning, you might like to work with your colleague on developing a list of different specific positive phrases you could use that would extend your repertoire. For example:

That was good because ...  
Good start – can you see where you might do next?  
That's a good idea – can you say why you think that might happen?  
Neil's just said something helpful ...  
I really like the way you ...  
Well done. I know that was difficult. Maybe now you could ...

You could experiment with the phrases and consider how they feel from the pupils' point of view and how they help them with their learning.

### Find out more

You can find out more about giving the kind of feedback that helps pupils to learn on the TLRP Learning how to learn project website at: <http://www.tlrp.org/proj/phase11/phase2f.html>