

## Alan Turing--Report Card Teachers' Comments, 1926-1931



Subject: **Mathematics**

1926. *Works well. He is still very untidy. He must try to improve in this respect*

1927. *Very good. He has considerable powers of reasoning and should do well if he can quicken up a little and improve his style.*

\_\_\_\_\_. *A very good term's work, but his style is dreadful and his paper always dirty.*

\_\_\_\_\_. *Not very good. He spends a good deal of time apparently in investigations in advanced mathematics to the neglect of his elementary work. A sound ground work is essential in any subject. His work is dirty.*

\_\_\_\_\_. *Despite absence he has done a really remarkable examination (1st paper). A mathematician I think.*

\_\_\_\_\_ *I think he has been somewhat tidier, though there is still plenty of room for improvement. A keen & able mathematician.*

1928. *Easily the best mathematician in the set. His position is caused by untidiness and carelessness due largely to impatience to let on something great as soon as he has seen his way through a problem.*

\_\_\_\_\_. *This term has been spent, & the next two terms will have to be spent, in filling in the many gaps in his knowledge & organising it. He thinks very rapidly & is apt to be "brilliant", but unsound in some of his work. He is seldom defeated by a problem, but his methods are often crude, cumbersome & untidy. But thoroughness & polish will no doubt come in time.*

1929. *His work on Higher Certificate papers shows distinct promise, but he must realise that ability to put a neat & tidy solution on paper – intelligible & legible – is necessary for a first-rate mathematician.*

1930. *He has faced the uninspiring task of revision & consolidation of his previous knowledge with determination, and I think he has succeeded in improving his style of written work, which is more convincing & less sketchy than last year. If he does not get flustered & relapse into slipshod work, he should do very well in the H.C. this year.*

\_\_\_\_. *A really able mathematician. His trouble is his untidiness & poor style, but he has tried hard to improve in this. He sometimes fails over a simple problem by trying to do it by complicated methods, instead of by an elementary one.*

1931. *He has done some post-scholarship reading without encountering any serious difficulties. He should be able to take the Higher Certificate next July in his stride.*

\_\_\_\_. *He has gone on with his reading as well as revising the elementary work for the Higher Certificate, & I expect him to get a Distinction with ease. He has my best wishes for an equally successful career at Cambridge.*

Subject: **Natural Science**

1926. *He is keen & has a natural bent for science, but his work is badly spoilt by extreme untidiness.*

Subject: **English.**

1926. *Without being lazy, he seems to do his work rather perfunctorily. I should like to see rather more life in him.*

1928. *His English work is becoming less feeble. He undoubtedly has brains, but is only slowly learning to apply them to subjects for which he has little interest.*

1930. *His reading is too deliberate. On paper he is usually sensible.*

Subject: **Chemistry.**

1930. *If the questions suit him, he is certain of getting a scholarship: but I do not feel that his knowledge is sufficiently all-round to make him independent of luck in the examination.*

Subject: **Physics.**

1928 *He has done some quite good work by himself in my room. Good work.*

1930. *He has done some excellent work, mostly strict training for his scholarship examination. I can only hope Cambridge will think as well of him as I do.*

1931. *He continues to take a genuine interest in physics.*

**House Report**

1927 *He is frankly not one who fits comfortably for himself into the ordinary life of the place – on the whole I think he is tidier.*

\_\_\_\_. *No doubt he is a strange mixture: trying to build a roof before he has laid the foundations. Having secured one privileged exemption, he is mistaken in acting as if idleness and indifference will procure further release from uncongenial subjects.*

\_\_\_\_. *Rather more tidy: & the one paper I looked over of his was certainly better than I expected in neatness. He certainly has ideas & imagination.*

\_\_\_\_. *I have seen cleaner productions than this specimen, even from him. No doubt he is very aggravating: & he should know by now that I don't care to find him boiling heaven knows what witches' brew by the aid of two guttering candles on a naked wooden window sill. However he has borne his afflictions very cheerfully: & undoubtedly has taken more trouble, e.g. with physical training. I am far from hopeless.*

1928. *Satisfactory. I am very glad that he is sociable & makes friends: & he seems unselfish in temper. He is certainly ambitious.*

1931. *He has had an interesting career, with varied experience: & brought it to a very successful close. I am grateful to him for his essentially loyal help: & I hope he will reap further reward at King's, both in work & friendships.*