

Section 1

#1: Opening paragraph ("Before we even left school...what to say?")

Strengths:

- You've created excellent sensory details with "bright yellow vest that smelt of new plastic" and "stiff fabric rubbing against my arms"—these help readers experience the moment alongside you.
- Your rhetorical questions at the end build genuine tension and reveal your emotional state effectively.

Weakness: Underdeveloped emotional transition → Your nervousness appears suddenly without showing us why you felt this way. The vest details are vivid, but you jump straight from receiving it to comparing yourself with others and feeling anxious. We don't learn what specifically worried you about being a buddy. Adding a sentence about your thoughts when first learning about the walking bus, or what you'd heard from other Year 6 students, would help readers understand the source of your worries.

Exemplar: *Before my teacher even explained the route, I'd already imagined everything that could go wrong—what if my buddy cried, or ran into the road, or didn't like me?*

#2: The walk and interaction with Max ("During the walk, the rain had stopped...brilliant at it.")

Strengths:

- Your descriptive language creates a clear picture: "puddles sparkled under the morning sun like glass" shows careful observation.
- Max's question about becoming a buddy himself is touching and shows how he looks up to you.

Weakness: Limited depth in the interaction → Whilst you list several things Max pointed out (rainbow chalk, barking dog, squashed snail), you don't share any of your responses or develop these moments into meaningful exchanges. The dialogue feels thin—we only see two brief lines of

conversation in this entire section. Showing one or two of these observations as actual back-and-forth dialogue would demonstrate the connection building between you and Max, rather than simply telling us he talked a lot.

Exemplar: *When Max stopped to examine the squashed snail, he asked, "Do snails feel pain?" I crouched down beside him and said, "I'm not sure, but that's a really thoughtful question." His face brightened, and he carefully stepped around it.*

#3: Final reflection ("I realised that even though I was guiding Max...the greatest pride.")

Strengths:

- The metaphor comparing responsibility to "sunlight bouncing off a puddle" connects cleverly back to imagery from earlier in your writing.

Weakness: Vague conclusion → Your final reflection tells us what you learnt but doesn't explain how this realisation came about through your specific experience with Max. The phrase "he also taught me something" remains unclear—what exactly did Max teach you? The connection between "smallest hands" and "greatest pride" sounds meaningful, but you haven't shown us the particular moment when you felt this pride most strongly. Grounding your reflection in a concrete moment from the walk would make your insight more powerful and believable.

Exemplar: *When Max squeezed my hand at the crossing and looked up at me with complete trust, I understood that being responsible for someone didn't mean carrying a burden—it meant sharing a moment that mattered to both of us.*

■ Your piece successfully captures a meaningful experience and shows genuine growth in your character. The sensory details throughout—the plastic smell of the vest, the glistening pavements, Max's warm fingers—bring your story to life. However, your writing would benefit from deeper exploration of key moments. You often tell us about feelings and realisations rather than showing them through specific scenes and dialogue. For example, when Max asked about becoming a buddy, this was a perfect opportunity to include more conversation that reveals both his personality and your growing confidence.

Additionally, your reflection needs stronger connection to concrete moments from your experience. Instead of stating generally that Max taught you something, identify the exact moment when this lesson occurred—was it when he trusted you at the crossing? When he shared his observations? Pinpointing these moments makes your insights more convincing. Also, consider expanding the middle section of your walk. You mention Max pointing out several things, but developing just one or two of these into fuller scenes with dialogue would strengthen the emotional heart of your narrative. Your writing shows real promise in creating atmosphere and using figurative language; now focus on deepening the substance of your interactions and grounding your reflections in specific, telling details from your experience with Max.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2:

#1 Before we even left school, I felt a bit nervous. My teacher handed me a bright yellow vest that smelt of new plastic, and I could feel the stiff fabric rubbing against my arms. I looked around at the other older pupils who were also paired with younger ones, and my heart pounded like a drum. Would my buddy like me? Would I even know what to say?

When we met at the gate, my buddy, a little boy called Max, grinned up at me with two missing teeth. His rucksack looked almost as big as he was. "Hi," he said, tugging at the straps.

"Hi, Max," I replied. "Ready to walk?"

He nodded eagerly, and off we went. **#2** During the walk, the rain had stopped but the pavement still glistened. Puddles sparkled under the morning sun like glass. Max kept pointing things out such as the rainbow chalk drawings on the slabs, a barking dog behind a fence**[fence,]** and even a squashed snail. The sound of bike wheels clicking and children chatting filled the air. Max talked so much that I hardly noticed how far we had gone. At one point **[point,]** he asked, "Do you think I can be a buddy when I'm in Year 6?"

"Of course you can," I said. "You'd be brilliant at it."

When we reached the crossing, I held his hand. His small fingers were warm in mine, and I felt responsible, like a guard keeping watch. As we stepped onto the zebra stripes, I looked both ways extra carefully, just as my teacher had reminded me. Reaching the other side, Max gave me a thumbs-up, and I couldn't help but laugh.

#3 Later, back at school, I felt lighter. My worries had vanished. Being a buddy was not scary at all. It was like helping a little brother. I realised that even though I was guiding Max, he also taught me something.

I learnt that responsibility does not have to feel heavy. It can feel bright, like sunlight bouncing off a puddle. Today showed me that sometimes the smallest hands can make you feel the greatest pride.