Examiners' Report March 2009

GCSE Mathematics 2381

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1.1. GENERAL COMMENTS

1.1.1. The paper proved to be accessible to most candidates with the majority of the candidates attempting all questions.

1.1.2. Candidates appeared to be able to complete the paper in the allotted time.

1.1.3. Candidates are to be encouraged to read the wording carefully so that they do not miss out important information. For example on question A4 many candidates did not read the first line of the question, thereby missing the fact that there were 80 children on the school trip.

1.1.4. Candidates need to be reminded which area of the exam paper to write on in view of the fact that this paper is marked on line.

1.2. INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

1.2.1. **Question A1**
Around 96% of candidates answered all 3 parts of this question correctly. The few responses that were incorrect read the wrong bar, and gave an answer of 6 (the number of TVs sold on Friday), or 9 (the number of TVs sold on Saturday in part (a) and did not read the height of the bar correctly in (b) with 3 being the most common incorrect response.

1.2.2. **Question A2**
Nearly all candidates were successful in writing the required coin. Again, nearly all the incorrect responses arose from not reading the question properly. As a result some candidates demonstrated that they knew which was the correct row that needed to be identified but they then went on to give the answer from the incorrect column. Thus the most popular incorrect answers of 'circular' in (a) and 'Canada' in (b) led to no marks being scored. Over 90% of the candidates scored both available marks.

1.2.3. **Question A3**
Part (a) was answered correctly by just over half the candidates. Answers of ¼ with 15, 90, 0.25 or 25% were also permitted. Common incorrect responses, which scored no marks, were 90° (the size of the angle on the pie chart representing Comedy), 15 (the number of student preferring Comedy), $\frac{1}{5}$ (as the pie chart is in 5 sections!), and $\frac{15}{360}$.

Many candidates struggled to work out the total number of students Colin asked although 44% did score both marks. The most common incorrect response was 50. Those that obtained at least three of the sections correct, often seen on the diagram, were rewarded with a method mark. However many then failed to complete the task by either adding their values incorrectly or leaving out one of the sectors.

1.2.4. Question A4

Questions on two-way tables are often to be found on these papers and this paper was no exception. However, the success rate was not as high as on previous papers because this time the candidates had to fill in ALL the numbers on the table rather than just fill in the gaps. This resulted in many not having a correct table because they either did not read the wording correctly or misunderstood what was given. Many students did not read the first line of information and so many did not put the number 80 on the table. Others saw that 14 boys went to York and then assumed that this meant that no girls went to York. By far the most common error was to have the second row of the table as 19, 0, 19 which generally meant that they had a total of 56 children on the school trip.

In part (b) there were quite a few correct answers or correct from their table but there were still those students who scored no marks because they gave their probability as a ratio which is not acceptable. Over 31% scored all 4 marks with a further 36% scoring 3 marks and another 25% scoring 2 marks.

1.2.5. Question A5

It was pleasing to see that over 36% scored all 3 marks on the last question on this section with a further 31% scoring 2 marks. Many did not realise that the word 'positive' was required in (a) but this did not put them off answering the rest of the question. Some unusual descriptions were seen but to describe the correlation as a "line of misfit" was perhaps taking things a little too far.

The most common error was in part (b) where many candidates felt the line of best fit had to go through the origin (60, 140) although they could still pick up the mark in (c) for an accurate reading from their line of best fit. It is also important that the line of best fit should be of sufficient length to cover the range of the given points; in some cases it was short of this length by a considerable amount. Merely joining up the points with a series of zigzag lines was never going to satisfy the requirement of a line of best fit.

1.2.6. Question B1

Candidates generally score highly on pictogram questions and this year was no exception with over 90% of the candidates scoring all 4 available marks. The most common error was to draw 2 small squares rather than 1 for the 9th book in (b).

1.2.7. Question B2

There was a variety of responses to listing all the outcomes from spinning the spinner and throwing a coin. A large number of candidates had no idea (around 18%) and many others did not realise that there were two options for the coin, namely Heads and Tails. Many only took note of the Heads on the coin and so only added 4 more possible outcomes. Others were so used to working with dice that they added the extra (6, Head), (6, Tail). Several candidates wrote the outcomes as if they were just from spinners e.g. (1,1) (2,1). Around 60% of the candidates were able to list the 10 outcomes correctly and over 28% were able to score all 3 marks. The most common error in part (b), very frequently seen, was to see an answer of 2/7 or 1/7 obtained by attempting to add the fractions 1/5 and 1/2. It was also quite common to see both the fractions 1/5 and ½ on the answer line separated by a comma. Others wrote 1/9 as they failed to include the given (1, head).

1.2.8. Question B3

Only 66% of the candidates were able to write that 5 people had a weight of more than 70 kg. The most common incorrect responses were 2 (two 7's in the leaves) and 4 (probably from sight of 4 numbers in the 70s).

In part (b) over half the candidates could provide 41 as the range of the weights with another 5% scoring one mark for identifying 87 and 46. It was surprising how many of these candidates made arithmetic errors in working out the difference between the two numbers. A significant number of candidates calculated the median value rather than the range.

1.2.9. Question B4

Around 80% of the candidates were able to score at least one mark on this question. Around 12% of the candidates were able to provide two valid things wrong with the question and give a suitable reason why the sample was not suitable whilst around 30% scored a total of 2 marks. The two most commonly identified things wrong with this question were the lack of a time period and not having a box for zero clearly stated. These were described in various ways but nevertheless reward was given for recognition of these two facts. Many spotted that the number 30 was involved in two option boxes and therefore gave the criticism that there were overlapping regions, clearly not understanding the implication of the words 'more than 30'. Credit was also given to those candidates who identified that the range within each box was too wide.

Part (b) was asking about a 'suitable sample' but most responses were still focusing on 'two things wrong with this question' from part (a). Thus it became simply a repeat of the answer for the first part slightly re-worded. Concentrating on sample size, age group or gender should have provided an easier base to frame the answer about the sample. Many candidates thought that James' sample could not include people that he knew.

1.2.10. Question B5

Around half the candidates failed to score any marks on this question, generally for plotting the points not at the mid-intervals and then failing to join their points with straight lines. Around 30% scored one mark either for not joining their correct points with straight lines or joining them correctly but having the points at one of the boundaries of the given class intervals. Some plotted the points and then drew a line of best fit, clearly not knowing what a frequency polygon was.

1.2.11. Question B6

Most candidates were able to score at least one mark in this question, usually for identifying the overlapping intervals. Another popular response was to identify in some way that there was not a box for more than 6 hours, e.g. "no other box", or a box for no computer, e.g. "they may not have a computer". A small number of candidates thought, incorrectly, that there was a problem with the grammar of the question, or with the presentation of the boxes.

2. PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT – HIGHER PAPER 6

2.1. GENERAL COMMENTS

2.1.1. The paper proved to be accessible to most candidates with the majority of the candidates attempting all questions.

2.1.2. Candidates appeared to be able to complete the paper in the allotted time.

2.1.3. Candidates are to be encouraged to read the wording carefully so that they do not miss out important information. For example on question A3 many candidates did not read the words 'four-point moving averages' and went on to calculate three-point moving averages

2.1.4. Many candidates did not have a ruler with them. In question A2 it was not uncommon to see a freehand line of best fit.

2.2. INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

2.2.1. Question A1
Candidates are becoming more and more familiar with stem and leaf diagrams as shown by this question where over 92% of the candidates scored 2 or 3 marks. The most common error was to lose a mark for an incorrect key although 75% of the candidates did score all available marks. There were a substantial number of candidates who did not realise the diagram required the numbers to be ordered.

2.2.2. Question A2
This question was also well done by the candidates on the Higher Tier with nearly 95% of the candidates scoring 2 or 3 marks. The most common error was in part (b) where many candidates felt the line of best fit had to go through the origin (60, 140) although they could still pick up the mark in (c) for an accurate reading from their line of best fit.

2.2.3. Question A3
Many candidates were not aware of how to find the last moving average in (a). By far the most common error was to find a three-point moving average, with some candidates even finding the average of the moving averages given.

In part (b) many candidates did not understand what was required and commented on the number of televisions sold each month. All that was required was to say that the trend was decreasing yet many went into great detail about every number in the table. In parts (a) and (b) 29% of the candidates scored all 3 marks with a further 44% scoring 2 marks. 20% of the candidates scored no marks at all.

Many candidates were successful in parts (c) and (d) with 38% scoring all 3 marks and a further 20% scoring two marks. Quite a few candidates plotted the cumulative frequency values at 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 thinking that the points needed to be plotted at the midpoints of the price intervals, clearly not understanding the question.

Some of these candidates did, however, go on and earn the mark in (d) for correctly reading from their graph. Some plotted the points in the correct position but then failed to join the points whilst others plotted the points correctly but then proceeded to draw a line of best fit. Nearly 20% of the candidates scored no marks at all on the final two parts of the question.

2.2.4. Question A4

57% of the candidates scored no marks on this question, generally for drawing a histogram with heights 16, 18, 32, 30 and 24, clearly having no understanding of a histogram with bars of unequal width. Those that did often correctly calculated some of the frequency density values. Many of those that did know what they were doing tended to not number the Frequency Density axis whilst others made errors in the proportion of the bars by starting their numbering at 0.5 or 1 rather than 0 losing a mark. Quite a few candidates did everything correctly but extended the last bar to 110. Many who constructed the histogram accurately using "blocks" then failed to show a key. Nearly a quarter of the candidates scored all 3 available marks.

2.2.5. Question B1

Calculating the missing probability in the opening question did not pose too much of a problem with many correct answers seen. For those who did make a mistake the addition 0.5 + 0.3 leading to 0.9, 0.08, or similar was still rewarded as long as the subtraction 1 – (0.5 + 0.3) was shown in the working thus gaining the method mark.

In part (b) calculating how many green counters were in the bag needed an appreciation that the product 50×0.3 would yield the correct result. The more successful ones were able to indicate this product correctly but a few found difficulties in evaluating the result. It gave rise to answers involving the digits 1 and 5 with 0.15 and 150 being the most common. The most common other errors, however, occurred in using the probability from part (a) as answers were given for the blue counter rather than the green one as had been asked in the question. Also, some candidates spent needless time calculating the amount for each colour, and then often failed to identify the one required in the question. Nearly 70% of the candidates scored all 4 marks with around 25% scoring 2 marks.

2.2.6. Question B2

Virtually all the candidates were able to score at least one mark on this question. Around half the candidates were able to provide two valid things wrong with the question and give a suitable reason why the sample was not suitable whilst around 80% scored a total of 2 marks. The two things wrong with this question were often correctly identified with the lack of a time period and not having a box for zero clearly stated. These were described in various ways but nevertheless reward was given for recognition of these two facts. Many spotted that the number 30 was involved in two option boxes and therefore gave the criticism that there were overlapping regions, clearly not understanding the implication of the words 'more than 30'. The word 'specific', with all its spelling variations, also featured but did not identify precisely what it referred to. Credit was also given to those candidates who identified that the range within each box was too wide. Candidates appeared to have been taught to respond with 'biased', 'leading' or 'too personal' which was not appropriate in this case.

Part (b) was asking about a 'suitable sample' but many responses were still focussing on 'two things wrong with this question' from part (a) thus it became simply a repeat of the answer for the first part slightly re-worded. Concentrating on sample size, age group or gender should have provided an easier base to frame the answer about the sample. Many candidates thought that James' sample could not include people that he knew. In both parts, concise answers often scored better than long explanations, which often lead to choice or ambiguity.

2.2.7. Question B3

Nearly all candidates managed to draw the box plot accurately in part (a) taking care to position their lines and box very precisely. The second box plot in the question had been drawn in and provided sufficient guidance as to what was required thus enabling many to gain full marks in part (a).

Part (b) appeared to be more challenging as many struggled to form a comparison between the two box plots. Firstly it was encouraging to see that many candidates successfully avoided simply listing the various components of the box plots without making a comparison. To simply say that 'the highest value on Saturday is 45 and on Friday is 41' does not compare the two values it merely states the values. The statement 'the longest delay on Saturday is greater than the longest delay on Friday' affords a comparison between the two. Most responses picked out a value for a comparison and scored 1 mark with some continuing to make a valid fact about range or interquartile range to secure the second mark. The alternative approach was to make a comparison between the ranges and between the interquartile ranges on each day and this would have scored both marks. It was not unusual to see a description relating to 'airports' in general with 'bad weather' or 'airports are busier at weekends' being in the top two.

Unfortunately neither fact can be picked up from the information given in this question, nor could any facts about the amount of planes that were delayed. Some candidates clearly did not read the question carefully, assuming that only the second box plot was Peter's or indeed, that the days included Sunday. Nearly two thirds of the candidates scored at least 3 marks for this question.

2.2.8. Question B4

There were some excellent answers to this question in which a correctly drawn probability tree was constructed carrying the correct probabilities on each branch. The six required probability products were then identified leading to the final probability of 67/100. Over 20% of the candidates got this question fully correct with a further 6% only making one slip. The alternative methods being used in an attempt to arrive at the final answer did, however, seemed to be less successful. An abundance of fractions in the subsequent working very often left the student wondering how to combine them together into one single probability. There was some evidence of non-replacement seen thus making the question much more difficult than it need have been.

The fractions manipulation within the working is clearly an area of weakness as some found difficulty in combining fractions together. For example $5/10 \times 7/10$ ended up as 35/20, 12/100, and any other combination of the four numbers. Cancelling the fractions down before multiplying $5/10 \times 7/10 = \frac{1}{2} \times 7/10 = 7/20$ was fine but then presented a problem when they had to add together fractions with different denominators. As a general rule it would be easier to achieve the final result if the fractions are not cancelled down. 60% of the candidates failed to score any marks on this question. Many had little idea what to do, though realising it involved the fractions 1/10; 2/10; 7/10 etc, then writing down some simple combination of these fractions, including multiplying 3 together, adding or taking away. Others had a separate tree diagram for each spinner, showing one or two throws but were then not sure what to do with their answers. Candidates using decimal notation also demonstrated correct tree diagrams but many had difficulty multiplying e.g. 0.2 x 0.2 correctly (the usual answer being 0.4).

3. PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT – FOUNDATION PAPER 9

3.1. GENERAL COMMENTS

3.1.1. The paper was well understood by almost all candidates and very few candidates were unable to gain marks in the early parts of the paper.

3.1.2. A significant number of candidates did not seem to have calculators for this exam paper, particularly when one question was designed to test the efficient use of a calculator.

3.1.3. The quality of algebraic manipulation was very poor with 71% of candidates scoring no marks in Q8a and 91% scoring no marks in Q8b.

3.1.4. It was also disappointing to see 50% of candidates unable to write ¼ as a decimal in question 3(a) and the basic work on powers and roots was poorly understood in Q1.

3.2. INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

3.2.1. Question 1
This question tested whether candidates understood the concept of powers and roots. Whilst 67% could find the square of 6 only 43% could find the square root of 225 and even fewer (41%) could find the value of 10^3. This was an indication of the size of the lack of calculator problem.

3.2.2. Question 2
This question was well understood with 88% of candidates scoring full marks. A further 8% of candidates scored 1 mark either for showing a complete method or for sight of 19 or 51. Many candidates took away both 15 and 17 and got an answer of 2. They were awarded one mark for a misread of taking 15 and 17 away from 34.

3.2.3. Question 3
Fractions often cause a lot of problems on a foundation paper but 50% of candidates were able to write ¼ as 0.25 and there was even more success with percentages where 71% of candidates were able to write 10% of £50 as £5.

3.2.4. Question 4
Candidates struggled with this question that is often tested in this paper and frequently made mistakes with the names of parts of a circle. Only 30% of candidates could write both parts correctly and a further 40% could write one part correctly, usually the tangent.

3.2.5. Question 5

This question was well understood and a surprising 45% of candidates could correctly calculate the missing angle *x* but only 12 % of candidates managed to give both of the correct reasons why the missing angle was 68º. In part (a) the most common error was to do (180 – 56) ÷ 2 = 62 and many took 56 from 180 to get 124. A surprising number of candidates did not know how many degrees in a triangle, often using 360 or 90, but sometimes other values, to subtract 112 from whilst some assumed it was an equilateral triangle with three angles of 56º.

In part (b) we needed to see both reasons for the award of a mark and candidates frequently only gave one and many thought that the equal sign marks on the sides *AB* and *AC* indicated that they were parallel! Many candidates used incorrect terminology and so invalidated their answer, e.g. references to parallel lines; corresponding angles, two equal lines rather than angles, three sides of a triangle make 180º. We still see far too many candidates showing a calculation, rather than giving a reasoned explanation.

3.2.6. Question 6

Despite this type of question being tested on a number of occasions candidates tend to struggle with measurements in an everyday context. A quarter of all candidates did not score any marks and 13% of candidates gained one mark, mostly for the height of the man. A further 26% of candidates gained two marks, usually for estimating the height of the lamppost from an incorrect estimation of the man's height, an allowance of a scale factor between 2½ to 3 was allowed on this. Only 36% of candidates were able to gain all three marks for this question.

3.2.7. Question 7

Candidates knew what they had to do with this question and could read the time axis accurately as there was a one to one correspondence between the squares and the numbers. They struggled with reading the intermediate points on the vertical scale where one 2 mm square was 4ºC. Only 2% of candidates scored no marks whilst 8% scored 1 mark usually for reading off the 20º in part (a). A further 22% scores 2 marks, usually for obtaining correct responses to parts (a) and (b) whist fully correct responses to all parts were obtained by only 45% of candidates. One mark was awarded in (c) for candidates that marked the required points on the graph or correctly read off the values of 40 or 90.

3.2.8. Question 8

Candidates sitting the foundation paper often struggle with algebra and this was certainly true on this paper. Only 10% scored both marks in part (a) whilst 20% of candidates scored one mark usually by multiplying out one of the two brackets correctly. Solutions then fell apart usually for incorrect simplification with numbers and algebraic variables incorrectly combined or for writing 20 – 4 as –16 or 24. Only 9% of candidates scored the mark in part (b) as factorisation was a very poorly understood topic.

3.2.9. Question 9

This question was poorly attempted by all candidates with only 18% of candidates able to give the correct answer in (a). Many answers seen here, the most common being 29.8166666… or 6.00694… which were incorrect. A method mark for 34.6 and/or 2.4 was often gained in part (a) but working was frequently not shown. In part (b) the understanding of writing to 2 decimal places was poorly attempted. Many candidates truncated their answer some gave their answer to 2 significant figures and a large number moved the decimal point 2 places (left or right). Only 8% of candidates were able to gain full marks on the whole question the style of which is quite common.

4. PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT – HIGHER PAPER 10

4.1. GENERAL COMMENTS

4.1.1. The paper was well understood by almost all candidates and very few candidates were unable to gain marks in the early parts of the paper.

4.1.2. It was also disappointing to see 39% of candidates unable to score any marks in question 6 where candidates often tried to subtract areas from volumes to try to get a volume and then they failed to find the density of the material when full follow through was given for using their volume from part (a).

4.1.3. In questions where it was important to lay out working in a logical way many candidates presented a page of seemingly random calculations which made it difficult for examiners to reward method marks. Clear setting out of solutions is very important as many candidates do not seem to realise that their examination paper is a vehicle of communication to the person marking their work. This was particularly true in questions 6, 7 and 8.

4.2. INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

4.2.1. **Question 1**

This question was very well understood with 80% of candidates scoring all four marks. A further 9% scored 3 marks for either drawing a graph from their table of values or for plotting at least 5 of their points correctly. There were still far too many candidates just plotting the points and not drawing in the straight line. Only 4% of candidates scored 1 mark or less.

4.2.2. **Question 2**

This question was also well understood with 84% of candidates scoring the mark for an answer of £30 or £30.00. It was disappointing to see that some candidates either could not find 15% of £200 or wrote down the answer as £230 or £170 and could not be awarded the single mark as they had not understood the question.

4.2.3. **Question 3**

This question was not that well attempted on this higher paper with only 49% of candidates able to give the correct answer in (a). Many answers were seen here, the most common being 29.8166666... or 6.00694... which were incorrect. A method mark for 34.6 and/or 2.4 was often gained in part (a) but working was frequently not shown.

In part (b) the understanding of writing to 2 decimal places too was poorly attempted. Many candidates truncated their answer some gave their answer to 2 significant figures and a large number moved the

decimal point 2 places (left or right). It was interesting to note that 29% of candidates scored only 1 mark or no marks on this question which appears regularly on this paper.

4.2.4. Question 4

This was a standard expand and simplify question with a single bracket used in part (a) and two brackets in part (b). It was gratifying to see 42% of candidates obtaining all four marks for the question with a further 23% gaining 3 out of the four marks. The most common errors were for writing 20 – 4 as –16 or 24 in part (a) and only getting 3 out of the 4 terms correct when the two linear terms in *x* were multiplied.

4.2.5. Question 5

Standard form is almost always tested on this paper and it was well understood with 55% of candidates obtaining both marks for a correct answer. A further 15% gained one mark for an incomplete attempt to write the answer correctly with answers of 32×10^9 or 32 000 000 000. A surprising 30% of candidates gained no marks.

4.2.6. Question 6

Fully correct answers to this question were only given by 23% of candidates. In part (a) it was common to see the volume of the 5cm cube being given correctly but then incorrect calculations for the hole were frequently seen. Some candidates thought the hole was a 3 cm cube and not a square prism with length 5cm. Where candidates tried to subtract two sensible volumes they were awarded a mark, however it was quite common to see candidates try to subtract 9cm² away from 125cm³ and therefore achieve no marks.

In part (b) full marks were awarded for dividing the mass of 64 grams by the volume calculated in part (a) and 39% of candidates scored 2 marks usually for doing this. A large number of candidates divided volume by mass or multiplied mass and volume and so gained no credit. It was disappointing to see 39% of candidates gaining no marks at all in this question.

4.2.7. Question 7

This was a very successful question for the 28% of candidates that gained all four marks. In fact though 25% of candidates scored no marks 12% scored the mark for recognising that there were 90° between the tangent and radius of a circle and a further 35% gained two marks for correctly calculating the value of either angle *TOP* or *SOT* or *SOP*. There were a number of valid methods for solving this question and all were awarded marks if the solution was correct. A surprising number of candidates had no understanding of which angle SOB referred to .Often they mentioned angle O which was of course meaningless as there were many angles with this point as a vertex.

4.2.8. Question 8

This question was poorly answered with 62% of candidates gaining no marks at all. Only 0.4% of candidates gained all three marks for a fully correct solution with 25% gaining one mark either for multiplying out both $(x + 1)^2$ and $(y + 1)^2$ correctly or for correctly factorising $x^2 - y^2$. The remaining 13% of candidates gained two marks, usually for obtaining the correct answer to (a) and squaring the two brackets in (b). Very few candidates linked the two parts of the question and the hint in the question of "Hence" was ignored by all but the most able candidates. Here again presentation of clear logical steps was often sadly lacking with candidates work arranged often in random order.

5.   STATISTICS

5.1. MARK RANGES AND AWARD OF GRADE

Unit/Component	Maximum Mark (Raw)	Mean Mark	Standard Deviation	% Contribution to Award
5381F/05	30	20.6	5.1	20
5381H/06	30	19.5	5.7	20
5382F/07	25	14.9	4.0	15
5382H/08	25	13.5	5.5	15
5383F/09	25	13.3	5.0	15
5383H/10	25	14.7	5.6	15

5.2. GRADE BOUNDARIES

The table below gives the lowest raw marks for the award of the stated uniform marks (UMS).

Unit 1 – 5381

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
UMS (max: 55)				48	40	32	24	16
Paper 5381F				26	22	18	14	10
UMS (max: 80)	72	64	56	48	40	36		
Paper 5381H	28	24	18	13	9	7		

Unit 2 Stage 1 – 5382

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
UMS (max: 41)				36	30	24	18	12
Paper 5382F				19	16	13	10	7
UMS (max: 60)	54	48	42	36	30	27		
Paper 5382H	23	19	14	9	7	6		

<u>Unit 2 Stage 2 – 5383</u>

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
UMS (max: 41)				36	30	24	18	12
Paper 5383F				19	15	11	7	3
UMS (max: 60)	54	48	42	36	30	27		
Paper 5383H	23	20	15	10	6	4		

5.3. UMS BOUNDARIES

Maximum Uniform mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
400	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80