Pearson Edexcel

Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9 – 1)
In Mathematics (1MA1)
Foundation (Non-Calculator) Paper 1F

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GCSE Mathematics 1MA1
Principal Examiner Feedback – Foundation Paper 1

Introduction

The paper offered an opportunity for students of all abilities to demonstrate their understanding of a variety of mathematical concepts.
The early questions acted as a good confidence building way into the paper, with many students gaining a good proportion of the early marks.

Lack of careful reading of some of the questions was a cause for concern; particular ones are quoted in the summary below. Also worrying is the number of arithmetical errors that featured in many students' work. Simple application of the four rules was found wanting on many occasions. For example, 10000/8 being seen as 8/10000. Students should be encouraged to check working before being totally satisfied with their answers.

Some students were clearly avoiding tackling questions that involved algebraic techniques. These attempted trial-and-error methods from quite early on in the paper, even for the simpler questions where an algebraic approach was straightforward.

The quality of handwriting from some candidates made their responses difficult to read. Students are advised to avoid rushing through their work.

Areas of the curriculum that need more attention are, Geometric reasoning (Q9b), Describing transformations (Q11), Equation of a straight line (Q11bii), Fractions (Q20), Indices (Q21) Comparison of ratios (Q24) and Factorisation of polynomials (Q26b).

Again, it was pleasing to see many students clearly showing their working and utilising their communication skills when required. This continues to be an area of improvement.

Report on individual questions

Question 1. This first question was generally well answered and served as a good introduction to the paper. Correct answers of $\frac{3}{10}$ or $\frac{30}{100}$ were the most common.

Question 2. This question was usually answered correctly although an answer of 6 (3×2) was a common mistake.

Question 3. Another well answered question with few mistakes. It was pleasing to see most able to follow the correct order of operations.

Question 4. Although 10 and/or 12 were seen more often than not, a number of students failed to gain the mark by offering extra, incorrect values. 6 being the most common seen.

Question 5. Many students failed to score in this question by not simplifying the given expression fully. $3w \times 5t$ and $15 \times wt$ were popular partial simplifications gaining no marks.

Question 6. It was very pleasing to see so many students gaining good marks on this multi-step question. The vast majority gaining 2+ marks. In general, marks were lost through not reading the question carefully. Often just one child was considered, or two adults were included. Another common mistake was to omit the cost of petrol while in other cases it was seen as a cost for each person. Poor arithmetic often denied many full marks, mainly with the addition of two child tickets (the only non-integer), or with an inability to line up integers and non-integers successfully in a column addition method. Some gave the total cost of the trip instead of the change.

The standard of presentation of answers was lacking, in some cases, with little structure or order to what they were doing

Question 7. Part (a) was answered well, the vast majority clearly understanding the concept of mode. In part (b) also, understanding of probability scales and probability in general was good. In (ii), some simply added a cross to the probability scale, failing to quote the actual numerical probability; this gained no marks. Some students are still using terms such as unlikely in terms of describing probability.

Question 8. Part (a) was answered well, with very few failing to score the mark. Candidates performed less well in part (b) with many not collecting the like terms of $3n$ and n together as a first step. Many tried to subtract the n from both sides of the equation either resulting in $2n = 24$ (giving $n = 12$) or $3n = 24$ (giving $n = 8$). In this question, students usually scored no marks or full marks. Some used an embedded solution, with mixed success. Many candidates who achieved full marks did not attempt the algebraic approach and instead simply stated that $3 \times 6 + 6 = 24$, with a correct answer on the answer line.

Question 9. Part (a) was well answered with the vast majority subtracting 70 from 360 to get a correct answer of 290^{o}. However, a great many were unable to give a correct reason for this answer in part (b). The most common incorrect explanation related to a circle "having 360^{o}". Students need to be made aware that such an explanation is not acceptable. Many simply explained how they did it, rather than why e.g. "I subtracted 70 from 360". Students should be reminded that a calculation is not a reason.
In this case "angles at a point sum to 360^{o}" or words to that effect is the reason required.
A common incorrect approach was to work with 180° rather than 360°.

Question 10. Most students correctly worked out that 5 was the greatest number of jars of coffee that could be bought for £23 in part (a). In part (b), a large number of candidates lost the mark as they hadn't read the question carefully enough, missing the word "exactly" in reference to the number of jars to be bought at half price. Many realised that Michael could now buy an extra 11th jar but then lost the mark because they answered 'yes' to the question "Is Michael correct?".

Question 11. Whilst many students correctly wrote down the scale factor of 2 in (a)(i), only a very small minority were able to pinpoint the centre of the enlargement in (ii). Many tried to position their centre either in between the two shaded triangles, in the centre of one of the triangles or on one (or two) of the vertices. In some cases, students who were able to draw lines to intersect at the point of enlargement identified it correctly but missed the mark because they also placed 'X' somewhere else on the graph.
In part (b)(i), accurate drawing of the mirror line was good. Whilst lines drawn with a straight edge are preferred, freehand, dotted or dashed lines were acceptable. In part (b)(ii), unfortunately, very few students were able to give the equation of their line. Common incorrect lines drawn were $x = 4$ or $y = 4$, which in some cases allowed a follow through mark if they stated this as their equation for (ii).

Question 12. Again with this multi-step problem in part (a), it was pleasing to see many students gaining good marks, often 2 or more. In this question, students had to find a sixth and 20% of 120 minutes. When performing calculations of this type it is important for students to show their working, eg $120 \div 6$ or $\frac{20}{100} \times 120$ so that credit can be awarded for correct method if errors are made with accuracy. In solving this problem, some students subtracted 50 from 120 to give 70 minutes and used this as the time spent playing badminton. Arithmetic errors were seen far too often from students when subtracting from 120.
In part (b), many ignored the good work they had done in part (a) and explained that Elana did not get to the café on time because she spent 2 hours at the sports centre making it 3.30pm when she left. This part followed through the working and answer in part (a) and the mark awarded if the reason and working were correct for the time given in (a).

Question 13. Part (a) was answered correctly by the majority of students, reading 60 from the bar chart. Part (b) was answered less well when a certain amount of extrapolation was required from the chart. 210 was a common incorrect answer.
In part (c), it was evident that many students weren't able to accurately read data from a composite bar chart, many reading the number of men as 90, women 200 and children 280 in 2020. The method mark here was awarded for sight of 80 (children) or 200 (men + women) used in a ratio. Many gained this mark but failed to score full marks as a result of incorrect values read from the chart. As a result of not reading the questions correctly, some students wrote an answer of 80 (child) : 90 (men) : 110 (women).

Question 14. Greater success was achieved in part (a) of this question by finding the sum of the distance travelled in one hour (54 miles) and the distance travelled in half an hour (27 miles). It was pleasing however, to see many students correctly quoting the equation distance = speed × time to solve this problem, although accuracy was often lost through incorrect use of the units of time. 54 × 90(mins) or 54 × 1.30 were common errors made.
In part (b), very few students were able to correctly convert from centimetres to kilometres. Many gained one mark for using the scale on the map correctly, 25 000 × 6. Credit was then given for a reasonable attempt at the conversion of 150 000 cm to km, usually just dividing by 1000. Most didn't seem to be clear that they had found a measurement in cm by multiplying by 25 000, those who did include units were more likely to be able to convert correctly as they often spotted that they could convert cm to m then m to km.

Question 15. The diagram proved very useful in getting one correct coordinate, for which one mark was awarded, usually $y = 1$, but rarely was a fully correct answer seen. Whilst many students did use the diagram, drawing the correct line segment, it was also rare to see the correct positioning of the required midpoint. This was often seen placed on the *y*-axis. There were very few instances of candidates using written methods to find the midpoint.

Question 16. Those students who attempted an algebraic solution often picked up good marks, 2 or more, for a correct expression for the perimeter and then equating it to the given value of 52. Simplifying their algebraic expression often proved more difficult and it was not uncommon to see quadratic terms creeping in. Some students assumed all the lengths to be the same and calculated 52/4 gaining no marks.
Some students correctly found the value of x and then failed to answer the question by finding $2x$, the length of DC. Poor arithmetic let many students down in being unable to divide 57 by 6 and hence not being able to achieve the accuracy mark.
Many students did however adopt a trial and improvement approach which usually cost them a great deal of time for little reward.

Question 17. Again, understanding of probability was good and many students gained the full 2 marks in part (a). One mark was awarded for sight of 100 – 30 (= 70) or a correct value for the probability of taking a blue counter. $\frac{3}{4}$ was a common incorrect answer by some of the less able students, assuming there was an equal number of coloured counters. Students should be reminded that expressing a probability as a ratio is not an acceptable form for this answer.
In part (b), the correct answer of 45 was the modal answer, with incorrect methods following no particular pattern. A common incorrect attempt was also to try to share 30 in the ratio 2 : 3.
Part (c) followed through student's answers in (b). Explanations were usually acceptable, such that 25 counters could not be shared equally between red and yellow. It should be noted that just saying '25 can't be divided by 2' gained no credit. Also, students should be aware that any calculations given as evidence in such questions need to be accurate.

Question 18. Many students were unable to make any progress in this question by not reading the question fully and jumping in to either find a half and/or a twelfth of 240 or to divide 240 by 5, then 3 then 2. Those that correctly divided 240 in the ratio 5 : 3 : 2 usually went on to gain good marks. Many scored 3 marks for finding the numbers of cans remaining, 120, 36 and 44 but were then unable to find the required percentage of cola cans remaining. Finding one number as a percentage of another is an area that needs addressing. Those that did find a percentage were often successful by simplifying their fraction of 120/200 to 60/100.

Question 19. The factorising of 500 was usually carried out with the aid of a factor tree diagram, many of which were seen to be fully correct. Failure to gain full marks was usually down to not giving their product of prime factors as powers as requested, often just leaving the factors in a list. Many arithmetical errors in the construction of a factor tree and some misunderstandings in the concept were seen where the sum instead of a product was given. Centres should emphasise here that complete tree diagrams should have each final branch ending in a prime

Question 20. In part (a), those students who dealt with the fractions and whole numbers separately often gained greater success in achieving full marks, although an answer of $3\frac{4}{9}$ was not uncommon.
Although no credit was given for simply converting the mixed numbers to improper fractions, many did so accurately and then were able to convert both to a common denominator with at least one correct numerator to gain one mark. However, the answer following this approach was often left as an improper fraction, $\frac{77}{20}$. Unfortunately, many just added the numerators and the denominators to give an incorrect answer of $\frac{17}{9}$.
Part (b) proved to be a much greater challenge for many students, many tried to concoct means of dividing $2\frac{2}{3}$ by 6 to get $\frac{4}{9}$, a few students however correctly changed $\frac{8}{3}$ to $\frac{24}{9}$ and divided this by 6 to get $\frac{4}{9}$. The most successful approach was $\frac{8}{3} \times \frac{1}{6}$ showing an ability to divide a fraction by a whole number. Some had success by transposing the problem to show that $\frac{4}{9}$ multiplied by 6 is equal to $2\frac{2}{3}$, although $\frac{24}{54}$ was often seen.
Many students seemed to not understand the requirements for this question.

Question 21. It was clear that the rules of indices are known by many students but the application of them was very poor. $(2^{-5} \times 2^{8})$ was often written as 4^3. This had to be carefully marked as 4^3 as a final answer was an acceptable Special Case answer for one mark.
Sometimes 2^{-10} or 2^{16} were seen but rarely both.
Less able students often unsuccessfully tried to evaluate the terms before finding a product or squaring and had little understanding of negative indices. Occasionally 2^3 was seen for the method mark but this was followed by 2^5. Working with negative numbers continues to be a problem with -5+8 being evaluated as 13 or -13. Many worked exclusively with the powers and did not include the base number at all; -5 + 8 = 3 was often seen.

Question 22. It was common to see the digits 128 quoted in the working or in an answer, but rarely was the fully correct answer of 0.00128 seen. Very few seemed to know the rule of finding the product of the numbers and then counting the decimal places in order to position the decimal point. Many used long multiplication techniques, usually to no avail. It was rare to see an answer given in standard form. Method marks were sometimes gained for arithmetic errors in working but with a correctly positioned decimal place.

Question 23. This question was not answered well at all. Sampling techniques were not well understood at this level. Many either multiplied 40 000 by 80 or divided by 15. Attempts to divide 40 000 by 80 often introduced arithmetic errors, some just left 500 as their answer and those that knew to multiply by 15 struggled to do so correctly. Some students tried to work with percentages which rarely gained any credit eg 15%.
Students need to be encouraged to consider the suitability of their answers as some offered answers which were greater than 40 000, the total number of cars produced.

Question 24. Students at this level find the comparing of ratios particularly challenging. The most common error in part (a)(i) was to add the values of *b* in the ratios to give a triple ratio of 1 : 9 : 5 or used some of the numbers in the given ratios and gave an answer of 1 : 3 : 5. Some using a correct common multiple often spoiled their final answer by more arithmetical mistakes. Although (i) was poorly answered many picked up marks for correctly following through with their values for *a*, *b* and *c* in part (ii).
In part (b), few students were able to make significant progress. Those who assigned values to *m*, *n* and *p* were often successful, but this was rare. The substitution of $n = 2m$ into $p = 5n$ was rare also but usually successful when seen. Occasionally answers lost the accuracy mark for an incorrect order of 10 : 1 or for including letters in their final answer, eg. 1n : 10n.

Question 25. This was very poorly answered. The formula and the force both being given meant there was only the need to work out the area by multiplying 4 by 2. Some students still think that when working with area, they need to square the values first before using them to divide into 10 000. Those who correctly worked out the area usually tried to divide 10 000 by 8, for one mark, but often then failed, again through poor arithmetic. Some stated the area as 6 (4 + 2) and therefore gained no credit.

Question 26. There were many trial and improvement attempts to answer part (a) of this question, the majority of which were unsuccessful, however a few did throw up the critical value of 6. Those following an algebraic approach were able to score one mark initially for a correct process to start a solution. Subtracting 3 from both sides was usually successful but multiplying both sides by 2 was often carried out incorrectly by omitting to multiply the 3 by 2 resulting in $5x + 3 > 36$ or $5x + 3 = 36$. A correct first step was often followed by an incorrect second step or no second step at all.
Replacing the inequality by an equality is not penalised but students must remember to replace the inequality for the final answer. Far too often an answer of $x = 6$ was given.
In part (b), the ability to factorise a polynomial was sketchy. Factorisation of the first two terms [eg. $x(x + 10) + 9$] was often seen but this gained no credit.
$(x + 10)(x - 1)$ was also a common incorrect answer seen. Common incorrect answers included $(x + 1x)(x + 9)$ or $(x + 9x)(x + 1)$

Summary

On the evidence of performance on this paper, students need to:

- take greater care when reading the questions. Performance in questions 6, 10b, 12 and 18 in particular was severely affected by this.
- take care when carrying out arithmetic operations and check their working to avoid careless errors.
- write clearly so that correct values quoted are not altered in subsequent working.
- show clear methods of working particularly in basic calculations such as finding fractions or percentages of quantities.
- set their working out clearly, crossing out working that is being replaced.
- be able to convert using metric units of distance.
- be clear on the specific wording required when giving geometric reasoning

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