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Examiners' Report Principal Examiner Feedback

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In Bengali (4CH0) Paper 1

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General comments

About 1,176 candidates were entered for the IGCSE Bengali in January 2018. A good proportion of candidates performed well and scored high marks in the paper. The demand of the paper is generally comparable and slightly more accessible as compared to January 2017 paper. It was evident from marking candidates' samples, back reading and monitoring marking, and the markers' reports.

Candidates had every opportunity to produce good and proper translations. Some key words and phrases helped to discriminate between good and adequate performance of the candidates. Also, a number of outstanding pieces of translations including examples of continuous pieces of writings were evident from a number of responses.

Question 1

Able candidates generally performed well in translating all 5 sentences without any difficulty and scored good marks. However, less able candidates struggled due to the lack of appropriate syntactical and grammatical knowledge in transmitting ideas which was evidenced in 1(b) and 1(c). The average mark recorded was 12.

Question 2

This question was about a trip to St. Marin island of Bangladesh. The Bengali transmission of this passage by the vast majority of candidates was good throughout except that a number of average candidates struggled to transmit fully and used transliterated words and phrases often such as 'hilly', 'camp', 'tribal people', 'timber', 'luggage', 'manoeuvre' and 'local food'. Nevertheless, the stronger candidates performed well and scored good marks. The average mark recorded was 18.

Question 3

This passage is about a young boy who came to the crowded city of Dhaka to earn living and was left alone on a road. Like question 2 this question was again quite accessible to the vast majority of the candidates who performed well in their translation into English. In transmitting the passage, a considerable number of candidates showed their strong abilities in their performances. Only a very small number of candidates struggled to translate the last sentence fully. The average mark recorded was 18.

Question 4

The essay options 4a and 4d were answered well by able candidates. However, 4b and 4c were answered well by the majority of candidates. The able candidates put their viewpoints, feelings, and thoughts coherently and sequentially giving their justifications followed by displaying facts and information, hence scored good marks. Only a very small number of the candidates had written essays in less than the required number of words, the quality and the required relevant information being taken into account; this resulted them in scoring lower marks. The average mark recorded was 26.

There was a requirement of an anticipation of facts, good flow, analysis of points of view and opinion/s. Unfortunately, it was not evident amongst average candidates in general. On quite a few occasions, responses were mainly descriptive. Also, not very many candidates used high level vocabulary or idiomatic phrases or expressions. The manipulation of language was often very basic. The use of syntax and wrong use of verb forms, mismatching of verb endings and the amount of common spelling errors highlighted gave the impression it was the second language for a number of candidates, so they scored less than expected. On the other hand, candidates who fulfilled these criteria and displayed a coherent piece of writing by displaying a variety of structures, a range of vocabulary, obviously scored the top range marks. The average mark recorded for Q4 was 27.

Conclusion

Overall, this paper appeared to be accessible and well balanced. The overall performances of able candidates showed that the standard of literacy, including the transmission skills to and from the target language, has improved on several occasions. This can be attributed to a number of centres having embedded appropriate exam techniques required for this examination. However, less able candidates' performances on average were not as good as expected. This was due to their lack of good grasp of the grammatical knowledge in both English and in the target language, inability to display a range of structures and phrases, manipulation of tense concepts / time frames and common spelling errors. Also, a wide display of transliterated words / phrases were evident in the candidates' performances across the board.

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