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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Introduction

This paper consisted of two sections: A and B. Section A was composed of 5 questions. Section B was composed of 3 questions. Students were allotted one hour and forty-five minutes to complete the questions.

Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4 and Q5 were designed to assess students' abilities to comprehend and utilise information from a range of texts which included multiple choice questions, word drop questions, multiple matching questions, note-taking questions and short answer questions. All the questions were set in English and students had to answer questions in English. English grammatical accuracy was not assessed in this part of the paper. Q6 and Q7 were writing questions. Q8 was the translation question.

Students' Performances

Question 1

There were six multiple choice questions. Each question had four options. The majority of students responded very well in this question with only a very small number of students making mistakes.

Question 2

This was a word drop question. Students were provided with twelve words in a box (plus an example) which they must drop in to complete a correct statement about the stimulus text. This was a new question type for IGCSE. The vast majority of students showed a good understanding of the text and they were able to give at least five correct answers out of six. Some students didn't obtain marks for Q2(b) because the question was a little bit challenging. However, a few students didn't obtain marks for other questions because they failed to read the question.

Question 3

This was a multiple matching question. Students were presented with three paragraphs, each spoken by a different person, and a grid with statements in each row which apply to one or more of the speakers. Students were expected to mark which speaker each statement applied to. Students were expected to identify eight correct answers. The performance in this question was very good. However, some students lost one or two marks because they had ticked either 7 or 9 answers. This suggests that they might have had less practice with examination technique and were not familiar with the question type.

Question 4

This was a note-taking question. Students were expected to read a piece of text and were provided with a short set of notes about the text with 10 gaps to fill. The performance on this question was highly varied. Some students lost marks in Q 4(b) and Q4(f) as expected because of the harder Chinese characters "garden downstairs". However, some students lost marks in Q4(d) unexpectedly because they failed to give the correct answer "around 15 to 16 years old". Instead these students wrote "15 years old" or "16 years old", which was incorrect. Very few students scored very low marks because they were not able to answer questions in English.

Question 5

Students are expected to read a longer passage and to respond to a series of questions in English. The students were required to understand the language of the original text and to use English to show their understanding. The question served as a discriminator between students who had different levels of English and Chinese language skills. For Q5(a), many students failed to obtain marks because they wrote various mis-spelled and unrecognisable versions of the place name "Guangzhou" in English. This was unexpected as "Guangzhou" was included in the Vocabulary List, and so students should have been familiar with both the English and Chinese name. Some students lost marks in Q5(c), Q5(e) and Q5 (f). For Q5(c), students failed to express the idea of "helping themselves" or "self-service" in their responses; for Q5(e), some students failed to convey the key phrase "less than" and for Q5(f), some students did not refer to "quicker" or "faster service" in their responses, often writing instead unrelated sentences that did not make sense as a response. This reflected both a lack of practice with examination technique, with students not including the appropriate level of detail in their responses and a small number of students either not being able to understand the question or answer in English.

For Question 6

Students were required to write 60-75 characters on a topic. Students were aided by four bullet points in both English and Chinese, to which they had to refer in their answer. This response was assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge and Accuracy. The majority of students answered the question quite well, which showed their ability to write about their favourite animal. Even some weaker students performed reasonably well as they could get some support from the reading passages and the bullet points in English. However, a few students failed to write any full sentences. They merely copied the questions out or answered the questions in

note form. A few students did not even attempt the question at all and left the page blank.

Question 7

Students could select one writing task from a choice of three. Students were expected to write a continuous response of 125 -150 characters. Students were also provided with four bullet points in both English and Chinese to help structure their answer, to which they must refer. This response was also assessed for Communication and Content, Linguistic knowledge and Accuracy.

Task 7(a), (b) and (c) seemed to be equally popular this year. The majority of students used the bullet points to form their articles.

Task (a)

The differing complexity of the bullet points given differentiated the writing abilities of students. The performance in this task was generally good. Many able students managed to give a detailed description of a birthday party they attended, expressed their opinions about birthday celebrations and explained how they would like to celebrate their next birthday. However, some students didn't add more sentences to develop their ideas, such as giving and justifying opinions or providing additional details and showing their ability to use a greater range of vocabulary and grammatical constructions in the second and the third bullet points, and hence dropped marks. Some weak students managed to write some simple sentences. Very few students merely copied the questions out or answered the questions in note form. Several students did not even attempt the question at all and left the page blank.

Task (b)

The performance in this task was quite good though fewer students attempted it. Many strong students responded to the bullet points with detailed information about their parents, expressed their opinion about their family relationships and what they could do to make their parents happier. However, a few students failed to respond to the second bullet point properly: instead of expressing opinions on the relationship between himself/herself and his/her parents, the students wrote about the relationship between his/ her parents, and hence dropped marks. Some weaker students only managed to write some very simple sentences.

Task (c)

The majority of students performed quite well on this task with full responses to the bullet points. Strong students were able to express their thoughts on health and diet and demonstrate their range of writing skills; even some weaker students were also able to respond

to all the bullet points with some simple sentences. However, individual students merely copied the questions out or answered the questions in note form.

Question 8

Students were expected to translate four separate sentences from English to Chinese. The majority of students performed well in Q8(a) and Q8(b). A lot of students scored full marks. However, a few students lost one mark as errors in forming the characters for "breakfast" hindered clarity. Some students scored full marks in Q8(c) and Q8(d). However, some students, although able to use mostly accurate linguistic structures and vocabulary in Chinese, lost marks because some of them confused "Chinese school" with "a school in China"; some of them confused "do not go" with "is not able to go/cannot go".

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- In reading tasks, answers should be given to an appropriate level of detail. Marks can be lost for vague answers or answers which do not demonstrate complete understanding.
- In reading tasks, all answers should be based only on the information in the text – no additional information should be necessary.
- In the translation task, students should attempt to translate all characters, vocabulary or phrases in the translation task as leaving out any individual piece of meaning would result in loss of marks.
- Ensure the spellings are correct and syntax is accurate throughout.
- Check the marks available for each question to ensure the correct number of answers have been given and search for the most appropriate/related answers for the questions.
- Take care to read the instructions in the question and be mindful of the requirements in answering: eg give answers in the appropriate language.

