GCSE
GERMAN

8668/LF Paper 1 Listening Foundation Tier
Report on the Examination

Version: 1.0

General Comments

Changes were made to the 2023 papers to reflect the removal of the regulatory requirement to test vocabulary outside of the published vocabulary list.

This was the fourth time that this GCSE examination was taken by a full cohort of students and examiners were pleased to see the progress that they had made in their German studies. The Listening examination differentiated well between lower-attaining and higher-attaining students but there was plenty of evidence to suggest that a good part of the exam was within the reach of most of them and that they understood much of what they heard and were able to respond successfully to the comprehension questions set on the spoken material.

The mean mark on the paper was just over 23/40 (just under 60% of the total mark), an increase of approximately 1.5 marks when compared with the 2022 examination. This suggests that this year's examination was broadly comparable to the examination in 2022. Handwriting was generally legible, although as in previous years it could be very small and difficult to read at times; examiners are only able to mark what they can read. There was very little evidence this year of students leaving questions unanswered but some students' English spelling was poor; fortunately, in most cases comprehension of their answers was not affected.

Questions 1 – 2

These two questions were meant to represent a gentle start to the question paper but the success level was a little disappointing with over one-quarter of students choosing the wrong answer for each question. In this specification, it is not permitted to test single lexical items in isolation, which means that there will always be a distractor or a negative present. The vocabulary used in these questions was very straightforward and examiners had expected more students to discount '*ich hasse Erdkunde*' and '*Sport ist nichts für mich*' than was actually the case.

Questions 3 – 5

Questions requiring verbal answers often have a lower success rate than non-verbal questions and this was the case with this suite of questions. Question 3 required students to give a detailed answer, as indicated by the emboldened word 'exactly'. Many students answered with 'Friday' but failed to add 'evening'. Some thought that *Abend* meant afternoon. A small number of students misread the English question word 'when' as 'why' and gave a reason for her going to the cinema. Just over half of all students scored the mark on question 3. Question 4 was better done with about two-thirds gaining the mark here. A range of appropriate translations of *Krimi* was accepted, but once again there were a number of students who wrote the incorrect distractor (*Liebesfilme*). In both questions 3 and 4, there was some evidence of students writing a correct answer and then contaminating it with an incorrect one, for example 'Friday evening/afternoon' or 'thrillers and love films'. Such answers will always be wrong.

Question 5 was the most successful in this section with nearly three-quarters of students gaining the mark here; '*mit Freunden*' was an accessible phrase for many students, but the singular 'with a friend' was rejected.

Question 6

Question 6.1 was answered correctly by only about one-quarter of students. The vocabulary items which would have led them to a successful answer – either *Dorf* or *mit vielen Geschäften* – were

not known by many of them. There was some evidence of guesswork here as well. It was very disappointing that question 16.2 was answered successfully by fewer than half the students who were entered for this examination; examiners were of the view that *fünfzehn Minuten* would be within the reach of a large majority of GCSE German students and it was surprising to read answers such as '5 minutes', '50 minutes' and even '5 hours'. Question 6.3 was a challenging item too with fewer than one-third of students scoring the mark here. Many of them wrote that the garden was big, despite the clear *nicht* in front of the word *groß*, and the correct answer of the beautiful flowers was not seen as often as examiners would have wished. Again, there was some evidence here of contamination with answers such as 'it is big and has nice flowers' not being creditworthy. A right answer combined with a wrong answer will always be wrong.

Questions 7 – 9

Question 7 was very well answered with significantly more than 80% of students being successful here – the idea of a big group of friends was clearly understood. The vocabulary in question 8 (*zum Lachen bringen, witzig*) challenged more students with a success rate of just less than one-half. Almost 70% gained a mark in question 9 with *streiten* an item of vocabulary that had been well taught during coverage of the friendships element of the specification. These items were designed to be of medium demand and success rates were therefore pleasing.

Questions 10 – 14

With only one exception, there was a good response to these questions which were aimed at the highest grades on the Foundation tier paper. These questions were overlap questions and therefore they also appeared on the Higher tier paper.

Question 10 was successfully answered by over 60% of students. The key vocabulary here is quite challenging – *missbrauchen, glauben* – and this was a pleasing success rate, therefore. A similar number got question 11 correct and again there were some more challenging items of vocabulary used here – *nichts bekommen, verschwunden*. Question 12 had a remarkably similar success rate to its two predecessors, just over 60%. The concept of having to keep up with the ever-changing world of technology was described in language that again would challenge many Foundation tier students (*etwas Neues, wie kann ich lernen?)* but the concept was clearly understood by the majority. The question that was an outlier in this suite of questions was question 13 with fewer than 40% of students gaining the mark here. The word *Freunde* appeared in the German text and 'friends' appears in both option B and F. The concept in the question – the idea of people not reading her posts on social media – was also more challenging and the distractor proved to be a strong pull factor for many students. The final question in this section was the most successful of the five (almost 65% of students gained a mark here), with *internetsüchtig* being a strong pointer to the correct answer.

Question 15

Question 15.1 proved to be a very challenging item with just over 5% of students gaining the mark here. The item of vocabulary which was not well known at all was *gut gelaunt*. A range of acceptable translations is given in the mark scheme but it is the case that a very large majority of students did not know what this phrase means. It is listed in the specification vocabulary list and examiners would expect it to be taught when describing one's own or others' personal characteristics. In the final analysis, only students who know and understand the vocabulary list well will be successful in a listening comprehension exercise of this type. There was lots of guessing here, with all sorts of answers starting with 'good' being given ('good-looking', 'good personality', 'with a good salary' etc).

Question 15.2 was much better done with nearly 80% gaining the mark here. The vocabulary was clearly much more straightforward and students had two opportunities to gain the mark – examiners saw translations of *traditionell* and *altmodisch* in approximately equal measure. Some students chose to give both answers and as they are both correct they were of course rewarded for their efforts.

Question 16

This was a lower-demand item which proved very accessible to many Foundation tier students. Question 16.1 had a success rate approaching 95% because of the straightforward vocabulary (*rauchen, Drogen, Alkohol*) and also the fact that the correct answer was mentioned last, which tends to benefit lower-attaining students. Question 16.2 was less successful with just under 70% of students realising that she is going to start cycling. The distractor was *Fitness-Studio* and a good number of students went for that answer; the fact that it was mentioned after the correct answer also increased its response rate.

Question 17

This was another low-demand item with a very high success rate – over 85%. The last word heard (*Polizist*) was the correct answer and this is clearly a very well-known word.

Question 18

Students responded well to these questions which were targeted at medium demand. Question 18.1 required students to reject *Berge* (and therefore option B) and to move from the vocabulary items *am Strand gesonnt* and *Wasserski gefahren* to the correct answer 'to the seaside'. The fact that three-quarters of students were able to do this is a credit to them. Question 9.2 was very successful with over 90% of students gaining the mark here. Weather-related vocabulary is straightforward in German with many near-cognates (*sonnig, kalt*) and obviously well taught.

Question 19

Although this was a higher-demand item, students' responses to question 19.1 were very pleasing with over 80% of answers being correct. Most students were able to reject the distractor (*Luftverschmutzung*) and understand *Plastikmüll in den Ozeanen*. The mark scheme was generous here, allowing 'plastic' in isolation as this answers the question correctly, and the fact that both *Plastik* and *Ozean* are cognates helped raise the success rate for this question. Question 19.2 was less well answered, however, with many students not understanding the key idea of buying products with less packaging. Some students wrote 'packaging' in isolation, which clearly does not answer the question, and there were plenty of guesses about changing packaging, recycling packaging, using better packaging etc. - *weniger* was the word that many students did not understand. There was an alternative answer here ('separate rubbish') but this was seen less often.

Questions 20 – 21

These two questions were overlap questions and so they also appeared on the Higher tier paper. The format is familiar from previous examinations and these questions test students' ability to understand different time frames and to listen for detail. These questions are aimed at higher-attaining Foundation tier students and are designed to be more challenging. That notwithstanding, responses to question 20 were disappointing with very few students understanding *Deutschheft* which examiners had believed would be a well-known item of vocabulary. The German school grading system was also unknown by many students, despite its inclusion in the vocabulary lists in

the specification, and therefore not many students wrote that Maximilian was likely to fail or do badly in his English test the following week. Very few students indeed scored both marks here, and only about 20% scored one mark.

Question 21 was answered more successfully with about one-quarter of students gaining both marks and nearly one-half of them gaining one mark, ie nearly three-quarters of students gaining at least one mark. *Kunstgalerie* was understood by many students and the majority of those who gained one mark gained it here. The exchange trip to the partner school in England was less well understood, perhaps because the vocabulary was more challenging (*Austausch, Partnerschule*), but perhaps also because regrettably international links between schools are less common nowadays.

Question 22

This was a longer piece of German targeted at higher-achieving Foundation tier students and therefore it was very pleasing to see a good or very good success rate, especially with some of the more challenging vocabulary contained in this question. Question 22.1 had the lowest success rate in this section, with about 55% of students getting the mark. The strong distractor *Suppenküche* and the challenging vocabulary item *spenden* were presumably reasons for this. Question 22.2 relied on students understanding *Bettler* and/or *obdachlos* and it was very good to see over 80% of students gaining the mark here. Question 22.3 was also designed to be more challenging with a multi-clause statement '*Ich habe beschlossen, meine alten Bücher online zu verkaufen, um sie zu unterstützen',* and the 70%+ success rate was therefore very gratifying. The topic of social problems is one of the more challenging ones in the specification and teachers have clearly prepared their students well for questions on it. It should be remembered that nearly all topics in the specification will be tested in each examination series and teachers who cover the specification vocabulary in full are providing their students with every opportunity to do well.

Question 23

This was the first question in Section B. It was a selection style question where students had to choose the four correct answers from eight possibilities. The passage heard was a longer one and the options were all mentioned, some as types of music the speaker liked and some as types of music that he did not like. Students responded very positively to this question which in essence tested vocabulary to express opinions. Over 30% scored all four marks, a similar number scored three and a similar number again scored two marks. Not far off 95% of all students scored at least two marks, therefore, and fewer than 1% of students failed to score at all on this question. There were a few instances where students had not attempted to complete all the boxes or where they had written the same answer more than once.

Question 24

This was a question of two halves. Question 24.1 was reasonably well answered with over 60% success rate. Students who understood that *Spinat, Blumenkohl* and *Zwiebeln* are all vegetables and chose *Gemüse* as their answer were rewarded. Far fewer students (less than one-quarter of them) were able to understand *Käse* and *Joghurt* and choose dairy products (*Milchprodukte*) in Question 24.2. The strong distractor *Bonbons* (option A in this question) was heard after the correct answer and this clearly contributed to a large number of students choosing the wrong answer, combined with the more challenging vocabulary *schmecken mir immer noch*.

Question 25

The final question on this paper also differentiated well between Foundation tier students with just over half of the students able to understand *Pferde* and *Reiten* and choose the correct answer to Question 25.1 which combined the two words into one. Question 25.2 was less successful with fewer than 20% getting this question correct; students had to deal with a negative question (the sport that Ben does not do any more), realise that *Hallenbad* relates to swimming and understand that *deshalb habe ich keine Zeit mehr* means that he no longer does that sport. Only the most able Foundation tier students were able to navigate their way successfully to the correct answer.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.