GCSE
CHINESE (MANDARIN)
8673/LF Paper 1 Listening Foundation Tier
Report on the Examination

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 GCSE examination has now been taken by a full cohort of students for the third time. It is encouraging to witness the progress made by students despite the challenges posed by the pandemic years. Once again, the Listening examination effectively differentiated between students, with ample evidence demonstrating that many of them comprehended a significant portion of the spoken material and successfully responded to the associated questions. Although the English handwriting in the answers was generally legible, there were instances where it was quite small and difficult to read. Additionally, there was noticeable evidence of poor English spelling among some students, particularly those who are English as an Additional Language students, but fortunately, in most cases, it did not impact on the comprehensibility of their answers. Furthermore, there were students who left questions unanswered.

In light of these observations, it is important for teachers to continue reminding students of the following tips:

- Listen to the entire utterance before writing down your answer.
- Pay close attention to the words that have been emboldened.
- Identify questions that have multiple parts.
- Write down option letters carefully and neatly.
- Ensure that answers are written within the appropriate numbered lines or sections.
- Avoid providing alternatives or unnecessary additional information.
- Clearly cross out answers that you do not want to be marked.
- Answer all questions to the best of your knowledge and avoid leaving questions unanswered.

Questions 1-2

These introductory questions were designed to be accessible to most students, and the vast majority answered them correctly. The specification for the exam states that individual lexical items should not be tested in isolation, which means that there will always be a distractor or negative element, such as 一个 or 没有去, included. Therefore, students should be trained to listen attentively for such elements and to promptly eliminate them as potential answers.

Question 3

More than half of the students were able to identify one detail in this question. The most recognised word was 小, while 漂亮 appeared unfamiliar to some students.

Question 4

This question received very good responses, with the majority of students understanding 大学生 and 去台湾, and selecting the correct answers for 04.1 'She is studying' and 04.3 'abroad'. However, less than half of the students answered 04.2 correctly, indicating a lack of understanding of both 唱歌 and 弹吉他.

Questions 5-7

There were variations in performance within this section.

The majority of students performed well in Question 5. Answers such as 'learn to cook rice' or 'have cooking rice lessons' were accepted due to the dual meaning of 做饭 ('to cook' and 'to cook rice').

Question 6 received the highest success rate among the questions in this section. Students were expected to identify the nationality of the chef, and it was evident that a significant number of students correctly recognised the term 美国人.

On the other hand, Question 7 proved to be the least successful in this section. It is surprising to discover that over 90% of the students were unable to earn a mark by identifying the date, 4 月 15 日.

Question 8

This question elicited a strong performance, with the vast majority of students earning at least one mark. Many students accurately wrote 'listen to music' for 听音乐, which is a highly accessible activity. However, some confusion arose with the phrase 看足球, as many students understood 看 but failed to associate it with 足球, resulting in an inability to earn the second mark. Several incorrect answers, such as 'watch films', 'watch videos', or 'read', indicated educated guesswork.

Question 9

This question was designed to be accessible, being based around the familiar topic of school subjects. However, 09.1 did not elicit strong responses, as many students struggled to provide an acceptable reason. Answers like 'he wants a job', 'work', or 'he wants to go to China' were not deemed acceptable due to their lack of specificity. In contrast, 09.2 exhibited a higher success rate, with nearly half of students providing the correct answer. It was observed that many students mistakenly identified 地理 as 'history'.

Questions 10-12

This set of questions was generally well executed, particularly questions 10 and 11.

Question 10 proved to be the most successful in this section, as nearly 95% of students were able to identify the key vocabulary related to family members, 爸爸 and 妈妈, along with the corresponding affirmative and negative expressions in the past time frame using 去了 and 没去.

It was pleasing to observe that Question 11, which included a country 法国 as a distractor and a spoken language 英语, was correctly answered by most students.

However, Question 12 posed a significant challenge for the vast majority of students, resulting in 82% incorrect answers, and nearly 11% of students failing to attempt an answer. This indicates that the usage of modal verbs 可以 and 能 was not well understood by many students.

Questions 13-15

These questions aimed to directly assess vocabulary, with each speaker providing the answer along with some contextual information. They were intended to be easily understandable for the majority of students, and it was gratifying to see that approximately 60% of students succeeded in Question 13, and 74% in Question 14. It was evident that 农村 and 商店 were reasonably well known. In Question 15, it is unfortunate that many students fell for the distractor 公共汽车, but it is still commendable that 43% of students correctly chose the answer 火车.

Questions 16-17

This section of the advantage and disadvantage question was an overlap question, appearing on both the Foundation and Higher papers. Consequently, it was designed to challenge students at the top end of the Foundation Tier. The section required students to identify the advantages 同事们…友好 and 免费的午餐, as well as the disadvantages 办公室...旧 and 工资不高. Only the most able students were able to answer correctly. The adjective 旧 proved unfamiliar to many students, leading them to mistakenly associate it with 'small' or 'crowded'. Additionally, there were several incorrect answers resulting from students failing to place their answers in the appropriate boxes. Teachers should remind their students to exercise caution when encountering this type of advantage and disadvantage question, specifically emphasising the importance of not inadvertently placing an advantage in the disadvantage answer box or vice versa.

Question 18

This multiple-choice non-verbal response question targeted proficient students and focused on vocabulary related to numbers, early and late, and rooms on a ferry. The performance varied among students: 18.1 was answered correctly by over 82% of students, while 18.3 had a lower success rate with less than half of students choosing the correct answer. However, 18.2 proved to be the least well-answered question, with 84% of students giving incorrect responses. Students should be reminded to carefully read the questions, as in the case of 18.2 where the question asked for the 'latest departure time' rather than the earliest, which was given as a distractor in the announcement. This seemed to pose genuine difficulties for many students and contributed to the high percentage of incorrect answers.

Question 19

This was another overlap question on both the Foundation and Higher papers, with a specific focus on assessing students at the higher end of the Foundation Tier. It required students to identify the elements 红衣服, 游戏, and 新鲜的烤鱼. While both 19.1 and 19.2 were answered well, it was disappointing to see that only a quarter of students recognised 鱼 from the seemingly unexpected term 烤鱼. It is also noteworthy that many students failed to identify 好吃, an adjective that is typically familiar to them, which could have led them to speculate that 19.3 pertained to something related to food. Moreover, the only multiple-choice option associated with food was 'fresh fish'.

Question 20

This question was specifically designed to assess students' comprehension of time frames and weather vocabulary. It is crucial for students to be aware that they need to listen attentively for time expressions such as 今天, 昨天 and 明天. In this question, students generally found it easier to associate 'rainy' with 'today' than 'hot' with 'yesterday'. However, there were cases where students

erroneously wrote their answers in the wrong boxes for the wrong day. Moreover, many answers of 'sunny' were rejected, which was unfortunate for some students who genuinely understood 'hot' for yesterday but assumed it meant a sunny day. It is important to note that high temperatures do not necessarily indicate a sunny day.

Question 21

This question effectively tested students' ability to listen for details and yielded the anticipated outcome, with 98% of students achieving at least one mark and 47% scoring three or more. While 喝水 and 睡觉 were more familiar to students, 晒太阳 and 吃药 were less well-known, effectively distinguishing between students' levels of knowledge.

Question 22

As an overlap question, the response to this two-part question, which targeted higher grades on the Foundation Tier paper, was reasonably satisfactory. It was well received by students who are familiar with this type of question. Both parts of the question posed high demand and effectively differentiated between students' abilities. In 22.1, more than half of students successfully drew the conclusion from the numerous activities mentioned and gave the answer 'too many distractions' while doing school work. 22.2 was relatively more accessible, likely due to the clues provided by the commonly known school subject 科学课 and the widely recognised negative opinion expressed by 没意思. They made it easier for students to reach the conclusion 'lack of interest in a subject'.

Question 23

This final question was deliberately crafted to be an accessible end to the paper and nearly half of the students managed to gain a mark from each part of the question. Although it may seem that teachers and students could have dedicated more revision time to clothing-related vocabulary, it is satisfying to note that the majority of students correctly identified the colour of the speaker's favourite clothing item as 'white', despite the inclusion of the distractor 黑色 being mentioned as well.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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