GCSE
CHINESE (MANDARIN)
8673/LH Paper 1 Listening Higher Tier
Report on the Examination

8673/LH
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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

Higher Tier students answered these overlap questions more successfully than Foundation Tier students. Over a third of students scored both marks for both questions because they were able to answer in sufficient detail, such as mentioning 'friendly colleagues' for 同事们友好 and 'low salary' for 工资不高. 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 3

This overlap section was also considerably more accessible at Higher Tier. In question 03.1, over 94% of students were able to identify 红衣服 for 'wearing red'. In question 03.2, over 80% of students were able to correctly infer that the word 游戏 refers to 'a party game'. Question 03.3 was still challenging for some students at this tier, but 76% were able to understand the meaning of the expression 新鲜的烤鱼好吃, and correctly link it to the multiple-choice option 'fresh fish'.

Question 4

This was another overlap question, also appearing on the Foundation paper, so it was a question of low demand at this higher tier. It used more commonly known items of vocabulary and grammar, which were taken from the Foundation Tier lists, as well as the common expressions for days such as 今天, 昨天, and 明天. Although 台风 was mentioned, it was set as the example answer and not tested. This question was answered well, with weather forecasts scoring particularly highly. A few students were unsure of the phrase 不得了, mistaking it as negative and responding to yesterday with 'not hot'.

Questions 5-6

These medium-demand questions discriminated well across students at this tier, with Question 6 achieving a slightly higher success rate. Question 5 proved a little more challenging, most likely because it required careful listening to the whole utterance. The utterance compares remote learning at home to going to school, and students who did not listen carefully and focused on single words or phrases, eg 去学校, incorrectly chose C, "going to school," as an option. In Question 6, the significant majority of students were able to understand the 除了…也… pattern, but a small proportion incorrectly answered C, which excluded football.

Question 7

This selection-style question was a lower-demand item at Higher Tier. 38% of students scored all three marks, and over 43% scored two marks, but cumulatively over 99% of students scored at least one mark. Options B and C were the most popular, probably because the food items used in the question were straightforward: 米饭, 鸡蛋 and 青菜. However, the information that the rice was cooked yesterday from 昨天做的米饭, was not taken into account by many students, who were unable to conclude that this main ingredient was pre-cooked.

Questions 8-10

This section discriminated well between students.

Question 8 was very accessible, and about three-quarters of students provided the awardable answer, showing their knowledge of mileage. However, quite a few students mistakenly thought that the answer required was the length of time for traveling, and gave the wrong answer of '32 minutes'.

Surprisingly, more than half of students found Question 9 challenging. They were unfamiliar with directions and the term 'traffic light' 红绿灯. Many students were unsure of the answer to the question, and some guessed incorrectly, responding with 'red stop and green go'.

Question 10 was a high demand question and produced the expected outcome. 自行车 was widely known to most students, so it was answered well with a high proportion of students giving the correct answer.

Questions 11-13

Students are familiar with this type of question and understand the importance of completing the sentence with a phrase that provides enough information to earn marks.

Question 11 did not perform as well overall as expected, with only 57% of students scoring the mark. This was largely because many students were caught out by the distractor 二十多 and misunderstood it as the number of years. As a result, there were many answers stating that the speaker's parents had been married for over 20 years, which was incorrect. Only answers that clearly indicated that the parents had been married for '40 years' or 'since they were in their 20s' received credit.

Question 12 met with mixed success. Nearly 65% of students understood the meaning of the word 安全 and connected it to the speaker's living environment provided by his parents, which was described as 'safe' or 'protected. Unfortunately, some students mistakenly thought that 安全 meant 'quiet' or 'peaceful', leading to a failure in scoring.

Question 13 had a higher success rate, with 70% of students answering correctly. Precise answers described the speaker inviting his parents to visit 'their grandson' or 'his son'. However, there were some incorrect answers that failed to clarify that it was the speaker's child, not his parents' that was being referred to. Additionally, some students struggled with using appropriate pronouns for the child in their responses.

Questions 14-17

The P / N / P+N style questions are a common feature on AQA GCSE MFL question papers. Students have clearly been well trained by their teachers on how to answer them. There was a high degree of success here.

Question 14 was answered successfully by nearly 90% of students, with the key words 难看 and 但是不难吃 being well understood. Question 15 was the most straightforward, with vocabulary such as 新东西 and 新朋友 leading 94% of students to the correct answer. Question 16 contained the obvious clues to a P+N answer, such as 喜欢, 可是, 无聊, which were clearly understood by many students with over 77% correct answers. Question 17 was another successful item with nearly 84% of students answering correctly, despite the more challenging language used, such as 做给别人看, 不是真想, 是不对的.

Question 18

This section, which consisted of high demand questions, caused difficulties for many students at this tier. All four written English answers had to be given following a single section of recording, with each answer worth one mark. Around a third of students didn't score any marks at all on this 4-mark question. Teachers are advised to do more practice with their students to train them to answer this type of open response question with extended text, which is an Ofqual requirement.

In 18.1, a variety of student responses to 科学馆 were accepted for the first place to be visited, such as science hall, science lab, or science exhibition. However, it is interesting to note that quite a few students mistook 参观 as canteen or restaurant. When responding to the second place, many students interpreted this from their own perspective and gave answers such as 'where we live' or 'our houses' or 'dorm.' However, some mistakenly thought the accommodation referred to was for university staff rather than students, which was not accepted.

18.2 was answered less well, possibly because the sentence was long and 生物学 proved an unfamiliar word to many. Nearly 6% of students unfortunately left their answer blank without

attempting to answer the question. Once again, teachers should advise their students to focus on the key ideas and avoid writing long answers due to the time limit. They should also answer the question to the best of their knowledge or understanding, and even include educated guesses if they are unsure, since skipping questions will inevitably result in no marks being awarded.

Question 19

This was a high-demand question that only the most able students answered correctly. It required a detailed understanding of what was said and an ability to provide sufficient detail in answers in order to be credited. 37% of students scored both marks and 19% scored one mark.

More students answered the Advantage question, which was easier because it used more accessible vocabulary like 吃 and 海鲜.

The Disadvantage question was more challenging. Many students understood the phrases 没有大山 and 没有冬天, and provided acceptable answers such as 'no mountains' or 'no winter', either of which was creditable. However, the phrase 想要高山滑雪的朋友就不要去了 generated a lot of different interpretations. Some students wrote that 'his friends don't want to go', 'he can't go with friends' or 'you can't make friends', which were all incorrect.

This high-demand question differentiated between strong and very strong students. It is likely that only the top-performing students would be able to answer this question correctly.

Question 20

Students are to be commended for their strong performance in this table-matching question. They demonstrated an excellent ability to listen to three speakers and remain focused throughout. Between 74% and 88% of students answered the three multiple-choice questions correctly. This suggests that the vast majority of students are familiar with the words 新房子, 公共交通 and 太吵了.

Questions 21-23

These were further examples of well-handled questions by students who are clearly comfortable with the topic of mobile technology. The high percentage of correct answers – 82% for Question 21, 90% for Question 22, and a significant 94% for Question 23 – in which students correctly identified that 好相机, 拍照, and 得漂亮 refer to a high-quality camera, attests to the students' listening skills, comprehension skills, and vocabulary knowledge. It is also a further testament to the effectiveness of the table-matching format as a way of assessing these skills.

Question 24

This question had a mixed success rate. Just over half of the students got both details about Chinese actors in Question 24.1 correct, understanding the words 年轻 and 好看. Another 36% understood one of these words. Question 24.2 was answered correctly by about one third of students, who understood both qualities of British actors, 有经验 and 有名. The remaining third of students did not get any marks. While 好看 and 有名 are more accessible words, students were less familiar with 年轻 and 有经验. There were some amusing guessed answers here, with some students saying that Chinese actors are young and good-looking, while British actors are old and ugly!

Question 25

This overlap question was answered well at Higher Tier, with a significantly high proportion of students scoring in each question. In 25.1, 94% of students successfully drew the conclusion from the numerous activities mentioned and gave the answer 'too many distractions' while doing schoolwork. 25.2 was also very 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. As a result, 95% of students reached the conclusion that the answer was 'lack of interest in a subject'.

Question 26

This was the final overlap question, and it was understandably answered more successfully on the Higher Tier paper than on the Foundation Tier paper. More than three-quarters of students got 26.1 correct, and 83% were successful on 26.2. Students seemed to have revised well the vocabulary of clothes and colours, as they were able to rule out the distractors 衣服 and 皮带 in 26.1, as well as 黑色 in 26.2. It is also pleasing to observe that the majority of students correctly identified the use of the superlative 最 before 喜欢 to be equivalent to the key question word 'favourite'.

Question 27

This question was straightforward for a wide range of students overall, despite some relatively challenging vocabulary on global poverty issues. In 27.1, which was answered correctly by over 81% of students, the vocabulary items 战争 and 饥饿 are less frequently covered in textbooks. As an exam strategy, one way to help students ensure that C is chosen as the correct option would be to eliminate the unlikely options, such as 'the pandemic' in Option A, or a clearly affirmative spoken sentence with 有 which allows students to disregard 'lacking of' in Option B. In 27.2, an impressive 91% of students correctly answered by choosing Option A, as the keyword 干净的水 clearly provided enough of a clue.

Question 28

This final open-response question was inspired by an interview with British professional tennis player Emma Raducanu, who is known for being half-Chinese and able to speak Mandarin. It was designed to test students' understanding of detail and was of medium level of demand. It also served the purpose of differentiation, as just over a third of students achieved all four marks, while 14-18% each scored between 1 and 3 marks.

The answer about Emma's dad required an understanding of 欧洲人. Many students, presumably native Chinese speakers, answered 'Australian' because they confused it with 澳洲人. Both words do indeed sound very similar.

The answer about Emma's mum required students to provide sufficient detail. Answers such as 'hard working' or 'busy working' were not accepted, as they did not provide enough information. The correct answer should reflect the meaning of 工作很长时间.

The answer about Emma's grandma was generally answered well, but some students did not provide enough detail. 很会做饭 was often rendered as simply 'cook', which was not specific enough. The correct answer should have been something like 'good at cooking'.

The most common mistake made by students answering the question about Emma herself was to respond with 'watch TV' without providing any further detail. This was considered too vague, as it did not specify what kind of TV shows Emma likes to watch. However, many students who did not mention 'TV' were still awarded a mark because they correctly identified the key detail that Emma likes to watch Taiwanese programmes.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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