

Mathematics

Level 1 09865

Level 2 09866

OCR Report to Centres

September 2011

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This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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Functional Skills Mathematics Level 1 (09865)

Report on the work of the candidates

Many, but not all, candidates had access to a calculator and many showed clear working to support their answers. A few candidates wrote, “used calculator” beside their answers but showed no working. This gained no credit where an answer was clearly incorrect and no method could be seen or where evidence was needed to support an answer.

All candidates appeared to have adequate time to answer the paper.

Most candidates used clear and correct money notations. However, a few still write figures without £ or pence being indicated and some answers such as £4.5 rather than £4.50. Some candidates made the error of writing £4.05 rather than £4.50.

A few candidates showed checks of their work to score 2 marks in some tasks. A reasonable number of candidates scored 1 mark in each task for completing three or more correct calculations throughout the task. Some candidates wrote, “checked” or “checked with calculator” after their solutions. This failed to score the checking marks as no evidence for the check was presented.

Many candidates could solve ratio problems using a method of listing, in this case, numbers of apple trees and pear trees. More able candidates used standard methods. Significant numbers of candidates did not show numbers they were using in calculations which prevented them from scoring higher marks.

Where scale diagrams were required, some candidates showed clear diagrams, but a common error was to misinterpret scale. Candidates had difficulty where they drew in pen and then attempted to correct an answer. A pencil and rubber are essential when solutions need to be drawn.

Some candidates misread information and assumed values that were not true. For example, some candidates misread an activity clearly stated as taking place 5 days per week as taking place on all 7 days of the week.

Averages were often used well by candidates to compare data but some candidates could only produce totals. Candidates did not always make it clear which average they were using.

More able candidates coped well with changing time units.

Candidates need to remember that for a holiday, a return journey is required as well as an outward journey.

Guidance for Centres

- Candidates have up to 2 marks available in each task for checking their work. These marks may be earned for employing any checking procedure at an appropriate point in the task. Such procedures could be: working out the calculation by an alternative means, approximating the figures or using a reverse calculation. It would be in the interest of candidates to practise such procedures.
- Candidates should use a calculator in the assessment but should also practise recording, ordering and annotating their working.
- Candidates need to be secure with converting between common units, especially time but also units of length, such as centimetres and metres.
- Candidates should know correct money conventions.
- Candidates should practise responding to questions that require them to make and explain decisions and support their answers with evidence. They should realise that, where a significant number of marks are available, calculations and data should be used to support their reasoning.
- Candidates should practise reading and interpreting questions and selecting necessary information from another source.

Functional Skills Mathematics Level 2 (09866)

Report on the work of the candidates

With a few exceptions the three tasks for this assessment all proved to be accessible to candidates, the exceptions being those candidates wrongly entered. As with previous level 2 functional skills mathematics assessments, centres are still entering candidates who would have been more appropriately entered for the level 1 assessment. There are, of course, the additional demands placed on candidates, in order to demonstrate functionality and to demonstrate their ability to read and interpret information presented in various forms.

Guidance for Centres

As with previous assessments there are some common weaknesses which can be identified and which centres need to address in their teaching. These include:

- Converting between different metric units with the associated demands of knowing that, for example, there are 1000 metres in a kilometre. Conversions will require some understanding of the place value system and the ability to multiply and divide by powers of 10.
- Ensuring that candidates have some appreciation of “everyday facts and figures”. For example being able to state a reasonable weight that an average person can lift off the ground or lift to place in a luggage rack, or knowing roughly how long a person’s stride or pace is, or what volume of liquid an average cup or mug holds.
- Ensuring that candidates appreciate for example, that night time could span any time between 6pm and 8am and should include a period containing midnight in to the early hours of the morning.
- Ensuring that candidates understand the need to explain or justify their answers or at least give reasons for their assumptions
- Developing the ability of candidates to read and interpret information provided in tables – including timetables.
- Ensuring that candidates check their answers; and provide evidence of this. calculation
- Centres should ensure candidates have access to calculators.

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