

GCSE Examiners' Report (Legacy)

Mathematics – Numeracy
GCSE (Legacy)
Summer 2026

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Introduction

Our Principal examiners' report provides valuable feedback on the recent assessment series. It has been written by our Principal Examiners after the completion of marking, and details how candidates have performed in each unit.

This report opens with a summary of candidates' performance, including the assessment objectives/skills/topics/themes being tested, and highlights the characteristics of successful performance and where performance could be improved. It then looks in detail at each unit, pinpointing aspects that proved challenging to some candidates and suggesting some reasons as to why that might be.¹

The information found in this report provides valuable insight for practitioners to support their teaching and learning activity. We would also encourage practitioners to share this document – in its entirety or in part – with their learners to help with exam preparation, to understand how to avoid pitfalls and to add to their revision toolbox.

Further support

Document	Description	Link
Professional Learning / CPD	WJEC offers an extensive programme of online and face-to-face Professional Learning events. Access interactive feedback, review example candidate responses, gain practical ideas for the classroom and put questions to our dedicated team by registering for one of our events here.	https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/
Past papers	Access the bank of past papers for this qualification, including the most recent assessments. Please note that we do not make past papers available on the public website until 12 months after the examination.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page
Grade boundary information	Grade boundaries are the minimum number of marks needed to achieve each grade. For unitised specifications grade boundaries are expressed on a Uniform Mark Scale (UMS). UMS grade boundaries remain the same every year as the range of UMS mark percentages allocated to a particular grade does not change. UMS grade boundaries are published at overall subject and unit level. For linear specifications, a single grade is awarded for the subject, rather than for each unit that contributes towards the overall grade. Grade boundaries are published on results day.	For unitised specifications click here: Results, Grade Boundaries and PRS (wjec.co.uk)

¹ Please note that where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

Exam Results Analysis	WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC Portal. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.	Portal by WJEC
Classroom Resources	Access our extensive range of FREE classroom resources, including blended learning materials, exam walk-throughs and knowledge organisers to support teaching and learning.	https://resources.wjec.co.uk/
Bank of Professional Learning materials	Access our bank of Professional Learning materials from previous events from our secure website and additional pre-recorded materials available in the public domain.	Portal by WJEC or on the WJEC subject page.

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Executive Summary

Candidates generally engaged well with the assessments across all six units, with most attempting the majority of questions. As in previous examination series, candidates were generally more successful with the questions in the first half of each paper before progressing to the more demanding questions later in the assessments. Overall, candidate performance at Foundation and Intermediate Tier was broadly similar to that seen in Summer 2025, while performance at Higher Tier showed an improvement on the previous summer series.

Candidates demonstrated secure understanding of a range of mathematical and numeracy skills across all tiers. Areas that were generally well answered included calculations involving percentages in familiar contexts, best-buy and value for money problems, Pythagoras' Theorem and routine statistical calculations. Many candidates also demonstrated confidence in carrying out standard calculations and applying familiar mathematical procedures in straightforward contexts.

Across all tiers, however, there continued to be evidence of gaps in candidates' mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills. Candidates found greater difficulty when required to apply their knowledge in less familiar or multi-step contexts, particularly where several mathematical processes were needed to solve a problem. Percentage calculations remained an area requiring improvement, especially when expressing one quantity as a percentage of another, calculating percentage profit, applying percentage increases and working with reverse percentages.

Interpreting scales accurately on graphs and diagrams also proved challenging for many candidates, particularly where scales did not increase in single units. Difficulties were also evident when interpreting pie charts, histograms and other statistical diagrams, with many candidates unable to extract or apply the information presented correctly. Converting between units continued to present difficulties for a number of candidates, including conversions involving metric units, time, volume and currency. Errors in non-calculator arithmetic, particularly multiplication and division, also prevented some candidates from making further progress in otherwise well-structured solutions.

Premature rounding and failing to give answers to the required degree of accuracy resulted in the unnecessary loss of marks across a number of units. Centres are encouraged to continue emphasising the importance of retaining full calculator accuracy throughout calculations and carefully checking the degree of accuracy requested before giving a final answer.

Centres should continue to provide opportunities for candidates to develop confidence in applying mathematical knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts, with particular emphasis on interpreting graphs and statistical diagrams, carrying out accurate unit conversions, using efficient percentage methods and solving multi-step problems.

Our digital resources website offers blended learning lessons and knowledge organisers, among other materials. Please ensure you are accessing the correct site with legacy resources (link [here](#)) and not the sister site for the new Made-for-Wales qualification.

MATHEMATICS - NUMERACY

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UNIT 1 FOUNDATION TIER

Overview of the Unit

Most candidates attempted all questions. Candidates were more successful with many of the earlier questions than with the later questions in the paper, as is expected.

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Understanding how to approximate and estimate (Q1)
- Finding volume from a diagram of centimetre cubes (Q2a)
- Reading scales on graphs where 1 square does not represent 1 unit (Q5, 9)
- Ratio (Q7b)
- Converting from fractions to percentages (Q8d)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:

- Working with calendar dates (Q2b)
- Finding the modal option from a table (Q2c)
- Naming 2-D shapes (Q3b)
- Interpreting Venn Diagrams (Q8)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Question 1

Many candidates did not correctly read or interpret the instruction, '*By approximating the cost of each item...*', and consequently simply added the four values together instead of estimating them first. As this was a non-calculator paper, these additions were also frequently carried out incorrectly.

Question 2

Very few candidates were able to calculate the volume by counting the cubes in part **(a)**. Of those who attempted this method, many counted the visible **faces** rather than the whole cubes, leading to incorrect answers.

Although part **(c)** was generally well-answered, some candidates incorrectly identified the modal colour as pink and red because both had a frequency of 9. They did not recognise that gold was the modal colour, as it had the highest frequency.

Question 3

In part **(a)(i)**, the most common error was in calculating the number of hours each child was looked after in one day. For example, many candidates stated that Toby was looked after for 9 hours rather than the correct 8 hours (from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Some candidates also demonstrated confusion over the number of days in the stated periods, treating Monday to Friday as 2 days instead of 5, and Monday to Thursday as 2 days instead of 4.

In part **(c)**, some candidates correctly calculated the area and selected the 'No' box, but did not state the area they had found. As a result, they were only awarded 1 mark.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to calculate $\frac{1}{4}$ of 2800, typically by halving and then halving again. While many candidates correctly calculated 15% of 2800, some instead found 15% of 2100. A common difficulty was determining the number of months required to save the remaining amount. A few candidates simply counted up in £200 increments to reach £2800, without taking into account the money that had already been saved or received.

Question 5

The main difficulty in part (a) was reading the scale on the horizontal axis accurately. Many candidates gained marks for the first two values in the table but struggled to identify the final two values correctly. In part (b)(iii), those who attempted the question often gave their answer as $\frac{18}{60}$ but did not simplify the fraction fully.

Question 6

Many candidates were able to calculate the cost of 1.5 kg of carrots but struggled to recognise the relationship between 40 g and 120 g, and therefore were unable to determine the cost of 40 g of green beans correctly.

Some candidates correctly calculated the cost of 0.5 kg of onions but did not then double this amount to find the cost of 1 kg.

Question 7

A few candidates gained some credit in part (a) by correctly calculating $1000 \div 20$ but many struggled to calculate $1750 \div 70$. Part (b) was answered less successfully by Foundation Tier candidates, with many of those who attempted the question beginning by incorrectly calculating $1750 \div 10$.

Question 8(d)

Many candidates struggled to calculate one number as a percentage of another. Those who attempted the question often left their answer as the fraction $\frac{6}{40}$ or its simplified form, $\frac{3}{20}$, rather than converting it to a percentage. Very few candidates demonstrated a method for converting a fraction into a percentage.

Question 9

The main difficulty in this question was reading the scale on the vertical axis accurately. Many candidates demonstrated the correct method in parts (a) and (c) but did not gain the marks because they misread the vertical scale. In part (b), those who attempted the question often gave their answer as 166 cm.

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UNIT 1 INTERMEDIATE TIER

Overview of the Unit

Most candidates attempted all questions. Candidates were more successful with many of the earlier questions than with the later questions in the paper, as is expected.

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Notation of money when working with £ and pence (Q1,7)
- Using non-calculator methods of multiplication, including decimals (Q8b,9b)
- Using non-calculator methods of division, including decimals (Q3a,6d,7)
- Expressing a quantity as a percentage of another quantity (Q5d,7)
- Interpreting cumulative frequency diagrams (Q10)
- Working with volume where trapezium area knowledge is required (Q9)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:

- Reading a conversion graph (Q2a)
- Interpreting a scatter diagram (Q6a,6c)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Questions 1 and 7

In Questions 1 and 7, a number of candidates used incorrect notation when expressing answers in pence, for example writing 58p as 0.58p. However, this error was often corrected in their subsequent working.

A common error in Question 1 was dividing the given cost of the green beans by 4 rather than by 3. Overall, the question was answered successfully by many candidates.

Question 2(a)

Part (a) was generally well answered for the bikes and car. However, there were a number of calculation errors when finding the tyre pressure in PSI for the truck, with the most common errors occurring during multiplication or addition.

Questions 3, 7 and 9(b)

In Question 3, many candidates used the method of calculating the amount of concentrate in one serving for both bottles. A number of candidates made errors when carrying out the division, particularly with $1750 \div 70$. Only a few candidates simplified the calculation first by recognising that $1750 \div 70$ is equivalent to $175 \div 7$.

In Question 7, many candidates did not use division correctly to calculate the cost of an individual herb. A common error was reversing the division, possibly due to the misconception that the 'larger number' should always be divided by the 'smaller number'.

In Question 9(b), a common calculation error occurred when evaluating 1.2×240 , with 2880 being a frequently seen incorrect answer. This resulted from a lack of understanding that 1.2×240 is equivalent to 12×24 , or similar.

Question 5(d) and 7

In Question **5(d)**, although many candidates were able to express $\frac{6}{40}$ as a percentage, some candidates did not demonstrate a clear method for doing so. For example, they did not recognise that the fraction could first be converted to an equivalent fraction such as $\frac{15}{100}$ by multiplying both the numerator and denominator by 2.5, or by using an equivalent step-by-step method.

In Question **7**, many candidates were able to calculate a total cost, although this was not always correct, and some were able to calculate the profit. However, very few candidates demonstrated the knowledge or skills required to calculate the percentage profit by first expressing the profit as a suitable fraction of the original cost and then converting this to a percentage.

Question 9

Very few candidates used the information provided on the formula sheet inside the front cover to calculate the area correctly. The area was often incorrectly found by either adding or multiplying the dimensions 17 cm, 6 cm and 13 cm. Of those candidates who correctly multiplied the cross-sectional area by the length of the gutter, many did not convert 8 m to 800 cm as required, resulting in an incorrect answer in cm^3 .

Question 10

Although part **(a)** was reasonably well answered, many candidates did not engage with part **(b)**, with many spurious answers seen. A common incorrect answer in **(b)(iii)** was 100.

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UNIT 1 HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Calculating percentage profit (Q2)
- Working with reverse percentages (Q9c)
- Describing the process of selecting a random sample (Q10b)
- Using the tangent of a curve to calculate the rate of change (Q11b)
- Working with Pythagoras' Theorem in 3-D (Q12)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:

- Increasing and decreasing an amount by a percentage (Q3a)
- Working with bounds (Q7)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Question 2

Candidates found this question more challenging than expected, particularly when calculating the total cost of producing a single plant pot and then scaling this to determine the cost of producing 100 plant pots. While many candidates correctly calculated the total cost and the resulting profit, relatively few were able to determine the percentage profit accurately. Common errors included using an incorrect total cost in the calculation or applying the percentage profit formula incorrectly.

Question 3

In part (b), many candidates experienced difficulty converting kilograms to pounds. A common error was using an incorrect conversion factor, which often resulted in candidates receiving only partial credit for obtaining 2.40 (£ per lb). Other candidates incorrectly divided by 2.2 rather than multiplying, indicating a misunderstanding of the conversion process.

Question 4

In part (a), many candidates did not apply the trapezium area formula correctly. Instead, some attempted to calculate the area by splitting the cross-section into a rectangle and a triangle, while others were unable to determine the area of the cross-section at all. A common error was failing to convert 8 m to 800 cm, which often led to the incorrect final answer of 720.

Question 7

This question was answered very well by the vast majority of candidates. Most candidates correctly used the upper bound in their calculations and clearly communicated their reasoning to justify their conclusion.

Question 8

Performance on this question was variable. Many candidates were able to identify the fuel consumption of 2.4 gallons at 30 mph but then struggled with the subsequent stages of the problem. A common error was in converting 2 hours 6 minutes into decimal hours, with many candidates failing to recognise that this is equivalent to 2.1 hours. As a result, otherwise correct methods did not lead to the correct final answer.

Question 9

Part **(a)** was answered correctly by many candidates. However, common errors included reversing the subtraction when calculating the difference between the values and using the difference between 2013 and 2021 instead of the years specified in the question. These errors resulted in incorrect final answers despite candidates demonstrating an otherwise sound understanding of the required method.

In part **(c)**, many candidates incorrectly reduced \$6.6 million by 10% and then by a further 20%, demonstrating a misunderstanding of the reverse percentage method required to solve the question.

Question 10

Part **(a)** produced some fully correct responses. Many candidates identified the correct strategy and demonstrated a sound understanding of the required method. However, a common error was using 24 cm instead of 30 cm as the radius when calculating the area of the larger sector.

In part **(b)**, the majority of candidates struggled to describe the sampling process clearly. Although many were able to identify the correct sample, they often failed to communicate the method sufficiently to gain full marks, typically receiving only partial credit.

Question 11

Part **(b)** was answered poorly by the majority of candidates. In many cases, no attempt was made to draw a tangent. Where a tangent was drawn, it was often incorrect, either because it was not drawn at the required point on the curve or because the line more closely resembled a chord than a tangent.

Question 12

This question proved challenging for many candidates. While a number were able to apply Pythagoras' theorem successfully in a single plane, many struggled to extend the method to a second plane when calculating the required three-dimensional distance. As a result, candidates often obtained the correct intermediate value but were unable to complete the calculation and arrive at the correct final answer.

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UNIT 2 FOUNDATION TIER

Overview of the Unit

Most candidates attempted all questions. Candidates were more successful with many of the earlier questions than with the later questions in the paper, as is expected.

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Using the properties of numbers (Q2a)
- Converting metric units (Q2b)
- Interpreting area and calculating perimeter of rectangles (Q4)
- Interpreting pie charts (Q6a)
- Reading scales on graphs (Q3e, 9)
- Increasing and decreasing by a given percentage, with a calculator (Q6b, 8)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:

- Using the four operations and other basic number work (Q1abcd, 2a)
- Working with best buys (Q10a)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Question 1(e)

Many candidates were unable to recognise that rounding 65 359 to the nearest hundred does not give 65 000. A significant number incorrectly believed this to be the correct answer. Candidates also found it difficult to explain Evan's error or to state the correct rounded value.

Question 2

The most common error in part (a) was identifying 14 as a square number instead of 16. Many candidates also placed Cedric in tent 13 rather than tent 11, indicating a sound understanding of prime numbers but a weaker understanding of the factors of 33.

In part (b), many candidates gained three out of the four available marks. Most used the scale correctly but experienced difficulty converting centimetres to metres, which prevented them from obtaining the correct final answer.

Question 3

Overall, part (a) was answered well by many candidates. The main difficulty was in identifying the correct categories (adult, youth or child) to use when calculating the total cost. Some candidates calculated the cost for only two people, typically the youth and the child. Although labels were often included, many candidates did not show how totals, such as the tourist ticket cost of €81, had been calculated.

In part (b), a small number of candidates did not apply the correct order of operations, adding 32 to 24°C before multiplying by 1.8.

Although many candidates gained one or two marks in part (e), very few achieved full marks. Many candidates drew line graphs instead of vertical line diagrams, while others struggled to use the scale accurately, often plotting a frequency of 23 at 21.5.

Question 4

Many candidates demonstrated a lack of understanding of the difference between area and perimeter. A common error was treating the given area of 24 as the perimeter, despite the question stating that 24 was the area.

Question 5(a)

Although some candidates recognised that volume involves three dimensions, many incorrectly added the dimensions instead of multiplying them, demonstrating a misunderstanding of how volume is calculated.

Question 6(a)

The majority of candidates demonstrated limited understanding of how to interpret pie charts. Very few correctly measured the angles and, when they did, many treated the angle as the number of people. Others attempted to use percentages but often used values such as 25% or 30% in part (i), which were outside the accepted range. In part (ii), some candidates gained partial credit for correctly calculating 45% of 1440. Centres should place greater emphasis on developing candidates' skills in interpreting pie charts.

Question 6(b)

Many candidates chose to use a non-calculator method to calculate 17.7% of £7.35. As a result, many did not determine the value of 0.7% correctly. A common error was to write 17.7×7.35 instead of 0.177×7.35 , before adding the increase to £7.35. Very few candidates used the more efficient method of calculating 1.177×7.35 . Some candidates correctly found the increase of £1.30, but did not add it to the original ticket price.

Question 7

In part (a), candidates who knew how to find a fraction of a quantity often calculated only $\frac{3}{8}$ instead of $\frac{5}{8}$. The word *off* was frequently misinterpreted as *of*. In part (b), candidates who knew the formula for speed often struggled to express the time correctly as a decimal. A common error was to treat $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours as 4.45 hours instead of 4.75 hours.

Question 8

Many candidates gained 2 or 3 marks by correctly calculating the cost of the units used and the electricity cost before VAT was added. However, many still found it difficult to calculate 5% of an amount, even with the use of a calculator.

Question 9

In part (a), very few candidates were able to determine the range over the specified time period from the graph. Common incorrect answers were 2°C and 8°C. In part (b), even candidates who understood the question often struggled to interpret the scale accurately when determining the length of time.

Question 10(b)

One of the most common errors was calculating $25 \div 16$ first and then multiplying by 60, rather than using the correct method of dividing 60 by this result i.e. $60 \div (25 \div 16)$ or $16 \div 25 \times 60$.

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UNIT 2 INTERMEDIATE TIER

Overview of the Unit

Most candidates attempted all questions. Candidates were more successful with many of the earlier questions than with the later questions in the paper, as is expected.

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Expressing a time as a mixed number of hours correctly as a decimal (Q1b)
- Converting metric units (Q2a,10a(ii))
- Interpreting pie charts (Q3a)
- Using calculator methods for calculation of percentages (Q3a(ii),3c,6c)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:

- Calculating fractions of amounts (Q1a)
- Working with better value and same value for money problems (Q6a,6b)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Question 1(b)

Many candidates knew and applied the formula for average speed as distance divided by time. However, many of these candidates were unable to enter $4\frac{3}{4}$ hours correctly into their calculator. Common errors included entering 4.45 or interpreting $4\frac{3}{4}$ as $4 \times \frac{3}{4} = 3$.

Questions 2(a) and 10(a)(ii)

In Question 2(a), a number of candidates incorrectly converted 2800 cm^3 into litres. A common error was dividing by 100, indicating the misconception that 1 litre is equivalent to 100 cm^3 rather than 1000 cm^3 .

In Question 10(a)(ii), a number of candidates incorrectly converted between minutes and seconds, not using $1 \text{ minute} = 60 \text{ seconds}$.

Question 3(a)

The pie chart represented 1440 people. Very few candidates recognised that $1440 \div 360 = 4$, so that each degree represented 4 people. Angles were often measured inaccurately, and many candidates did not correctly use the fact that the pie chart represented 360° . Overall, many candidates demonstrated limited understanding of how to interpret pie charts, suggesting this is an area for improvement.

Question 6

Many candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the concepts of *better value* and *same value for money*. This represents an improvement compared with previous numeracy examinations.

Questions 3(a)(ii), 3(c) and 6(c)

In these questions, many candidates attempted to use non-calculator methods to calculate percentages of amounts, such as 45%, 17.7% and 95%. Where these calculations were carried out accurately, candidates were able to gain both method and accuracy marks. However, some candidates made errors in their partitioning methods or did not show sufficient working at each stage, preventing them from gaining method marks and, consequently, accuracy marks. Candidates who used a calculator generally showed an appropriate calculation and obtained accurate answers.

MATHEMATICS - NUMERACY

GCSE (Legacy)

Summer 2026

UNIT 2 HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

Most candidates attempted all questions. Candidates generally had more success with the questions in the first half of the paper than with those in the second half, as we would expect.

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Avoiding premature rounding, which cost candidates marks across a number of questions (Q2b,4a,5a,6,11b,11c)
- Working with a given formula for a loan amount to work out the initial deposit and total cost (Q7)
- Working with bounds and the volume of a cylinder (Q8)
- Working with reverse calculations involving arc length (Q9)
- Estimating the median from a histogram (Q10b)
- Carrying out multi-step calculations using the Sine Rule and Cosine Rule (Q11b)
- Understanding the relationship between the area and volume of similar shapes (Q11c)

The following areas were generally well understood:

- Working with percentages, converting metric units and converting currency (Q1a)
- Calculating lengths using Pythagoras' Theorem (Q2a)
- Converting between speed, distance and time (Q5a)
- Calculating the volume of a cuboid and working with density (Q6)

Comments on individual questions/sections

When a question or part-question is not listed, there are no areas to highlight.

Question 1(a)

Although this question was answered well by most candidates, the large numbers involved led some candidates to include an unnecessary $\div 100$ step, perhaps assuming that their answer needed to be converted from pounds into pence. The quality of written communication (OCW) has continued to improve, although a small number of candidates lost marks by omitting labels or units, or by misusing the equals sign.

Question 2(c)

This question was answered well by most candidates. However, some candidates incorrectly attempted to use the formula for the surface area of a sphere or the circumference of a circle.

Questions 4(b) and 5(a)(i)

In both questions, a significant number of candidates did not give their answers to the required degree of accuracy.

Question 7

Few candidates correctly found the monthly interest rate as a decimal. Most were unable to calculate either the deposit or the total amount to be paid. This remains an area requiring improvement.

Question 8

Most candidates engaged with the bounds required in this question; however, a significant number misinterpreted the question and instead calculated the opposite bound. A considerable number of candidates also did not use the correct formula for the volume of a cylinder.

Question 9

The large numbers involved in this question appeared to cause difficulty for some candidates. Some incorrectly used the formula for the area of a sector instead of the arc length formula. Others were unable to rearrange the arc length formula correctly to find the radius or diameter.

Question 10(b)

While many candidates were able to identify the position of the median, most were unable to make further progress. A number of candidates also made calculation errors in their working.

Question 11(b)(ii)

Among the candidates who made good progress with this question, a small number rounded prematurely, resulting in answers that fell outside the accepted tolerance. Some candidates also used sides or angles that were not part of triangle ACD.

Question 11c

This question was answered well by some candidates. However, most did not correctly apply the relationship between the area scale factor and the volume scale factor, often assuming that the two scale factors were the same. Premature rounding also resulted in a loss of accuracy for a number of candidates.

Supporting you

Useful contacts and links

Our friendly subject team is on hand to support you between 8.30am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Tel: 02922 404251

Email: mathematics@wjec.co.uk

Qualification webpage: <https://www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications/mathematics-gcse/>

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