GCSE

GCSE Examiners' Report (New)

Mathematics & Numeracy (Double Award)

GCSE (New)

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.***

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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

This was the first assessment series for the new Made-for-Wales GCSE Mathematics qualification. As this is the first live series, a direct comparison with the previous GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics–Numeracy qualifications is not possible. However, extensive post-marking statistical analysis and detailed sampling of candidate work were undertaken throughout the awarding process to ensure that standards were appropriately aligned with those of the legacy qualifications. The majority of entries were from Year 10 candidates, reflecting the phased introduction of the new qualification.

Candidates generally engaged well with the assessments across all four units, with most attempting the majority of questions. Performance was generally stronger on the Unit 1 assessments than on the Unit 2 assessments, with candidates typically demonstrating greater confidence when responding to the earlier questions on each paper before progressing to the more demanding questions later in the assessments.

Across both calculator and non-calculator papers, candidates demonstrated secure understanding of a range of mathematical knowledge and skills. Areas that were generally well answered included comparing payment plans, interpreting income tax, and employing methods for finding the product of prime factors.

Across the qualification, however, there was evidence that candidates found greater difficulty when required to apply their mathematical knowledge in less familiar or multi-step contexts. Geometry, including bearings and angle properties, proved challenging for many candidates, particularly where several pieces of mathematical reasoning were required. Algebra also presented difficulties, especially when candidates were required to form or manipulate equations within unfamiliar contexts.

Percentage calculations remained an area requiring improvement across both calculator and non-calculator assessments. In particular, many candidates found expressing one quantity as a percentage of another challenging, while others did not make effective use of calculator methods on calculator papers, instead attempting lengthy non-calculator approaches that often led to unnecessary errors. On Foundation Tier papers, interpreting graph scales accurately also proved difficult, particularly where scales did not increase in single units.

Candidates should work on applying their mathematical knowledge and skills in unfamiliar contexts, with particular emphasis on geometry and spatial reasoning, efficient percentage methods, and algebraic reasoning. Regular opportunities to solve multi-step problems, communicate mathematical methods clearly and interpret information presented in a range of graphical forms will further support future performance.

Our digital resources website offers blended learning lessons, knowledge organisers and Examination walk-throughs. Please ensure you are accessing the resources developed for the new Made-for-Wales GCSE Mathematics qualification (link here), rather than those produced for the legacy GCSE Mathematics and GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy qualifications.

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MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY (DOUBLE AWARD)

GCSE (New)

Summer 2026

UNIT 1: FINANCIAL MATHEMATICS AND OTHER APPLICATIONS OF NUMERACY 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:
- Setting up a suitable scale for a graph (Q7)
- Working with bearings (Q8)
- Calculating one value as a percentage of another (Q9a)
- Working with ratio within the context of recipes (Q10)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:
- Comparing two deals and working out which one is cheaper overall (Q1)
- Labelling and setting out methods and workings clearly for OCW (Q1)
- Using a formula written in words (Q4)

Comments on individual questions/sections

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

Question 2

Most candidates gained marks in part **(a)**. The most common error was calculating the time for the final swim as 1 hour 65 minutes instead of 1 hour 25 minutes. This arose because many candidates used a calculator to subtract 13:45 from 15:10 without accounting for time notation. Using this incorrect value often led to the correct total of 4 hours 15 minutes, as candidates similarly used their calculator incorrectly when adding the times. For example, they calculated 1.15 + 1.35 + 1.65 = 4.15 and interpreted this as 4 hours 15 minutes. These compensating errors were penalised.
In part **(b)(i)**, the most common error was dividing by 1.6 rather than multiplying by 1.6.

Question 3

Part **(a)** was generally well answered. However, some candidates incorrectly concluded that 0.7 was less than 0.55 after calculating the cost of a single toilet roll from each pack.
In part **(b)**, several candidates multiplied £1.50 by 18 rather than by 9.

Question 4

Many candidates correctly calculated both the number of bank holidays and the number of days of annual leave. However, some did not combine these values to determine the total number of days off work.

Question 5

The main error in this question was that candidates did not fully engage with the 10 cm edging strips. As a result, they did not divide ‘their perimeter’, or the length of each side, by 10.

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Question 6
Many candidates were able to gain 3 or 4 marks. However, some incorrectly calculated 50% rather than 5% for the VAT. Others subtracted the VAT instead of adding it.

Question 7
In part **(a)**, common errors included using a vertical scale that did not extend to 12 miles. Many scales stopped at 10 miles, which meant candidates could not accurately plot the point representing 12 miles travelled in 1 hour. Although some candidates recognised that the graph should show leaving the coffee shop and travelling until they were 5 miles from home, many did not use the correct time of 30 minutes.
Part **(b)** was not well answered. Most candidates gave only the time for the outward journey rather than the return journey.

Question 8
Questions involving bearings continue to be challenging for many candidates.

Question 9
Some candidates gained 1 or 2 marks in part **(a)**, but most were unable to calculate the additional payment as a percentage of the cost of Option A. Candidates who gained 2 marks often gave the additional amount of £187.25 as their final answer rather than expressing it as a percentage.
In part **(b)**, many candidates found the ratio question challenging, particularly as the given amount represented one part of the ratio rather than the total amount represented by all parts.

Question 10
This question proved demanding for many candidates. In part **(a)**, most did not determine how many times greater 200 is than 16. Many instead attempted calculations such as 120 × £2.20 for butter and 80 × £1.90 for sultanas.
In part **(b)**, many candidates did not know how to begin. Common incorrect approaches included calculating 3.2 × 8, or 8 ÷ 2.5, or 360 ÷ 8.

Question 11
Many candidates continue to calculate the tax as 35% of £48 000 rather than applying the tax rate only to the taxable portion of the income. Some candidates also incorrectly calculated the VAT as 20% of £40 000.

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MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY (DOUBLE AWARD)

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UNIT 1: FINANCIAL MATHEMATICS AND OTHER APPLICATIONS OF NUMERACY HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

Key areas for improvement include the following:

- Expressing a number as a percentage of another (Q1a)
- Converting between metric units of length (Q2a)
- Understanding and using 3-figure bearings (Q2b)
- Substituting numbers into a formula written in words (Q4a)
- Solving speed, distance and time problems (Q7)
- Using the upper and lower bounds in the addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers expressed to a given degree of accuracy (Q11)
- Solving problems involving compound interest (Q12a)
- Explaining sampling techniques such as random sampling (Q13b)
- Solving problems involving the area of a circle and the surface area and volume of a sphere (Q6,15)

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

- Using ratios in a variety of situations (Q1b)
- Solving problems involving money and income tax (Q4a,5)
- Converting ordinary numbers into standard form (Q9a)
- Finding the upper and lower bounds of numbers expressed to a given degree of accuracy (Q11)
- Calculating the Annual Equivalent Rate (AER) (Q12b)
- Calculating the volume of a cylinder, cone and a compound solid (Q13a)

Comments on individual questions/sections

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

Question 1

Most candidates successfully calculated how much extra was paid under Option B. The main difficulty was expressing this extra amount as a percentage of the cost of Option A. The OC mark was awarded for a logical structured answer with clear labelling, and the W mark for units and correct mathematical form.

Question 2

In part **(a)**, most candidates completed one step correctly, usually multiplying the measured distance (e.g. 6.4 cm ± 0.2 cm) by 50 000. Converting centimetres to kilometres proved challenging for many.

Question 3

Part **(a)** was generally well answered, with many candidates using the correct method to obtain 6 tubs of butter and 2 packets of sultanas. Some rounded $\frac{200}{16}$ to 13 batches, producing 208 Welsh cakes; these candidates typically gained 4 of the 5 marks available.

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In part **(b)**, candidates commonly found the mass of one bar or calculated the protein content for 360 g and worked backwards. Marks were awarded for appropriate operations leading towards the correct answer.

Question 5
A minority did not engage with the different income-tax bands and instead applied 35% to the full £48 000. Some candidates calculated Jayden's income after tax rather than the tax paid. Candidates are reminded to read the question carefully.

Question 6
Many candidates calculated the area of the letter B and the rectangle correctly, but a significant number did not provide a sufficient reason for the final mark. A valid justification required comparing the area of the letter B with half of 9 cm². Statements such as "4.98 > 4.5" or "4.98/9 = 55%" gained this mark.

Question 7
This question was not well answered. Although most recognised the need for distance ÷ time, many used an incorrect distance or time. Some calculated the speed for each day and then found the mean of these values, which is not the correct method. Converting minutes to hours also caused difficulty.

Question 8
Candidates should be reminded that a simple check can confirm their answer (e.g. $1.2 \times 24.60 + 4 = 33.52$). A very common incorrect answer was £23.62, arising from $0.8 \times (33.52 - 4)$.

Question 10
Common errors included using the incorrect multipliers of 1.2^5 and 1.33^7.

Question 11
Many candidates gained a mark for correctly identifying 3950 cm and 3550 cm. Errors arose when finding the perimeter, often through forgetting all four sides or using bounds outside the permitted range.

Question 12
Many candidates did not recognise that the nominal annual rate must be divided by 365 for daily interest; some divided by 360.
In part **(b),** some did not use the AER formula provided on the formula sheet, and others did not round their answer to the required 2 decimal places.

Question 13
Part **(a)** was generally well answered. The cone volume was usually calculated correctly, while the cylinder volume was more frequently incorrect. In part (b), many candidates stated that jar numbers run from 0001 to 4000 but did not reference ignoring 0000. Some candidates stated to ignore repeats but still included 1561 twice in their list of numbers.

Question 14
Many candidates gained one mark for a partially correct substitution into the loan formula, often repeating or omitting the ÷100, the 12 months, or using an incorrect power. Part **(b)** was poorly answered, with many not recognising that the loan amount and the 48 monthly payments must be subtracted from £11 500.

Question 15
A pleasing number of candidates correctly found the radius of the sphere from the surface area and continued to calculate the cost for 500 balls. Follow-through marks were awarded only when π had been used in the radius calculation.

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MATHEATICS & NUMERACY (DOUBLE AWARD)

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UNIT 2: NON-CALCULATOR FOUNDATION TIER

Overview of the Unit

Key areas for improvement include the following:
- Applying geometric properties for points, lines, triangles and other polygons (Q5,15)
- Calculating with percentages, decimals and fractions (Q9,14)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:
- Knowing and using factors and multiples (Q1b, 1c,16)
- Finding terms in sequences (Q4a, 4bii)
- Solving simple equations (Q8ai,8aii)

Comments on individual questions/sections

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

Question 1(e)
Although many candidates gave a correct response, a common incorrect answer in this part was 24, from not understanding the hierarchy of operations.

Question 2(a)
A correct response was seen quite often. Common errors include square numbers given in the answer space but not with a difference of 20. Another common incorrect response was to ignore the requirement for square numbers and give an answer with two non-square numbers that have a difference of 20.

Question 5
Many candidates found this question difficult as it assessed knowledge of various aspects of angle geometry, including angles at a point, angles on a straight line and angles in a triangle. Candidates had more success in working with angles at a point.
W0 was often awarded due to misuse of the equals sign or the incorrect order of numbers in a subtraction.

Question 6(a)
Although many rectangles were seen as correct responses, very few candidates drew a rhombus. Common incorrect responses included drawing a parallelogram, square or isosceles trapezium.

Question 8(b)
This question was not well answered. Many candidates did not read the requirement for an expression, only focusing on the last part of the sentence. Consequently, $5 < x$ was a very common incorrect response.

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Question 9
Generally, many candidates worked correctly to compare 0.2 and 0.21 or 20% and 21%. However, many candidates were unable to compare with $\frac{4}{25}$ correctly. A common incorrect conversion of $\frac{4}{25}$ was to write this as 20%.

Question 11(a)
Many candidates answered this question correctly. However, common errors included incorrect partitioning, for example as 20 × 10 + 4 × 6, or omitting a carry digit from the overall calculation.

Question 11(b)
Many candidates answered this question correctly. However, common errors included incorrect partitioning by dividing by 10 and also by 4 or from an incorrect multiple of 14 (14, 28 and incorrectly writing 32), or from a carry digit error.

Question 13
Some candidates engaged well with this question, with many of these candidates making good progress beyond the initial stage of finding the probability of orange. A number of candidates correctly found the probability of green and yellow as 0.36, calculated one third of 0.36, then assigned this incorrectly to the probability of a green counter.

Question 14
This question was not well answered. Many candidates used a partition method to calculate 57% of 120. However, often working for each stage was not shown, so the method mark could not be awarded unless the answer was correct.
Many candidates did not show a method or understanding of calculating $2\frac{1}{9}$ of an amount.

Question 15
This question was not well answered. The question required the formation of an equation. Many candidates did not give an equation; however a few candidates showed working for the exterior angles and the sum of the exterior angles. Some candidates stated the sum of the exterior angles incorrectly as 180° or 540°.

Question 16
This question was well answered by a number of candidates, although some candidates stopped working before reaching a prime number or made a calculation error.

Question 17
This question was not well answered. Some candidates did have a method to multiply probabilities, although an appropriate sum was often not included. A common error was in calculating 0.4 × 0.1, leading to an incorrect answer of 0.4.

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MATHEMATICS & NUMERACY (DOUBLE AWARD)

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UNIT 2: NON-CALCULATOR HIGHER TIER

Overview of the Unit

Key areas for improvement include the following:
- Forming and solving equations (Q6,12)
- Using non calculator methods of multiplication, including fractions and decimals (Q5,11)
- Using brackets correctly (Q12)
- Sketching a quadratic curve (Q19)

The following topic areas were generally well-understood or well-answered:
- Working with parallel line angle facts (Q2)
- Writing a number as a product of prime factors using indices (Q8)

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 answered this part of the question correctly. Of the candidates with a correct statement of $\frac{15}{75}$, a common error was to write this incorrectly as $\frac{30}{100}$ leading to an incorrect answer of 30%, rather than 20%.

Question 2
Many candidates answered this question correctly, with appropriate angles shown on the diagram. A common error was to give an incorrect answer of 95° from subtracting the sum of the angles given from 360°.

Question 4
Many candidates answered this question correctly. Poor labelling sometimes led to the answers for the probability of yellow and the probability of green being interchanged. Often the colours were labelled initially, but no reference was made to the decimals being probabilities. A lack of correct labels impacted on the mathematics and the OCW marks. W0 was often awarded due to incorrect order in a written calculation, mixed decimals and percentages in the same calculation, e.g. 64 – 1= 36, or for not using probability notation or labels stating probability.

Question 5
Many candidates used a partition method to calculate 57% of 120. However, often working for each stage was not shown, so the method mark could not be awarded unless the answer was correct.

Many candidates did not show a method or understanding of calculating $2\frac{1}{9}$ of an amount.

Question 6
The question required the formation of an equation. Many candidates did not give an equation, but showed working for the exterior angles and the sum of the exterior angles. Some candidates stated the sum of the exterior angles incorrectly as 180° or 540°.

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Question 7(a)
Common errors in part **(a)** included omission of multiplying 14 by 3, and replacing the inequality with an equals sign.

Question 8
Although this question was generally well answered, some candidates stopped working before reaching a prime number or made a calculation error.

Question 9(a)
Although this question was well answered by some candidates, other candidates had no knowledge of factorising; instead they incorrectly attempted to 'collect terms', leading to $-21xy$.

Question 11
Although many candidates did have a method to multiply probabilities, the sum was often not included. A common error was in calculating 0.4×0.1, leading to $0.4 + 0.54 = 0.94$, a common incorrect answer.

Question 12
The most common error was not to include appropriate brackets in the initial equation, hence not forming the correct equation to solve. This question was not well answered.

Question 17
Candidates found difficulty in calculating the final term in the expansion of the pair of brackets, although often at least 2 of the other 3 terms were correct.

Question 18
Although a number of candidates worked out 30 divided by 5 to get 6, many candidates did not interpret what they had calculated. Other candidates wrote a fifth, but did not interpret this as a fifth of 30. However, many candidates worked out 76% correctly from a couple of lines of working.

Question 19
This question was not well answered. Often the only marks candidates were awarded were for the intersection with the y-axis, or appropriate sight of -9, and a sketch of the general shape of a quadratic graph in the correct orientation.

Question 20
Many candidates did not have a strategy to expand the brackets and many candidates were not careful in multiplying the brackets and recording the correct indices for x, or made arithmetical errors. Accuracy is important in initial stages, otherwise the subsequent work will not lead to the possible factorising that was required.

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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/gcse-mathematics-and-numeracy-double-award-teaching-from-2025/

See other useful contacts here: Useful Contacts | WJEC

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Please find details for all our courses here: https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/professional-learning/

WJEC Qualifications

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