GCSE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

FRENCH

SUMMER 2010
**Statistical Information**

The Examiners' Report may refer in general terms to statistical outcomes. Statistical information on candidates' performances in all examination components (whether internally or externally assessed) is provided when results are issued. As well as the marks achieved by individual candidates, the following information can be obtained from these printouts:

*For each component:* the maximum mark, aggregation factor, mean mark and standard deviation of marks obtained by *all* candidates entered for the examination.

*For the subject or option:* the total entry and the lowest mark needed for the award of each grade.

**Annual Statistical Report**

Other information on a centre basis is provided when results are issued. The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.
Reading and Responding – Legacy Specification

Once again this year there were candidates who failed to answer every question, either whole questions or parts of questions, even though sometimes they only had to pick a letter from a list. The practice of answering in the "wrong" language continues with some very good candidates losing up to 8 marks on the FT Q6 and HT Q1. It was hoped that this practice would disappear with the advent of the new syllabus but see below.

Foundation Tier

Q.1 There were very few fully correct answers to this question with LOCATION VELOS and CHARCUTERIE predictably causing most problems. Boulangerie and Charcuterie were frequently transposed.

Q.2 Once again there were few completely correct answers. Some candidates might have been led to tick the activities which showed younger people rather than those which referred to the text irrespective of the age of the characters in the clipart. Mainly mistakes were made through candidates' not looking carefully enough at the text and choosing a picture or time which was mentioned but which was not the correct answer.

Q.3 This form typically gave rise to marks of 4/6 with candidates having most problems with nom de famille, domicile and animaux domestiques where balcon was sometimes given as an answer. Chein and torture featured as misspellings of words which were given in the text.

Q.4 This was answered well by the vast majority of candidates.
Foundation Tier Q5 and Higher Tier Q2

Foundation candidates notably found difficulty with this question, particularly as written French was required for the answers which could, nevertheless, be very brief.

(i) Very few identified that Juliette had nothing to eat (or could not work *rien* accurately into a sentence) or noticed that it was *trop tôt*.

(ii) *Comment* was widely misunderstood and a time given instead.

(iii) If (ii) had been answered incorrectly then the same tended to be true of (iii) but if *car* had been recognised for (ii) then usually *en panne* featured here. Many answered simply *le car est tombé*.

(iv) This was often answered correctly but many wrote (*dure*) *une heure et demie*.

(v) The correct answer was often given but sometimes only half of *poulet-frites*.

(vi) *Poulet-frites* was often given here by those who had recognised *mange* in the question. Those who recognised some words but who did not understand the question and/or the text sometimes lost marks by writing *m'empêcher de choisir le poulet-frites*.

(vii) The many wrong answers here tended to focus on *regarder la télé* or (*elle a*) *du mal*.

Foundation Tier Q6 and Higher Tier Q1

There were very few wholly correct answers here at either tier with candidates losing marks who otherwise (at HT) had full marks for every question. Some candidates answered this question in French or in a mixture of French and English/Welsh.

(i) Some candidates lost marks by writing *tranquill(e)* for tranquil and *quite for quiet* and many gave *annoying* for *ennuyeuse*.

(ii) *bruyant* was often translated as *dirty* or *busy* and sometimes as *brutal*

(iii) This was fairly well done but, by misunderstanding *travailler*, lots of candidates said Estelle’s father *travelled* long hours.

(iv) Most candidates gave the correct answer by one means or another!

(v) A fairly widespread ignorance of *ancien* led to many wrong answers here, most of them centring on the lack of rugby. Many said that the teachers were severe.

(vi) *Banlieue* was not well known at either tier so for many candidates it became a proper noun and the name of Estelle’s next town of residence. It was also variously given as Bungalow, Bangor and Bangladesh. Intriguingly *donc* was given the same treatment so Estelle was judged to be moving to Donc, Donc town-centre and even the suburbs of Donc. Out of frustration perhaps some wrote *nowhere*!
Higher Tier

Q.3 This was generally very well done.

Q.4 This was answered very well by most candidates though there was a tendency to give *travaux manuels* for (i) presumably because Alexandra liked travelling.

Q.5 This was answered well by most candidates except that some ticked only one box for (iv).

Reading and Responding – New specification

The most important difference between the Legacy and the New Syllabus papers is that the rubric of the latter is in English/Welsh and answers are normally expected to be in English/Welsh throughout. Because not all answers are in English/Welsh, e.g., FT Q1 – 4 there is no rubric on the front of the sheet instructing candidates to answer in English/Welsh but they should all be aware that where there is a question in English/Welsh and where writing is required, unless instructed otherwise [e.g. *choose the correct letter*] they should write their answers in English/Welsh. Many candidates used French or a mixture of French and English/Welsh to write their answers to Q5 and 6. As the rubrics for individual questions are in English/Welsh there should be no excuse for the candidates not to know what to do. Adherence to the rubric is essential.

It was a conscious decision to use much of the same material for both the Legacy and the New Syllabus exams so some of the comments above will apply here also.
Foundation Tier

Q.1 Quite a few candidates wrote out the signs instead of their corresponding letters. *CHARCUTERIE* and *LOCATION VELOS* were not well known.

Q.2 This question was not well done with many candidates choosing pictures or times which might have been mentioned in the text but which were not the right answers. Many also failed to notice that two pieces of information were required for (ii) – (iv).

Q.3 There were very few full marks here with *college* for (4) and *elephant* for (6) being frequent mistakes. There was also misspelling of some given words, *apartment* being the most common. As this question proved a good discriminator, testing as it did the candidates’ knowledge of both vocabulary and grammar, it would appear to be a suitable test type for the examination at both FT and HT.

Q.4 Very well done.

Foundation Tier Q5 and Higher Tier Q2

(i) *Croissant* and *coffee* was a common wrong answer here.

(ii) The many candidates who wrote *car* here lost a mark but would have gained one for the same answer in the Legacy examination which, perhaps highlights the benefit of using English/Welsh as a means for testing comprehension.

(iii) Many persisted in using *car* so lost marks even when they said it had *broken down*. Other suggestions were that the vehicle had *fallen, crashed* or *got stuck in traffic*.

(iv) This was usually correct, avoiding some of the ambiguity of the corresponding Legacy question.

(v) *Chicken* featured in most answers but in a bewildering range of preparations including *nuggets, burgers* and *battered*.

(vi) *Escalade* was not well known so many referred to *sitting on the stairs* or picked up *gym* from the following sentence.

(vii) There was a wide range of incorrect answers including the inevitable *too much TV*. 
Foundation Tier Q6 and Higher Tier Q1

Please see comments above re Legacy Examination.

Higher Tier

Q.3 This question was very well done.

Q.4 This was answered very well by most candidates though there was a tendency to give travaux manuels for (i) presumably because Alexandra likes travelling.

Q.5 This was answered well by most candidates except that some ticked only one box for (iv). Having the rubric for this question in English/Welsh and the questions themselves in English/Welsh seems to have had no material impact on its degree of difficulty.

Writing

Foundation Tier

Q.1 Most candidates were able to respond appropriately to this question either partially or fully so marks of 9 and 10 for Communication were common. However, very few were able to write appropriate indicative verbs correctly to accompany the nouns they had offered. The passé composé was frequently offered and gained marks if used correctly, suggesting that some candidates find it an "easier" tense to deal with than the present indicative.

Q.2 This question is designed to be answered in the present tense as it asks what the candidate typically does on a school day. Many candidates, however, answered, or attempted to answer, in the past tense perhaps because they have had more practice at it. Very few candidates, however, were able to construct appropriate and accurate verbs consistently in either a past or present tense which was a shame as, apart from the essential arrive and get to [which, of course, could be the same verbs] for the first two tasks the candidates had a wide choice of verbs available to convey the meanings required in the other three tasks. Once again je pied, je travaille [and their variations] were common. A number of candidates lost marks by their inability to refer to the time periods asked for in some of the tasks viz lunchtime and after school.

Foundation Tier Q3 and Higher Tier Q1

This year nearly every FT candidate attempted Q3 but there was also a number who wrote responses which bore little relation to the question asked.

At both tiers some candidates in (a) wrote about their boulot instead of their stage though this generally lost them only one mark for Communication. The questions in both (a) and (b) (particularly that of asking whether breakfast is included in the price) were poorly phrased by nearly every candidate at each tier.

At both tiers and in both options the beginning and ending of the letters was not well done at all. This is all the more surprising as they can both be prepared beforehand. The most marks were lost in (b) by candidates not giving both the day and the date of the arrival and departure and by candidates creating a regular – er verb departer.
Higher Tier Q2

Q.2  (a) This question was poorly done. A large majority had not understood ‘il vaut mieux’ so simply wrote about their future plans, offering no argument for further study rather than going straight to work. Quite a significant number just wrote about the subjects they study now with no reference to future plans.

(b) This was generally well done and produced some outstanding responses comparable to AS standard. Many were able to present ideas and justify points of view, giving them access to the top bracket for communication. Though most argued against the statement that all sports are a waste of time, some did manage to support it with some interesting justifications: ‘Si vous faites du sport chaque jour vous ne rencontrerez pas les filles et vous n’aurez pas des expériences; et plus tard en vie, il serait très important’.

(c) There were some interesting responses to this question, which proved that the skill of narration is alive and well!

Overall a difficulty encountered by many candidates this year was that of the negative statement so that something like le sport est ne une perte de temps pas was frequently met. There was also a number of candidates who wrote French which, while "orally" correct, showed a flagrant disregard for agreed French spelling e.g. s’été bon and ont été parties.

Coursework Option

The vast majority of the coursework submitted was both administered correctly and marked accurately by schools and the moderators are, as ever, grateful for your cooperation.

Please remember that this option is no longer available and that no coursework can be submitted for awarding in 2011.
Listening and Responding

General Comments

- Some worrying gaps in vocabulary at both Foundation and Higher levels were noticeable; for example, the word "college" in Q7 Foundation/Q1 Higher was frequently not recognised, with the question usually being answered by "leisure centre" or "sports club".

- Spellings are also still causing problems; "famille" and "professeur" are basic items of vocabulary, especially at Higher level, but are still being misspelt.

- Numbers are still proving difficult, although fewer candidates than in previous years persist in trying to write them in words, even when the instructions on the front explicitly state that figures are acceptable.

- Although there were only a few sections to be answered briefly in French in the legacy paper, candidates had difficulty writing accurately in the target language.

- Some candidates wrote answers, especially at Higher level, in a mix of the two languages, thereby losing out on marks.

- Many made good use of the Rough Notes space to write down the meaning of the French questions or other vocabulary items in order to help them choose correctly and they should be encouraged to do this.

- It is however concerning that in the section to be answered in English/Welsh, a number of candidates still do not read the question carefully and give the wrong sort of information e.g. Where does Benjamin play sport? (Football/Tuesday etc). Likewise in questions to be answered in French – this is probably because knowledge of key questions forms is weak.
Foundation Tier – Legacy Specification

With a high percentage of multiple choice answers, the Foundation level examination seems to have been very accessible enabling the majority of candidates to achieve marks of 30+.

Q.1  No real problems here; occasionally too few boxes ticked.

Q.2  Mostly well done but a considerable number of candidates didn’t tick the cycling image and went for horse riding instead. A few candidates assumed they had to select one image per row, pupils need to be reminded that it is not the case.

Q.3  This was generally well done with few errors. Although skiing and swimming often ticked instead of wind surfing seemingly at random by some candidates, planche à voile not known.

Q.4  Usually well done. The main error was to select the boots rather than the shoes. Also the word lunettes was not easily recognised.

Q.5  Most candidates lost points on that question at foundation level. A very few candidates wrote the words instead of the letters which made it slower to mark but credit was still given.

Q.6  Usually fine overall; the main errors were to choose the wrong time in (a) and to be confused between orange juice and orange in (c) Many candidates misunderstood "mails" in (d) and ticked the box with the picture of letters.

Q.7  (a)  Many candidates failed to pick up on the fact that Benjamin did his sport in school; the favourite alternatives were “leisure centre” or “sports club”

(b)  Posed problems with many candidates failing to spell tired.

(c)  Posed problems for many candidates with many failing to answer with the correct 2 days – Tuesdays and Thursdays. An acceptable alternative was to put down “twice a week” but few chose this and wrote 1 or 2 days of the week, seemingly at random!

(d)  This was usually well done with most candidates being able to pick out personal and family problems. There were, however, some candidates who misheard “examens” as “eczema”!

(e)  Was usually done well with the occasional mistake of “exams” instead of the acceptable “lessons”. Most candidates chose the correct answer of “friends”.
Higher Tier

At Higher level, the examination seems to have presented more difficulty which consequently resulted in a fuller, wider range of marks. Few attained full marks and there were a number who scored 15 or below.

Q.1 The same as for Foundation Level Question 7.

Q.2 The same errors occurred as at Foundation Level Question 5 although Higher candidates answered it much better.

Q.3 The same errors were made as at Foundation Level Question 6.

Q.4 (a) “Bureau” was rarely spelt correctly with many variations. The point was awarded if comprehensible with *d'information*. Many candidates chose to answer with its location instead, which was accepted under the mark scheme but meant that they could not achieve another mark by repeating the same answer for (b).

(b) Was usually answered correctly but again spellings had to be taken into account and “en face du restaurant” often produced interesting variations on both main words – “fasse” and “restront” amongst them.

(c) Was usually correct with most candidates writing the time in figures to avoid the possibility of incorrect spellings.

(d) This required 4 ticks and was mostly well done with at least 3 correct.

Q.5 (a) Was mostly well done – most candidates answered with either “famille” or “amis”, although “devoirs” was a common mistake and the spelling of “famille” still poses problems for many!

(b) Posed many problems, with most of the candidates who scored marks writing the acceptable “utile” and “rapide”; too many attempted to explain why technology is useful and ended up with complicated phrases or sentences which scored no marks.

(c) Was rarely done well, even though the answer “prof” instead of “professeur” was acceptable. The variation in spelling of “professeur” is still a cause for concern as it should be a basic item of vocabulary at this level.

(d) Most did not seem to have understood *qui* and made reference to things affecting the environment – *la pollution* frequent.

(e) Posed more difficulties as “voiture” was acceptable but rarely spelt correctly. Idea of *voiture intelligente* ignored by most.
Q.6  

(a) *Italie* mostly understood but very frequently written in English.

(b) Too many candidates wrote “pianiste” instead of “piano”.

(c) Most made reference to *neuf ans* but omitted *à l’âge de* and hence failed to score.

(d) This was mostly well done with few candidates being unable to answer “19”.

(e) Not often answered correctly and often left blank – *architect* and *architecture* answered by a few abler candidates – *model* and *chanteuse* often answered.

(f) Was usually fine as most candidates managed to get the answer “musique” spelt correctly.

(g) Seemed to be difficult, with many candidates writing lots of unconnected words instead of “contente” or “heureuse” or an acceptable positive comment such as “bien”.

(h) Attempts to express answer fully resulted in many errors although *top album/* *première place* could be picked out. However *premier plus* was very common and therefore failed to gain marks.

(i) Most took 238 000 Euros as the answer. Very few understood *rien*.

**New Specification 4221 / 01 / 02.** In this new paper, English spelling was inaccurate in many papers but it was easier to determine whether candidates had answered questions correctly, testing their comprehension more securely. Although the examination was virtually the same but with answers in English/Welsh, the general performance was not as good as on the Legacy paper. This may be an indication that candidates entered in Year 10 are not sufficiently prepared and that pupils do make progress in Year 11. On the other hand, it might indicate that on the Legacy paper, candidates have been able to provide answers in French without fully understanding the meaning!!!
Speaking

General Comments

- Administration was generally really good. On the whole tapes arrived promptly and most of them were clearly labelled with the Centre number, candidates’ names and numbers.
- Mark sheets were often included with the recordings rather than sent under separate cover.
- It has been noticed this year that the order of candidates seems to have been more random rather than according to candidate examination number.
- Most centres still use cassettes although there were a few CDs. The quality of recordings was generally better on CDs. Most centres seem to adhere to the time limits set for the tests – with a tendency to be too brief in some cases, thus not giving candidates sufficient opportunity to develop conversations.
- On the whole, candidates seem to have done better on the Role plays than the conversations.

Conversation

- It was generally well done as most centres ensured that the prescribed topic was covered.
- However, some schools just ask a few questions on every topic rather than an in depth conversation on 2 or 3 topics, resulting in the same series of questions being posed to each candidate and eliminating the element of originality, spontaneity or unpredictability.
- There were a few examples of over-rehearsed conversations but fortunately in most cases this did not apply to the whole conversation thus avoiding Band 4 capping.
- At Foundation level, candidates were able, for the most part, to maintain some conversation and attain marks within Band 3 and 4. Many were prevented from attaining Band 5 because they were not given sufficient opportunity to display knowledge of tenses, or if they were, they were unable to use tenses correctly.
- General performance at Higher level was somewhat disappointing as many higher candidates did not seem to show initiative or display a variety of structures, complex sentences etc.

Role Plays

General Observations

- Candidates at both levels are generally able to cope well with role plays.
- As usual, transactional tasks (particularly asking questions) presented problems.
- Only a few candidates managed to cope with the unpredictable elements this year and most of them did not understand “Tu viens de quel pays?”

Set 1

Foundation RP1

1. Mostly correct, some mispronunciation of “chambre” or “pièce”.
2. Mostly correct, some difficulties with the word “nuits”.
3. Pupils lost points by using the English pronunciation of “télévision”.
4. Pupils struggled to ask the question.
5. Good answers, a lot of mispronunciations, confusion between countries and nationalities.
Foundation RP2 Higher RP1

1. Pupils confident with expressing opinions, some kept saying “my” house.
2. Accepted any activities, housework, sport, activities of leisure.
3. Mostly correct, some candidates lost half a point when only 1 detail mentioned.
4. Usual problem with asking questions, some pupils were confused with the prompt.
5. Several pupils missed the time reference “le weekend dernier” so only gained half mark.

Higher RP2

1. Lots of “pouvez-vous m’aider?”, “j’ai un problème” not good enough on its own.
2. Mostly correct, accepted any duration.
3. Accepted any food, even breakfast.
4. Candidates performed well.
5. A lot of good opinions and justifications.

Set 2

Foundation RP1

1. Mostly correct, mispronunciation of “tente”.
2. Mostly correct, just a number was needed.
3. Most opted for “télé”.
4. Pupils struggled here with ‘où’ and ‘magasin’.
5. Mostly correct, used countries and nationalities.

Foundation RP2 Higher RP1

1. Pupils confident with expressing opinions, some kept saying “my” school.
2. Most able to answer correctly.
3. Mostly correct, some candidates lost half a point when only 1 detail mentioned.
4. As for set 1.
5. Wrong tenses used very often or omission of “semaine dernière”.

Higher RP2

1. As for set 1.
2. Good, some used English pronunciations of certain foods.
3. Some good answers, some didn’t understand what to do.
4. Asking the time not well done.
5. As for set 1.

Set 3

Foundation RP1

1. Most pupils knew the word maison but a few managed to ask where it was.
2. A number was good enough on its own.
3. A lot of mispronunciation of months in French.
4. Most pupils could ask how much it was.
5. As for set 1.
Foundation RP2 Higher RP1

1. Pupils confident with expressing opinions.
2. A lot of teachers rephrased resulting in no marks given.
3. Mostly correct, some candidates lost half a point when only 1 detail mentioned.
4. As for set 1.
5. Omisison of *weekend*. Wrong tense.

Higher RP2

1. As for set 1.
2. Most pupils did not understand the question.
3. Pupils did well by mentioning any food.
4. Some pupils did not understand the question.
5. Pupils were confident with opinions.

Set 4

Foundation RP1

1. As for set 1.
2. As for set 2.
3. Most pupil got the point by listing food they wanted to eat.
4. As set 3.
5. Any age accepted even if some pupils were very young or old

Foundation RP2 Higher RP1

1. Pupils confident with expressing opinions.
2. Mispronunciation of "frites" and "chips".
3. Mostly correct, some candidates lost half a point when only 1 detail mentioned.
4. As for set 1.
5. Wrong tenses used or omission of "mes vacances dernières".

Higher RP2

1. As for set 1.
2. Some pupils did not understand the question.
3. Any sport accepted.
4. Pupils did well with this question
5. Pupils were confident with opinions.
Marks to Grades

Below are the marks needed to gain each of the grades available at foundation and higher tier in each component of the 2010 French Legacy examination. It must be emphasised, however, that those marks are relevant only to that examination. As the difficulty level of papers cannot be known precisely in advance, the marks needed for each of the grades may vary from year to year. (The total marks are given in brackets after the index of each component).

Foundation Tier

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<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
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<th>Listening 02 (40)</th>
<th>Reading 03 (40)</th>
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Higher Tier

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<th>Speaking 08 (40)</th>
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*N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.*
Cumulative Percentages of candidates achieving Grades A* - G (Provisional figures).

Total number of candidates - 12,648.

Grade

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Grade Awarding - UMS

Candidates’ raw marks in each component are converted to a mark on the following Uniform Mark Scale:

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Marks to Grades - New Specification

Below are the marks needed to gain each of the grades available at foundation and higher tier in each component of the 2010 French New Specification examination. It must be emphasised, however, that those marks are relevant only to that examination. As the difficulty level of papers cannot be known precisely in advance, the marks needed for each of the grades may vary from year to year. (The total marks are given in brackets after the index of each component).

Foundation Tier

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Higher Tier

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*N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.