GCSE
GEOGRAPHY

Paper 2 / 40302F Human Geography
Report on the Examination

General

The paper allowed wide differentiation and all questions were done well by some students, with most students having made an effort to answer all or most of the questions attempted. Most students responded to the stimulus material provided and wrote in sentences with a quality of writing that was an improvement from previous years. The most successful students had sound examination technique and took notice of the mark allocation for each question. As on the higher tier, the most popular combination was 1, 2 and 6 and these were also the most frequently answered. Questions 4 and 5 seemed equally popular with few schools opting for question 3. Rubric offences are declining in number but still occurred, often by weaker students attempting as many questions as possible.

Whichever questions were answered there were clearly differences in how the specification content had been approached between schools. It was clear that a significant minority of students were unfamiliar with phrases and terms used within the specification, notably "non birth control" in question 1 and "external factors" and "ecotourism" in question 6. It is important that the language and content of the specification is used in teaching rather than that which may appear in textbooks and resources. It is from the specification wording that the questions must be derived. Furthermore, if material appears in the specification then questions should be expected on that material as it is a requirement to ensure complete specification coverage over the lifetime of the specification.

A further element that remains an issue from previous years is the need for students to carefully read and deconstruct the question. For example question 1(b)(ii) where there was a need to say how the chosen result was caused by rapid population growth rather than general causes relating to levels of development of the features seen. Similarly, for full credit, all aspects of the question need to be addressed such as the need to link to future development in questions 4(c) and 4(d) and future sustainability in 2(b)(v). Therefore all students need to practise fully addressing question commands and content.

Mapwork and other skills have always been integrated into the specification and examination, and account for approximately 20% of the marks. The OS maps were completed to a very variable standard with a preponderance of basic answers that did little more than list items that could be seen on the maps. The best students used grid references and directional and locational language to show clear use of the extracts and used these to address the question as mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The use of photographs was similarly variable and students should be reminded that where they are required to make use of such material they should look at it carefully and comment on features that can be clearly seen therein. All these skills benefit from repetition and practice before the exam.

SECTION A

Question 1 Population Change

1(a)(i) was widely answered correctly, although some did offer "Nigeria", missing the key word continent. 1(a)(ii) was equally high achieving, though a few offered incorrect answers by quoting one of the countries named, showing a need to read the key provided more carefully. 1(a)(iii) was generally very well done; where students did lose marks it was usually for the first part of the answer. It is encouraging therefore that students are able to use a map and key and recognise patterns. Similarly the direct response and statement required by 1(b)(i) elicited 2 marks from the vast majority of students with those who failed to score mentioning results which could not be seen in figure 2. Moving from direct response to application of knowledge in 1(b)(ii) proved more demanding as many students misunderstood the question and outlined ideas such as the causes or results of population growth and/or the problems that resulted from the events shown in the photographs. There were, however some excellent and well linked answers, often relating to food shortage as consequence of resource – population imbalance. Unfortunately there were some detailed answers on China for 1(b)(iii) which gained no credit. Whilst this is popular and clearly well known by students, schools are reminded that all elements of the specification must and will be examined and they cannot expect the same elements to appear year on year. Every effort was made to signal the content of the question by emboldening the key phrase. More positively, there were good answers on Kerala and Indonesia and also France or Germany to promote growth. Whilst the latter were not the original intention of the question they were credited as valid response to the question posed. 1(c)(i) proved straightforward as did 1(c)(ii)where the majority cited healthcare as their reason. In 1(c)(iii) many students did not refer to structure and either referred to processes or did not convey the element of change. Whilst terminology may not be as explicit as on Unit 1, there is still a need for it to be used and understood. 1(c)(iv) revealed that many students had an understanding of the problems stated but were unable to develop their answers sufficiently for the second mark on each case.

Question 2 Changing Urban Environments

2(a)(i) was surprisingly poorly answered with very few scoring full marks. A similar need to improve OS map skills was apparent on 2(a)(ii) where, whilst the majority were able to identify elements of the land use, few moved beyond a basic list and fewer still added OS detail. If grid references were attempted they were often incorrect. 2(b)(i) proved more challenging than expected with variable answers and many students not knowing what brownfield sites were. Consequently 2(b)(ii) and 2(b)(iii) were also not well answered though more of an issue than a knowledge gap was not using figure 5, again highlighting the need to read question instructions and to develop the skill of extracting information from a photograph. Even if students did not know what brownfield was they could have made reasonable comments based on what was easily observed in the photograph. 2(b)(iv) produced many single marks for the observation of larger size but many strayed into cost or the environment, however, there were some good answers where the two areas were clearly compared. 2(b)(v) revealed that many students were not sure enough of their understanding of sustainability to be able to apply knowledge to the strategies presented, all of which are stated on the specification. Few were able to score more than one mark for each strategy. Schools should ensure that students are able to apply their knowledge as well as state it. In 2(c)(i) The text stimulus was much better used than the other stimulus material in this question with the majority of answers scoring both marks. The informal sector was identified by most in 2(c)ii). 2(c)(iii) was an opportunity for case study information despite not being a requirement of the question. Schools should encourage the use of case study information as a good way of achieving clarity for level 2, those who did use case studies often scored well though generally

there was little real knowledge displayed. Many answers referred to individuals rather than improvements to the settlement, some knowing the terms site and service and self-help but not able to explain them very well.

Question 3 Changing Rural Environments

Once again this was by far the least popular question on the paper with the standard being very variable from those who had studied the topic to those who answered through confusion or rubric offences and hence struggled. This also had the lowest mean mark, perhaps because it was often answered as part of rubric errors. There were few correct answers to 3(a)(i) which should have been a straightforward mark, whereas 3(a)(ii) was usually all correct, with the North / South distance the most likely to be the lost mark. Students were much less able, as with the equivalents on questions 2 and 6, to be able to utilise the map to suggest reasons in 3(a)(iii) generally limited to level 1 for identification of the features. Again, they should be encouraged to routinely make map evidence clear and to develop points so that they do more than just state points. 3(a)(iv) seemed more familiar ground and many were able to identify the features and state why it was typical. It was ironic that some used the term commuter when referring to the suitability of the housing even if they couldn't define the term in the first question. The Lake District or Snowdonia were the most common case studies for 3(b) and where a case study was used students seemed well able to describe the situation in such areas, though some fell short of full marks with generic answers. The definition required for 3(c)(i) produced a good number of correct responses, though a disappointing number could not define what might be regarded as a fundamental term and 3(c)(ii) followed in the same vein. 3(c)(iii) was much more poorly answered because students were rarely able to move beyond "more money" to clarify how the country rather than individual farmers might benefit. Many answers to 3(c)(iv) focussed on increased health risks with many gaining a mark for ideas of dangerous working practices. Only the better students were able to develop their answers and relate them to the change in farming and therefore the question differentiated well as a common question with the higher tier.

Question 4 The Development Gap

A high percentage of the answers to 4(a)(i) were correct, though the plotting of south Africa was less successful on 4(a)(ii),either because it was missed, an overlarge and imprecise dot was used, or the differing scales were not read accurately. 4(a)(iii) was also missed out in a significant number of cases but those who did attempt it were mostly correct. It is a perennial feature that students miss single mark questions such as these and they should be reminded to read the questions carefully and check that all questions have been answered. 4(a)(iv) was done much better as was 4(a)(v) where the majority gained a mark for mentioning disease or health care, but few gained the second as they merely stated the problem. This again shows the need to highlight examination technique so that students know they have to extend their answers where more than mark is avaialable. 4(a)(vi) saw most students gain marks, though few gained more than three as, whilst they could mention specific diseases linked to water quality they often neglected to tackle the issue of water quantity. 4(b)(i) was done well with most getting two marks and many all three, though few were able to give more than generic aid responses to 4(b)(ii) or thought that charity workers were disinclined to work well because they weren't being paid. Politics and the effect of unstable governments does not appear to have been covered well as few students did more than offer direct lifts from the text. However there were a few excellent answers which dealt with ideas such as refugee crises and the long term impact of loss of education. This is a topical issue whose potential for engaging and enthusing students with the relevance of geography could be exploited further. The earthquake in Haiti was a popular choice for 4(d), though there was also confusion between the boxing Day and Japanese tsunamis and some answers were very generic. As a consequence all gained some marks at level one with short term impacts such as deaths and crop

loss, with only the better answers moving to level two with discussion of how this affected development through things such as tied aid and loss of revenue for future infrastructural investment. The clearer the case study knowledge, the better the answers tended to be.

Question 5 Globalisation

It was unusual to get a correct answer to 5(a)(i) as students either gave one word answers or attempted to define. On the other hand 5(a)(ii) usually produced three or four marks which is surprising given the response to the previous question. There seemed to be a fundamental knowledge gap in many students on 5(b)(i) who included nuclear as a renewable energy source to give a total of 19%, whereas 5(b)(ii) generated much higher success rates as the majority were aware that fossil fuels would eventually run out. The theme mentioned elsewhere in this report of coverage of all aspects of the specification came to the fore again in 5(b)(iii) as answers were generally weak. Few demonstrated any idea of what social or economic impacts might be, often discussing environmental impacts, and if they had an idea remained at level 1 usually for the idea of price increases. A significant number misread the question and outlined the social causes of increased energy use focussing on their dependence on social networking. 5(c) produced many good answers with solar energy and wind turbines being the most common with level two answers being the most likely when they discussed the disadvantages as advantages were often simply stated. Some students successfully based their answer in a case study of a location which was encouraging use of place knowledge and detail. Equally many students knew what food miles were in 5(d)(i) and also used the stimulus photograph well in 5(d)(ii) to connect the local nature of the food with the low food miles as a consequence so that many gained both marks. 5(d)(iii) was more mixed with many level one answers which stayed with the theme of food miles or stated the idea of freshness. There was also some notable confusion with organic food and the mistaken assumption that local food would be cheaper. The best answers discussed income staying in the community and used phrases such as reduced carbon footprint showing the value of terminology as a means of displaying clarity.

Question 6 Tourism

6(a)(i) was generally either well done or way out, suggesting that students either were or weren't familiar with OS map scales. 6(a)(ii) produced very similar outcomes to the OS maps elsewhere on the paper with many reaching level one for a list of features / attractions. Markers were instructed to be strict so that both use of the map and clarifying the attraction were required for level 2 on what was a common question with the H tier. Schools and students are reminded that they must do more than name features or state a list of places that can be seen to demonstrate use of the map extract. It is not difficult for students to give grid references and / or use directional and locational language to meet this criterion. Equally they need to develop answers beyond stating that something is attractive to say to whom it is so e.g. families or why it might be so e.g. the fact that there are fewer traditional seaside piers left to visit. In many ways this was the most disappointing question as the extract was full of information that the students could have utilised and yet so few did so other than at a basic level which might have been achieved without the benefit of a map. 6(b)(i) was either known or not, with the most common confusion being with the Demographic Transition Model and 6(b)(ii) generally produced two or three marks with the most common error getting points 2 and 3 the wrong way round. Most answered 6(b)(iii) correctly with the idea of developing new attractions / facilities as the most common. 6(c)(i) created difficulties with, as previous years, less than half seeming to grasp the nature of a pie chart and therefore circling one of the two figures which were offered as fairly unequivocally incorrect. London was, however, identified correctly by most for 6(c)(ii). 6(c)(iii) mainly produced a solitary mark for the notion of bringing money or more jobs with only a few able to develop the answer for the second mark. On 6(c)(iv) very few scored any marks at all giving what was perhaps the worst answered

question on the paper. Most wrote very generally about factors affecting tourist numbers such as cheap package holidays and recommendation by others along with the draw of the royal family and history in the UK coupled with the vagaries of our weather. Whilst it is recognised that many texts and resources do not separate factors, the specification clearly refers to external factors and so students needed to be cognisant of the term, which it did not appear that they were. A very few did answer successfully by referring to the Olympics and the effect of exchange rates and EU recession on visitor numbers. For 6(d) those who knew and used the correct case studies responded well to this question and it seemed that the results were centre specific with some having covered the topic well. Many answers sized upon the sustainability aspect over ecotourism leading to a range of incorrect answers about how tourism in general could be more sustainable e.g. Blackpool. Others mentioned urban sustainability and discussed BedZed and Curitiba. Galapagos, Kenya and Antarctica were common answers that secured level two by linking at least one comment or idea to future protection.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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

Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

UMS conversion calculator www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion