

Home Economics (Child Development)

General Certificate of Secondary Education **J441**

Examiners' Reports

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

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

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Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

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B011 Controlled Assessment – Short Tasks

General Comments

The cohort taking the specification was wide and varied. From the evidence seen, both the controlled assessment and the examination paper proved accessible to all the candidates and provided plenty of opportunities for a wide range of abilities to gain success. At the same time it provided differentiation across a wide range of abilities. It was apparent that where teachers had a clear understanding of the new specification the appropriate guidance and support was given to their candidates. In many cases there was evidence to indicate where teachers had attended OCR training sessions and had implemented suggestions and highlighted and embraced the new specification with rigour. Appropriately supported candidates achieved well.

B011 Controlled Assessment – Short Tasks

The majority of the work followed the OCR practical and investigative themes with some adaptations. **It is vital that board set titles be used.** Centres may adapt the titles slightly but not change the overall focus and topic as this could disadvantage their candidates.

Centres should be reminded that to fulfil this unit candidates are required to complete three Short Tasks. The focus of these tasks must be taken from the board set titles as set out in the OCR web site. **Candidates need to undertake tasks that will illustrate a range of skills and not be repetitive in their outcome.** For example, two leaflets are not acceptable. Centres can contact the board for further advice and agreement from OCR prior to candidates embarking on a task.

The Short Tasks were not too lengthy and reflected the allocated time (7 hours are recommended for each Short Task) that had been given to candidates in many instances. However, it was disappointing to see that a considerable number of centres were still including large quantities of research which does not form part of the planning section and therefore no credit could be given.

Planning

In many centres, it would appear that insufficient time was spent planning. Far too many centres submitted teacher-led plans that had clearly been done in one session. They were, often brief, did not explain the candidate's aims and objectives, or provide any detailed indication of the resources and how they were going to be utilised throughout the task. The latter were frequently just bullet pointed items lacking detail. Several candidates provided a lot of unnecessary research in the planning section and centres awarded full marks for very limited amounts of relevant information.

Candidates are required to carry out a plan of action that is logical, concise, and which clearly identifies the key priorities that are required to carry out their chosen task. This could take the form of a flow chart or step by step account and should be sufficient in detail for the candidate to carry out the planned work. This is paramount if high marks are being awarded.

In addition candidates undertaking a leaflet, poster or magazine article could include draft layouts of how their outcome may be constructed. This could include different fonts, sizes, relevant layout and content. Accurate plans demonstrating progression through the stages of working is an effective tool for delivering this part of the planning section.

Candidates should consider any safety aspects of making their identified outcome, for example comparisons of bought/homemade baby food or investigating baby changing facilities in their area.

To summarise, the plan must be detailed and accurate. All resources that are required to carry out the task should be included in this section. There should be clear evidence of how they will be used, especially if full marks are awarded. Research should not be included or given credit as it is not a requirement of the specification. Candidates should clearly state their task title on the front OCR cover mark sheet and at the start of each task.

Carrying Out – Organisation

Many centres did not show that they had followed their plans. Also in this section there was confusion over the written evidence to show that work was carried out. Centres appeared to be under the misconception that evidence of research (frequently far too many straight downloads from the internet) indicates that the work has been completed rather than providing a written account with confirmation of the results of their practical outcome or investigations together with clear annotation and/or photographic evidence. A diary log, annotated photograph of the candidates undertaking the work or a section linked to the plan of action can be utilised.

Centres must ensure that there is detailed written evidence undertaken by the candidate to support the work carried out in this section. This is in addition to and separate from the evaluation section.

Candidates must follow their plans making good use of the time available and should organise their resources effectively using any equipment safely and independently.

Several centres provided outcomes of leaflets (comparing nappies – breast v bottle) and there were a variety of approaches as to how the candidates undertook the task, together with a wide and diverse level of success. Many were able to present the data they had researched from surveys with varying levels of competency.

Carrying out work to a “high standard” led to a wide range of interpretations. Whilst there were some excellent leaflets, booklets and meals in evidence, many teachers accepted poor quality content and finish, and too often gave high marks.

Work often lacked a range of techniques across the three tasks; centres should undertake a range of tasks which enable candidates to fulfil a range of different skills and techniques which provide a varied and diverse set of outcomes.

In some cases written evidence was accurate and relevant, however, from some centres it was non-existent or did not support marks awarded.

To summarise, candidates should use a range of suitable methods when carrying out their planned work and use appropriate resources. Centres should provide relevant annotation to support the marks awarded in the section – Comments: “Excellent has worked well” and “A good attempt”, are not sufficient. The use of revised cover sheets which can be downloaded from the OCR website should be completed and attached to the work making sure that there is clear justification of why the marks are being awarded. This not only demonstrates good practice but is imperative to support the moderation process.

Practical Outcomes

A good number of centres made full use of ICT skills to produce leaflets and magazine articles. However, many outcomes were clearly not worthy of the full marks that were awarded with many spelling mistakes, hasty cutting out and poor presentation. There was a very wide range of extremes in terms of quality. Disappointingly, too much work was brief and not of high quality. There were a lot of very weak leaflets and magazine articles which lacked many basic facts whilst looking "quite pretty".

The quality of outcomes were of a mixed standard, however in many cases had been awarded high marks. The few centres where the candidates lacked ICT skills/facilities were disappointing as the hand produced leaflets were often limited in content and lacked visual quality stimulus.

Investigative Outcomes

The outcomes in the investigations did not show 'a range of detailed results', many centres did not have evidence of investigative techniques, nor meaningful results. Quite a number had simply produced a leaflet, as would have been expected in a practical task, with no evidence of an investigation. It is important that the investigative task includes a range of detailed and accurate results. This may take the form of testing and comparisons cumulating in a survey with appropriate conclusions. It is obvious that the use of ICT for this Short Task is strongly encouraged, particularly for charts and graphs. "Detailed and accurate results" whilst commented upon as such by the teacher, were anything but that in reality in a number of cases.

Centres should be reminded that if questionnaires are used they must be relevant to the topic and only one copy is required to be included with the work.

Evaluation

Some candidates did not review the whole task or evaluations were sometimes an account of what the candidate had done in the task (often being used as the written evidence part) which meant information was repeated but not necessarily evaluated. Many candidates were able to evaluate all sections (particularly if they had separated each section in the main body of the work) and most gave some strengths and weaknesses and suggested ways to improve the task.

In general the evaluation was often tackled more successfully than the earlier sections in the Short Tasks. This may possibly be due to the fact that there were no significant changes to this section from the old specification requirements.

However, some centres were over-generous when crediting marks in this section. Those who had embraced the written evidence part of the execution section had also grasped the concept of the overview of the whole task response in the evaluation. The centres who had not attempted to address the written evidence tended to explain what they had carried out in the evaluation, rather than addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the task as a whole.

Overall the quality of the Short Tasks was disappointing, as was much of the marking, which was far too generous in too many centres.

To reiterate, from previous years Centres should award marks for the quality of response. Candidates are required to identify their strengths and weaknesses in all areas of the task, not just the practical outcomes. They are also required to suggest ways of how to improve on their strengths and weaknesses, and draw conclusions from their work. Any results should have been collated, interpreted and linked back to the task title. All the aforementioned work should be undertaken independently if full marks are being awarded.

Administration

On reflection, the introduction of the OCR Interchange for the submission of marks by centres, the auto checking and updating of arithmetical errors and feedback of reports is a definite improvement. However, centres need to take more care to ensure fewer arithmetical errors in future. Centres must ensure that cover sheets which are annotated are securely attached to each of the three Short Tasks. They should also identify which task title is being used and number them one, two or three and highlight the investigation. The centre name and number, together with candidate name and number should be completed in the appropriate sections for each of the three tasks.

B012 Controlled Assessment – Child Study

Research

The quality of research varied considerably. Candidates need to include a clear rationale as to why they have chosen their topic area. It is recommended that several reasons for choice are identified. Candidates need to produce their own focused task title and it is suggested that the title is written as a question. Please note that brief bullet points are not acceptable for the more able candidate.

It is recommended that candidates should choose only one area of development on which to base their study. A range of appropriate sources should be identified which could include varied types of primary and secondary research. However, only about half the candidates had referenced the sources of information.

Initial research to explore the child's background and other relevant information can be undertaken through an interview and/or questionnaire to the parents of the child that is going to be studied. Candidates are required to carry out detailed research on the development area chosen using a range of suitable secondary sources of information. This could take the form of books/internet. Some used a good variety of sources of information, relevant specifically to the age and area of development. Some centres had only photocopies or printouts, with or without relevant information being highlighted. The information was rarely summarised comprehensively. There was little to connect the suggestions of ideas to the research in the work of too many candidates. Centres had taken on board the point that information on a new born baby was not required in the study of a four year old, but had taken it to the other extreme in including only minimal background information about the child.

Numerous letters of permission which are not required were included in candidates' work, and it should be noted that these do not constitute background information and often breach confidentiality as they include surnames. Full-frontal photographs, showing the child's face, should also be avoided.

At the end of the research section candidates should produce a clear outline of the steps to be carried out in the task. This could take the form of an action plan, flow chart, or specification. Candidates must undertake the majority of this work independently and show a high level of understanding if they are awarded marks in the top band.

Centres are reminded that to fulfil this unit, the candidates are required to complete one child study and select one of the board set themes on which to base the focus of their study. It is recommended that approximately 22 hours are allocated for the completion of the task. The themes can be found on the OCR website and in the specification if further guidance is required. Some Centres are still allowing their candidates to undertake emotional development which is no longer part of the OCR board set themes.

Selecting and Planning the Observations

Most candidates had plans for each visit; however, some of these were too brief and repetitive. Very few candidates demonstrated that they knew why they were planning the activities and what they were actually going to find out from undertaking them. They were able to list a range of activities, (not always relevant ones) and the resources needed, but were not able to show that they understood the connection between the research and the observations. A limited number of centres actually planned how the visits would be recorded. Some included blank pro-

formas but didn't mention why they were included. It was pleasing to see that there were some excellent responses.

Candidates should use the research previously undertaken to then draw appropriate conclusions and explain how the task will be carried out.

Candidates should go on to use their research to identify and produce a range of possible ideas for their observations. The research can then be collated and assessed as to its suitability. The ideas suggested should be appropriate for the age of the child and the area of development chosen. Candidates must consider and justify a range of suitable methods for their observations which link to their task title and area of development. Plans should then be drawn up, they must be accurate and detailed especially if marks are being awarded in the high mark band. Resources that are going to be used for their observations must be clearly identified. A variety of methods to record the results of the observations should be included together with clear reasons for choice. The use of ICT is recommended. The observations should illustrate different skills, for example, a drawing session, cookery activity, reading, a puzzle, depending on the age of the child and the area of development being studied. Plans for each observation must be included; candidates must also state how these are going to be recorded. Sample recording sheets are recommended.

Practical Observations

Variety and detail were lacking in the work of many candidates. Too many write-ups were descriptive and repetitive lacking in any originality. Only a few centres had an interesting variety of ways of recording. A large number of centres marked candidates in the higher mark range where there were six visits all written in exactly the same way. The marking criteria point "use a number of different methods effectively" was not evident in the work of many candidates. Some centres gave high marks for very brief descriptions in this section, where there was little other evidence. The length of each observation varied from 3 minutes to 1 hour. The former does not enable the candidate to gain a worthwhile experience especially if six observations were undertaken on the same day within an hour.

Applying Understanding

There was a varied level of evidence in this section. To gain high marks candidates must show that they have clearly understood and applied their gained knowledge to what they have observed and in particular to their child and the area of development.

Not many centres referred specifically back to their research, nor noted progression in the child's development. Too often this was really a repeat of what was written in the observations. Where a chart, tabulated evidence, or a set of norms was used as a check-list the work was much enhanced. Many centres did not really attempt any comparisons with another child of a similar age and very few drew conclusions on the child's progress. This area could be undertaken by candidates sharing understanding with other peers, group work in class, or using the text book norms for reference.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Candidates should produce a high quality evaluation that includes all aspect of the task. Many included the strengths and weaknesses in their study and identified some improvements. Relevant and pertinent conclusions that relate back to the task title should be evident especially if high marks are being awarded. Where the task title was appropriate, and had been written as a question, the candidates commented upon their degree of success in a meaningful way. Few

candidates suggested further work. Bullet points are not sufficient for the awarding of high marks.

If high marks are awarded, a good standard of written communication throughout the whole task using specialist terms/terminology in a structured format is necessary.

In general, there have been fewer adjustments to the centres' marks for the Child Study Tasks than the Short Tasks controlled assessment.

Administration

On reflection the introduction of the OCR Interchange for the submission of marks by centres, the auto checking and updating of arithmetical errors and feedback of reports is a definite improvement. However, centres need to take more care to ensure fewer arithmetical errors in future. Centres must also ensure that cover sheets which are annotated are securely attached to the child study and that the centre name, number, together with candidate name and number are completed in the appropriate sections and their title written out in full.

B013 Principles of Child Development Written Paper

General Comments

The paper proved accessible to all candidates and gave opportunities for differentiation throughout. It was evident that some centres had prepared their candidates well, both in delivering the whole specification and in their instruction of examination technique. Examiners were pleased to say that there were few questions which had not been attempted, indicating that the paper had been framed in such a way that candidates felt confident about making a response. Candidates lost marks if they did not read the question carefully enough or failed to explain the points they identified in the longer responses. Questions throughout the paper were well attempted by all.

Comments on Individual Questions.

- 1 (a) All candidates correctly identified four toys.
- (b) On the whole well done but a few candidates thought growth was the answer.
- (c) Most candidates gave the correct ages. At times the norms for 2 years and 3 years were ransposed and a few gave 9 months as an answer even though it was given as the example.

Tip: Teach candidates to read the question carefully before answering.

- (d) (i) A mixed response showing differentiation. Candidates could give some factors but little explanation. Candidates demonstrated a lack of knowledge by mentioning factors from 100 years ago eg the vote for women etc. Many answers became muddled and repetitive. Although career opportunities is a sound fact there are many other factors that could have been given, eg more benefits/increased childcare facilities to allow women to not only work but also have some free time. Candidates at times lost the focus of how the role of women had changed and talked generally of family life.
- (ii) Well attempted, with 'allows both parents to bond', 'less stress', 'more free time', 'role models'. Candidates who answered by repeating the question gained no marks.
- (e) Candidates appeared to understand the term but could not explain it without using the wording from the question, ie 'rivalry between siblings'.
- 2 (a) On the whole, well done.
- (b) (i) This question gave differentiation as most candidates could give causes of infertility eg low sperm count/blocked fallopian tubes/sperm ducts but few candidates could go on to describe how these prevented conception taking place.
- (ii) Well attempted, sperm/egg donors, IVF and IAH being popular answers.

- (c) On the whole very well done, although a few candidates did not use correct terminology.
- (d) Well answered by all with 'midwife' or 'health visitor'. Again it was pleasing to see candidates using the term GP rather than doctor if this was given as the answer.

3 This question successfully achieved differentiation. Many candidates could show their knowledge of the correct disciplining of children eg naughty step/remove a toy/explain/do not shout/do not smack/praise etc but not many candidates could describe the theory behind these actions. Some answers were worryingly incorrect, eg 'remove laptop/do not let them go on Facebook/ground them' and at times 'smack' or 'shout at them'.

Social skills were correctly identified by many but it was candidates with more understanding and knowledge who could explain the given points.

Tip: Remember the specification is for a child of 0 – 5 years.

- 4 (a) Candidates who had learned their work well understood the term 'voluntary service' but many lost marks for repeating the question or thinking it was a free service.
- (b) Well answered by most candidates.
- (c) It was pleasing to see some correct answers but often informal care was muddled with fostering. Some candidates gave multiple answers.

Tip: Teach candidates that where they give multiple answers to a single response question no mark can be awarded.

- (d) (i) Well answered by all.
- (ii) Some answers were related to 2000 rather than 1975 as required in the question.
- (iii) & (iv) Well done.
- (e) Most candidates could give points to look for when choosing a day nursery, but it was those who responded to the command word 'explain' who gained better marks.

Tip: Teach candidates how to respond to command words eg 'describe' and 'explain'.

- 5 (a) (i) On the whole, well answered. Just a few candidates gave meningitis or chicken pox.
- (ii) It was pleasing to see some candidates gaining marks but on the whole, although all candidates completed the question, the answers often showed little depth of knowledge, eg 'eat infections' and 'mixing together'. Candidates showed little understanding of how a vaccination protects against infections, but often referred to the vaccine actually adding the antibodies, rather than stimulating the white blood cells to make and release the antibodies or that the antibodies attack the bacteria by attaching to them.
- (b) Well answered in the main – coughing/sneezing or touch/contact.

- (c) Candidates who had revised well earned a mark for 'incubation' but many candidates did not know this term.

Tip: Encourage the use of glossaries to help the learning of key terms.

- (d) Correct answers seen were the glass test and a sensitivity to light. Many answers were vague or generalisations of being unwell, eg 'feeling sick', 'crying', 'sleepy' and 'hot' and gained no marks.
- (e) Some good answers were 'read instructions', 'in date', 'clean spoon' and 'wash hands'. However candidates lost marks for repetition, eg 'correct amount', 'at the right time', 'correct age', 'don't give more than you should' etc which were aspects of 'following the instructions'.

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

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Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

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