



GCSE **Italian**

8633/RF

Report on the examination

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General comments

Performance at Foundation Tier this year was weaker than in 2024, indicating that students found the paper more challenging. The slightly smaller number of entries may also have affected the overall statistics.

Nevertheless, students are demonstrating greater willingness to engage with the paper, even in its more demanding sections. Encouragingly, fewer students are leaving answers completely blank on difficult questions, for instance, question 5, question 8, and the translation task consistently showed solid effort, even when responses appeared to be largely guesswork.

In general, Foundation Tier students continue to struggle most with questions requiring extended written responses and sometimes submit answers that suggest they have not fully understood the question. News headline items remain particularly problematic and should be regularly practised as part of preparing for the reading paper.

Section A

Question 1

This question on future jobs was fairly successful, with over 92% of students scoring at least 2 out of 3 marks. However, part 1.1 posed some problems: in fact, just over half of the students answered it correctly.

While most were able to link the key words *all'aria aperta* to the job of gardener, many who failed to do so chose “actor” as their answer—making it the most common incorrect response.

Question 2

This question on school was generally well answered, particularly part 2.2: most students understood the meaning of *mercoledì*, and 71% scored a mark here. On the other hand, many did not recognise *mezz'ora*, and for part 2.1, responses such as “an hour and a half” were often given.

Part 2.3 proved the most challenging, with only 37% of students achieving both marks. While the majority correctly identified *matematica*, the second most frequently listed subject was physical education or PE, instead of physics.

Question 3

This question on the local area was fairly challenging, with only around 50% of students managing to score full marks. In part 3.1, most identified “lots of activities” as the correct reason; however, many selected “in the mountains” as the location. This refers to where Marco lives, rather than where he prefers to live, and may suggest the instructions weren't read carefully.

In part 3.2, most students selected the correct location— in the countryside —but chose the incorrect reason, *avere dei negozi vicino a casa*. While this phrase does appear in the text, it does not correspond to the reason given for the countryside location.

Although the text itself was relatively straightforward, the format of the question—requiring students to select both the correct location and the matching reason—appears to have posed difficulties. It seems that some students did not fully engage with the instructions.

Question 4

This question on lifestyles was fairly well answered overall, except for part 4.1, where fewer than 50% of students identified the correct answer (“healthy”). A large number selected “unhealthy,” and an almost equal proportion chose “healthy and unhealthy,” making it difficult to analyse the possible reasons. It seems plausible that Foundation Tier students may often scan the text for gist rather than read between the lines, as is more commonly expected at Higher Tier.

Possibly, the presence of phrases such as *soffre di problemi* and *fuma* misled students into thinking the text described unhealthy habits. In reality, these did not refer to the dad’s behaviour: one was a factual statement, and the reference to smoking was presented in the negative form.

The remaining three parts of the question, however, were very well answered.

Question 5

This question proved challenging for students, even though the text on school was aimed at lower grade levels. Foundation Tier students often find it more difficult to answer questions requiring an explicit written response, as their answers are frequently imprecise or appear rushed.

For part 5.1, for example, although many students came close to scoring the mark for identifying the correct disadvantage, a significant number missed out by stating “science is too long”—a vague phrase that lacks clarity in English. The precise response required was “science lessons are too long”.

Part 5.2 was even more difficult, with only 22% of students scoring both marks. A high proportion responded with “the school is too strict” or simply “it’s too strict”, which was not accepted as it lacked the specificity of the correct answer: “the rules are too strict”.

Students performed better when identifying the correct advantages, but overall, this remained a demanding question. It appears that Foundation Tier students would benefit from further practice in producing focused written responses and from recognising that vague or awkward phrasing may result in marks being lost under the mark scheme.

Question 6

This question combined two distinct challenges: a literary extract, and the true/false/not in the text format, which has traditionally been difficult for students at both tiers—although last year saw some improvement compared to previous papers. As such, this question was targeted at the most able Foundation students, and it is unsurprising that several parts were found to be quite challenging, particularly part 6.3, where only 33% answered correctly.

This suggests that students were unfamiliar with the word *l'ultima*, leading many to incorrectly believe that Natalia was the eldest child.

Performance on the remaining items was mixed. Part 6.5 posed the fewest problems, with approximately 75% of students correctly identifying “the family was poor” as true, thanks to the reference *avevamo pochi soldi* in the text. For the remaining parts, however, only around 50% of students gave the correct response.

Question 7

This question on relationships was of average difficulty, yet students performed exceptionally well. In fact, it was the most successful item on the entire paper, with around 70% of students scoring the full 3 marks and over 90% earning a mark for part 7.2.

This reflects strong understanding of the personality adjectives required to succeed in this section, such as *arrabbiato*, *simpatico*, *divertente*, and *noioso*.

Question 8

This question was particularly challenging, due to both the complexity of the text—targeted at the highest-achieving Foundation students—and its format: a multiple-choice questionnaire requiring students to express the meaning of the selected correct answer in English, without simply restating the question.

Although the text was lengthy, students were only expected to focus on the option that had already been circled, not to read all possible choices (a, b and c). Clear guidance on this during exam practice could potentially improve future success rates. In this instance, only part 8.3 was answered successfully, while responses to the other parts ranged between 33% and 46% accuracy.

For part 8.1, although a few students answered correctly, many missed the key idea. “Because he wanted to go to university” was a frequent response, but it omitted the essential point—that he needed to save or earn money to attend university—and therefore did not score.

Part 8.2 saw a significant number of guesses, with answers like “he likes them” or “wants to spend time with them,” which were unsupported by the text. Some students came close with “his parents pay some of it,” but did not gain the mark as the correct response was “they pay for him” or “they pay for everything,” reflecting the Italian *i miei genitori mi pagano tutto*.

Part 8.3 was the most successful, largely due to the mark scheme accepting simple responses such as “the culture”—a sensible decision, considering Foundation Tier requirements. The intended answer was “to discover foreign culture” or “to discover new countries.”

Part 8.4 also scored reasonably well, although some students did not recognise the word *ambiente*, and answered “because they like the ambient,” which did not receive a mark. The correct response was “train because it helps the environment.”

Section B

Question 9

This question focused on a popular and accessible topic—hobbies—and required students to identify fairly common verbs such as *ballare*, *leggere*, and *nuotare*. Indeed, nearly 60% of students achieved full marks (3 out of 3),

Question 10

This question followed a similar format to Question 9, but tackled one of the most challenging topics—news headlines—and was aimed at the highest-performing Foundation students. Only 22% of students achieved full marks (3 out of 3), though 95% managed to score at least one mark.

Question 11

This question format, which requires students to select the correct word to fill a gap from multiple options, is typically challenging for Foundation Tier candidates. However, this year's performance was notably stronger: nearly 50% of students achieved full marks (4 out of 4), and almost all students scored at least one mark.

Question 12

The second literary extract on the paper was an abridged extract from Italo Calvino's *Marcovaldo*. Despite being in multiple-choice format, the question proved difficult for most students.

Part 12.1 posed difficulties. Most students chose option C (*al magazzino*), influenced by the distractor in the opening line—*il capo dell'ufficio entra in magazzino*. This suggests that students did not pay close attention to the subject of the sentence. Additionally, the section included the word *domicilio*, which may have confused students unfamiliar with it, as the question used the more common term *casa*.

Parts 12.2 and 12.3 were the most successful; however, only around 50% of students answered these correctly.

Part 12.4 was the most challenging: only 19% understood that the story involved multiple Father Christmases. The majority selected option A (*un Babbo Natale*).

Question 13

Parts 13.1 and 13.2 shared an identical format, requiring students to answer in Italian and identify three distinct time frames. However, part 13.1 featured a slightly easier text, which is reflected in the success rate: 35% of students scored both marks in the first part, compared to only 10% in the second.

Both texts included time adverbs and verb clues to support accurate identification, but those in part 13.1 were more accessible—*cinque anni fa* and *oggi* (a term also used in the question). In contrast, part 13.2 included less familiar expressions such as *fino a poco tempo fa* and *fra dieci anni*, which proved more difficult for students to interpret.

For the future time frame in 13.2, a frequent answer was *il numero di nascite scende nei paesi europei*, which actually relates to the causes of *la fame* —the correct response. Additionally, across all parts of Question 13, many students tended to copy and paste random segments from the text into the answer box, producing phrases that lacked meaning or relevance, such as *soprattutto fra i giovani era al primo posto*.

Section C

Question 14

It was pleasing to see a significantly higher number of Foundation Tier students attempting the translation this year. Traditionally, this section has seen a considerable number of blank responses; however, even when students earned few marks or relied heavily on guesswork, the task was at least attempted.

Notably, 80% of students scored at least one mark. Although only a small number achieved full marks, the overall effort demonstrated a positive shift in engagement with this challenging task.

Section 1

This was one of the most successful sections overall and was frequently the only part where students scored when awarded just one mark. A very small minority failed to gain a point due to translating the Italian phrase literally as “I have 15 years,” which, of course, does not work in English.

Section 2

This part of the task was translated reasonably well overall. However, some students lost marks by interpreting *vicino al mare* as “near the beach” instead of the more accurate “near the sea.” Additionally, a small minority omitted the word *bella*, which was likely a distraction error. Given its familiarity, even at Foundation Tier, it's improbable that students were genuinely unaware of its meaning.

Section 3

The word *estate* was translated well by most students. While one might expect confusion with the English word “estate,” such misinterpretations were rare. More commonly, students lost marks due to omitting the word *spesso*, which was unfamiliar to some. Translations using “usually” were accepted as sufficiently close synonyms.

Section 4

Despite appearing straightforward, this portion of the translation generated a wide range of interpretations. The literal translation “take the sun” was rejected for being too direct. However, responses like “lay in the sun” and “catch some sun” were accepted as reasonable synonyms for “sunbathing.” When translations strayed too far from the intended meaning—such as “get the sun”—marks were not awarded.

Section 5

This section was not particularly challenging overall. However, a small number of students lost marks due to not recognizing *domenica* as the word for Sunday.

Section 6

In this section, quite a few students translated most of the phrase correctly but failed to include *quindi*, which led to no marks being awarded. Additionally, a small number of students were unfamiliar with the word *sciare*, leading to varied guesses—such as “ice skating”—that ultimately lost them the mark.

Section 7

This sentence was accurately translated by the majority of students. However, marks were not awarded when the translation strayed too far from the intended meaning of *divertirsi*. For example, responses like “I liked it a lot” were deemed insufficiently close, whereas phrases such as “I had a lot of fun” or “I really enjoyed it” better captured the original intent.

Section 8

Despite being one of the longest sections in the translation task, it was largely successful, with most students conveying the intended meaning accurately. Where marks were lost, it was typically due to the omission of the conditional form—students often wrote “I want to do an apprenticeship” instead of “I would like,” which failed to reflect the correct nuance.

Section 9

Although this section appeared deceptively straightforward, it led many students to rely on guesswork or assume that a loosely similar version would earn the mark—when, in fact, it did not. A frequent error was translating the phrase as “in France to work with my dad” or “in France working for my father.” However, the only accepted translation was “in France where my father works.”

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.