General Comments

The paper was a very similar standard to last year’s paper and the standard of candidate response was, again, very encouraging. The majority of candidates scored well over half marks and displayed high levels of competence in their understanding of specific and general comprehension tasks. As last year, the candidature was well prepared to meet the variety of question types experienced on the paper and examination rubrics were understood. Questions requiring written answers in French were marked for communication of message. Accuracy was only considered if the clarity of the message was in doubt. Answers written in languages other than French were ignored, but these were pleasingly rare. The extracts heard featured formal and informal language in a variety of settings. In terms of the gradient of difficulty across the three sections and the distribution of marks overall, the paper provided an excellent and appropriate test of listening at all three levels. Candidates found the last exercises the most difficult. As last year, the majority of candidates chose to answer questions on all three sections of the paper. For some, this was over-demanding, but, equally, for the majority of candidates who did not attempt Section 3, some Examiners noted that marks on Sections 1 and 2 indicated that a good attempt at Section 3 could have been made.

Comments on individual questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-8

This section tested the comprehension of short conversations. The question type used was multiple choice. Many candidates scored at least 6 of the available marks. Q1 and Q7 were the most demanding. Droite and gauche perhaps proved a demanding opening question/stimulus for weaker candidates and in Q7 averses de pluie was not well understood.

The correct answers were:

Q1 C; Q2 C; Q3 B; Q4 A; Q5 B; Q6 C; Q7 D; Q8 D

*The report for this subject is supplied by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES).
**Exercise 2 Question 9-16**

This exercise tested the comprehension of specific detail and factual information concerning activities in Paris. Times, dates, prices and leisure activities were tested via note completion and box ticking. Candidates made few errors on numbers and did well on the last three questions. Q2 was more difficult in that some did not identify 21h30. The most common source of error was on the transcription of dessin which was rendered as design or dessant. Overall, candidates did well on this section.

**Section 2**

**Exercise 1 Question 17**

Candidates heard five young people giving their views on television and had to match the views expressed to a list of statements. The instructions were well understood and many candidates scored full marks. Even the weakest candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks on this section.

Correct options were: E, A, C, D, F

**Exercise 2 Questions 18-17**

On this exercise, weaker candidates started to go astray. The extract featured an interview with an astronaut. Questions focused on studies, training and his experiences. Questions required short answers in French, full sentences were not required. Only a few failed to answer in French, but there was some intrusion of Spanish and English in some answers. Generally, weaker candidates scored just less than half marks, but overall many scored at least 7 or 8 marks. In Q18 candidates writing space for espace did not gain the mark. Some confused the answer for Q19 with the information required for Q20 (tests medicaux). On Q21 weaker candidates gave answers such as traîner pendant un an rather than s'entraîner with the correct time/duration of training. Q22 was one of the most difficult – weaker candidates wrote that he went to the sun. In Q23 Mir alone or la station russe were adequate to gain the mark. On Q24 weaker candidates transcribed 12 ans, 20 jours which did not gain the mark. 20 jours alone was adequate or en 12 ans, 20 jours. On Q25 weaker candidates mentioned astrologie. On Q26 the correct sports aquatiques was a common answer, but the spelling aquatic did not gain the mark. Q26 proved difficult for many who incorrectly wrote la vie, la view or la ville instead of la vue de la Terre. Answers such as regarder la Terre or voir la Terre were, of course, acceptable.
Section 3

Exercise 1 Question 28-33

Candidates heard an interview with a young girl talking about photography. The question type was multiple choice. Appropriately entered candidates usually scored at least 4 marks. The first three questions were found to be easier than the last three. Overall, candidates found Q32 to be the most difficult – only the most able answered this correctly, and this was a real test of listening ability.

The correct answers were : Q28 D; Q29 D; Q30 B; Q31 C; Q32 C; Q33 C

Exercise 2 Question 34-42

The extract heard featured an interview with a young girl about a trip to Sénégal. Answers in written French were required. This proved to be a demanding exercise and it discriminated well. Inappropriately entered candidates often scored only 1 or 2 marks, usually on Qs 37 and 41. On Q34, la richesse was an adequate answer, as was ils sont pauvres. Les riches was not an acceptable answer. On Q35, many found it difficult to spell chaleureux and accueillants. In Q36 the required answer was reboiser les environs de la ville – candidates writing environment did not get the mark. Many also wrote 4,000 instead of 40,000 arbres. Q37 was one of the best answered. Q38 required the word fier/s. In Q39 some reference to the fact that it provided a living for a lot of or at least a dozen people was required. In Q40 a fair number of candidates perceived the problem of the heat but failed to render moustiques, often giving domestiques as an answer. Q41 was generally well answered with many candidates giving les conditions (de vie) sont difficiles, but Q42 was correctly answered by only a few. The concept of going to live/help in a developing country was expressed by only the most able and was an appropriately testing last question.
**0520/2 : Reading and Directed Writing**

General comments

In general, candidates showed very reasonable competence and most appeared to have been very well prepared for this examination. The difficulty of the paper was appropriate to the ability range of the candidates.

Sections 1 and 2 of the paper were very well answered by a large majority of the candidates, with many scoring 50+ out of 52. Some candidates scored full marks and only a small minority scored less than 36. The replacement of one of the reading exercises in Section 1 with a writing exercise aimed at EFG candidates gave all candidates a chance to gain marks.

Section 3 proved to be more difficult. It was quite challenging for some candidates, but good candidates were able to score high marks.

Comments on individual questions

**Exercise 1 Question 1-6**

A large majority of candidates achieved full marks.

The correct answers were: Q1 C; Q2 B; Q3 D; Q4 A; Q5 B; Q6 D

**Exercise 2 Questions 7-13**

This exercise was very well answered with nearly all candidates scoring 5 to 7 marks. Some candidates had problems with Q11 because they did not know *placard*.

The correct answers were: Q7 V; Q8 V; Q9 V; Q10 F; Q11 F; Q12 V; Q13 F

**Exercise 3 Questions 14-20**

Again, most candidates scored very well here.

The correct answers were: Q14 C; Q15 F; Q16 A; Q17 D; Q18 E; Q19 B; Q20 C

2000-CE-FRENCH
Exercise 4 Questions 21

This new writing task has been very successful in giving all candidates a chance to show their ability to write in French at the level of a postcard. On the whole, candidates did very well, with most candidates able to score at least 6/7 marks and a very large number gaining full marks.

Candidates should be reminded that they must follow the prompts given in the pictures when they write their postcards.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 22-32

The text on Yannick Noah was well understood by the vast majority of candidates: they nearly all managed to answer the questions correctly and scored between 14 and 16 marks.

Q22  (i)  Il est champion de tennis
        (ii)  Il est capitaine de l'équipe de France
Q23  (i)  A Nice/en France
        (ii)  En pension/loin de sa famille
Q24  Au Cameroun or en Cameroun or dans Cameroun
Q25  L'importance de a famille
Q26  (i) ils sont plus mûrs/ils sont très informés/ils ont de nombreux moyens d'apprendre/ils profitent de leur époque
        Any 2 of these 4 answers
Q27  (i) la télé/les voyages/l'ordinateur/les jeux vidéo
        Any 2 of these 4 answers
Q28  Elle aide (C'est pour aider) les enfants qui ont des difficultés/problèmes
Q29  Il va visiter les enfants (gravement) malades
Q30  Voir les enfants sourire/rire or Les voir sourire/rire
Q31  (i) courage/tenacité/discipline
        Any 2 of these 3 answers
Q32  Perdre/ce n'est pas grave de perdre/fi a le droit de perdre
Exercise 2 Question 33

Once again, some candidates penalised themselves by failing to follow the instructions in the rubric and instead writing essays on 'My holidays', 'My intended career' or 'A description of my family'. Candidates should be reminded that they need to spend some time reading the rubric carefully before starting to write as they cannot get communication marks if they do not follow the instructions given.

The quality of the writing was very varied. The best candidates demonstrated a high level of accuracy, whereas the weakest had real problems with tenses.

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 34-40

Teachers should remind candidates that if the statement is true they do not have to explain why it is true. They only have to provide a reason when they think the statement is false.

All too often candidates just lifted part of the text, making no attempt to manipulate it appropriately.

Q34 Faux. Non, beaucoup de Français sont venus/viennent habiter les villes or La population des villes a augmenté
Q35 Vrai
Q36 Faux. Non, ils conçoivent pas de véritable plan d'urbanisme or Ils ne réfléchissent pas à la façon d'organiser/aménager la ville
Q37 Faux. Non, ils sont coupés des centres-ville or Ils ont le sentiment d'être enfermés dans leur banlieue or Non, ils n'ont pas de commerces ou d'équipements de loisirs
Q38 Vrai
Q39 Faux. Non, ils passent leurs journées dans leur quartier or Non, ils sont sans travail/ils n'ont pas de travail
Q40 Faux. Non, ce sera long or Ça sera coûteux or Il faudrait dépenser 35 milliards de francs par an
Exercise 2 Questions 41-49

At this stage of the paper, to get full marks, candidates are required to write more complete answers and to do so with a certain level of accuracy. Candidates who lift sentences from the text without answering the question will not score marks. They should be advised that where questions ask Pourquoi... ?, Pour quelle raison ... ?examiners expect an answer that starts with parce que or car or pour etc and the correct subject and verb.

It was pleasing to see the number of very good answers from candidates, especially to Qs 41, 43, 45 and 47.

Q41 Parc qu'il s'agit de descendre des pistes à 60 degrés/des pistes qui tombent presque à la verticale
Q42 Les pistes noires ont seulement 30, 35 degrés d'inclinaison or Les pistes de Paul sont plus inclinés or L'inclinaison
Q43 Any 2 of
   il ne s’élance jamais sans préparation/il se prépare/il s'entraîne
   énormément/il étudie de près le parcours
Q44 Any 2 of
   Parce qu'en montant, il étudie le terrain/les rochers/la qualité de la neige/et il repère les virages difficiles
Q45 (Il doit) maîtriser sa peur
Q46 Il faut avoir un temps clair et une neige de bonne qualité
Q47 Il est trop indépendant (pour ça)
Q48 Any 1 of
   il aime l'aventure/il est courageux/il aime les défis/il est fou d'aventure/il aime prendre des risques/il cherche à prouver qu'il est plus fort que la nature/il a besoin de se pousser jusqu'à ses limites
Q49 Any 2 of
   Parce qu'il faut partir dans des conditions météorologiques très dures
   Parce qu'il faut grimper avec du matériel d'alpiniste, de skieur, et des bouteilles d'oxygène sur le dos
   Parce qu'il faut partir dans des conditions météorologiques très dures et grimper avec du matériel très lourd sur le dos
   Parce qu'il faut grimper à 8000 mètres
   Pour grimper avec tout ce matériel

2000-CE-FRENCH
Exercise 3 Questions 50-69

Generally, well answered apart from very weak candidates who did experience problems. An increasing number of candidates are scoring well on this exercise.

Q50 avec
Q51 que
Q52 le/ce/leur
Q53 de/pour
Q54 dans
Q55 lendemain/premier/second/deuxième etc
Q56 faisait
Q57 à
Q58 qui
Q59 vers/pour
Q60 du
Q61 par/dans
Q62 des
Q63 quand
Q64 avoir
Q65 ont/avaient
Q66 en
Q67 eu
Q68 était
Q69 ses/leurs
General comments

This paper was common to all candidates who had followed both a Core Curriculum and an Extended Curriculum course. The full range of marks was available to all candidates and, as last year, there was a wide range of performance from candidates.

The communication skills of these candidates continue to impress. They are determined to make the most of what they know and well over half were able to score above half marks. Overall, the standard heard was very comparable to that of last year.

Comments on individual questions

Role Plays

Centres are reminded to encourage candidates to attempt all parts of each task. If only one part of a task is completed only 1 mark should be awarded.

The 'A' role plays were perceived to be of equal difficulty and of a level of difficulty comparable to last year. They were intentionally easier than the 'B' role plays and were set using vocabulary and topics from the Defined Content Areas A, B and C. Generally, candidates found them accessible and even the weakest candidates were able to score 1 or 2 marks on each task. The 'B' role plays were more demanding and frequently required a more advanced use of tense and structure. They did, however, represent a fair challenge and candidates responded well.

Role Plays 'A'

Candidates should be reminded to greet and thank as appropriate.

At the bust station
Pronunciation of Beaune and Dijon caused some problems. In Task 2, weaker candidates requested un retourner and in Tast 3 sometimes asked Combien de prix? Most candidates correctly formulated a question in Task 4, but there were problems for weaker candidates.

At the campsite
Generally, candidates approached the tasks well, but were not always successful in formulating a question on Task 5, despite the suggestions given.
In a restaurant
Task 1 was well done as was Task 2. Some candidates were unfamiliar with une entrée (cf Defined Content) and some did not listen to the options offered by the Examiner in Task 4. Some lively dialogues were heard however and most were able to formulate the appropriate question in Task 5.

Role Plays ‘B’

Phoning a flat-owner in France
Task 1 caused problems for a surprisingly large number of candidates who failed to realise that they were not being asked about whether they had had a good holiday but about their trip home. Teachers would be well advised to emphasise the importance of the word voyage as it appears frequently in IGCSE papers and is part of the Section 1 Defined Vocabulary. On Task 2, j’ai lassé was heard, but most coped well with the task and gave good descriptions in Task 3. Task 5 posed the most problems and many found it hard to formulate the correct Pourriez-vous m’envoyer mes affaires s’il vous plaît? Only the best candidates included a notion of politeness in their request.

Phoning for a job in a hotel
Task 1 and 2 were well done but candidates were surprisingly not well prepared to answer Task 3 – some had clearly not made use of their preparation time. In Task 4, weaker candidates needed prompting to say when and for how long they would be free. Task 5 was perhaps the most demanding, but some of the more able candidates gave good responses here.

Phoning a French friend to relate an accident
Task 1 was well done, but some failed to give an appropriate greeting. Task 2 produced the perennial J’ai cassé mon bras or J’ai cassé ma jambe – candidates still need practice in reflexive verbs in the context of injury. Better candidates explained well what had happened, but some descriptions were very sketchy. Some candidates failed to relate what the doctor’s advice was in Task 4 and went straight to Task 5. Some candidates regrettable failed to say when they could visit in December merely responding Oui in Task 5. In such cases, Examiners must remember to prompt candidates to complete the task.
**Topic Conversation**

There was a pleasing variety of topics heard this year. The majority of topics were appropriate to the ability of the candidate with, pleasingly, only a few candidates choosing *Ma vie* – which can often pre-empt the General Conversation. Most Centres had trained candidates to give an initial exposition and then ask questions that explored the content further. Some Examiners, regrettably, just repeated in their questions the content of the exposition. The range of performance heard was very wide, from the weaker candidates who could cope well with simple, straightforward questions, to the best who could cope well with unexpected questions and could explain and justify their opinions using a variety of tenses and structures.

**General Conversation**

The best performances from candidates of all abilities were those in which the Examiner asked questions of an appropriate level of difficulty across a range of topics (as noted within the syllabus). Again, a full range of performance was heard and Moderators commented on the fluency of many of the candidates and their ability to hold spontaneous and natural conversations. The ability of this candidature remains impressive overall and is perhaps best exhibited in this final section due to relaxed and efficient examining which enables all candidates to do their best.

**Impression Mark**

These were generally well awarded in Centres.
0520/4 : Continuous Writing

General comments

Again, it is a pleasure to commend so many Centres on the high quality of written work presented for this paper. The standard of language and content of candidates’ answers continues to rise.

This year there was a better understanding of the rubric in all three questions and consequently there was less incidence of irrelevance. All but a minority of candidates were appropriately entered and it was encouraging to see so many scripts close to the maximum both for language and communication.

Again, the Examiners must stress the importance of including all the elements required by the rubric within 140 words.

The standards of presentation do not show any sign of improvement and a number of untidy and barely legible scripts were received. Examiners cannot reward what they cannot read.

Comments on individual questions

Q1 Of the two questions the informal letter was marginally more popular. This was perhaps because writing to a friend is practised more often and the format is familiar. The quality of work presented was similar on each question.

(a) The planned Sports Complex: this subject had an interest for many. The majority welcomed the project and looked forward to practising their favourite sport. Considered answers referred to an increase in employment opportunities in the area. Convenience was a common advantage of course and many wrote that the Complex was long overdue in their region as little was provided for young people. Disadvantages almost always included an increase in noise and pollution and traffic congestion. Some feared hooligan behaviour and ‘lowering the tone’ of the neighbourhood. Others bemoaned the loss of green areas sacrificed to the Complex. The Communication point most commonly missed was a description of the facilities the Complex would offer. Many did not think to mention the building of swimming pools or tennis courts etc, perhaps taking it for granted.
Language was within the scope of most candidates, although errors such as jouer au sport were common. Many wrote as if the Sports Complex were already there and others mixed present and future tenses, especially with pouvoir and être. Candidates should be encouraged to vary the structures they use as much as possible to show their competence over different verb usages and idioms, and to avoid the constant repetition of phrases such as il y aura and je voudrais. Vocabulary was not usually a problem and it was impressive to read about salles de musculation and the loss of espaces verts.

Although the practice of including lengthy introductions in the letter to a friend is in decline, some candidates did begin with several sentences of irrelevant material for which they did not gain credit.

(b) Letter to a hotel: most candidates who attempted this more formal letter were familiar with the etiquette involved, although some employed an inappropriate register, including slang and even occasionally addressing the hotel owner as tu.

Candidates who scored highly for Communication wisely kept closely to the rubric, taking care to mention the dates of their stay at the hotel and all the other required elements. The letter of complaint to a hotel is a topic which students have clearly practised. Complaints ranged from slow service or the absence of towels to cockroaches in the beds, rats and general filth. In fact, the catalogue of complaints was occasionally so long that the word limit was reached before candidates had made reference to a refund.

Problem areas for language were the attempts to give dates between which they stayed at the hotel and the demand for a refund. The likes of je veux rembourser and je veux vous rembourser moi were not uncommon. Nearly all recognised the need to use past tenses but success in the use of the perfect and imperfect was variable. Many female writers were inconsistent in agreements of adjectives describing themselves and past participles with être verbs. Vocabulary was usually well handled and knowledge of such items as chauffe-eau, climatisation and cafards was most commendable. The formules de politesse at the end were well known by the majority.
Q2 Many seemed to revel in the opportunity to write about their idols. It was interesting to see that certain celebrities do have a world-wide appeal, as Celine Dion, Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts featured in scripts as far apart as Papua New Guinea, Southern Africa and the Middle East. The ‘interview’ with a star was often taken to be a prize in a magazine competition which seemed very reasonable and the accounts one read often seemed to reflect the ‘Hello’ magazine format. It was strange that some chose to write about deceased celebrities, such as Marilyn Monroe, Elvis or Marie Curie.

Again, those who scored well for content were those who observed the rubric closely, saying what they thought of the time spent with the star, what they did together and what they thought of the person. Others lost out by writing a detailed account of the life and career of their idol to the exclusion of some of the required items. At the other extreme, the ‘best day of my life’ frequently consisted of a meal in a restaurant, a film and a disco where the presence of the star seemed to be incidental. Boys often wrote about a sportsman and practised basketball or football with Michael Jordan or Ronaldo. Girls seemed to prefer a secluded tête-à-tête with a singer or an actor in a smart restaurant. The star was always disarmingly modest and charming. Nearly all approached the subject with enthusiasm and it was encouraging to see that this year marks for both Language and Communication were comparable with those obtained for Q1.

As with Q1(b), past tenses were necessary and verb forms were a source of difficulty for weaker candidates. Feminine agreements with je were again problematic as was the choice of perfect and imperfect tenses. The best candidates seized the opportunity to display an impressive range of complex structure and rich vocabulary, which they achieved with minimal error. Less gifted linguists were still able to present interesting work in language which, despite a greater incidence of error was largely appropriate and communicated successfully. The majority of candidates had obviously been well prepared for this kind of open ended question and tackled their work with confidence.