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FOREIGN LANGUAGE MALAY

Paper 0546/02

Reading and Directed Writing

General comments

The general performance was even better than in previous years. The vast majority of candidates showed an excellent understanding of the reading passages and were able to write quite coherently. All but the very weakest candidates coped extremely well with **Sections 1** and **2**, with a good number achieving full marks in these sections. Nearly all candidates attempted **Section 3**. This final section proved more challenging, as intended, and a wider range of achievement was in evidence here.

Once again, Examiners commented on how well candidates had been prepared for this examination.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1 Questions 1-5

The vast majority of candidates achieved full marks. Where this was not the case, it was usually **Questions 3** and **5** that caused problems.

Exercise 2 Questions 6-10

Candidates found this exercise very accessible and nearly all scored the 5 marks available. No question caused any particular problems.

Exercise 3 Questions 11-15

Another very accessible exercise for which many candidates scored full marks.

Exercise 4 Question 16

This question tested candidates' ability to give directions and use of appropriate prepositions. Most candidates made full use of the landmarks given to guide them, using the right instructions and prepositions such as *jalan terus* (go straight on), *di sebelah kanan/kiri* (on the right/left) etc. However, a handful had problems with the words for 'roundabout', 'junction', and 'bridge'. A few candidates would have benefited from more practice on prepositions. Occasionally, candidates misread the question and used the destination as the starting point for their journey.

Section 2

Exercise 1 Questions 17-23

This exercise tested candidates' comprehension of a more extended passage in Malay. The vast majority had clearly understood the passage and were able to demonstrate this in the way they answered the questions. **Questions 20** and **22** proved to be the most demanding for weaker candidates: it was clear from what they wrote that although they had a vague idea as to the part of the text in which the answers were located, they did not have a clear understanding of the questions and/or the passage.

Exercise 2 Question 24

For most candidates writing a more extended piece of Malay posed no problems. However, Examiners still came across the occasional candidate who did not understand the word *anda* (you).

Section 3

Exercise 1 Questions 25-29

Candidates had no problems with this multiple-choice exercise.

Exercise 2 Questions 30-35

While most candidates did extremely well and there were many examples of candidates scoring full marks, a small number found this exercise quite challenging, in particular **Questions 33, 34 and 35**. Again, candidates were able to locate the portion of the text that contained the required information, but their understanding was too vague to enable them to identify the precise answer to the question. Instead they copied out sentences/paragraphs from the passage which were not complete and/or made no sense as an answer to the question asked.

Paper 0546/03

Speaking

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 in 2003, a wide range of performance was heard by Moderators.

Generally, the candidature displayed a pleasing level of communication skills and the standard heard was very similar to that heard last year.

Quality of recording

Centres should ensure that all samples are audible. This year, Moderators reported that sometimes microphones were poorly positioned or that there was a lot of background noise on tapes. It is each Centre's responsibility to check cassette recorders before the examination, in the room where the test will take place. Centres are also reminded that it is the Examiner who should announce the candidate name and number, *not* the candidate. Once the recording of each candidate has started, the tape must not be stopped – the recording of each candidate should be continuous and should last for the duration of the individual speaking test, that is approximately 15 minutes.

Preparation

Centres generally conducted the examination very professionally. Most Examiners had prepared the role plays well, were confident in what they were doing and were thus able to help candidates who experienced any difficulty. Centres are reminded that questioning in the Topic and General Conversation sections should be such as to allow a spontaneous conversation to develop.

Timings

Timing was usually good in Centres, but there were some very short tests and also some very long tests. Candidates must not be examined for more than the stipulated 15 minutes.

Application of the mark scheme

Generally, marking in Centres was close to the agreed standard and adjustments, where necessary, were usually small. Centres requiring larger adjustments tended to fall into one of the following categories:

- failure to complete all the tasks in the role plays
- short Topic and/or General Conversation sections.

In Centres where more than one Examiner was used, the marking was usually consistent across all Examiners, but in a few Centres, there was not a consistent standard between Examiners. Centres are reminded that where more than one Examiner is used, permission must be sought from the Product Manager prior to the examination session. In Centres of two or more Examiners, internal moderation must take place and a common standard of marking must be applied across all candidates. The sample submitted should cover the work of all Examiners.

Paper 0546/04
Continuous Writing

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

- (a) This was the less popular alternative. Those candidates who chose it tended to produce good quality work. Their main concerns were usually the state of the canteen (price of food and standards of hygiene) and the lack of equipment for games.
- (b) Most candidates opted to write a letter to a friend about a change of plans affecting their holiday together. Candidates showed a great deal of inventiveness when it came to giving reasons for the change to their plans.

Question 2

Once again, candidates impressed Examiners with the quality of the work they produced. There were a large number of genuinely interesting and entertaining stories.

It was, however, regrettable that there were still a handful of candidates who wrote their answers without first reading the question carefully and ensuring they had understood the requirements of the task. A small number of candidates wrote about being left at home by the school bus.

As in previous years, there were a number of candidates who alternated the use of *saya* and *aku* (for I).