

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit H (RSS08) *Religion and Contemporary Society*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



2009 (June) Unit H Religion and Contemporary Society

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

This is an example of a candidate who produced some excellent work on one question, but clearly did not manage her time well, thus leading to a disappointing performance on the second question. Although this answer is probably longer than it should be it is included here as an example of a very good understanding of the topic, handled maturely.

- 2 (a) Examine the role of faith schools within the United Kingdom today. (30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response

2a. A faith school is an educational institution that has its basis in a faith ethos. Faith schools were set up in the 19th century by the Church of England to provide education for the poor. This meant the UK would then begin to embody the dual system where schools with a religious character are offered up against those without a religious character. Currently there are a third of all maintained schools in England are faith schools. Although, and quite obviously, the role of a faith school (and any other school) is to educate the younger population. Faith schools tend to have a much stronger focus upon the moral and spiritual development. This can be seen at St. Marylebone

Church of England schools where this development is encouraged through the weekly held collective worship at the local church. Or ~~Or~~ ~~It can~~ This emphasis

is on a wider development can also be seen in the mission statements of such schools with St. George's Catholic School stating "inspired by Gospel values to learn, achieve and excel."

However, faith schools have a much more specific role too. Faith schools, within the UK today are catering to the ~~met~~ for the increasing number of ~~faiths~~ within Britain. This can be seen in Southall, where there is an overwhelming ~~sense~~ Sikh community which has ~~thus~~ ~~is thus~~ led to the presence of a Sikh primary school, ~~or where~~

Also, the increasing Hindu community is demonstrated by the fact of the first Hindu school - Krishna-advanti being set up in the UK.

Furthermore and perhaps more importantly, faith schools have a vital role in social cohesion (the bringing together of different groups in society)

which leads to them providing for the local community. This can be seen in the fact that many faith schools, in particular Church of England schools reserve a minor percentage of places for those of other or no faiths. This can be seen in St. Marylebone Parish C of E school where 25% of places are reserved for those of no or other faiths. Not only does this encourage social cohesion and to an extent assimilation but it fosters positive links with the wider community. This can be seen through the fact that many faith schools are attached to a place of worship. St Marylebone school for example has a strong bond link with St. Marylebone Parish Church and even though the school was set up to cater for the Christian community initially, the inclusive nature, emulated through

the reservation of 25% of places for those of no or other faiths

furthermore, faith schools and the government's plans to build more are a re-

murder of the significance
 to the UK has placed upon
 religion. Thus another
 role is to demonstrate
 that Britain is perhaps not
 such a secular society
 after all. Instead the call
 for more faith schools
 also demonstrate the
 craving that British so-
 ciety has for the promo-
 tion of ~~social~~ understand-
 ing, because it is only
 through interaction,
 and understanding of
 other faiths that ignor-
 ance is abolished and
 where society particular-
 ly a multi-faith one
 can thrive.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The answer starts with a brief plan. It is always advisable for candidates to make a brief plan. What is to be avoided, however, is the tendency of some to plan in so much detail that their answer merely seems to be a repetition of their planning notes. This is clearly not a good use of their time.

The answer starts off with a brief definition of a faith school, and shows some historical awareness. The examiner's omission mark near the top of the page is simply to indicate that it was not just the Church of England that was involved with education at this time. The candidate makes appropriate reference to the dual system, and then goes on to explore a range of roles of faith schools. These are well focussed and specific, with good exemplification. The candidate is able to exemplify from a range of schools of different faiths, showing a very good understanding. The idea of social cohesion is explored well, and there is good exemplification of the ways in which this may operate. The final paragraph, whilst going beyond the strict demands of the question, makes very valid points in considering the role of faith schools within the wider life of the country.

The Level 7 descriptor states:

'A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available, information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence/examples'

This answer clearly met these criteria and was awarded L7 (28/30).

Level 7 (28 marks)

- (b) 'Faith schools are inappropriate in the 21st century.' Assess this view
(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

b. There has been much discussion about whether or not faith schools are

inappropriate in the 21st Century. This essay shall conclude that in fact faith schools are appropriate for multi-faith British society.

A faith school is an educational institution that has its basis in a faith ethos. There are currently one third of every maintained school in Britain is a faith school. ~~The~~

Those that agree with the view that faith schools are inappropriate for 21st century Britain claim that in a multi-faith society faith schools in fact detract from social cohesion. This, they claim is achieved through the highly selective nature of faith schools only giving places to individuals who display a religious affiliation with the religion the school is based on. This it is claimed causes segregation which de-

tracts from social cohesion and thus surely cannot be appropriate for the 21st century.

However those who disagree claim that in actual fact faith schools promote social cohesion. This is done by the reservation of places for those of no or other faiths. For example St Marylebone C of E school reserves 25% of its places for those of no or other faiths. This advocates of faith schools claim demonstrates how inclusive and thus appropriate faith schools are for the 21st century.

However, many claim that due to over subscription this inclusiveness does not often happen as the issue with Sacred Heart girls school where every student is Catholic due to over subscription. ~~Adva~~ Advocates claim that this can't be helped

and point to the fact that even the government praise faith schools with Tony Blair in 1997 praising them for their strength, ethos and values. Also

The 1987 education reform act claims that spiritual development should be the main aim of schools and thus faith schools fulfil this obligation.

However, critics still claim that there is the possibility of indoctrination and that why should tax payers who do not agree with faith schools have to pay for them?

Advocates reply that education must be paid for regardless and it is much better in a 21st century democratic society for there to be a choice of the dual system therefore concluding

that faith schools are in fact very appropriate.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This is a well reasoned discussion which addresses the question clearly. As sometimes happens, the conclusion is stated in the opening paragraph. This is perfectly acceptable, and the candidate then goes on to show the reasoning which led to this conclusion. The first complete paragraph on page 6 is a reiteration of AO1 material which does not add to the argument, but s/he then goes on to make a range of valid arguments about the place of faith schools in a multi-faith society. Rather than simply listing points for and against, s/he teases ideas on either side of the argument, and uses examples to support different points in the argument. This part of the answer is supported by good knowledge and understanding, as well as skills of reasoning, which supports the conclusion.

The Level 7 descriptor for AO2 states:

‘A well focussed reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.’

What is very evident in this answer is the process of argument, and the whole response is very well focussed. The answer was awarded L7 (14/15).

This candidate’s final mark fell just below the grade A boundary, but this was because of the time issues and the quality of the second answer. Had the second answer been of the quality of the first, s/he would have gained a very good grade A.

Level 7 (14 marks)