

## Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit H (RSS08) *Religion and Contemporary Society*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate D



## 2009 (June) Unit H Religion and Contemporary Society

### Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

#### Candidate D

2 (a) Examine the role of faith schools within the United Kingdom today.

(30 marks)

AO1

#### Candidate Response

2

a) Faith Schools are very important ~~to~~ to some people in the UK today. Some people could argue that by putting their children in Faith Schools then they are protecting ~~them~~ them from everyday distractions and therefore strengthening their faith. However, other people may oppose that and say that by only learning about their faith, they are making the children ignorant of other faiths, which often leads to prejudice and discrimination.

Many children that have attended faith schools have said that it has pushed them further away from their religion because of the pressure to follow that religion being put on them. However some students have also said that it has helped them to follow and strengthen their faith.

Many faith schools are funded by either the Government or local religious communities. This has caused quite a lot of ~~controversy~~ controversy because issues have been raised about whether the money should be put to a different use e.g. helping people in need or helping other struggling schools.

Faith schools are obviously focused around one faith, but the children of other religions may still attend. However, this could cause some difficulties with respect to children feeling left-out or 'different'. Although, ~~the parents~~ it is the parent's decision ~~to~~ whether they send their children to a faith school or not.

p1	Another potential difficulty is the staff and whether they should employ staff from that faith or not. Many faith schools refuse to employ teachers unless they are of that religion. However, there is a serious lack of teachers to teach in faith schools at the moment, so <del>the</del> the children's education may suffer as a result of this, which many people would see as unfair.
	<p><del>Today's</del> Faith schools are probably better at providing certain needs, for example it would be rare for a secular school to provide ✓ kasha or Halal food or incorporate pray times at certain times of the day. Therefore they seem to be important in today's society.</p>
p2	In conclusion, some people would see Faith schools as being an essential part of society in the UK, but there is evidence to suggest that the need for them is decreasing.

### Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This answer starts with a general but appropriate statement about the ways in which faith schools protect children from certain influences. Almost straightway, there is an element of discussion of different views which is not relevant to the question. The second paragraph is about former pupils' views of faith schools, with some counter comment, again of little relevance to the question. A valid point about funding is made at the beginning of the third paragraph, but this again moves off into discussion. The fourth paragraph makes the valid but rather vague point that faith schools are focussed around one faith but others may attend. With more substantiation and exemplification, this could have gained more credit.

On the second side of the answer, the candidate starts to talk about difficulties, again indicating an element of debate, although this paragraph does make a valid point about the appointment of teachers. The penultimate paragraph also talks appropriately about the ways in which faith schools can meet particular needs of pupils.

#### The Level 3 descriptor for AO1 states:

'A summary of key points, limited in depth or breadth. Answers may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.'

#### The Level 2 descriptor states:

'A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and some signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.'

The basic problem with this answer was that the candidate could not distinguish between AO1 and AO2 and as such, missed the point of the question. When the irrelevant material was stripped away, what was left remained a superficial outline, with very little of substance that was relevant to the answer. It was therefore awarded Level 2 (7).

Level 2 (7 marks)

(b) 'Faith schools are inappropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.' Assess this view. (15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

b)

People seem to be becoming less and less tolerant of ignorance in today's society and some people have argued that by not teaching other faiths in faith schools, it is promoting ignorance. However, for ~~some~~ some religions e.g. Jehovah's Witness, it is against their beliefs to learn about other religions anyway, so this is not much different from secular schools.

However, some people have argued that children would benefit more from being in secular schools. A child might be sheltered from everyday distractions in a faith school, but once they finish school and enter a secular working society they might not have the skills needed to deal with these distractions that they never previously had. Therefore in that sense faith schools are inappropriate for the 21st century.

In today's society, it is not socially unacceptable not to be religious, as it was a hundred years ago. Therefore, it seems the number of parents who feel passionately about sending their children to a faith school and decreased dramatically, and therefore the need for faith schools have also decreased.

In conclusion, it's not really the case that faith schools are inappropriate in the 21st century, but more like there is a lesser need for faith schools in the 21st century.

**Commentary**

AO2 (15 marks)

Although this answer is of an appropriate length, it actually says very little that contributes to an answer to the question set. The first paragraph seems to be based on an assumption that faith schools only teach their own faith. Whilst many do, this has not been established. The reference to Jehovah's Witnesses is not clear in this context. The second paragraph makes a valid point about the possible benefits or disadvantages of such schools. The third paragraph, claiming that the number of parents who wish to send their child to a faith school has declined dramatically is factually dubious, and the candidate produces no evidence for this point.

A conclusion is made, which could be making a very valid point, namely that rather than being inappropriate, there is less need for faith schools. However, this is essentially a new point, which is unexplained, as it does not arise from any of the earlier discussion.

**The Level 3 descriptor for AO2 reads:**

'A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.'

**The Level 2 descriptor reads:**

'A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.'

The lack of coherence in this response led to it being awarded a top Level 2 mark of 4. With a little more focus it could easily have been a Level 3 answer.

**Level 2 (4 marks)**

- 3 (a) **With reference to one or more religion(s), examine the difficulties faced by people trying to practise their religion in the United Kingdom today.** (30 marks) AO1

**Candidate Response**

3	
a	As the United Kingdom is becoming more and more multicultural, it is also becoming easier for people to practise their religion more than ever. However for some religions, it is still still provided some difficulties.
	For Jews and <del>Muslims</del> <del>Muslims</del> (Hindus) the need for Kosha and Halal food is very important. <del>People</del> For people living in large cities, it is not so bad because many restaurants and supermarkets now sell Kosha and Halal food, and there are specialist butchers too. However, it is much more difficult is someone lives in a small town or village. Religious minorities tend to live in communities together so that shops and schools can provide things e.g. food that they need.

Another difficulty faced by some religions is praying at certain times of the day. This would be difficult if somebody is travelling or busy in at a job. Racism is quite a big problem in the UK and people would obviously feel vulnerable ~~prayer~~ praying on the street for example.

The clothes that people wear for different religions is notoriously controversial, with a Christian BA worker being suspended for wearing a crucifix and people wishing to wear head scarves or full veils have found this to be very difficult in some situations. However, the United Kingdom is more tolerable than other countries, for example France banned the wearing of all religious symbols in public.

There are obviously some clear difficulties faced by people trying to practise their religion in the UK today, but religion is fitting ~~to~~ into society so it is not too hard to overcome if someone is determined enough.

### Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This answer really begins with the second paragraph. Although there is a factual error here, the point is made about dietary requirements, and the practicalities of access to appropriate suppliers. Reference is also made to 'praying at certain times of the day.' This is a valid point, but is very vague. There needs to be clear reference to particular requirements within particular faiths, and the ways in which these may cause difficulties.

Again, in the next paragraph, there is some valid reference but it lacks the necessary precision. So the reference to a Christian BA worker is followed immediately by comment on 'people' wishing to wear headscarves or full veils, without any reference to Islam.

#### The Level 3 descriptor for AO1 states:

'A summary of key points, limited in depth or breadth. Answers may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.'

#### The Level 2 descriptor states:

'A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and some signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.'

This answer best fits the descriptor of 'superficial' and 'some signs of partial understanding'. Had some of the points made been contextualised or exemplified, it could easily have met Level 3, 'a summary of key points.'

**Level 2 (8 marks)**

- 3 (b) 'Only those with a strong faith can overcome the difficulties of practising religion today.' Assess this claim.

(30 marks)

AO1

## Candidate Response

b)	Although there are obviously difficulties with practising a religion, religion itself has had to fit in with today's society otherwise there would be very few followers.
	People practising religion must have some commitment to it, otherwise there would be no point in practising it. People who have a stronger faith are probably more determined to try and overcome the difficulties faced than those who <del>are</del> do not have such a strong faith.
	However, someone might consider themselves to be more casual in their faith might still practise that religion for various reasons. For example, someone of a minority religion might still be living in a religious community among other people who perhaps have a stronger faith, but because they are living in that religious community they would probably still <del>follow that faith</del> practise that faith, even if they don't feel that strongly.
	In conclusion, it is not only those with a strong faith that can overcome the difficulties of practising religion today, but it is probably easier for those that do.

## Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This answer starts in the second paragraph, with a valid comment on commitment, and compares those with 'some commitment' to those with a stronger faith. In the third paragraph there are some comments on those more 'casual' in their faith, but who still practise, and there is an observation on the influence of being in a community of those with a stronger faith. A conclusion is drawn which does not follow fully from what has been said earlier.

This is a simple answer, but one which shows that the candidate is trying to deal with the issues, rather than reiterating a prepared response.

**The Level 3 descriptor for AO2 reads:**

'A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.'

This answer fits this descriptor, and was awarded 6 marks.

**Level 3 (6 marks)**