

Religious Studies A (World Religion(s))

General Certificate of Education **GCSE J620**

General Certificate of Education (Short Course) **GCSE J120**

Reports on the Units

June 2010

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B569 Buddhism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

Overall, performance in this paper was a little disappointing, particularly in comparison to B570, although entries were lower in B570 than B569, which may explain why a much wider range of marks was seen in B569. The paper achieved a good level of differentiation, particularly on part (e) questions and candidates accessed the full range of marks. There was significant variation in the quality of responses with some candidates in particular being very well prepared for the demands of the examination.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. There was no evidence of any candidate having run out of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the work book was clearly labelled making the marking process easier.

There were few rubric errors. Although some candidates attempted all three questions, this was generally in too little detail to access the higher levels in part (d) and (e) questions.

Few candidates attempted Q3, but of those who did, most were well prepared and answered well.

Part (d) and (e) questions provided an excellent opportunity for the most able candidates to show their ability and were a good means of achieving differentiation in the papers. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions, although many merely stated different viewpoints without giving arguments or reasons in support of them. Part (e) questions require genuine discussion and an analytical engagement with the question in order to access the higher levels. Candidates are also required to give and justify a personal viewpoint. Weaker responses often included very general points, rather than the narrower focus required by the mark scheme.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Almost all candidates gained the mark for this question. In order to gain the mark, specific reference had to be made to Buddhism. "A book" or "Teaching" was not sufficient.
- 1 (b) Most candidates were able to gain the available marks for this question without difficulty.
- 1 (c) Most candidates were able to state the Universal Truths without difficulty. Answers in English or Pali were credited. A few candidates confused the Universal Truths with the Three Refuges or the Four Noble Truths, but these were in the minority.
- 1 (d) Many candidates gave good responses. Most concentrated on occupational choices or daily practice such as meditation, but surprisingly, few did both. There was some discussion of the ethical elements of the dhamma and how they could be implemented in a Buddhist's life in stronger responses.
- 1 (e) There were some excellent responses to this question, with discussions centring around the difficulties of modern life and the relevance of religion. Some pointed out that the Four Noble Truths have not changed so it is still possible to follow the

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Dhamma. Where candidates failed to do well, it was often because they focused on whether it is desirable to follow the Dhamma in the modern world (in other words, should people try to follow it) rather than on the possibility of following it as the question required. As in other questions, weaker responses often gave different points of view but with no reasons or discussion given in support.

- 2 (a) Whilst many answered this question correctly, quite a few struggled to do so. Some were clearly guessing and many gave general answers such as "meditate". A specific answer relating to the recitation of the Vinaya (or monastic rules) was required in order to gain the mark.
- 2 (b) Although, once again, some were clearly guessing ("once a week" or "on Sundays" being the most common) most did manage to gain the marks for this question.
- 2 (c) Responses tended to be very vague or general; however, credit was given for anything that one could reasonably be expected to do during a festival including eating special food and visiting friends.
- 2 (d) Many answered this well, with good discussions of the importance of learning about the religion and gaining merit. Getting together for discussion and encouragement was also frequently mentioned. Some answers were a little too general to access the higher levels with little reference being made to spiritual rather than social reasons to celebrate festivals.
- 2 (e) There were a few excellent responses, but on the whole this question produced rather disappointing results. Many got weighed down in discussions of whether adults should be allowed to attend festivals, and most were adamant that festivals, like parties or music festivals, were something that you attended rather something that could be celebrated at home. Stronger responses considered the importance of festivals for teaching about religion and the various benefits that adults could gain, weighed against the dangers of attachment to the material world.
- 3 (a) Most candidates who attempted this question answered correctly.
- 3 (b) Candidates either knew this or they did not. Many of those who attempted this question were well prepared although a significant minority of candidates were clearly guessing.
- 3 (c) Some responses were very vague and related to any Buddhist belief. Many, however, answered well, correctly distinguishing Theravadan beliefs.
- 3 (d) Where candidates did not do well on this question, it was often because they discussed why, rather than how Buddhists might seek enlightenment. Many did well discussing meditation and following the Dhamma. Weaker responses made general reference to living a good life with little specific Buddhist content.
- 3 (e) Regularly, candidates discussed the right to believe differently. The best included the delay between the Buddha's death and the writing of the scriptures, how individual experience is emphasised rather than dogma, the difference between key beliefs and more peripheral ones, alternative paths to the same goal and how similar beliefs could bring unity. There was some confusion about having and consciously choosing one's beliefs respectively.

B570 Buddhism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

The standard of response was very high and most candidates answered well across all questions. There was evidence that the candidates had been well prepared by the centres and there was obviously some very good teaching.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. There was no evidence of any candidate having run out of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the work book was clearly labelled making the online marking process easier.

Candidates generally rose well to the challenge of the new part (e) questions and there was clear evidence that they were able to enter into a dialogue with the question and appreciate some of the wider depth and significance of the issues they had studied.

The question on sacred writings has not been widely attempted in previous years but on this occasion was attempted by a reasonable proportion of the candidates who had been well prepared for it and performed well. As in other areas of this paper there is evidence of excellent teaching.

Part (d) and (e) questions provided an excellent opportunity for the most able candidates to show their ability and were a good means of achieving differentiation in the papers. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Almost all candidates gained the mark for this question with only one or two confusing it with a mudra.
- 1 (b) Candidates were well prepared for this question and almost all gained the two marks available.
- 1 (c) The requirements of this question were well understood by the candidates and they were aware of the need for appropriate development. Some made three separate points while others made one or two points with development and examples. The majority achieved full marks and few achieved less than two marks.
- 1 (d) The majority of answers followed the mark scheme closely and there were some genuinely outstanding answers. Candidates wrote about developing the qualities of the Buddha and using the rupa as a focus of meditation. Stronger candidates were able to talk about the symbolism in the rupa and make the link between this and how it could be useful in the practice of a Buddhist. Very few thought that the Buddha was worshipped as a god or was watching and would punish those who did not worship. The response to this question was very encouraging and again pointed to some excellent teaching.

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- 1 (e) Again, there were some excellent answers. Some candidates drew a comparison between puja and meditation arguing that while puja was not essential, meditation was. Others included meditation within the wider definition of puja and contrasted it with living the Buddhist Dhamma, and on one occasion with ethically engaged Buddhism. Both approaches were credited and achieved full marks. The quality of discussion among the stronger candidates was exemplary.
- 2 (a) A straightforward question which almost every candidate answered correctly.
- 2 (b) Candidates were aware that two responses were required and most achieved full marks. Credit was not given for answers such as "to achieve enlightenment" as this was not seen to be a duty as such. However, helping others on the route to enlightenment was credited.
- 2 (c) Again, this was well answered with the majority of candidates well aware of what they needed to do in order to achieve full marks.
- 2 (d) This was well answered with candidates taking a variety of different approaches, widely in line with the mark scheme. Very few achieved less than level 2 and a large proportion of candidates achieved full marks.
- 2 (e) This was well and imaginatively answered with the strongest candidates showing that they could effectively apply their knowledge to a genuine debate. Once again, there was a very encouraging number of outstanding responses.
- 3 (a) Surprisingly, given that this has been an area of weakness in the past, virtually all candidates achieved the mark for this question.
- 3 (b) Most candidates gained both of the available marks, although some had repeated the same point in slightly different ways, and so only gained one mark.
- 3 (c) Most candidates performed well. Where they did not, it was usually because they read the question as how, rather than why respect is shown to the sacred writings. It was disappointing to see one or two very able candidates making this mistake, and so losing marks.
- 3 (d) Some answers to this were very general, speaking of different languages and interpretations and "everyone choosing what suits them best", but with little detail or development. Having said this, there was, once again, a significant minority of candidates who gave superb answers which included detail and examples.
- 3 (e) Many candidates approached this as a question of reading the scriptures personally or following the teachings passed on by others. The most able made a distinction between the sangha and the lay community saying the scriptures were more important to the former. Some discussed the inner quest for enlightenment which the Buddha undertook without help of any kind. The vast majority of candidates achieved level 3 with a pleasing proportion reaching level 4, often with full marks.

B571 Christianity 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

The standard of answers for this paper was quite variable but this was to be expected due to the range of ability and the age range of the candidates. Some candidates produced very good answers although there were not many who achieved level 4 in the (d) and (e) questions. Some responses showed a lack of maturity in their answers to (d) and (e) questions.

All questions seemed to be equally popular with the candidates although they were not all equally well answered.

Whilst it was expected that parts (a), (b) and (c) would allow candidates to achieve most of the 6 marks available, it seemed that some candidates were drawing from anecdotal information rather than fact. However, in a number of these cases, the candidates were able to perform better on parts (d) and (e). That said, it was also very pleasing to see how many candidates knew the topics very well.

The main area of concern was that many candidates did not meet the assessment criteria of part (e) questions. This part was often answered in the same way as candidates have previously answered the part (c) question in the legacy specifications - that is by giving reasons for and against the statement with, perhaps, a personal opinion at the end. The new AO2 requires the candidate to discuss the statement in more depth and breadth and to give a fully supported personal response.

Despite clear instructions, a significant number of candidates answered all three questions. The standard of written communication was generally good though there is still the on-going problem of candidates who have poor, if not almost illegible, handwriting.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) There was a vast range of answers for this question. The majority of candidates answered correctly but it was clear that some candidates did not know the answer.
- 1 (b) While a substantial proportion of candidates could answer this question correctly, a significant number took the answer from the New Testament in general, or sometimes the Old Testament, rather than specifically from the Sermon on the Mount.
- 1 (c) This question was generally answered correctly although there was more emphasis on the importance of what Christians say in the Lord's Prayer rather than the authority of the prayer itself.
- 1 (d) Whilst there were some candidates who chose two of the Ten Commandments to explain, the majority of candidates did know what the two great commandments were and were able to explain how Christians worship God in their daily life and how they could fulfil the command to "love your neighbour." Most concentrated on attending church and reading the Bible for the former and giving to charity for the latter.

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- 1 (e) Overall, the responses to this question were pleasing. A number of responses did achieve level 4 but the majority achieved level 3 or below. There were some interesting points made and candidates had thought of a number of differing and interesting points of view.
- 2 (a) There were a number of candidates who did not know what Advent was. Many knew that it was something to do with Christmas but not that it was a time of preparation for Christmas.
- 2 (b) Disappointingly, there were not that many candidates who answered this question correctly. Candidates were credited if the answer was correctly expressed in some way but few knew that it started four Sundays before Christmas and ended on Christmas Eve.
- 2 (c) Many of the answers to this question were secular rather than religious although it was possible to credit some of these answers if they were in some way related to the religious reason for Christmas. This meant we had many references to buying presents, parties and chocolate advent calendars. However, it was pleasing to see that some candidates had a good grasp of the topic and could list the religious practices well.
- 2 (d) Most candidates achieved a level 2 or 3 for this question. Many talked about the incarnation of Jesus and its importance to Christians as well as why Christmas is important to families and the Christian community in general.
- 2 (e) There were some candidates who were confused by this question because they did not know what Epiphany was. They were able to achieve some marks by talking of the importance of Christmas but obviously not able to achieve a higher level. One or two considered Epiphany as a noun and discussed the idea of Epiphany or revelation; these were credited as appropriate. For those who did know about and understand Epiphany, there were some good answers.
- 3 (a) The vast majority of candidates knew the answer to this question.
- 3 (b) Most candidates could name one Protestant denomination – usually the Church of England (or Anglican Church) – however they tended to struggle to name a second.
- 3 (c) Disappointingly, in most cases, this question was not answered well. Those who knew what Ecumenical communities were, mentioned Christians coming together to pray, but few could develop their answer further. However, there were some candidates who answered the question really well.
- 3 (d) It was very pleasing to see that many candidates were able to explain the differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants. There was a variety of points raised including the position of the Pope, the differing beliefs about the Eucharist, the role of the priest in the forgiveness of sins and the services of worship.
- 3 (e) This question was answered particularly well by candidates. They were able to consider a number of reasons why Jesus might be disappointed with the Church today – often referring back to Biblical teaching – but, equally, give a number of reasons why he might not be disappointed. Some were very thoughtful answers.

B572 Christianity 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

The standard of answers for this paper was quite variable but this was to be expected due to the range of ability and the age range of the candidates. Some candidates produced very good answers although there were not many who achieved level 4 in the (d) and (e) questions. Some responses showed a lack of maturity in their answers to (d) and (e) questions.

Questions 1 and 2 seemed slightly more popular than question 3 but not by a great deal. Although the topics were all in the specification, and the questions accessible to all candidates, some questions were not answered well possibly suggesting that not all sections of the specification had been taught equally well.

I had expected that parts (a), (b) and (c) would allow candidates to achieve most of the 6 marks available. However, in a number of these cases, the candidates were able to perform better with parts (d) and (e). That said, it was also very pleasing to see how many candidates did know the topics very well and had good knowledge and understanding of the topic.

The main area of concern was that many candidates did not meet the assessment criteria of (e) questions. This part was often answered in the same way as candidates have previously answered the part (c) question in the legacy specifications - that is by giving reasons for and against the statement with, perhaps, a personal opinion at the end. The new AO2 requires the candidate to discuss the statement in more depth and breadth and to give a fully supported personal response.

Despite clear instructions, a significant number of candidates answered all three questions. The standard of written communication was generally good though there is still the on-going problem of candidates who have poor, if not almost illegible, handwriting.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) This was almost always answered correctly.
- 1 (b) This question caused some problems for many candidates. It was clear they did not know what the Stations of the Cross were and whilst some were able to state that Jesus was crucified, this was more to do with the understanding of what happened at the cross rather than knowledge of the Stations of the Cross either in a Church or in Jerusalem. However, some candidates obviously had studied the topic and answered correctly.
- 1 (c) Most candidates had no problem in achieving full marks for this question.
- 1 (d) While many candidates understood what many Christians do on Sunday and why going to Church is important for Christians as individuals and as a community, the importance of Sunday itself was neglected and most answers could have referred simply to going to Church to worship. A minority of candidates could say why Sunday was the Christian day of worship with reference being made to it being the weekly celebration of the resurrection and the day chosen by the early Christians to gather. There were some references to it being the Sabbath day and the day God rested

after creating the world. However, unless this point was Christianised in some way, it was not credited.

- 1 (e) This question did lead to some interesting discussions about the value of worshipping alone, as opposed to in a community. Many candidates ultimately felt that private worship is more meaningful and personal than organised public worship, which could be seen as simply a person's way of showing others what their beliefs are; this in itself they felt was wrong according to Jesus' teaching (some references to the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector [Luke]). However, other candidates could see the importance of meeting together, especially to celebrate the Eucharist and there were references to Biblical passages to support this, for example, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them [Matthew]," and "On the first day of the week we came together to break bread [Acts]. Overall, this question was well answered.
- 2 (a) Most candidates had little problem with this question.
- 2 (b) Conversely, many candidates did have problems with this question. Whilst most candidates stated that one of the reasons for marriage was for love and companionship – which was credited – many struggled to find a valid second answer, which could have been to provide the right relationship for sexual intercourse or to give the right foundation for the procreation and raising of children (or words to that effect).
- 2 (c) The answers to this question tended to vary quite a bit. Many answers were secular rather than religious, based on watching too much TV or too many films - for example, the releasing of white doves – however, some candidates did answer it well from a Christian viewpoint.
- 2 (d) Candidates coped relatively well with this question and many talked about mutual love and support, the instilling of morals and belief.
- 2 (e) As with Q1(e), there were some well thought out points of view for this question. Many candidates did not think it was difficult if the parents were committed to bringing up their children in the Christian – or any other – faith. Many saw the media and technology as being the main reason why it could be difficult as children receive so many mixed messages in today's society and also, needed to be accepted by their peers. Overall, there were some good, interesting and thought provoking answers.
- 3 (a) Surprisingly, this question was not answered well with few candidates being able to mention Matthew or Luke specifically.
- 3 (b) Similarly, although some candidates answered this well, many had no idea at all of the types of literature found in the Bible.
- 3 (c) This question caused little problem and most candidates were able to say how the Bible might be used for worship, including both public and private worship.
- 3 (d) Similarly, candidates were able to say why Christians might turn to the Bible for guidance either from the viewpoint of Christians needing help at various times in their life or from the viewpoint of the authority of the Bible and why it is a good source of guidance.

- 3 (e)** This was the least well answered of the part (e) questions on this paper. Many candidates could not really say why the New Testament was important and struggled to find anything to compare it with as the question expected. Many concentrated on the fact that the New Testament was “newer” than the Old Testament and therefore had to be more important or relevant simply due to age. Some felt it was easier to understand as it was newer and therefore the language was easier. However, there were those who could answer the question from the point of view of Christianity, discussing how the New Testament was about Jesus’ life and teaching, about the start of the Christian Church and how it was the continuation of the Old Testament in Christian terms, showing how Jesus was the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies found within the Old Testament.

B573 Christianity (Roman Catholic) 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

Comments on Questions

- 1 (a) Very few candidates were able to offer a simple, clear definition of a saint. Better responses suggested that they were people who had gone through the beatification and canonisation process. Many knew that they would have to have performed a miracle but descriptions did not establish the difference between saint and some TV miracle workers. Nor are people who are 'living as close to Jesus as possible' necessarily saints or people who are blessed. Candidates had to say more than 'role model' to gain a mark as secular role models also met that criteria. As a consequence many candidates failed to receive a mark for this question.
- 1 (b) In contrast almost all candidates received two marks for this question as they knew that it was a day when the life of a saint was celebrated and many linked it to particular saint's day - often the school's patron saint. Some also explained why that day was chosen, such as the day the saint died.
- 1 (c) Better responses were able to offer a range of technical terms to describe the role of Mary such as Mediatrix, Theotokos, Immaculate Conception, co-redemptrix or second Eve. Those who explained the same roles in more ordinary language also gained full marks. Most candidates were able to discuss some aspect of Mary's role. Most were able to offer Mary's intercession and motherhood of Jesus and thus of us all. A significant number failed to notice that the question was about the 'role' of Mary.
- 1 (d) This was a more difficult question. Candidates did not have to use the example of Maximilian Kolbe but many did and then struggled to link him to morality. Instead they described his story which was not always told accurately. Others then moved on to Mother Teresa – only some acknowledged that she was not yet a saint. Many also suggested St Francis of Assisi giving the example of rejecting riches and serving the poor. In answer to morality, candidates did look at love of neighbour and sometimes agape to good effect.
- 1 (e) Candidates could consider the merits and otherwise of perfection in saints. Imperfect actions of Saint Paul, Saint Peter, Saint Augustine and Saint Francis of Assisi were cited to show that the saints were not all perfect. Generally, it was acknowledged that no-one is perfect and all have original sin. Others wanted to look up to a saint if chosen as a role model and not have someone with lots of faults. Many mentioned choosing their confirmation name or naming schools and churches as evidence that saints were role models. Very few considered that all saints were once ordinary people who may have had to face extraordinary circumstances in their lives which anyone could be called to do.
- 2 (a) Some candidates suggested the 3 days of celebration at the end of Holy Week or the three days leading to Easter. Others more accurately named Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Both earned a mark. Weaker responses demonstrated no knowledge of the term 'Triduum' and many offered no answer. Others guessed at trinity or were simply wrong.

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- 2 (b) Most candidates could offer two ideas from prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Some gave religious practice such as the ashing on Ash Wednesday or palm procession of Palm Sunday. If prayer or mass was mentioned, candidates needed to explain this would be additional to the norm for their mark.
- 2 (c) Many of the candidates could not accurately explain that the term 'Eastertide' refers to Easter Sunday to Pentecost and so most candidates were unable to score highly. A good number of them described the suffering and death of Jesus and managed to mention resurrection at the end which allowed the examiners to give them 1 mark. Better responses were able to explain the reason for the prolonged celebration of Eastertide with a few including the Ascension in this period.
- 2 (d) Most candidates knew this was the day that Jesus died. Weaker responses offered little more than that. Some knew that it is a day of fasting and abstinence. Details of Good Friday service were not always fully described and explained sufficiently for the top level marks. Better candidates knew that there was Veneration of the Cross, the reading of the Passion in parts and that communion was the reserved sacrament. Some mentioned that statues were covered and that priests wore red vestments. Very few mentioned the prostration or that the service began at 3pm. Some suggested that Catholics would do the Stations of the Cross, a Walk of Witness or just not work and pray at home.
- 2 (e) Candidates mainly considered the events of Holy Week and Easter and compared them to Christmas, concluding that the Resurrection could not happen without the birth of Christ. Most could justify their views with some argument. Some commented that as we are 'The Easter People' Easter is obviously the most important. Others considered a range of other festivals with reasons for their importance but usually St Paul's assertion that if Christ had not risen our faith is in vain, though not always quoted, was the conclusion. Many commented that none was more important than the others.
- 3 (a) Again very few had an accurate definition to hand. Some candidates offered the Eastern Orthodox Church, some right judgement/thinking and others strict adherence to their religion. All were accepted. Many offered no answer to this section.
- 3 (b) Most candidates were able to offer two broadly protestant denominations for full marks. Weaker candidates erroneously offered Orthodox, Christian or Protestant and even on occasion Catholic and received no mark for those suggestions.
- 3 (c) Most candidates easily selected and listed three differences. There were some nicely subtle references to differences such as transubstantiation and consubstantiation or the number of sacraments from better responses. On occasion candidates mentioned differences from the Orthodox Church such as no pews, bearded priests or the iconostasis which could not be given credit.
- 3 (d) Many candidates were able to suggest why Ecumenism is important. The work of WCC, Taize and Corrymeela in this area were known and seen as important ways of uniting Christians through what they share. Some offered biblical injunctions from Jesus 'That they all be one.' Others saw the need for example of love of neighbour between Christian denominations. An oft repeated phrase was, 'how can he love God whom he has not seen, if he loves not his brother whom he has seen?' 1Jn 4:20. All were pointing to the importance of the Church being as Jesus had intended. Others felt it was important to forge one Christian voice to speak out against injustice.

- 3 (e)** Most candidates offered arguments for and against ecumenism. Not all considered the 'important differences' mentioned in the question. Some assessed the differences as unimportant and the cause of disunity for many years so not lightly overturned. Most summed up that as uniting was bound to result in division at some future point, it was better to ensure that denominations could at least get along but keep their differences.
- Some started, usefully, with a historical perspective on the divisions within Christianity. Exploring Martin Luther's horror of paying for indulgences and pointing out that this practice no longer takes place. Others explored the implications of more theological divisions such as transubstantiation and consubstantiation.

B574 Christianity (Roman Catholic) 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

Many candidates achieved well and were able to show good knowledge and understanding of Roman Catholic teaching and practice in parts (a), (b) and (c).

Many candidates made a good effort to answer part (d).

However, candidates did not always rise to the demands of the part (e) questions and need to ensure they have read them carefully, perhaps underlining key words in the question to see the point of the statement stimulus before answering.

Comments on Questions

- 1 (a) Most candidates were able to give an appropriate description of a pulpit as somewhere from which the Gospel is read or homily given. For some, the difference between a pulpit and a lectern was not known and so they did not gain the mark because they described a pulpit as a stand. Better candidates mentioned the change to use of the pulpit in Vatican II, although this was not required for one mark.
- 1 (b) Most candidates were aware of how to use Stations of the Cross and easily gained two marks. Many explained their focus on the passion and death of Jesus which allowed for reflection on His suffering for us. Many considered their use in Lenten services.
- 1 (c) Many candidates chose to list three things found on the Sanctuary. Some also gave further explanations of their choice of items. Both gained three points if relevant. Some candidates chose not to go for more obvious things such as Altar, Tabernacle, crucifix or candles and instead offered other things such as altar cloth, cruets, thurible which were given credit.
- 1 (d) Again a clear answer from many candidates who either commented on the importance of the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist or had a scaffold such as take, bless, break, share to frame their answer to good effect. Candidates had to do more than just describe a Mass for full marks. Occasionally, a candidate read only 'main features' and missed 'of the Roman Catholic Mass' so wrote about the fixtures and artefacts in a Church which could not gain higher levels.
- 1 (e) Candidates found it easy to discuss pros and cons of worship in or outside of a Church. There were some interesting comments on God's omnipresence. Candidates also made good use of examples from the lives and teachings of some saints; for example the idea that 'to work is to pray' from St Augustine or the belief of St Therese of Lisieux that one can praise God through the simplest actions in life. Others made good use of the words and actions of Jesus such as: 'Where two or three are gathered in my name.....'. From the other perspective some candidates made good use of a Church being consecrated ground and the importance of this for the celebration of the Mass and the idea that a Church is the ideal place for Christians to come together to worship and witness to their faith.

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- 2 (a) Candidates generally found it easy to define 'Confirmation' in their own way and gain their mark.
- 2 (b) Candidates only had to give two suggestions and did so confidently. Most suggested some guidance in spiritual matters and encouragement to continue the faith. A significant number of candidates thought that godparents would take on the care of their godchild should something happened to their parents.
- 2 (c) Again, candidates were able to describe three things that happen in the confirmation service from being presented as candidates/confermandi to the bishop, the laying on of hands, anointing, receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and taking a new name.
- 2 (d) This was another question where candidates were able to respond well and write about the importance of Sacraments of Initiation. There was some excellent understanding expressed. Occasionally candidates knew only two of the three Sacraments of Initiation and suggested Reconciliation or Ordination so forfeited full marks.
- 2 (e) Candidates did not always pick up on 'expensive rites for joining a church' and so did not rise fully to the demands of the question. Many wrote about the importance of belonging to Church and how that might lead to care for the poor. Some commented on the difficulty of focusing on the meaning of the Sacraments in the face of materialistic aspects of presents and celebrations. Some thought the Sacraments worthy of expense because of their importance. Very few noted that it is not the Church that demands money be spent on joining it but practice and custom.
- 3 (a) Good answers on the whole were given to this question. Most candidates explained it as the Holy book of Christianity. Occasionally the translation 'library' was given with appropriate explanation.
- 3 (b) While answers such as Old and New Testament could not gain marks, almost all candidates correctly selected two types of literature found in the bible.
- 3 (c) Candidates were less sure in these answers, probably because they struggled to mention three differences rather than giving a fully developed explanation of the difference or differences known which could equally earn three marks. Having mentioned it, some were unsure of why the Protestant churches did not include the Apocrypha. Many thought that Jesus did not have the Apocrypha. Some suggestions were wrong such as the Protestant bible being in the vernacular and Catholic bibles in Latin. Better responses employed a good range of technical vocabulary in their answers.
- 3 (d) Most candidates combined the importance of knowing about the life of Jesus and his teaching to answer the question. They then went on to explain its use in developing a Christian life. Some discussed the idea that the world could be made a better place by following the teachings found in the New Testament. Some also explored the idea that if these teaching could reduce sin in humanity then people could have a closer relationship with Jesus.
- 3 (e) A few candidates made the point that Christianity is not a religion of the book or that Catholicism is not based solely on scripture. Many also explained that early Christianity did not have a written canon. People are needed. Most candidates considered the use of the bible and then the effect of people - concluding that both were needed. Some recognised that the bible was about people like Moses, the

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prophets and others. Whatever line was taken was given appropriate credit. Some candidates explored the idea that perceived inconsistencies in teachings found throughout the bible made it less useful to developing faith than following 'good Christian' people. Some made interesting points along the lines that when the Christian Church originally flourished immediately after Pentecost, there was no New Testament.

B575 Hinduism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. There was no evidence of any candidate having run out of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the work book was clearly labelled making the online marking process easier.

There were few rubric errors, although some candidates attempted all three questions, generally in too little detail to access the higher levels in part d and e questions.

Few candidates attempted Q3, and those who did often struggled.

Part (d) and (e) questions provided an excellent opportunity for the most able candidates to show their ability and were a good means of achieving differentiation in the papers. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions, although many merely stated different viewpoints without giving arguments or reasons in support of them. Part (e) questions require genuine discussion and an analytical engagement with the question in order to access the higher levels. Candidates are also required to give, and justify a personal viewpoint. Many candidates gave "alternative views" from one, or sometimes two other religions. This was not successful as the differences in the religions meant that these responses usually failed to answer the question. Formulaic answers such as this rarely achieved the higher levels.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Many candidates answered correctly, although some thought Brahman was an example of one Hindu deity among many.
- 1 (b) Responses to this question were very varied with some excellent answers, whilst others were clearly guessing, or described the attributes of one of the Hindu deities.
- 1 (c) Many achieved 2/3 marks, but few gained full marks. Few were able to explain ideas about the identity of the atman with Brahman in some Hindu beliefs.
- 1 (d) Answers to this question were generally satisfactory. Many candidates were able to explain the idea of Brahman being in everything and therefore existing in all deities, but many struggled to go beyond this and discuss the idea of deities as aspects of a single reality, rather than as distinct beings.
- 1 (e) This question was generally well answered with a discussion of the different attributes of the deities and how, for example, Ganesha might be worshipped by students facing an examination. Personal and family or regional preferences were also discussed, as was the ultimate unity of all the deities. Some gave alternate views from Christianity or Islam, which on this question might have been successful. Unfortunately, however, most missed the opportunity, merely mentioning that Muslims/ Christians worship one God, without discussing the comparative merits of the Hindu and Christian/Islamic approaches.
- 2 (a) A straightforward question which almost every candidate answered correctly.

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- 2 (b) Again, most achieved the marks for this question. Some answers, such as "perform puja" were quite vague but were credited if they could be considered to be accurate.
- 2 (c) Most candidates were able to achieve at least two marks here, with many achieving full marks.
- 2 (d) Most candidates were able to answer this question well, discussing how festivals allow Hindus to study the stories of the gods and take inspiration and teaching from them. Some answers were quite general, referring to having a good time and getting together, emphasising the social rather than spiritual benefits of festivals.
- 2 (e) Responses to this question were generally disappointing. Many gave very simple answers describing how and why festivals might, or might not be fun. Better responses explored the spiritual benefits of fun, for an example as a way of helping people to learn. The strongest responses gave a full explanation of the benefits of Hindu festivals. Again, too many candidates wasted time and space in irrelevant statements about other religions which added nothing to the response.
- 3 (a) Few candidates attempted this question, but those who did, generally gained the mark for this question.
- 3 (b) Most gained both of the available marks here without difficulty.
- 3 (c) Many candidates struggled with this question, often discussing the importance, or attributes of an individual goddess, rather than the Goddess in the sense intended by Shaktism.
- 3 (d) This was generally well answered with a variety of approaches being taken, often in the same response.
- 3 (e) Many candidates answered this question very well, although many gave quite simplistic answers which mainly focused on the distractions of modern society without moving beyond this. Few were able to move the discussion into specifically Hindu thinking, looking at particular deities or the idea of multiple aspects of God. Once again many wasted time giving views from other religions which, since the question was about "The gods" were completely irrelevant. Many simply restated what they had already given as a Hindu view but substituting the words "Muslims/Christians" and "God/Allah". Stronger responses gave balanced arguments exploring the idea that since evil and suffering continue and people seek meaning, religion continues to be relevant.

B576 Hinduism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

The paper achieved a good level of differentiation, particularly on part (e) questions and candidates accessed the full range of marks.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. There was no evidence of any candidate having run out of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the work book was clearly labelled making the online marking process easier.

There were few rubric errors, although some candidates attempted all three questions, generally in too little detail to access the higher levels in part (d) and (e) questions.

Part (d) and (e) questions provided an excellent opportunity for the most able candidates to show their ability and were a good means of achieving differentiation in the papers. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions, although many merely stated different viewpoints without giving arguments or reasons in support of them. Part (e) questions require genuine discussion and an analytical engagement with the question in order to access the higher levels. Candidates are also required to give, and justify a personal view point. Many candidates gave "alternative views" from one, or sometimes two other religions. This was not successful as the differences in the religions meant that these responses usually failed to answer the question. Formulaic answers such as this rarely achieved the higher levels.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Disappointingly, few candidates gained the mark for this question, many confusing puja with prayer.
- 1 (b) Most gained the available marks here. Credit was given only for activities undertaken during puja such as arti or singing bhajans.
- 1 (c) Most gained at least 2/3 marks, although some limited themselves by giving repetitive answers, stating the same response in different words.
- 1 (d) This question was, in general, poorly answered with many candidates describing puja rather than relating it to Hindu beliefs. Stronger responses considered the necessity of giving offerings to the gods, and gaining karma as well as the importance of obeying the vedas. A few discussed the importance of ritual in Hinduism.
- 1 (e) This was generally answered with many successfully discussing the relative benefits of puja and ethical behaviour. It was disappointing that few mentioned the teachings of Krishna in the Gita, or the bhakti movement which emphasises personal devotion over ritual behaviour. Many candidates wasted valuable time and space on irrelevant discussions of other religions or even atheists, to whom the question of puja is wholly irrelevant.

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- 2 (a) A straightforward question which most candidates answered correctly, although, again, there were some who were clearly guessing.
- 2 (b) Credit was given for general, but accurate responses such as prayers and the singing of bhajans. Some answers were extremely detailed and specific, sometimes too much so for a two mark question.
- 2 (c) This was well answered with candidates taking a variety of different approaches, widely in line with the mark scheme. A fair proportion of candidates achieved full marks. Most candidates answered with regard to varnashramadharma.
- 2 (d) This was, again, well answered. The vast majority of candidates answered with regard to karma and reincarnation, Few considered other possible responses such as because it is morally right, or the gods have commanded it. Many were able to achieve full marks.
- 2 (e) A large number of candidates confused Newton's third law of motions ("To every [physical] action there is always an equal and opposite reaction") with karmic law (every moral action results in a corresponding reaction). However, many candidates were good at linking present actions to reactions in a future life-form during which one has no recollection of what has happened previously. Some considered karma as a way of learning or as just retribution for past actions. There was the usual propensity for "What goes around comes around" with little evidence that they understood this or its implications.
- 3 (a) This was the least popular question, but it was generally well answered when it was attempted and most candidates gained the mark for this question.
- 3 (b) Candidates who understood the term sruti invariably gained two marks for the question. A small minority named inappropriate scriptures.
- 3 (c) Many were able to give appropriate answers to this question and many gained full marks. Credit was given for more general answers about why scriptures are important which, whilst accurate for sruti texts may not be exclusive to them.
- 3 (d) Candidates often limited themselves to mentioning that sacred scriptures may change a Hindu's attitudes, not what they may do as a result of reading them.
- 3 (e) This was generally well answered with arguments about the relevance of ancient texts set against their eternal and divine nature. Few took the more relevant line of discussing the importance of the Vedas in an increasingly pluralistic world.

B577 Islam 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

Although a new examination, many but not all of the candidates displayed an understanding of the format and what was being asked of them. However, in part (e) questions a number of candidates did still follow the formula of "I agree/I disagree" which does not lend itself too well to a question which asks for a discussion of an issue.

A number of responses displayed a lack of understanding of some of the basic ideas/facts of Islam. Also, some responses seemed to show that a small number of candidates remain unable to resist the opportunity to demonstrate a sectarian bias which impedes their ability to express ideas in an appropriate manner.

Candidates need to carefully read the questions as many seem to be missing or misreading the key words: explain (not discuss); personal response; state or list not describe or explain.

It would help if candidates indicated when an answer was to be continued on another page and also to number/label these additional answers. The lines allocated are an indication as to how much writing is needed for an appropriate answer, particular in parts (a) to (d). However, a number of candidates still wrote far more than was needed to gain full marks.

Questions 1 and 2 were by far the most popular and, as with legacy papers, the questions on divisions and interpretations seem to be the least favoured by candidates.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Almost 100% answered correctly
- 1 (b) Many interesting and very detailed answers but often only 1 mark achieved as the question asked what the "word" Muslim means, so detailing everything a Muslim does could not gain credit.
- 1 (c) Generally well answered with most candidates showing a good understanding of Shahadah.
- 1 (d) Many candidates only focused on wudu and few went beyond that. Very repetitive use of the word "respect".
- 1 (e) Some competent answers. Most got the idea of discussing the quote though there was some reference to the formula "I agree, I disagree".
The best answers were characterised by candidates who gave an initial reaction, discussed the idea, linked salah with the other Pillars and then came up with an adjustment of their original answer so demonstrating that they had engaged personally with the question.
Some candidates clearly engaged with the question even when choosing to maintain an objective position.
- 2 (a) The majority gave the correct answer.

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- 2 (b) Well answered by most candidates with many giving far more detail than actually needed, but showing a good understanding of the importance of hajj.
- 2 (c) On the whole, well answered by the majority but some candidates put a lot of emphasis on just accommodation issues.
- 2 (d) Although this was an "understanding" question, many candidates failed to reach level 3 due to a lack of knowledge of what happens when and where on the hajj.
- 2 (e) More challenging for some candidates who got caught up in a debate on such issues as "how dare you call it a holiday etc" but often didn't give much in the way of an explanation of why it was more than that. Others gave a detailed appreciation of what the question was getting at. However, those who followed the legacy "I agree/I disagree" formula found it difficult to move beyond a lower level 3 response.
- 3 (a) Well answered by most candidates.
- 3 (b) Although well answered by a number of candidates, many did not see the word "practices" in the question and so were preoccupied with leadership. Some factual information given was inaccurate or open to interpretation or at times gave a suggestion of bias
- 3 (c) Generally well answered but there were a number of candidates who seemed unsure as to the answer.
- 3 (d) This proved a difficult question for a number of candidates, many of whom seemed ill prepared for it.
- 3 (e) Some higher ability candidates got into a discussion of the historical and leadership differences whilst most of the answers concentrated upon differences in practice i.e. prayers, Ramadan.
This proved a good question for differentiation with some strong level 4 responses.

B578 Islam 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

A significant number of rubric errors with candidates attempting, even if they did not complete, all 3 questions.

Many candidates did not clearly label the additional sheets with the numbers for the questions they were continuing. Also, very few gave any indication that they were continuing their answers on an additional sheet. The lines allocated are an indication as to how much writing is needed for an appropriate response particular in parts (a) to (d). However, a number of candidates still wrote far more than was needed to gain full marks.

All candidates were able to respond to the (e) part of the questions, though with varying degrees of success. Some were answered well with insight and understanding of the relevant issues. However, often the responses were rather confused and sometimes formulaic.

Many candidates, including those who performed well on other parts of the paper seemed to lack the knowledge needed to deal with the questions requiring quite specific information, particularly parts (a) to (c) of the questions. This tended to lead to answers that were often vague and general rather than specific and focussed. Some candidates have been clearly taught the correct and appropriate terminology for this subject and used it well but a number of candidates seem to be lacking in this knowledge.

In some instances, it would seem that candidates were appearing to try and answer purely from their own experiences rather than from what they might have been taught. This led to some very interesting but unique answers that were not always directly related to the question.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Only a minority of candidates gave the correct answer. The majority wrote about place of prayer or worship or even of bowing down. Only a small number knew it meant place of prostration.
- 1 (b) Most candidates were limited to one mark as a result of only mentioning the call to prayer.
- 1 (c) Most candidates were able to gain marks within the 1 to 3 range.
- 1 (d) A large number of answers confused mihrab with minbar so wrote about the imam standing on the mihrab to read the Qur'an or deliver the Kuthba. Of those who did get it right, few gained full marks as they could not go beyond saying what they are and where they face but no development as to why.
- 1 (e) This question was well answered by many candidates with those reaching the higher levels of response referring to various functions of a mosque other than for worship. Good responses also highlighted the role of the mosque in maintaining/strengthening the unity of the Ummah.

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- 2 (a) Most candidates gained 1 mark.
- 2 (b) Only a small number of candidates gave enough accurate information for full marks with many answers being vague (prayers are said) rather being specific. Some candidates confused "said" with "done"
- 2 (c) This question was misunderstood by a lot of candidates who discussed preparations for a funeral rather than what happens at an actual funeral. Another common response seemed to be to describe things that would be done at any funeral e.g. they are taken to the cemetery, prayers are said and they are buried rather than being specific to Islam.
- 2 (d) A number of candidates did not seem to fully grasp what was meant by the term "funeral rites" so had difficulty in answering this question. They seemed ill prepared for this type of question. A number of candidates only answered with reference to funeral preparations, but not to the beliefs they reflect.
- 2 (e) Although there were some very good and varied responses to this question, many candidates just made general points with only a minority relating their answer clearly to Islam.
Answers varied from those who said it was a good thing because it meant that you would do right in this life, to those who said it was a waste of time to think about rewards in the afterlife because it didn't exist anyway. Good answers tended to relate judgement after death to how one lived now as well as discussing the merits of leading a good life as a Muslim as that was the appropriate way to behave. This proved a good question for differentiation.
Overall, question 2 was well answered by only a small number of candidates.
- 3 (a) Generally this was answered correctly but a number of candidates seemed to confuse Ahadith and Sunnah.
- 3 (b) Accurate answers were only from a minority of candidates with a number unable to give effective answers as they seemed to lack sufficient knowledge to understand the significance of the question. A number of candidates confused Sunnah with Surah.
- 3 (c) Well answered by most candidates, a number of whom were able to gain full marks for this part question.
- 3 (d) This part question was poorly answered by many candidates. A large number of candidates seemed to have some idea of what ahadith are but very few were able to comment meaningfully on why all Muslims might do not use the same Ahadith.
- 3 (e) This question was generally well answered with most candidates able to gain some marks.
A number showed an understanding of the issues involved, although only a few commented on the role of Arabic in other aspects of Islam. Many candidates picked up on the point that to translate the Qur'an would be to change the actual words of Allah and went on to discuss the implications of such a move (confusion, possible splits due to differing interpretations, loss of the actual words). Others simply concluded - who are we to translate or change the words of Allah? A few candidates mentioned that translations are already in circulation for study and reflected on how these are viewed.
Others commented on the beauty of the text that would be lost if translated.

B579 Judaism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

It is perhaps worth making some general observations about the new specification and how it may impact on candidate performance in the future. Candidates must adjust to the greater demands placed on their evaluative skills and use their time accordingly. It is no longer enough to simply develop two points of view, including reference to Judaism. Instead, candidates will be assessed on their written communication skills and the effective use of exemplification, amongst other areas of competence.

One of the main concerns shared by all examiners was the large number of rubric errors. Some candidates attempted all questions, whilst others tended to pick a selection of questions to answer on all the topic areas. If these are deliberate strategies to improve performance, it should be noted that it is likely to be counter productive. As with the Legacy paper, candidates must always take account of the time available, and consider the number of marks allocated. In general, the short answer questions were tackled effectively. The only slight problem was that some candidates were inclined to spend rather too long on them, with obvious implications for later in the paper. It would be sensible for most candidates to start making more use of textual references to add detail and depth to their longer answers. In addition, they should also not neglect the need for high standards of written communication. A small number of candidates had been encouraged to respond to the evaluation question in bullet point format. This only tends to be beneficial when a candidate is running out of time near the end of the examination.

No questions provided insurmountable problems, though inevitably some were more popular and better answered than others.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Most candidates were familiar with the concept of 'covenant'. It was expected that answers should reflect the two-sided nature of the agreement.
- 1 (b) Although most responses made reference to G-d promising Abraham a son, land or nation, candidates who described G-d caring for Abraham and his descendants were also credited.
- 1 (c) Other than those candidates who confused Judaism with another religion, this was very well answered. The only other concern was that some candidates wrote about the Messiah.
- 1 (d) This question did not create any major problems for candidates, especially as there were so many valid approaches which might be credited. Some candidates took a more general approach, exploring the way that G-d might provide reassurance and purpose to a believer. Others rooted their responses in specifically Jewish ideas of covenant and mitzvot. Credit was given to those who referred appropriately back to the qualities of G-d, from the last question, explaining how these might affect the worldview of a believer.

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- 1 (e) This question was intended to encourage some ethical reflection. It was hoped that it gave candidates scope to explore what it means to behave morally, whilst not losing sight of the Jewish perspective. Candidates often use the differences between Orthodox and Progressive Jews as way to get across different arguments in the evaluation questions. If this is attempted, it is vital that it is based on a sound understanding of these differences. This question offered some potential for use of the different groupings. Answers did not always provide a clear reference to Judaism, nor did they always reflect the amount of time that was potentially available. Candidates must develop arguments more fully than in the past and make appropriate use of subject specific terminology. Written communication was sometimes not of the necessary maturity.
- 2 (a) This was a popular question and most candidates recognised Pesach as the Passover.
- 2 (b) There was significant confusion regarding the identity of the other pilgrim festivals. Many candidates gave the names of the High Holy Days and others seemed to confuse Shabbat with Shavuot.
- 2 (c) Most candidates were able to state three features of the festival. The best responses were all specific to Pesach, often referring to the Seder meal. Marks were also given for the preparations. Many candidates gave very generic answers about a meal or praying or visiting the synagogue. These responses were not awarded full marks if not accompanied by a clear reference to the festival.
- 2 (d) Many responses explaining the importance of Pesach were satisfactory or better. The question allowed candidates to take the formulaic approach sometimes seen in the Legacy paper. In these responses, candidates examined the festival from the perspectives of individual Jews, families and communities. The best responses often made connections between Pesach and the suffering of the Jews during the Holocaust, as well as themes like freedom and reliance on G-d.
- 2 (e) This was a very accessible evaluation question. The hope was that many candidates would recognise the relevance of some of the most well known traditions associated with Pesach. Candidates tended to take two main approaches to the topic. Some candidates discussed religion in general, looking at the extent to which different faiths might benefit from making festivals fun for children. This argument was opposed by the recognition that many festivals have serious aspects to them. When these points were related to Judaism, many were able to pick out the aforementioned Pesach traditions and went onto compare them to the more austere festivals like Yom Kippur, for which they had also prepared. This illustrates the way that candidates can use exemplification to add depth to their responses and thereby achieve a higher level.
- 3 (a) This was the least popular question of the three. It was expected that reference to a Jewish homeland should include specific mention of Israel. Less able candidates had very little knowledge of what Zionism might be.
- 3 (b) Responses to this question could be quite general like, for example, prayer. However, others were more specific and related explicitly to the State of Israel, such as working on a kibbutz. Both types of response were credited by examiners.

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- 3 (c)** Once again, some responses indicated a very clear knowledge of the subject whilst others were more general. The better answers tended to make reference to specifics like the Western Wall and kibbutzim. The more general responses discussed family and ancestors. Both were credited, although the weakest candidates tended to confuse biblical events in Egypt with those in Israel.
- 3 (d)** This question was often quite poorly answered as it depended on a clear understanding of a rather complicated topic. As ever, the most able produced a thorough examination of the topic that reflected on the ancient beliefs about the importance of Israel and the modern Zionist movement. The best were reminiscent of A level responses at times. The weakest had little knowledge of what Zionism might be, even if they had gained marks on the previous two questions.
- 3 (e)** It was relatively easy for candidates to structure responses to this question. There were two easily identifiable arguments to be made. Once again, candidates often developed answers that made little reference to Judaism and might have been applied to other religions. Even those candidates who had no knowledge of Zionism were able to express valid opinions about G-d's omnipresence. Deeper understandings of some of the motivations for the Zionist movement were beneficial for putting the counter argument. As ever, candidates would benefit from effective time management, exemplification and clear written communication.

B580 Judaism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

Candidate performance varied greatly. Some candidates showed a high level of knowledge and evidence of impressive examination preparation for the new specification and the revised assessment objectives. Other candidates, however, appeared to have a less competent grasp of the subject matter and were confusing Judaism with other faiths, especially Islam and Christianity. The short answer questions were generally well answered. There was a tendency, however, for some candidates to spend too long on them and to end up repeating themselves later on or struggling with their timing. A significant number of candidates struggled with the 12 mark questions and some did not seem to have a clear understanding of what is now required to achieve the higher levels on this new specification. An increase in effective and relevant exemplification would be a significant step forward for some. In the evaluation questions, some candidates did not refer to Judaism in sufficient detail and so lost marks. Others struggled with how to formulate an argument using evidence. A small number of candidates had been encouraged to respond to the evaluation question in bullet point format. This only tends to be beneficial when a candidate is running out of time near the end of the examination. There was a tendency for responses to be too generic and applicable to other religious traditions. There remains a tendency for candidates to stereotype Orthodox and Progressive traditions. These should only be used if candidates clearly understand the different interpretations. It would be beneficial for candidates to make increased reference to texts and teachings to back up arguments. As has been noted in the Legacy specification, candidates are not advised to spend time drafting responses to questions as this impacts negatively on their time management overall.

There was some evidence of a lack of skill with written communication with a small number of candidates. Answers could be incoherent, often resorting to lists and unconnected sentences. No questions provided insurmountable problems, though inevitably some were more popular and better answered than others. Of particular concern was the number of rubric errors made with some candidates answering every question and others picking questions to answer at random. This approach rarely results in a good mark.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) The kittel was not as well known as some other items of ritual dress. Some confused it with the tallit.
- 1 (b) Most candidates were able to name two other items of ritual dress such as the tallit or yamulkah. Examiners only credited the tephillin as one item. English or Hebrew responses were accepted.
- 1 (c) It was expected that candidates would refer to the parts of the body on which the ritual dress is worn. Whilst this was the usual approach taken, candidates were also credited for describing the context for wearing the items.

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- 1 (d) Most candidates produced, at least, competent answers to this question. Some were inclined to work through the different items and explain their importance individually. This led to very detailed responses with lots of different ideas. Others took a more generalised approach which looked at Jewish ritual dress in total and went onto explain how it enhances the experience of the worshipper. Good responses linked the importance of the items to ideas like community, identity, Covenant and Torah. Many candidates filled the space available for this answer.
- 1 (e) This new specification puts far greater emphasis on the ability of candidates to produce detailed evaluative answers. There were some excellent responses to this question. The best obviously contained detailed arguments and made clear reference to Judaism in the process. It was very important that appropriate evidence was used, along with correct use of terminology. In addition, examiners expected candidates who reached the highest levels to be very strong in their written communication. Some answers were poorly organised and unbalanced. Nearly all candidates grasped the significance of the question but some struggled to demonstrate understanding of Judaism in the process, some answers being quite generic and applicable to any major world religion. As has been mentioned already, greater use of textual references may have helped to add depth to the arguments used.
- 2 (a) This question was successfully answered by many, particularly because a simple reference to circumcision, without mention of the Covenant, was credited.
- 2 (b) Most candidates correctly identified two venues for the rite with the home and synagogue being particularly prevalent.
- 2 (c) This question was aimed at eliciting a brief summary of some of the key features of a Brit Milah. Candidates were able to mention some of the key traditions and important roles played by members of the family and community. The mohel, sandek, kvatter, chair of Elijah and so on were all regularly described. Most scored relatively highly.
- 2 (d) This question was flexible enough for candidates to explain the importance of Brit Milah for the boy, family and the community. The best answers recognised the permanent nature of the mark on the child. Reference to the Covenant and the role that the ritual plays in uniting the community was also credited. Others discussed the importance of the naming of the child and the importance of rites of passage in general. Candidates were also credited for structuring their responses coherently.
- 2 (e) Candidates seemed to have strong feelings on the subject of whether children should follow their parents' religion. Many were able to convey them with a degree of clarity. Overall responses were well balanced between agreement and disagreement, though there was once again a tendency for some candidates to omit clear and salient reference to Judaism. It is vital that candidates use appropriate exemplification if they are to achieve the highest marks. The most competent responses tended to consider the transmission of Jewish identity through the mother. There was, as there often is, irrelevant and inaccurate reference to differences between Orthodox and Progressive Jews.

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- 3 (a)** This was the least popular of the questions but it was mostly tackled by able candidates who answered this part correctly.
- 3 (b)** Once again, candidates were usually able to answer this question effectively, giving either the Hebrew or English terminology.
- 3 (c)** This question proved to be a little problematic and many candidates were unable to get beyond the reading of the Torah. Some candidates, however, identified the use of the HafTorah in the synagogue but only the most competent were able to cite occasions where the books of the Ketuvim might be used in Jewish worship.
- 3 (d)** Although, as has been said, this was not a popular question, the answers tended to be one of two extremes. Some candidates were able to demonstrate both an exemplary knowledge and understanding of the nature of the Talmud and its importance. Less able individuals often confused the Talmud with the Torah. Whilst they occasionally achieved some marks, these responses were obviously at a much lower level. Better answers discussed the importance of studying the Talmud for many Jews, as well as the impact that the teachings that it contains have on the life of many.
- 3 (e)** This question was generally better answered than the previous one. Obviously there is an ethical issue at the heart of the short quotation. Is simply adhering to a set of laws truly ethical behaviour? It is noted elsewhere that some candidates have omitted reference to Judaism in their responses and this was also the case here. Many, however, were able to enter into interesting and informed debates about the nature of religious authority with specific reference to the Torah. This was an ideal question in which to include exemplification and some took advantage of it. However, once again, many tried to use Orthodox and Progressive as the two sides of the debate. This only worked when the candidate actually had an understanding of the religious differences between them.

B581 Sikhism 1 (Beliefs, Special days Divisions and Interpretations)

General Comments

This is the first year of a new specification and new format for the GCSE examination.

Many centres are to be congratulated on their efforts to prepare candidates for the paper. Overall, many candidates gave adequate responses to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the questions demonstrating that they had an appropriate level of understanding and knowledge of Sikhism.

The responses to the evaluation part (d) showed that some candidates were able to answer in the required depth to access higher levels. However, some answers lacked specific details and were generic. There was evidence that some candidates had only a limited understanding of Sikhism and would benefit from a longer period of study of the material as well as more experience of the examination process.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Most candidates were able to answer accurately although some candidates confused 'guru' with 'God'.
- 1 (b) Candidates mentioned recitation of God's name whilst fewer were able to add the repetition of the sacred verses.
- 1 (c) Many candidates explained how meditation brought a follower closer to God, and that community praise and worship also helped in following the faith
- 1 (d) The majority of candidates knew about 'sewa' and could explain the practice. Most who attempted this could also explain the practice of nam simran. Higher levels were accessed according to the depth in which the balance was explained and evaluated.
- 1 (e) Many candidates gave a generic response and some failed to make clear reference to Sikhism. Some candidates could make an evaluation specific to the faith.
- 2 (a) Most gave the correct answer but some included GGS and mentioned 11 gurus. The question specified 'human' gurus.
- 2 (b) Most candidates mentioned release from prison, some mentioned saving of other princes whilst fewer included the return to Amritsar. A minority of candidates described activities from the lives of other gurus.
- 2 (c) This was generally answered accurately and in full.
- 2 (d) Some good responses demonstrated a variety of events in the life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji which might be seen as an example, including his unwillingness to accept authority if he felt it was wrong, caring for the poor, tolerance etc. Some candidates described important events from Guru Nank's life but failed to explain how it might be an example to a Sikh.

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- 2 (e) Many candidates were able to evaluate the importance of festivals as well as showing an understanding that festivals might be seen as merely entertaining. Some candidates gave generic answers which were not related to Sikhism

- 3 (a) Many candidates were able to answer accurately, however some confused the Sikh code of conduct with the Khalsa code of conduct

- 3 (b) Generally answered well.

- 3 (c) Many candidates gained marks with at least two examples, but fewer were able to give a full answer.

- 3 (d) Most candidates knew that GGS (a book) ended the line of human gurus but some failed to explain the importance. Some candidates pointed out that some Sikh sects like the 'Namdharis' still have human guru.

- 3 (e) Many candidates gave good responses showing evaluation of the importance of rules and some could also evaluate an alternative view. Some gave a generic response and failed to make clear reference to Sikhism.

B582 Sikhism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

General Comments

This is the first year of a new specification and new format for the GCSE examination.

Many centres are to be congratulated on their efforts to prepare candidates for the paper.

Overall, many candidates adequate responses to parts (a), (b) and (c) of the questions demonstrating that they had an appropriate level of understanding and knowledge of Sikhism.

The responses to the evaluation part (d) showed that some candidates were able to answer in the required depth to access higher levels. However, some answers lacked specific details and were generic. There was evidence that some candidates had only a limited understanding of Sikhism and would benefit from a longer period of study of the material as well as more experience of the examination process.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Well answered. Most knew this.
- 1 (b) The majority of candidates could give a number of examples.
- 1 (c) The majority could describe the three main aspects of sewa. A few were only able to describe in the most basic of terms and failed to demonstrate that they knew the aspects.
- 1 (d) The majority were able to explain in some detail how sewa could affect the life of a Sikh. They were able to make links to earning good karma, and the wish to become gurmukh. A few gave only a superficial response.
- 1 (e) Some good arguments showing that some candidates were evaluating a number of different responses. Some candidates struggled to give much more than a basic overview of the importance of service but failed to offer other possibilities
- 2 (a) Clear answers given.
- 2 (b) Most candidates gave accurate responses.
- 2 (c) The majority of candidates were able to give details of a variety of events. There were a few inaccuracies and superficial answers from a few candidates.
- 2 (d) Good responses included the idea of public acknowledgement and belonging to a religious community. Other responses included the benefit for other members of the community as an opportunity for sewa. Weaker answers concentrated on the idea of following tradition with little development.

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- 2 (e) A good range of answers for this question. Many candidates gave good responses showing evaluation of the importance of choice b and some could also evaluate an alternative view. Some gave a generic response and failed to make clear reference to Sikhism.

- 3 (a) Most gave an accurate answer, although some confused this with the nisan sahib.
- 3 (b) Those who gave an accurate answer in part (a) were able to answer this.
- 3 (c) As above. Answers which gave detail were accepted as well as simple statements of three different ways this might be used.
- 3 (d) There was a number of full, detailed answers. Some candidates clearly knew the key teachings but were unable to explain their importance.
- 3 (e) Many candidates explained how symbols might/ might not be helpful to believers and used a variety of examples to prove their point. Some gave a generic response and failed to make clear reference to Sikhism.

B583 Christian Scriptures 1 (Mark)

General Comments

A number of candidates achieved a very good/excellent standard of performance on all parts of the questions. Some candidates had been very well prepared and demonstrated a consistently high level of achievement across both questions. These candidates wrote well and used good, accurate knowledge of the Mark text in an interesting and thoughtful way, showing engagement with the topic.

However, amongst those candidates who did not achieve the higher levels, there was an obvious common trait in their performance. Candidates mostly appeared to find parts (a) to (c) straightforward if they knew the text but there was a less certain performance on parts (d) and (e) of the questions, where some candidates appeared to be unsure of the assessment objectives. In part (d) some wrote too briefly with little developed explanation or analysis and in part (e) candidates sometimes wrote at length about different viewpoints but in a superficial way or omitted a personal response.

Candidates who made lists of 'For' and 'Against' or adopted a formulaic approach in answers to part (e) questions often hindered their achievement because they failed to argue in a cogent way or did not engage with the question.

Some knowledgeable candidates marred their performance with poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. There was also a significant number of candidates who committed the rubric error of answering all three questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Most candidates answered correctly.
- 1 (b) Answered well.
- 1 (c) Varied responses. Fewer candidates than expected achieved full marks.
- 1 (d) Some answers did accurately analyse the significance of the crucifixion story as a powerful depiction of Jesus as rejected and abandoned, treated with cruelty by his enemies. Some were able to develop further their explanation to show how the crucifixion represents a culmination of the main themes in Mark. Some candidates, who did less well, limited themselves to a short description of Jesus as 'a sacrifice to save us from sin' etc. Some answers were just descriptions of the crucifixion but these were quite rare. Nearly all candidates attempted some explanation, commensurate with their ability.
- 1 (e) The best answers argued persuasively, with evidence from the text and personal insight that Jesus' life and death were inextricably linked and predicted and the whole point of the gospel (good news). Some satisfactory answers argued two directly opposing views with some evidence from the text and an appropriate personal opinion but without perceiving the illogicality for Christians in choosing his life or his death. There was also a significant number of disappointingly weak responses just about 'death being too sad' and 'life being better'.

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- 2 (a) Most candidates answered correctly.
- 2 (b) Mainly correct answers, but some confused this incident with the healing of the man with the withered hand.
- 2 (c) Some correct answers, but also some confusion with healing on the Sabbath.
- 2 (d) This question was confidently answered by a good number of candidates who had accurate knowledge and understanding of the conflict passages in Mark and the background of the Pharisees. Most gained top level 2 marks and above and answered in terms of the Sabbath conflicts or other incidents. However, some answers showed little understanding and were very brief.
- 2 (e) There was a very mixed response to this question. Arguments were not as well supported or justified as in the other part (e) questions. Some candidates literally interpreted 'forceful' to mean physical violence and the arguments were limited. However, there were some thoughtful answers which used evidence of Jesus' dealing with criticism as an example for Christians but the personal viewpoint was rarely objective.
- 3 (a) Most candidates answered correctly.
- 3 (b) Mainly correct answers. Only a very few did not gain at least 1 mark out of 2.
- 3 (c) Well answered. Most candidates gained full marks.
- 3 (d) Most answers were of a satisfactory standard showing understanding of why the disciples were afraid of the storm and that they were saved in spite of their lack of faith and that this means that Christians should have faith in times of difficulty or danger. Answers which achieved the higher level demonstrated a more developed understanding of the meaning of 'saved' or the disciples failure to recognise Jesus' power and the importance of this story at times of persecution.
- 3 (e) There was, generally, a good performance on this question. Some very good attempts considered a number of factors in relation to the Calming of the Storm and other nature miracles and used wide-ranging evidence on healing miracles from the texts. Personal viewpoints attempted to evaluate what the response of Christians might be to all types of miracles. A weakness in some answers was the lack of knowledge of the set text to offer evidence to support arguments. Others became confused in their arguments as to whether Christians might believe some events were miracles or coincidences.

B584 Christian Scriptures 2 (Luke)

General Comments

There was generally a high standard of performance on all parts of questions set. Many candidates had been very well prepared and demonstrated a high level of achievement in the first year of this new specification. The majority of candidates wrote well and used the extra pages on the answer booklets and had a good knowledge of the Luke text.

However, amongst those candidates who did not achieve the higher levels there was an obvious common trait in the performance. Candidates appeared to find parts (a) to (c) straightforward and performed in accordance with their knowledge of the set text but there was a less certain performance on parts (d) and (e) of the questions, where some candidates appeared to be unsure of the assessment objectives. In part (d), some wrote at unnecessary descriptive length with little explanation or analysis and in part (e), wrote too little on evaluation/differing viewpoints or omitted a personal response.

Candidates who made lists of 'For' and 'Against' or adopted a formulaic approach in answers to part (e) questions often hindered their achievement because they failed to argue in a cogent way or did not engage with the question.

Some knowledgeable candidates marred their performance with poor spelling, grammar and punctuation. There were also a few candidates who committed the rubric error of answering all three questions.

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) Mostly correct answers.
- 1 (b) Well answered.
- 1 (c) Most made a good attempt at answering correctly although a few candidates did not know the Luke account and confused it with other accounts in Mark or John.
- 1 (d) Most candidates were able to explain that the disciples were astonished/ shocked at the news and that the women might have been considered to be unreliable witnesses but most answers failed to develop further to explain the disciples' lack of understanding or failure to remember Jesus' prediction of the resurrection. There were a fair number of irrelevant, confused descriptions, taken from other gospels, about post resurrection appearances to disciples.
- 1 (e) There were some excellent answers, which discussed a wide range of Lukan material about women and discipleship. There were some interesting and enthusiastic answers which showed engagement with the material and compared and evaluated Luke's presentation of both men and women (and the meaning of 'disciple') in a very perceptive way. Satisfactory answers tended to present two directly opposing views, based on some evidence from the gospel with an appropriate but not very insightful personal viewpoint. Weak answers discussed only the differences between men and women.

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- 2 (a) A majority of correct answers.
- 2 (b) Most answered correctly.
- 2 (c) Well known. A majority of correct answers. Some weak guesses.
- 2 (d) This was not a well answered part (d) question. Many candidates answered with vague generalities rather than engaging with parables and teachings on the Kingdom of God. Some answers did explain how parables might make it easier for Christians to understand the nature of the Kingdom or what is required to enter. However, some candidates appeared to be confused about the nature of 'the Kingdom' and so could not engage with the question. There were some overlong answers describing the content of various parables with no explanation of the importance of the teachings. Some confused events with parables. Answers which used the details of The Great Banquet as the focus for an explanation were often successful.
- 2 (e) Answered well, many candidates used and discussed relevant texts sensibly and interestingly and offered insightful personal conclusions. Most candidates did themselves justice here, commensurate with their ability. As with other part (e) questions, the answers showed that many candidates had a good working knowledge of Luke's gospel and his special interests.
- 3 (a) Most answered correctly.
- 3 (b) Mainly correct answers. Only a very few did not gain at least 1 mark out of 2.
- 3 (c) This was a well known passage of text.
- 3 (d) Candidates who knew this story tackled this part (d) question with more confidence and showed empathy with this account of the young Jesus evading his parents and engaging on equal terms with the religious elders as well as the fact that his parents did not understand his actions. Some were also able to explain the implied relevance of the phrase 'in my Father's house.' However, a significant number seemed to have difficulty in developing their answer to gain above level 2 and there were also some weak answers.
- 3 (e) This question proved to be a problem for some candidates who only argued that stories of Jesus as a child did or did not have relevance without referring to other events in Jesus' later life or other events of his birth or childhood. Some candidates, who did argue well about the relevance or purpose of the childhood events, appeared to be at a loss to find anything but a superficial counter-argument or different view when they might have discussed whether all the events of Jesus' life should be seen as relevant, or, alternatively, that there are few accounts of his early life and only in Luke.

B585 Jewish Scriptures 1 (Tenakh)

There were some excellent responses to the questions on this new paper. The candidates responded well to the short answer parts (a), (b) and (c) and in the main understood the demands of the part (d) and (e) questions. This is evidence of good preparation on the part of the teachers. It is to be noted that a number of candidates did not achieve full marks on the part (e) questions because they simply did not put in enough creditable information for 12 marks and that teachers may wish to concentrate on this aspect of the specification for future sessions.

B586 Jewish Scriptures 2 (Talmud)

Question 1

Candidates could name who received the Torah and the books of the Torah. However, not all candidates could construct an argument as to whether texts such as Ethics of the Fathers do make it easier to understand the Torah as asked in part (e).

Question 2

Candidates could identify the ways in which the second blessing in Grace after meals describes the Land of Israel. The candidates could explain why the Land of Israel was important to Jews.

Question 3

Many candidates entered into a good discussion over whether private prayer was more important than public prayer (part (e)). It is worth mentioning that public prayer brings with it the advantage of synagogue worship while private prayer can be said at any place and at any time.

B587 Muslim texts 1 (Qur'an)

General Comments

Very few candidates sat this examination in this, its first year, so the following comments need to be read with this caveat in mind.

The least popular question was Q2 with no candidates attempting it.

The higher marks were generally gained on Q3.

It was noted that most responses to part (a) of both Q1 and Q3 were wrong, and on Q1, responses to part (b) were also weak.

This is a concern as in Q1 both of these part questions directly referred to the set text.

For part (d) answers, depth and analysis are needed for candidates to achieve top-level 3 marks.

In the part (e) responses, most candidates were clearly able to express a supported personal viewpoint

There were no rubric errors and candidates seemed to use the allocated time correctly. However, candidates do need to clearly indicate when a part question is to be continued on another page.

Candidates need to carefully read the set question and not answer the question they hoped was set!

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1 (a) All candidates attempted this question but the majority gave the wrong answer. The question clearly asked the candidates to refer to Surah 1:1-7.
- 1 (b) Again, this question was asking the candidate to respond from the set text which most did but not always correctly or accurately.
- 1 (c) The answers given seem to indicate that a majority of the candidates did not fully understand the meaning of the phrase and tended to just paraphrase the question.
- 1 (d) Most responses reached level 2, but weaker answers tended to just list Allah's attributes rather than offer the explanation that the question was asking.
- 1 (e) Most candidates managed to achieve level 3 responses showing that they had been well prepared for this type of question. However, candidates need to be able to discuss a range of views to be able to achieve top marks.
- 2 No candidate attempted this question.

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- 3 (a)** There were no correct responses, though all attempted it. It would seem the candidates did not read the question carefully.
- 3 (b)** This was correctly answered by all the candidates
- 3 (c)** Some candidates seemed to have interpreted the question to be about the Night of Power. This meant that a few candidates just described what happened on the Night of Power rather than answering the set question. However, so long as they gave an accurate answer to the question they were not penalised for only referring to the Night of Power.
- 3 (d)** Most responses displayed a good understanding of the importance of the Qur'an to Muslims
- 3 (e)** The majority of responses achieved level 3 though to access the higher level marks, candidates need to engage more with the question offering a clear range of views well supported by argument /discussion. Most gave thoughtful personal responses.

B589 Perspectives on World Religions

General Comments

The paper provided good differentiation between the candidates and produced a full range of marks. Whilst a number of candidates did achieve full marks examiners reported that they saw few outstanding papers. There appeared to be evidence of candidates, some of whom had achieved full marks for part (a) to (c), lacking the skills and maturity required to perform well in the (d) and (e) parts of the questions. This might reflect the age profile of the cohort taking the exam this year. Centres need to be aware however that examiners can not speculate or make allowances for the preparedness or otherwise of candidates for the examination and that it will be marked at GCSE standard.

The vast majority of candidates responded to questions from the Christian religion, questions 2, 8 and 14. Responses from faiths other than Christianity were rare.

Time management was an issue for a significant minority of candidates. Of these candidates, many ignored the mark allocation for the parts of the questions and wrote at length in their responses to parts (b) and (c) which were only worth 2 and 3 marks respectively. Some candidates wrote at length in their response to the (e) part of their first question and then ran out of time in the second question. Other candidates and on occasions whole centres, tackled the (e) part of their chosen questions first, presumably to ensure they obtained a good number of marks from the extended writing part of the paper. For some candidates this worked well but for others, time management became an issue as they spent far too long on the first (e) part. Other candidates failed to recognise the significance of the issue in the stimulus probably because they had not been prepared for it as they would have been had they worked through the parts of the question in order.

Candidates seemed to find parts (a) to (c) of the questions very accessible. Parts (d) and (e) enabled effective discrimination between the candidates. There were excellent informed and accurate responses to the (d) parts but there were rather more, weak responses which offered only generalised comments and often inaccurate details. In the Christianity responses a negative and inaccurate caricature was often drawn of the Roman Catholic approach to key moral issues. Similarly an assumption was often made that the Church of England was quite relaxed about any moral issues and that Protestants would let anything go as long as it was a loving thing to do. Candidates will not reach the higher levels unless they offer precise and accurate information. In all religions the higher levels require that candidates get 'under the skin' of the faith showing that they can explain why a particular view is held. The specification makes it clear in the prelude to the unit that candidates should be familiar at an appropriate level with the key driving forces behind the attitudes of the faith to moral issues. Hence for example it is not enough to say believers of a faith would support human rights because they think all people are equal. For the higher levels, candidates are expected to go further in the explanation to say why followers of the faith believe all people to be equal. To achieve this, knowledge of key texts or teachings need to be deployed to support statements about the moral rationale. Accurate quotations are not expected or required but paraphrases or summaries will enhance responses.

Part (e) of each question tests AO2 and requires significantly more developed responses than the AO3 c) part of the questions in the previous specification. Candidates who stated information as points of view and then put their own point of view could be awarded at most, a low Level 3 mark. For the higher marks at Level 3, or for Level 4, candidates are expected to use the information they offer as evidence in their discussion of the issue in the stimulus. The best responses weighed up evidence and offered a personal response which was also supported with evidence and argument. Candidates who followed a formula for these responses generally scored satisfactorily but rarely achieved beyond Level 2 or low Level 3 because their responses

did not really engage with the stimulus. There needs to be evidence of discussion which implies a conversation between the views expressed in the response. Reference to the religion studied was vague or absent from the work of some candidates and others failed to offer a personal response which is a key requirement for levels 3 and 4. Whilst this report is not the place to make suggestions about teaching strategies, the change in Religious Studies criteria which is common to all Religious Studies specifications, implies a concomitant change in the balance of delivery in the classroom between knowledge and understanding and the development of the skills of analysis and evaluation.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Responsibility for the Planet

- (a) Candidates had little difficulty giving an appropriate response from the chosen faith. The issue for some was that they wrote extensively taking no account of the mark allocation. A simple statement such as 'Christians believe the world was created by God' was enough for 1 mark.
- (b) Many candidates offered a general reason which might apply to all the faiths, such as the desire to ensure the world is left in good condition for future generations. Others referred to reasons which were religion specific. Examiners could credit either sort of response but candidates giving general responses often struggled to identify two reasons effectively.
- (c) The majority of candidates offered a description of the Big Bang theory or the steady state theory which were appropriate. Some candidates confused the origin of the universe with the origin of species and offered detailed descriptions of the theory of evolution, which were not credited.
- (d) Many candidates offered description of the traditions about this from the chosen faith. Many responses for the Christian faith referred in detail to the Genesis account. The best responses explained significance of the tradition for the faith rather than just recounting for example the story of Adam and Eve. Some candidates entered into a useful explanation of the evolution versus creation debate.
- (e) This was an opportunity for candidates to review the information they had used throughout the earlier parts of the question and to apply it, in the context of their chosen religion, to assess whether views or theories about the beginning of the world had any bearing upon that faith. Some candidates offered further knowledge and understanding of the creation story or the religion versus science debate without assessing how these affected the faith as a whole. Some candidates grasped the significance of the stimulus and saw that the issue was about whether religion was sustainable in the face of explanations of the origin of the world which did not require any reference to God or a creative force and used the knowledge and understanding they had to offer a balanced discussion and a personal view.

Section B: War Peace and Human Rights

- (a) The vast majority of candidates responded accurately to this question. Examiners were looking for response which defined this as a person would not take part in any form of violence or a war.
- (b) Many candidates found difficulty in giving two reasons – sometimes one reason was stated twice or only one reason was given which was explained at length.

- (c) The majority of candidates could access this question and in some cases wrote at considerable length, often well in excess of the amount required for 3 marks. Many candidates gave well informed responses focusing on the need for wars in self defence or in defence of a weaker country. A significant number of candidates responding to the Christianity questions was able to identify biblical evidence which could be deployed in support of the view (eg Joel 3:10). There were several ways in which candidates could gain three marks and examiners credited responses which showed detail and development of one idea and also those which offered more than one reason stated rather than developed. A small number of candidates offered further development of their responses to (b) which could not be credited.
- (d) This question proved accessible, but many candidates failed to plan their response well enough and did not go into sufficient depth in their explanations. Some did not connect the reasons they gave for a believer supporting the UDHR to that declaration at all, just making general comments about how because humans have rights because they are equal. Some candidates were able to make reference to some of the key human rights in that declaration and tied them effectively to specific aspects of religious teaching.
- (e) Examiners reported that all candidates who tackled this question offered something useful in response to this stimulus. The best responses examined different points of view, supported them with reference to the religion compared them and then offered the candidate's own judgements with support. The personal viewpoint in the responses to these part (e) questions should be clearly identified by the candidates and even if it is similar to one of the views expressed previously, should still be expressed in full and supported. Candidates who just say they agree with such and such a view are not doing enough.
Similarly, candidates who just state points of view along the lines of a Christian would say this and a humanist would say that and another person would say this are not really discussing the issue but are allowing knowledge of viewpoints to masquerade as evaluation. Such responses will not reach the higher levels.

Section C: Prejudice and Equality

- (a) All candidates who responded to this question succeeded either in defining the term or offering an acceptable example which could be credited.
- (b) A number of candidates could only give a general response which tended to be repetitive and therefore only worth one mark. Others offered a general response and one which referred to an aspect of the religion which enabled examiners to credit the response fully. Only a few could offer two good reasons from the point of view of the religion. A significant number of candidates offered extensive responses giving explanations rather than stating reasons. Whilst these responses could be credited they did occupy too much time for the candidates.
- (c) Candidates offered a range of examples, both practical and intellectual which ranged from calling the police to engaging the racist in dialogue to change his/her view, with a full explanation of the reasons from the point of view of the religion. Several candidates mentioned that racists within a religion should be excluded, for example from church services.
- (d) Many candidates seemed to believe that the traditional roles of home maker and child bearer were still the only acceptable roles for women as far as their chosen religion was concerned. Better responses examined changes in attitudes as well as traditional roles. Many of the responses from the Christian religions mentioned the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church in only allowing males to be priests as an example of the continuing

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sexism of religious denominations. Other candidates showed that they understood the view that equality did not rule out acceptable or even necessary differences in roles.

- (e) The stimulus evoked some excellent discussions. Many candidates recognised the equal treatment was the ideal but that in reality, people had prejudices and could not avoid discrimination at some point in their lives. In the view of many, only God could achieve the ideal but that should not stop people attempting to treat people well and if possible equally. Candidates referred to examples of people who had worked to achieve equality for others as evidence for the view that it was important to try. Specifically religious content was missing from substantial number of responses for this question which limited the level which candidates could be awarded. Others offered considerable support for their views from the sacred text of their faith which along with personal viewpoints enabled some to achieve full marks at Level 4.

B603 Ethics 1 (Relationships, Medical Ethics, Poverty and Wealth)

General Comments

The paper provided good differentiation between the candidates and produced a full range of marks. Whilst a number of candidates did achieve full marks examiners reported seeing few outstanding papers. There appeared to be evidence of candidates, some of whom had achieved full marks for part (a) to – (c), lacking the skills and maturity required to perform well in the (d) and (e) parts of the questions. This might reflect the age profile of the cohort taking the examination this year. Centres need to be aware, however, that examiners cannot speculate or make allowances for the preparedness or otherwise of candidates for the examination and that it will be marked at GCSE standard.

Time management was an issue for a significant minority of candidates. Of these candidates, many ignored the mark allocation for the parts of the questions and wrote at length in their responses to parts (a), (b) and (c) which were only worth 1, 2 and 3 marks respectively. Some candidates wrote at length in their response to the (e) part of their first question and then ran out of time in the second question. Other candidates and on occasions whole centres, tackled the (e) part of their chosen questions first, presumably to ensure they obtained a good number of marks from the extended writing part of the paper. For some candidates this worked well but for others, time management became an issue as they spent far too long on the first (e) part. Other candidates failed to recognise the significance of the issue in the stimulus probably because they had not been prepared for it as they would have been had they worked through the parts of the question in order.

Candidates seemed to find parts (a) to (c) of the questions very accessible. Parts (d) and (e) enabled effective discrimination between the candidates. There were excellent informed and accurate responses to the (d) parts but there were rather more weak responses which offered only generalised comments and often inaccurate details. In the Christianity responses a negative and inaccurate caricature was often drawn of the Roman Catholic approach to key moral issues. Similarly an assumption was often made that the Church of England was quite relaxed about any moral issues and that Protestants would let anything go as long as it was a loving thing to do. Candidates will not reach the higher levels unless they offer precise and accurate information. In all religions the higher levels require that candidates get 'under the skin' of the faith showing that they can explain why a particular view is held. The specification makes it clear in the prelude to the unit that candidates should be familiar at an appropriate level with the key driving forces behind the attitudes of the faith to moral issues. Hence for example it is not enough to say believers of a faith would care for the poor because they think all people are equal. For the higher levels, candidates are expected to go further in the explanation to say why followers of the faith believe all people to be equal and give some support from sacred texts or other sources of authority for the religion. To achieve this, knowledge of key texts or teachings needs to be deployed to support statements about the moral rationale. Accurate quotations are not expected or required but paraphrases or summaries will enhance responses.

Part (e) of each question tests AO2 and requires significantly more developed responses than the AO3 (c) part of the questions in the previous specification. Candidates who stated information as points of view and then put their own point of view could be awarded at most, a low Level 3 mark. For the higher marks at Level 3, or for Level 4, candidates are expected to use the information they offer as evidence in their discussion of the issue in the stimulus. The best responses weighed up evidence and offered a personal response which was also supported with evidence and argument. Candidates who followed a formula for these responses generally scored satisfactorily but rarely achieved beyond Level 2 or low Level 3 because their responses

did not really engage with the stimulus. There needs to be evidence of discussion which implies a conversation between the views expressed in the response. Reference to the religion studied was vague or absent from some answers and others failed to offer a personal response which is a key requirement for levels 3 and 4. Whilst this report is not the place to make suggestions about teaching strategies the change in Religious Studies criteria, which is common to all Religious Studies specifications, implies a concomitant change in the balance of delivery in the classroom between knowledge and understanding and the development of the skills of analysis and evaluation.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A: Religion and Human Relationships

- (a) The vast majority of candidates offered a correct response. A small number of candidates stated that contraception was a way of protecting a person from sexually transmitted infection without reference to protection against pregnancy.
- (b) Most candidates offered a method of contraception appropriate to their chosen religion. Some went on to explain why the method was acceptable, which was unnecessary.
- (c) Responses seemed to be polarised between those which demonstrated a sensitive and sound understanding of the attitude of the religions chosen towards this and those which could only give a simple response that faith members would be against premarital sex. For the full marks, examiners were looking for a statement plus development and/or exemplification.
- (d) The few candidates who chose to answer from Buddhism or Hinduism had little trouble in achieving three marks defining celibacy and then usually giving an example of what this might mean or the extent to which it was expected to be a permanent state or a temporary part of the religious life.
- (e) Many candidates responded well to this part of the question. However, there was a tendency to give generalisation without any back up, either from sacred texts or practice within the religion. A number of candidates linked it with the previous question and often just repeated what they had said before.
- (f) A substantial number of candidates took this to be an opportunity to discuss the attitude of their chosen religion towards contraception and missed the reference to overpopulation completely. These responses could not be credited fully. Centres should note the importance of addressing the issues in the specification - personal social and global issues. The prelude to each unit in the specification gives useful guidance which is critical to the appropriate delivery of the material in the specification.

Section B: Religion and Medical Ethics

- (a) The vast majority of candidates responded accurately to this question although some gave response which could be applied to murder or to suicide without any sense of the death being caused to prevent or end suffering. Responses of this sort could not be given credit.
- (b) Candidates had no problem giving two reasons – money problems and depression being two common ones. A small number of candidates gave reasons which were too similar and could only be awarded one mark.

- (c) The majority of candidates could access this question and in some cases wrote at considerable length, often well in excess of the amount required for 3 marks. Many candidates gave well informed responses and a significant number of candidates, responding to the Christianity questions, were able to identify attitudes with denominational groups and explained the underlying reasons for the denomination taking that view.
- (d) This question also proved very accessible but some candidates failed to plan their response well enough and did not go into sufficient depth in their explanations. Candidates are not expected to be able to quote from the scriptures of the religions to which they have chosen to respond, but candidates who are able to make reference to material in the sacred writings or to specific teaching, as the reasons behind the attitude, are judged at a higher level. A disturbing number of candidates seemed to believe that euthanasia was practised frequently and that it was acceptable to religious people who would see it a loving thing to do.
- (e) The stimulus provoked a wide range of discussions some of which reached the highest levels. A number of candidates used this as an opportunity to express their own views in detail with no reference to their chosen religion. Others rehearsed the arguments given in part (d) and on a number of occasions in part (c) without commenting on them or attempting weight them up or come to a conclusion. Centres need to be aware that the AO2 requires candidates to discuss issues which are not achieved by restating knowledge. The best responses took a stance at the beginning and commented on other views throughout then response drawing a conclusion, with a personal response evident in the response as a whole.

Section C: Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- (a) Candidates found this question accessible and usually identified a sound cause such as war, natural disasters or imbalance in the world's economy.
- (b) Rather than stating reasons, some candidates offered examples of what religious people might do to relieve poverty. Some candidates, having stated a reason went on to explain its rationale. This was unnecessary and could not be credited beyond two marks allocated.
- (c) Candidates approached this in a variety of ways. Some stated several aspects of teaching, whilst others offered one teaching, which they explored and developed. Others offered a teaching with an explanation and stated another teaching. All these approaches could be credited and full marks given for appropriate responses.
- (d) There were some excellent religion specific responses which showed candidates had a good understanding of the rationale behind the attitude of the religion towards wealth. Responses which attained the higher levels stated the attitude of the chosen religion and supported the reasons for the attitude by reference to religion specific teachings or by alluding to sacred texts or official statements from authoritative sources. There was however a larger number of general responses which gave bland unsupported statements along the lines that wealth and religious belief do not go together and that most religious people would not approve of wealth at all.
- (e) The stimulus evoked a creditable response from nearly all the candidates who selected this question. Some recognised and argued cogently that money itself was not the problem but that the love of money and associated greed were at the root of much of the evil in the world. Some candidates veered into an unprofitable discussion about how we might abandon the use of money altogether. For the most part candidates grasped the issue and managed to link it to the attitude of the religions they had chosen. As with the part (e) question in the previous section, some candidates focused too much on their own points of

Reports on the Units taken in June 2010

view to the exclusion of any religious view point at all. Others stated views without discussion and omitted any viewpoint of their own.

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