

Religious Studies A (World Religion(s))

General Certificate of Education **J620**

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

Examiners' Reports

June 2011

J620/J120/R/11

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This report on the Examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this report.

© OCR 2011

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications
PO Box 5050
Annesley
NOTTINGHAM
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622
Facsimile: 01223 552610
E-mail: publications@ocr.org.uk

CONTENTS

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Religious Studies (World Religion(s)) (J620)

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course)

Religious Studies (World Religion(s)) (J120)

EXAMINERS' REPORTS

Content	Page
B569 Buddhism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	1
B570 Buddhism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	3
B571 Christianity 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	5
B572 Christianity 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	7
B573 Christianity (Roman Catholic) 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	9
B574 Christianity (Roman Catholic) 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	12
B575 Hinduism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	15
B576 Hinduism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	17
B577 Islam 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	19
B578 Islam 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	21
B579 Judaism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)	23
B580 Judaism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	25
B581 Sikhism 1 (Beliefs, Special days Divisions and Interpretations)	27
B582 Sikhism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)	29
B583 Christian Scriptures 1 (Mark)	31
B584 Christian Scriptures 2 (Luke)	33
B585 Jewish Scriptures 1 (Tenakh)	35
B586 Jewish Scriptures 2 (Talmud)	37
B587 Muslim Texts 1 (Qur'an)	39
B588 Muslim Texts 2 (Sunnah and Hadith)	41
B589 Perspectives on World Religions	43
B603 Ethics 1 (Relationships, Medical Ethics, Poverty and Wealth)	46

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

General Comments

There was a significant and noticeable improvement in the standard of this paper compared to last year and there was evidence that candidates had been well prepared for the paper with some excellent teaching.

All questions were attempted, and candidates generally made good use of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the answer book was clearly labelled.

There were few rubric errors, with some candidates attempting all three questions, generally this leads to time issues and responses being given in too little detail to access the higher levels in part d) and e) questions.

Few candidates attempted Question 3, but of those who did, many 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. Where candidates did not achieve well, they usually 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 as well as accurate subject knowledge in order to access the higher levels.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most candidates experienced no difficulties with this question.

1b) There needed to be two clearly distinguishable facts in order to access both marks.

1c) Credit was given for responses in either English or Pali, but 'pig snake and cockerel' with no further elaboration or explanation were not credited.

1d) Most responses accessed level 2 without difficulty and most candidates showed understanding of the concept of samsara. Where responses failed to achieve level 3 it was usually because candidates did not explain clearly the connection between the Three Poisons and attachment, and the ways in which this might affect samsara.

1e) There were some excellent responses to this question. The highest level responses considered various things meant by happiness and whether the state of enlightenment could be said to involve happiness as it is commonly understood. There was also discussion around the issue of whether permanence is a necessary criterion of happiness. Responses which did not progress beyond level 2 often displayed little understanding of the concept of enlightenment.

2a) Most candidates were able to answer this question.

2b) No difficulty was found with this question.

2c) Many responses accessed the full marks available. Candidates who did not achieve full marks either concentrated on, and developed a single reason, or thought that Sarnath was where the Buddha was enlightened.

2d) Many responses accessed level 3. Responses were required to explain the ways in which going on a pilgrimage might be of use to a Buddhist, rather than simply describing a pilgrimage.

2e) Many responses managed to achieve level 3 on this question. Where candidates did not achieve level 4 it was usually because they provided arguments for and against the statement with no further development or discussion. Lower level responses focused on whether pilgrimage was necessary once you had become a Buddhist as they seemed to see it as something that is undertaken before a commitment is made.

3a) Most candidates who attempted this question answered correctly.

3b) Most candidates were able to answer this question correctly.

3c) Many candidates achieved full marks on this question. Those who did not, tended to give generalised information about Mahayana Buddhism rather than specific information about the Triratna movement.

3d) Most responses achieved at least level 2 on this question with many accessing level 3. It was clear from some responses that the candidate was not familiar with the term Bodhisattva.

3e) Candidates achieved the full range of marks on this question with some accessing level 4 and a good proportion achieving level 3. Weaker responses tended to focus on whether it is 'fair' to say that Buddhism cannot be a religion and rather missed the point of the question. Candidates often gave a Buddhist, a Muslim/Christian response, an atheist response and their own response to questions like this, which is not helpful as the other religious responses are often irrelevant to the question and lead to candidates giving the Buddhist response in insufficient depth.

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

General Comments

There was a significant and noticeable improvement in the standard of this paper compared to last year and there was evidence that candidates had been well prepared for the paper with some excellent teaching.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the answer book was clearly labelled.

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

Less popular was question 3, but of those candidates who did attempt it, many 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. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions. Where candidates did not achieve well, they usually 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 as well as accurate subject knowledge in order to access the higher levels.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most were able to answer this question correctly. General answers such as 'a temple' or 'a Buddhist place of worship' were credited.

1b) Answered well.

1c) Generally well answered.

1d) Many responses achieved full marks. Where candidates failed to achieve level 3 it was often because they described the artefacts and what they symbolised rather than focusing on the question.

1e) There were some excellent responses to this question. The highest level responses discussed the definition, purpose and benefits of worship and assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the various viewpoints considered. Others focused on either considering whether the Buddha was a god (although a few candidates who took this as a starting point actually produced very good responses) or considering the value of worship without making a connection between the two.

2a) Most candidates answered this question correctly. Those who did not, usually suggested that a lay Buddhist was a monk or nun.

2b) Most candidates answered this question correctly and a wide variety of responses was credited.

2c) Some responses did not make the connection between Right Livelihood and making a living, interpreting it instead as living in accordance with Buddhist principles in general.

2d) Most candidates experienced no difficulty with this question with some excellent responses.

2e) Some of the best responses to this question considered differences between Theravada and Mahayana approaches to this issue. Other candidates gave arguments on both sides of the statement, but without further development and discussion, these could not progress beyond level 3.

3a) General answers such as 'A Buddhist holy book/scripture' were credited.

3b) Most had no difficulties with this question.

3c) Candidates who achieved full marks on this question gave responses that were focussed on the Vinaya Pitaka.

3d) Most candidates were able to achieve good marks on this question with many achieving level 3. Many candidates focused on the question dealing with the importance of sacred writings and avoided more descriptive responses.

3e) There were some good responses to this question which considered the ways in which society had changed, and the Buddha's own attitude towards his teachings. The best candidates critically analysed the arguments they considered. Other responses gave arguments on either side of the statement, but without discussion or evaluation did not progress beyond level 3.

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

General Comments

There was quite a range of responses for this paper with the standard perhaps being slightly better than in 2010. All questions seemed to be equally popular with the candidates.

There were some high level responses for parts d) and e) questions. Some candidates struggled to rise above level 2 mainly because they lacked the basic knowledge of the topic being addressed and/or did not offer a personal viewpoint.

There were fewer rubric errors this year but there were still a worrying number of candidates whose writing was very difficult to read.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1a) Generally well answered.

1b) Generally well answered – it was clear many centres had studied the Apostles Creed in great detail and therefore candidates were able to select relevant beliefs about Jesus from it.

1c) Generally well answered; there were a number of reasons presented by candidates as to why the Apostles Creed is important to Christians. Many candidates felt it was because of the tradition that the Apostles of Jesus wrote it and therefore it is a first-hand link to Jesus. Others explained why having a summary of beliefs could help a Christian in their worship and everyday lives.

1d) A large number of responses achieved level 3 for this question. There was generally a good understanding of sin and salvation. Those candidates who did not achieve level 3 mainly failed to address both parts of the question, explaining sin but not salvation or vice versa. A few candidates did not know what salvation was with some confusing it with the Salvation Army.

1e) This question was generally well answered. Many points of view were offered but the most popular views were those to do with justification by faith versus justification by action. Many candidates put forward the viewpoint that it is totally unacceptable to believe certain things about how to treat others, for example, without actually doing something about it; there were also some very good arguments for the power and the importance of faith alone.

2a) Generally well answered.

2b) Answered well; it was clear from the responses that the candidates knew a great number of pilgrimage destinations.

2c) Again, well answered. It is clear that this topic has been well taught in many centres. Responses offered many and varied reasons why Christians might go on pilgrimage.

2d) Generally well answered. Lower level responses tended to concentrate on 'becoming close to God' but higher level responses explained a number of ways in which pilgrimage might help a Christian's faith.

2e) There were many good and varied personal viewpoints offered, as well as arguments for and against the statement. Whilst most candidates felt that pilgrimage was not a waste of time and money, many did offer the opposing view that, as God was omnipresent and immanent, there was no need to travel far to be "close to God". It was clear that a number of candidates had been on a pilgrimage of some kind. .

3a) Taizé was the favoured response here.

3b) Candidates stated many and varied activities which take place in an ecumenical community. Most responses recognised that there is an opportunity for those from different denominations to come together to discuss difference but also, importantly, similarities.

3c) Whilst there were a number of good responses to this question, quite a number of candidates failed to achieve full marks because they did not address the 'worship' element of the question. A number of responses offered general differences between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians, for example, the place of the Pope or celibacy in priests, but they did not give differences between worship.

3d) There was much evidence that this topic – ecumenism – has been well taught in centres. Most candidates could see the importance of the Christian Church working together rather than being fragmented.

3e) Most responses offered the opinion that, as long as Christian belief remains the same, how it is expressed is up to the individual. Many could see the benefits of unity but obversely, many could see that complete uniformity removes the personal aspect of religious belief and freedom of worship.

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

General Comments

Overall, the responses to the questions showed some good understanding. In particular, the approach to part e) questions showed confidence in the answers. However, disappointingly, some candidates showed a lack the basic knowledge needed to gain the marks available for the part a), b) and c) questions.

There was a greater maturity in many of the part d) and e) responses this year than last. It is clear that the specification has been well taught and in some detail.

Candidates made good use of the time available for this paper and there were only a few rubric errors.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1a) Generally well answered with most candidates being aware of what an iconostasis is.

1b) This was well answered with a number of reasons given as to why Christians pray.

1c) Generally well answered. Although some candidates simply gave three examples of festivals or life events. Others were able to offer a broad selection of ways in which a church might be used by the Christian community.

1d) There were some good responses offered for this question. These responses were able to identify more specifically the role of religious leaders in worship and why that role was important. Unfortunately, some candidates missed the part of the question that said '... in Christian worship' and explained why religious leaders were important in general without any reference to any form of worship. A few candidates interpreted "religious leaders" as Jesus or God.

1e) As is usually the case when this topic appears on an examination paper, there were some very good responses. Most candidates were able to evaluate the question well, referring to a number of very relevant and diverse points of view. Candidates were able to offer Bible-based arguments for and against the statements as well as the more topical. In addition, many candidates discussed the need for a place of worship, as Christians believe, God is immanent and omnipresent.

2a) Answered well. Virtually every candidate knew what a charity was.

2b) Generally well answered but some candidates did not name Christian charities and therefore could not be awarded one or both of the marks available.

2c) Generally well answered with lots of suggestions given as to how Christians might show concern for others.

2d) Generally well answered. Many were able to refer to the teachings and example of Jesus in their responses, in particular 'Love your Neighbour ...'. A number of other responses also referred to doing good deeds as a way of ensuring eternal life.

2e) There were some very good evaluations being offered in response to this question. Pleasingly, there were some interesting discussions as to why belief might be more important, or at least equally important, to action with references to justification by faith. However, the majority of candidates did ultimately agree with the statement and were able say why we should help others.

3a) Quite a number of candidates did not seem to know what the Apocrypha is, but those who did, offered detailed answers.

3b) Virtually all the candidates who answered this question answered it correctly.

3c) A pleasing number of candidates answered this question well.

3d) This was a well answered question. Most candidates considered the Bible as a source of Authority as well as a 'guidebook' for life. Emphasis was placed on the Bible being the direct or inspired word of God and therefore to be obeyed.

3e) The responses to this question were generally of a high standard. There were some very interesting and thought provoking discussions and evaluations about the importance of the Bible overall, as well as the many varied sections. One might expect the candidates to ultimately agree with the statement, however, many did not and showed a very good understanding of the Bible as a whole and as separate sections. Generally, the responses were very pleasing.

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

General Comments

Many candidates achieved well and were able to show good knowledge and understanding of Roman Catholic key words, teaching and practice. Most candidates answered Questions 1 and 2.

Many candidates made a good effort when answering part d) questions.

Many candidates were able to develop points beyond lists, which meant they were able to achieve the level of response necessary for a level 4 mark on their part e) questions. When giving their own point of view in conclusion to e) questions, higher level responses return to the question rather than offering an unrelated opinion. However, some candidates did not always rise to the demands of the part e) questions and should ensure that they read them carefully, perhaps underlining key words in the question, to see the point of the statement stimulus before answering.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) The most common definition of commandments was rules given by God (to Moses). Some candidates said Jesus had given the commandments or a secular definition but were not penalised for this.

1b) Most candidates offered the two Great Commandments. Many could quote them accurately. Others could offer one or the other or give the gist, often intertwined with 'Treat others as you wish to be treated' rather than the more correct 'love your neighbour as yourself.' Weaker responses gave two examples from the Decalogue and failed to gain a mark.

1c) Simplest proved best here and Candidates taking the approach of offering three commandments easily gained 3 marks. Although there was no need to do so, some candidates also gave good examples. Some candidates clearly knew how Catholics follow the Commandments but could not gain marks because they gave general ideas of Christian living not directly linked to the 10 Commandments.

1d) Most candidates wrote, in varying degrees of depth, about the four last things – death, judgement, Heaven and hell, along with purgatory. Better responses added explanations to the statements. There were some excellent responses showing knowledge and understanding of Salvation history through Jesus' death and resurrection; the creedal communion of saints; the Church triumphant; life as Pilgrimage with its goal of heaven; Assumption of Mary as proof of eternal life. Some candidates gave good descriptions from the bible – The Book of Revelation or gospels eg Beatitude rewards, Rich young man, Dives and Lazarus, The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.

On occasions some candidates erroneously thought that Catholics believe in reincarnation.

1e) Better responses took up the idea of 'no longer important' and a thread of why this was the case ran through their argument. Most candidates felt they were still important, after all Jesus said he had come to fulfil the law. In contrast, many commenting on the Two Great Commandments felt these were now more important. When Catholics go to confession they use the 10 Commandments to examine their conscience. Occasionally, candidates thought 'thou

shalt not' is not very helpful. Some tried to argue that they were obviously unimportant because Catholics and others break them all the time nowadays.

2a) The commonest mistake was to describe pilgrimage as a place, or simply as a trip. The more accurate responses mentioned journey connected with religious motivation.

2b) Almost all candidates were able to give two examples. The most commonly mentioned were Lourdes, Knock, Fatima, the Holy Land/ Bethlehem/ Nazareth/ Jerusalem. Occasionally, Mecca was given and was given credit.

2c) Most candidates used the example of Lourdes and easily chose three examples of things done there. Many candidates realised that it was important not to give a history but state what is done there – this illustrates the importance of reading the question and understanding what is required in response as the question asked what 'happens' not 'happened'. Some candidates choosing other sites, were often not able to offer three things done there.

2d) Candidates were able to offer a range of ideas in response to this question. Main answers were: to develop a closer relationship with God; get away from the world for a while with its stresses and distractions; strengthen faith; effect a Miracle cure; to form bonds in parishes; to visit key relevant sites around festivals; seeking answers or penance. These ideas had to be developed in order to achieve higher marks.

2e) The main argument given remained fairly constant. It was summed up by a number of responses which argued that if a catholic does not take the time to do pilgrimage, and better their relationship with God, it may disappear altogether and their faith be significantly weakened, meaning a decrease in goodness and charitable works.

Other interesting responses linked action and spiritual journey through the idea that Roman Catholics consider themselves to be a pilgrim people. Some candidates saw that the poor are not always poor in money but spirit too, needing spiritual journey to improve their relationship with God.

Many candidates considered that Catholics can pray for the poor or help the poor/sick on pilgrimage. Comparison with Islam, where pilgrimage is compulsory, gave interesting and insightful 'food for thought'. Finally, some candidates considered that People going on holiday are the ones who should be criticised, not pilgrims.

3a) This question was often left unanswered. However, those who knew the answer offered clear definitions.

3b) Answers ranged from the specific eg they do not accept papal authority, to the general, they both believe in Jesus. Sometimes the question was left unanswered or only one idea offered. Weaker responses demonstrated no idea what these terms referred to, or gave differences and not similarities.

3c) Another question often left unanswered. Some candidates did not understand the term 'shared church'. Some gave financial reasons and others offered ideas of building communities.

3d) The most common example given was Taize. Many candidates knew the history of Taize but not always its importance. Some did not notice 'one' in the question and answered about ecumenism in general.

3e) Candidates struggled to develop arguments about 'very real differences'; many candidates focused on the topic of worshipping together rather than the point of the question. Better answers suggested attitudes towards Mary, perhaps her assumption, could cause problems; others looked at the schism between Orthodox and Catholics – on occasion mentioning the filioque/per filio division as something which would need to be tackled. Asking questions within

the essay such as, 'What if..?', for instance a female priest was leading worship, gave some candidates something on to which they could 'hang their argument'. Many candidates felt it was important to ignore differences in order to comply with Jesus' call that 'they all may be one'.

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

General Comments

Whilst some candidates were 'stumped' by the questions (especially Questions 1 and 3 parts a) to c) many were able to show good knowledge and understanding of their chosen topic and the standard of answers generally was high.

When answering questions, candidates would benefit by taking note of the following three points:

1. The need to be able to define clearly words mentioned in the specification. (for part a))
2. Offering two examples, if requested in part b), or three examples if requested in part c).
3. If a question has two parts, such as the part e) questions, answer both parts.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Few candidates were able to answer this question accurately. Many had an idea of sanctuary as a place of safety rather than the place where the altar stands.

1b) Few candidates were able to accurately name two decades of the rosary. Many candidates offered the Our Father and Hail Mary. Credit was given to candidates naming the Mysteries of the Rosary.

1c) Many candidates were unclear about what happens during Benediction. Others were able to offer some aspects of the service, such as a description of the Monstrance, incense, the humeral veil, blessing with the Monstrance and hymns such as 'Oh Sacrament most holy' and 'Tantum ergo'.

1d) There was a great deal of highly personal and very good understanding of the importance of Holy Communion to these young Catholics specifically, and Roman Catholics in general. Some candidates discussed the importance of First Holy communion and were given credit if it was relevantly commented upon and not simply described. Some candidates developed their answers by exploring the importance of Jesus' sacrifice to this sacrament.

1e) Candidates had to notice the two parts of this question and refer to both in their answer. It was rare for candidates to offer Church services, other than Mass. Most candidates summed up that it was important to do both. Better candidates backed this up with biblical references on both sides of their argument.

2a) Although it was difficult to for many candidates to be precise in their definition, most gained their mark. Better responses used key terms such as Sacrament of Commitment (occasionally Sacrament of Ministry) Nuptial Mass, Holy Matrimony.

2b) Most candidates were able to offer two relevant examples with many correctly using the examples of saying vows and exchanging rings. Very few candidates were unable to state two things.

2c) Better responses described the priest's role as witness at a marriage ceremony. Most candidates were able to offer some of the things a priest does at a marriage ceremony from welcoming to pronouncing them man and wife and all activities in between. The main conclusion was that the priest made sure things were done properly, so that the couple were married in the eyes of the law and God.

2d) For those beginning their answer with the teaching of one purpose of marriage being procreation, found it easy to answer relevantly. Better responses discussed the importance of being open to children and to receive the gift of children from God as the main point of marriage in the Catholic Church. Marriage was seen as the ideal situation to raise children and there were some biblical ideas to back up how children should be raised. Many spoke of children strengthening marriage as well as being the sign of their love.

Some candidates showed good understanding of ideas such as the family as the Domestic church and the future of the Church. Some concluded that as it is a condition of annulment not to consummate the marriage or not to be open to having children it must be important. Weaker candidates saw this as **at** the ceremony rather than **in** a marriage and described their role as bridesmaids/pageboys. Some even suggested the importance of the couple's own children being there to witness their parents' wedding. These answers did not gain any marks.

2e) Many candidates rightly chose to write about examples of the problems connected with living longer: getting bored; more time to be tempted or to be unhappy; people and goals change; familiarity; health problems such as dementia; keeping the romance alive. Most concluded that long life should not matter. Human nature has not changed, the fundamental idea of marriage has not changed, why use this justification? Indeed there were benefits in seeing your children and your children's children. Couples spent even more time together and perhaps less time grieving. No expiry date means more time to perfect it. There was some good use of vocabulary such as indissoluble.

Weaker responses quickly moved on to the topic of divorce ignoring living longer. Some candidates were confused about marrying after the death of a partner and thought it unreasonable not to allow widows and widowers to marry, but stay married for life. Others looked at working it through – breaks, forgiveness, counselling etc could help marriages to last. Some queried the question as an irrelevance! Is marriage a burden? On occasion some compared marriage to the relationship of Christ and His Church so it must last for life.

3a) Most candidates chose to describe the Old Testament as the stories before the birth of Jesus. Some candidates wrote about the covenant with God and Hebrew history or literature. Some were not accurate enough to gain their one mark.

3b) Candidates mostly offered the examples of Gospels and Letters. Occasionally, they gave apocalyptic literature, history, laws and poetry and suchlike.

Others offered either Old Testament examples or books of the Bible, not types of literature eg Revelations, Acts

3c) Many candidates found it difficult to describe the Apocrypha clearly. There was some good vocabulary eg Deutero-canonical. Occasionally, Apocrypha was confused with apocalyptic literature.

3d) The question asks for how and why – there were poor responses to 'how' and rare answers to 'why'. It was rare to have examples beyond read at Mass (perhaps used for hymns or sermon). Some suggested it was placed on the lectern, processed, and kissed at the Gospel to show its importance. Assemblies were mentioned by some. Most then considered some form of Study groups which were not worship necessarily (lectio divina was referred to on occasion). Some cited the Angelus, Lord's prayer and rosary as coming from the bible and used in public prayer. Why it was used was usually explained as because it is the Word of God and our Holy book.

3e) Better responses concentrated on 'more important' and argued for and against. Surprisingly, there was rarely a Protestant versus Catholic stance; sola scriptura versus papal authority/magisterium/apostolic succession. Teaching was interpreted as the priest's sermon on the whole. Occasionally, encyclicals were mentioned. Many candidates concentrated either on the fact that modern issues were not included in the bible, which then needed interpretation by the priest's homily with either positive or negative conclusions, or that the Church gets its teachings from the bible, so both are equally important.

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

General Comments

There was a significant and noticeable improvement in the standard of the responses for this paper compared to last year. There was evidence that candidates had been well prepared for the paper, with some excellent teaching.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the answer book was clearly labelled, making the online marking process easier.

Few candidates attempted Question 3, but of those who did, many 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. Some candidates produced outstanding responses to these questions. Where candidates did not achieve well, they usually stated different viewpoints without giving arguments or reasons in support of them. Candidates are also required to give, and justify a personal viewpoint. Candidates often provided a non-Hindu perspective on part e) questions which can be relevant, but needs to be done carefully to add something to the answer.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most answered this question correctly.

1b) Candidates were required to give two clearly distinct beliefs.

1c) Most candidates were able to answer this question correctly. Those who could not, did not know what deities were and most described three 'Hindu duties'.

1d) Most candidates gave good answers to this question. Good answers explained the connection between action, karma and samsara. The best responses demonstrated an understanding that moksha is associated with the end of karma rather than with the accumulation of a great deal of positive karma.

1e) Many candidates were able to reach level 3 in this question. Most suggested things which are more important than happiness, sometimes with appropriate justification. Many suggested that living a good Hindu life led to happiness so that the pursuit of happiness did not contradict a religious life. Weaker candidates gave 'opinions' from a variety of religions, often ones which failed to reflect that religion's true teachings and so did not deal with Hinduism in sufficient depth. The highest level responses critically analysed the different ideas of what constitutes happiness and whether a Hindu life does or does not tend to lead to happiness.

2a) A straight forward question which almost all candidates answered correctly.

2b) Most candidates achieved the marks for this question. Some quite general answers, such as "perform puja" were credited if they were considered to be sufficiently accurate.

2c) Most candidates were able to gain all three marks for this question.

2d) The best answers had a good breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, explaining a variety of reasons for the importance of Varanasi. Most candidates achieved at least level 2 and a good number were able to reach level 3.

2e) There were some good responses to this question with some very good application of subject knowledge. Some candidates discussed whether some festivals were more 'child orientated' than others, often very successfully. Others gave a variety of reasons for and against the statement, but without further discussion and development were unable to progress beyond level 3.

3a) Few candidates attempted this question, but those who did, generally gained the mark.

3b) Most candidates gained both of the available marks here without difficulty.

3c) Most candidates gained at least 2 of the 3 marks available for this question. Most responses focused on the difficulties that might be experienced by a Hindu in Britain. A few focused on positive changes to styles of worship and the reasons for them.

3d) There were some good responses and most candidates who attempted this question achieved at least the top of level 2. The best answers displayed good breadth, focusing on a variety of reasons including family preferences and individual circumstances. Narrower answers tended to focus on the personality of Shiva and why certain people might find it attractive.

3e) Where it was attempted, this question was thoughtfully answered with some good application of subject knowledge. Weaker responses tended to be quite vague and did not tend to make use of specific examples. Again, a few candidates commented on the Islamic or Christian opinion which in this question had no relevance.

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

General Comments

There was evidence that candidates had been well prepared for the paper with some excellent teaching.

All questions were attempted and candidates generally made good use of time. Candidates also followed instructions and extra work at the back of the answer book was clearly labelled making the online marking process easier.

Few candidates attempted Question 3, but of those who did, many 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. Some candidates produced outstanding responses. Where candidates did not achieve well, they usually 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, as well as accurate subject knowledge in order to access the higher levels. Candidates are also required to give, and justify a personal viewpoint.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Almost all candidates were able to access the mark for this question.

1b) Most candidates gained the available marks here.

1c) Most candidates answered this question with no difficulty. More pastoral activities (such as giving advice) which are more likely to be carried out by a priest in the UK, rather than in India, were credited where appropriate.

1d) Most candidates performed well on this question with some, but not all, choosing to contrast the importance of puja in the home with temple worship. Others successfully explained a variety of reasons why home puja is important. Candidates who did not achieve level 3 either talked about puja in very general terms, without relating it to the home, or described puja rather than explaining why it is carried out in the home.

1e) This was generally well answered with many candidates giving thoughtful and well considered personal responses. Many responses also discussed the comparative merits of home and temple puja and a few of the better responses considered the impact of varnashramadharma on the statement

2a) Almost all candidates were able to access the mark for this question.

2b) Most candidates gained the marks on this question. Candidates could give the English or Sanskrit names of the life ceremonies, so 'birth' and 'death' were not credited as these are not samskaras in themselves.

2c) Almost all candidates accessed the three marks for this question.

2d) Many candidates achieved level 3 on this question with a full and detailed explanation. Where level 3 was not achieved, it was usually because the response focused on a single aspect (dharma, varna or ashrama) and ignored the others.

2e) Where responses did not achieve at least level 3, it was generally due to a lack of Hindu content. There were some very good sociological discussions, but in order to access level 3 and above, responses needed to link specific Hindu subject knowledge to the question. Some did this very successfully, mentioning varnashramadharma, the Ramayana and the Laws of Manu. Surprisingly few, however, used the story of Prahlad as evidence that obedience to parents is not always the best course for a Hindu to take.

3a) Most candidates gained the mark for this question.

3b) Most candidates gained the two marks available for this question. Candidates were required to give two clearly distinct uses of the Gita in order to access both marks.

3c) Most candidates had no difficulty in accessing full marks for this question.

3d) Many candidates gave excellent responses to this question. The best responses talked about the importance of various characters in the Ramayana as role models and as an example of how dharma should be applied to life. Many candidates talked about the significance of Rama as an avatar of Vishnu. Weaker responses tended to describe the contents of the Ramayana rather than directly addressing the question.

3e) Some candidates gave excellent responses, discussing the merits of revealed truth against experience. Some acknowledged the importance of scriptures but pointed out that they had existed in oral form for a very long time before being written down and that their written forms were therefore of secondary importance. Weaker responses either offered irrelevant points of view from non-Hindu faiths or gave very general and vague responses which did not make good use of specific subject knowledge.

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

In this second year of the new examination, many candidates displayed an understanding of the format and what was required of them. However, some candidates were still following the format from the Legacy papers and they must adjust to the greater demands placed on their evaluative skills. It is not enough to simply develop two points of view. It would be beneficial if candidates were to include textual references.

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 rarely achieved the higher levels.

Many candidates did not indicate that their answers continued on separate sheets, and those who did, did not reference the question with which they were continuing.

The overall performance of the candidates was variable, but covered the whole spectrum.

Question 1 was by far the most popular question followed by Question 3 then Question 2.

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

There were rubric errors with some doing all three questions or parts of each question.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Almost all candidates obtained one mark.

1b) A sizeable number of candidates did not give accurate answers – many equated Shahadah with Salat.

1c) Few candidates obtained full marks, as they spoke about Akhira or judgement but did not refer to the 'Day of Judgement'.

1d) Some excellent answers on Greater Jihad were given as a Muslim's personal/inner struggle. Some candidates confused Lesser and Greater Jihad

1e) Some candidates provided excellent answers if they remembered that the question was about 'the best way'.

2a) Almost all candidates obtained one mark.

2b) Many candidates were confused with Hajj, and especially Ramadan, being named as festivals.

2c) Some candidates only gave descriptions of the festival rather than commenting on 'the importance of'. When a candidate understood the significance of the question, it was answered well.

2d) Some candidates are still equating Salat-ul-Jumu'ah with Salat; many were just describing Friday prayers or the importance of Friday rather than explaining 'the importance of Salat-ul-Jumu'ah'.

2e) Excellent answers were seen when the question was addressed. Unfortunately, too few candidates actually knew the annual festivals and so many answers were general rather than specific and often limited to 'regular' versus 'occasional'.

3a) This was not well answered. Often Pakistan, Israel or Mecca was cited. Some candidates answered with British cities.

3b) On the whole, this was well answered, but many had 'Mina'.

3c) Most candidates provided accurate answers.

3d) This was probably the least well answered of the questions. Differences were often known, but little else. Many muddled the two.

3e) This question was answered well, although some very repetitive answers were seen.

B578 Islam 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. Other candidates, however, appeared to have a less competent grasp of the subject matter and were confusing Islam with other faiths. The short answer questions were generally well answered. There was a tendency, however, for some candidates to spend too long on these answers and therefore, struggling with their timing. A significant number of candidates struggled with the part e) questions and some did not seem to have a clear understanding of what is now required to achieve the higher levels.

A significant number of rubric errors were found 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 with which they were continuing. Also, very few candidates gave any indication that they were continuing their answers on an additional sheet. However, a number of candidates still wrote far more than was needed to gain full marks.

All candidates were able to respond to the part e) 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. 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. Some candidates added superfluous information on the part a) to c) questions which caused them to lose marks on the part d) and e) questions due to time management issues.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Many candidates misunderstood the term calligraphy and tried to link it exclusively to Islam rather than identifying it as beautiful handwriting.

1b) A number of students confused minbar with mithrab and/or the minaret.

1c) Most candidates were able to gain 2 marks. Many failed to gain 3 marks as they did not see the word "important" in the question.

1d) The majority of candidates answered well, showing a good understanding of idolatry and shirk.

1e) Responses were very varied from referring to the clocks in a mosque, to a more evaluative account of the benefit of having set prayer times. A number of candidates seemed rather confused as to the references to prayer times in the Quran: Surah 4; 103, Surah 11; 114 and Surah 17; 78-80. They only referred to/or knew of Muhammad's instructions.

2a) Candidates generally answered this correctly.

2b) Candidates in general seemed to be ill prepared for this question. Few were able to differentiate between giving 2.5% of savings and 2.5% of earnings. Also, there was some confusion between zakah and sadaqah.

2c) Candidates were generally ill prepared for this question and did not seem to know what the Qur'an specifically said about who should be given Zakah. Many thought it was to the family and others thought it went to well known charitable causes.

2d) This question was generally well answered with candidates being able to refer to both parties.

2e) Some very good and varied responses to this question with many candidates getting to the heart of the question. However, a number of students seemed not to fully appreciate the role of the Ummah within Islam, as well as some not referring to Islam specifically thereby failing to gain access to higher levels of response

3a) Most candidates answered this question correctly.

3b) This question was well answered by most candidates

3c) Almost all candidates who attempted this question gained full marks.

3d) This question was poorly answered by many candidates. A number of candidates clearly did not know what the Ahadith were. Some candidates did not attempt this part of the question.

3e) This question was generally well answered with many candidates showing an understanding of the role of scriptures to religion in general and to Islam in particular. A number argued from the standpoint of oral versus written scripture.

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

General Comments

Candidates have maintained a high level of performance. This reflects both the commitment of the candidates and the expertise of their teachers.

There were relatively fewer rubric errors this year but some candidates still attempted all questions. This obviously has significant implications for their overall level of performance.

The questions were not equally popular with candidates. The first two were more frequently answered, though it is not clear if this was simply due to the order in which they appeared.

It is increasingly the case that candidates are well coached with regard to timing, which is evident from the amount written on each question. Few candidates spent time making detailed plans before attempting each longer response. Written communication was generally of a high standard. It remains the case that candidates contrast progressive and orthodox beliefs and practices in evaluation questions. This can also lead to inaccurate and stereotypical observations about both traditions. The standard of evaluation responses is improving, though candidates need not feel compelled to answer with a 'for/against/my opinion' format. In fact, a more flexible structure can often improve the level of the response. At times, evaluations were a little generic with a lack of reference to Judaism. On other occasions, personal opinion was absent.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most candidates provided an accurate definition. Some described beliefs about the Messiah instead.

1b) Most candidates were able to state two beliefs, though some responses were repetitive.

1c) Candidates generally referred to more general affects like 'providing hope', rather than specific instances of tradition or liturgy. Others described the effects on a Jew during the Messianic age.

1d) This question saw a change of subject matter. Some candidates confused Moses with the Messiah and were consequently unable to achieve many, if any, marks. Others were able to provide useful examples which demonstrated the importance of the covenant in terms of belief, history and practice. Candidates often used their knowledge of the story of Moses to good effect. All approaches were rewarded and a wide range of examples was apparent.

1e) A small number of candidates appeared to think that this question referred to Bar Mitzvah. This obviously had significant implications for their overall level. The highest level responses were very well informed and packed with relevant examples. Effective use of the beliefs of the different strands of Judaism was helpful in this question. Distinctions were made between chukim and mishpatim, ritual and ethical and so on. It was recognised that some mitzvot were gender specific, and that the destruction of the Temple also had significant implications for observant Jews.

2a) Most candidates came up with an accurate definition. Some assumed it was a festival.

2b) Specific and more general responses were accepted by examiners. Some candidates provided Hebrew terms though these were not obligatory.

2c) A small number of candidates became confused with other festivals and holy days. Most common confusions centred on Shabbat and Pesach. Examiners did accept more generic responses about visiting the synagogue for example.

2d) Those candidates writing about the wrong festival continued to do so on this question. Pesach was sometimes discussed. This obviously impacted on the overall level and mark achieved. Otherwise, this was very well answered and candidates were able to explain the importance of many different facets of the festival. A significant number of candidates did not refer to the four species, but simply concentrated on the sukkah itself. Appropriate references abounded to the historical background of the festival.

2e) The joyful nature of Sukkot was the inspiration behind this question, though it was not necessary to make this link in order to achieve full marks. As mentioned earlier, however, candidates had to make clear reference to Judaism in order to access the higher marks. The highest level responses made clear comparisons between different Jewish festivals. Yom Kippur and Purim were often cited as well as Sukkot itself. Examples of traditions associated with these holy days were provided. Many candidates considered the effect that the tone of the day might have on children and young people.

3a) Candidates often provided a description of Orthodox Judaism, rather than the definition which was asked for.

3b) This question was well answered with most candidates able to suggest valid examples such as the Torah, Talmud, prayer and so on.

3c) Whilst many candidates gave appropriate instances as to where worship might differ, others referred to differences in belief and lifestyle between the groups. These responses were not credited. Better responses cited the division of the genders, the use of the vernacular and so on.

3d) This question seemed to elicit some good responses with very few misinterpreting it or unable to provide any relevant information. The highest level responses discussed divine inspiration of scripture, gender roles and relationships with gentiles. Some candidates even cited Mendelssohn and Geiger, though this was by no means expected or required. The tendency to make sweeping statements about different traditions was, however, apparent.

3e) This last point mentioned in Question 3d) also applied to some evaluative responses. Neo Orthodox attitudes were often not reflected in answers and Progressive Judaism was sometimes characterised as opting out of Judaism completely. Some candidates interpreted this question as asking whether a person should change one's religion over time. Otherwise, candidates had no shortage of ideas to write about. Responses were clearly structured and generally provided examples from within the Jewish tradition. Personal opinion was often left until the end, although some stronger candidates integrated it throughout.

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

General Comments

Generally, candidates performed well. Examiners reported awarding the full range of marks. Candidates and teachers are to be greatly commended for their efforts.

There were relatively few rubric errors although some candidates persist in attempting all questions with obvious implications for their final total. A few candidates wrote nothing at all on their examination paper.

The first two questions were much more popular than the third. It is unlikely, in this case, to simply be a result of the order of the questions on the paper.

Judging by the amount written, candidates are well coached as to the use of time, relative to the number of marks available. Evaluation questions need not follow the 'agree/disagree/my opinion' format. It would be advisable for candidates to make their opinion explicit in their answers at some point. Equally important is the need to refer to Judaism and not be too generic. One way of doing this is to provide regular exemplification from the tradition in question. Sometimes, responses are more effective if these components are more integrated and organic. Some candidates were inclined to confuse Judaism with other Abrahamic faiths.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Although most candidates answered this question correctly, responses such as 'Israel', 'East' and 'Mecca' also appeared with some regularity.

1b) This question was generally well answered. English and Hebrew terms were accepted. 'Temple' was credited due to its use in America. Some candidates mistakenly wrote about what happens in the synagogue.

1c) Most candidates were able to name features of a synagogue. Weaker responses showed confusion with other places of worship. Once again, Hebrew and English terminology was accepted.

1d) This question was generally well answered, especially by those candidates who based their responses around the ideas of 'meeting', 'prayer' and 'study'. Some failed to appreciate the role of a synagogue as a focus for the community and simply considered its role in worship. Good references were made to the cheder and the mikveh. The role of the rabbi was often discussed and credited.

1e) This question is a good example of where candidates can use the knowledge they have displayed in earlier parts of the question. When this is necessary, candidates must ensure that it is used with a view to evaluating, particularly as exemplification. Some candidates discussed the notion that G-d might be omnipresent and this was credited. However, others focused on whether a Jewish community could survive without a synagogue. The consensus was that this would be unlikely, although many made thoughtful reference to the important role of the home in perpetuating Jewish belief and tradition. Most candidates were able to make some relevant observations, whilst many were able to achieve at least the middle of level 2

2a) This question was generally well answered.

2b) It was important that religious reasons were provided. These could include G-d's plan for humankind and the need to perpetuate the Jewish people through reproduction. 'Falling in love' and similar responses were not rewarded.

2c) Although for some candidates, there was clear confusion with the Christian tradition, most candidates gained marks on this question. Examiners did not credit practices carried out in preparation for marriage like the use of the mikveh.

2d) This question seemed to come as a surprise to many candidates who presumably expected that all the parts would be about marriage. With some notable exceptions, the responses tended to be a little generic. Some candidates mistakenly included Christian teachings like the Good Samaritan. The highest level responses looked at different types of charity and how it impacts on the life of a Jew.

2e) Candidates had strong feelings on this issue. Many were able to produce informed and structured responses. There was a tendency for some to be a little generic and to ignore the necessary reference to Judaism. Candidates were often able to cite the kinds of conflicts that might transpire, but were not always able to find many arguments against the assertion. Some responses only considered marriages between different Jewish traditions, this did not affect the level achieved.

3a) Those who attempted this question usually identified the Talmud correctly. Some candidates confused it with the written Torah.

3b) This question was not well answered. Some candidates confused what the Ketuvim are.

3c) There was not a huge awareness amongst candidates of how the Ketuvim might be used, as opposed to the Torah itself. Many were reliant on generalities to get some marks.

3d) In contrast, this was a very well answered question. Candidates could explain many different ways that respect is shown. Some focused on the physical Torah with reference to the Ark, mantle, yad and so on. In contrast, others discussed the importance of showing respect by observing the mitzvot. The highest level responses embraced both approaches though either was credited. Some made good use of traditions at Simchat Torah.

3e) Those candidates who had been unable to identify the Talmud originally were destined to struggle here. However, many candidates were able to produce very mature and well informed discussions in their responses. These were generally built on a thorough knowledge of the historical background to the Talmud. Interestingly, candidates found it harder to argue against the quotation. Those who did so, most effectively, again made use of an understanding of the historical development of the oral tradition.

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

General Comments

The majority of candidates answered two complete questions as directed by the rubric. A few candidates attempted all three questions. Question 1 was the most popular question.

Overall candidates were able to complete the required number of questions in the time available. Good subject knowledge was evident in most responses, although it was apparent that a minority had little subject specific knowledge, as demonstrated by general responses which showed only generic religious studies information.

Many candidates made a fair attempt to demonstrate understanding and evaluation as required. The higher levels awarded in part e) responses were limited to a minority of candidates. Many candidates were obviously well prepared and able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Good, accurate use of subject specific terminology was evident, as was a familiarity with the majority of the topics on the paper.

However, it is essential that candidates are encouraged to read the questions carefully and to ensure that their answers relate to what is asked, rather than what they feel comfortable in attempting.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) The majority of candidates answered correctly.

1b) The majority of candidates answered correctly.

1c) Many candidates could give three correct pieces of information, although some wildly inaccurate answers were given, suggesting that some candidates were muddled in their knowledge about the different Gurus.

1d) Answers to this part were generally good, although those responses which simply explained what the Khalsa was, without explaining and linking it to the importance of the founding, were only able to achieve at the lower levels.

1e) Many candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of a variety of points of view from the Sikh perspective and were able to make some evaluation between them. Some personal views were limited to a repetition of ideas already given with no further development or evaluation, which limited the level which could be achieved.

2a) to c) These questions were generally attempted successfully, with a limited number of candidates demonstrating uncertainty about gurburbs

2d) Answers for this part were often rather general and lacked a full understanding of the importance of gurburbs for a Sikh community. Responses which concentrated on the importance for the individual found it difficult not to achieve at the higher levels.

2e) No comment.

3a) Candidates answered correctly.

3b) Those who attempted this question gave an accurate response.

3c) The question was answered competently, with a range of responses evident.

3d) Some candidates concentrated on the importance of the ten Gurus rather than their teachings, which limited the credit which could be given. Good responses showed that candidates could offer a range of ways in which the teachings were shown respect and could give reasons for this.

3e) The question enabled candidates to demonstrate their evaluative skills. A variety of points of view were effectively discussed and considered.

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

General Comments

The majority of candidates answered two complete questions as directed by the rubric. A few candidates attempted all three questions. Question 1 was the most popular. Question 3 was the least popular, but was well attempted by those who answered it. Overall candidates were able to complete the required number of questions in the time available.

Many candidates made a fair attempt to demonstrate understanding and evaluation as required. The higher levels awarded in part e) responses were limited to a minority of candidates.

Many candidates were well prepared and able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Good, accurate use of subject specific terminology was evident in many responses. Candidates appeared to be familiar with the majority of the topics on this paper.

It is essential that candidates are encouraged to read the questions carefully and to ensure that their answers relate to what is asked, rather than what they feel comfortable in attempting. Candidates also need to be fully prepared for each section of the paper to ensure that they are able to make a positive choice of question.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) The majority of candidates were able to answer accurately.

1b) The majority of candidates were able to answer accurately.

1c) This question was mostly well answered, although a number of candidates struggled to give all three examples.

1d) Most candidates could give at least a simple explanation for the importance of the langar. Higher level responses showed an understanding of the importance of sewa and issues relating to equality.

1e) Candidates were able to offer a wide range of views for this question, with some relevant and insightful evaluation.

2a) Some confusion was evident in the responses to this part.

2b) Most candidates were able to answer accurately, however, some candidates offered festivals as a response.

2c) This was generally well completed.

2d) Candidates did not always relate the funeral to Sikh beliefs, which limited the credit given. General descriptions of a funeral were not required.

2e) Some excellent evaluations were given, with a number of candidates really engaging with the issues and demonstrating the ability to consider different ideas, and evaluate them effectively.

3a) The vast majority of answers were accurate.

3b) Many candidates were unclear about the question and a variety of inaccurate responses was offered.

3c) No problems evident.

3d) Many candidates offered some generic responses as to the importance of holy books in general, suggesting that they did not know what the Dasam Granth was.

3e) The question enabled candidates to demonstrate their evaluative skills. A variety of points of view were effectively discussed and considered.

B583 Christian Scriptures 1 (Mark)

General Comments

The majority of candidates responded well to the demands of the paper. Questions assessing knowledge and understanding of the prescribed sections of Mark's gospel provided good differentiation across the ability range, and many candidates displayed accurate knowledge and good understanding of the text.

Part e) of questions account for fifty percent of the marks per question and the assessment objective requires argument and debate on a related issue. In the highest level responses, candidates demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the significance of the issues and were able to express and justify an appropriate personal response based on an evaluation of a range of views. Some candidates would have improved their overall performance if they had been more consistent in their arguments and explanations of different views. Many responses would also have benefited from the use of a more discursive writing style.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) The majority of candidates answered this accurately.

1b) The text was well known and many candidates scored full marks.

1c) The majority of answers were correct. Some responses would have benefited from closer reference to the text rather than general expressions such as 'cheered' or 'lined the streets'.

1d) Candidates achieved good answers through explanation of the importance of the figure of Messiah in first century Judaism, in comparison with the presentation of Jesus and the symbolism of the entry into Jerusalem in the gospel. A mere description of the event did not achieve the assessment objective for this part of the question.

1e) Responses to this question were varied. Responses were good at referring to the Triumphal Entry and other gospel material, and the highest level responses had elements of this. The arguments which showed most sophistication were the ones which explored differing views on peace and conflict outside of a purely personal relationship context. Some candidates put forward a robust defence of 'a just conflict' or quoted Jesus' actions in the Temple as an alternative view to the statement in the question. To achieve marks of level 3 and higher, candidates were expected to explore differing views. Some candidates argued well and with enthusiasm but only in favour of the statement. Others, would have achieved a higher level if they had included and justified an appropriate personal view.

2a) This question was generally answered accurately.

2b) Very well answered with accurate information from the gospel account.

2c) The majority of candidates gained the three marks available, with sufficiently accurate details.

2d) Satisfactory responses concentrated on the exorcism as a conflict between good and evil and a demonstration of Jesus' power as 'Son of the Most High God'. Better responses improved upon this with good explanations of Jesus' authority and compassion and an explanation of the significance of the miracle occurring in gentile territory.

2e) A number of responses made an excellent or very good attempt to draw distinctions and comparisons between two caring branches of society and came to the conclusion that there could be a synergism between the two. Spiritual counselling, faith healing and psychological well-being were seen as vital elements, alongside medical and surgical treatments for those who are ill. Evidence from Jesus' healing miracles was frequently used to illustrate points, with varying degrees of success. Some might have improved their arguments by more relevant use of the material eg the woman with bleeding 'had spent all that she had on physicians' before her encounter with Jesus.

3a) Most candidates were able to name one of the titles.

3b) The majority gained the full two marks for this answer.

3c) The exact instructions Jesus gave to the disciples were required to gain the full three marks. Details were often given which were vague and included material which was more imaginative than accurate.

3d) The highest level responses showed understanding of the meaning and symbolism of Jesus' words and actions and their implications for his death and resurrection. Most candidates began with an account of what Jesus said on this occasion, and were able to put his words into context in relation to the crucifixion. Responses might have been improved with a better understanding of the Christian view of Jesus' sacrifice and the promise of salvation.

3e) The majority of candidates concentrated on the compulsory nature of worship and justification for its inconvenience. The best answers were those which gave a balanced summary or conclusion of the arguments in their personal opinion. The focus of the question, an evaluation of the possible spiritual benefits was often not fully developed. Many answers would have been improved by greater awareness of when and how often the Eucharist is held in Christian churches and the different views held by Christians on participation. Judgements were frequently made about regularity of participation or non-attendance, without supporting reasons.

B584 Christian Scriptures 2 (Luke)

General Comments

There were some excellent and very good responses to the demands of the paper and the questions differentiated well between candidates, producing the full range of marks. In terms of knowledge and understanding of the prescribed texts, candidates engaged with the questions and produced mostly accurate answers.

Answers to part d) of questions were generally strong and candidates understanding of the meaning of the gospel text was usually well expressed. Some candidates would have performed better with a greater understanding of the assessment objective for part d) questions, as they gave detailed descriptions rather than explanations.

Many candidates responded well to the assessment objective for part e) questions and examined different views on the significance of an issue and included an appropriate personal view, which was either developed as a balanced evaluation of the views examined, or, expressed a personal conviction, supported by reasons. Some candidates could have improved very knowledgeable answers by the inclusion of these elements and gained a higher level of marks.

The highest level responses to part e) and, in some cases part d) questions, adopted a discursive style and were aware that structure and organisation of material is an important factor in helping to maintain a focus on the question.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most answers were accurate.

1b) Most candidates accurately identified the two parables.

1c) The majority gave an accurate account, to gain full marks in this answer.

1d) Good understanding of the allegorical nature of the parable was shown in most answers. Some included the significance of the role of the elder son as a later addition to the story. Other responses would have achieved higher marks by focusing more on explanation and understanding rather than just giving descriptions of the parable.

1e) This was a challenging question and candidates attempted to answer it by quantifying repentance eg 'how sorry' a person might be and matching it with equally quantifiable forgiveness in matters of everyday life. Answers often stated brief personal opinions, without appropriate justification. Some candidates explored the issue with certain ideas in mind about God's capacity to forgive. The more successful related their answer to evidence from the parable of The Lost Son, where the son was repentant and the father eager to forgive and the implications for human behaviour in the allegory. Personal views were then reflections on the actions of both the son and the father and their meaning for Christians today.

2a) Most answers were accurate.

2b) Mostly accurate answers. The gospel text was often quoted.

2c) Many answers gained the full three marks for an accurate account of Zacchaeus act of reparation.

2d) The majority of answers showed very good understanding of the importance of this event in terms of Luke's purpose to demonstrate Jesus' compassion for the outcasts of society. The performance, overall, was the best of all the part d) questions on the paper. Many candidates compared the Zacchaeus story with similar examples in other stories in the gospel.

2e) Many candidates showed a good grasp of Luke and its importance to Christian life, using examples and showing accurate knowledge and understanding of the gospel. Some candidates could have enhanced their answers by including different points of view regarding other Biblical material or other means of religious education. Some candidates who did state different views and gave a strong personal opinion, would have improved their answer by fully justifying their claims.

3a) Most candidates answered accurately.

3b) Most candidates achieved full marks.

3c) This part of the text was well known, and the majority of candidates selected accurate information from a number of correct responses to this question.

3d) Most explanations concentrated on the Holy Spirit and its significance to the commission of the disciples and to Christianity, producing good answers. Some very good responses also included some development of the ways in which Christians recognise and acknowledge the importance of Pentecost.

3e) There was a mixed response to this question. The highest level responses often began with the courage shown by the disciples and went on to focus on a discussion of modern day examples of religious commitment in daily and public life and whether there were occasions when courage was necessary. Some candidates included examples from the lives of Christians and other religions and there were some perceptive personal views, which evaluated Christian/religious life objectively and subjectively in terms of their own experience. Other answers had a pertinent but narrow focus on church attendance and restrictions on personal behaviour which were statements of one view, rather than a discussion. Although relevant issues were raised in these responses, they were less successful in achieving the higher levels, because part e) questions are designed to promote discussion and evaluation of a range of views.

B585 Jewish Scriptures 1 (Tenakh)

General Comments

The candidature this year produced a number of excellent responses. Clearly teachers have adjusted well to the new Specification with the demands of the d) and e) parts. Most candidates had little trouble understanding that the parts a), b) and c) required factual recall and development of simple facts.

In many instances, there was a range of appropriate responses which were creditworthy and the examiners attempted to be inclusive and credit all reasonable responses.

Question 1 proved to be a popular question. Question 2 was a less popular question, although most of the candidates responded well to the questions.

Comments on Individual Questions:

1a) The vast majority of candidates had no trouble responding correctly.

1b) Most candidates gave the correct response, however, a number quoted books from the Ketuvim in their responses which could not be credited.

1c) Some responses did not give enough information for three marks, if two separate points were made, then some development was required to attain all three points. Many candidates gave the Haftora as their example, however, without further amplification, or another example being given, only one mark could be awarded.

1d) Most candidates responded well to this part of the question, giving examples of mitzvot, showing how they affect the life of a Jew and crucially linking that in some way to the covenant with G-d or stating that they were thus fulfilling G-d's will.

1e) Candidates responded well to this question with many appreciating that they needed to evaluate the arguments for and against the stimulus.

Many appreciated the demands of the question by adducing arguments such as all of the Bible is considered the revealed word of G-d, and therefore must be treated with equal importance, whilst also pointing out that some may think that the ten commandments could be considered as more important by virtue of its directives at Mount Sinai.

2a) In general the response that man would otherwise be lonely was given. A number of candidates did however respond with, for example, to work the land which could not be credited

2b) Candidates had no difficulty identifying two of G-d's directives to man.

2c) A number of responses did not give enough detail or development to gain maximum credit. Some candidates simply responded, 'G-d made Adam sleep.'

2d) A large number of candidates discussed mankind's role in the world, the fact that he is a social being, that the creation of woman afforded him the possibility to develop, that he has responsibilities of stewardship and his potential to achieve spirituality. Explanation was required in order to achieve level 3.

2e) This question was answered well by most candidates who could adduce arguments about which many felt passionately. Some candidates disadvantaged themselves by addressing only one side of the argument which was a shame.

3a) Most candidates answered correctly either Moses or the Israelites.

3b) Again most candidates, who answered this question, had no difficulty in responding correctly.

3c) Candidates, in the main, had no problems here, although some did not include enough facts for development to gain the 3 marks for this part of the question.

3d) Many candidates responded with points about the value of human life, quoting the directive, 'do not kill' for example. Many responses included ideas based on the holiness of life, which was creditable.

3e) Most candidates, who answered this question, had no difficulties; however, some did not achieve the highest level of response as they did not give reasons to validate their assertions on the topic that Judaism either does or does not have too many rules for modern life.

B586 Jewish Scriptures 2 (Talmud)

General Comments

There is a relatively small entry for this unit. Teachers should be congratulated for preparing their candidates with a high degree of proficiency.

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Most candidates answered correctly.

1b) This was generally answered correctly. Most candidates were able to identify the two sections of Mishnah and the Gemara.

1c) No candidate had difficulty in answering this question.

1d) Many candidates restricted their answers to commenting on how the Talmud offers explanations of Torah meaning that the level they could achieve was also restricted.

1e) Candidates were generally responsive to this question, and there were some good answers. However, the question was open to two interpretations; one being 'the teachings of the Rabbis', ie the Talmud, and the other being more generic as in 'Rabbis teaching people', either interpretation was creditable.

2a) First blessing for food – some candidates were clearly confused by the question, and answered 'benching' or 'birkat hamazon', rather than stating *when* the blessing is said. Several candidates said 'before eating, but many candidates answered well by also including 'after meals containing bread'.

2b) This was correctly answered.

2c) Three ways in which Hashem nourishes – very few candidates answered as expected, and most referred to G-d sustaining the earth with rain/sun/food/animals which, when referred to the text, were credited. Otherwise, the fact G-d nourishes the land, with His grace, kindness and mercy were among the ways G-d nourishes the land.

2d) There were good answers to this question with frequent references to tzedakah and, occasionally, candidates mentioned Jewish organisations involved in the alleviation of poverty such as World Jewish Relief.

2e) This question prompted a lot of debate and there were few candidates who agreed with this. Many quoted Hillel as an example of Judaism's altruistic principles.

3a) Most candidates knew the correct answer, but it was disappointing to see a significant percentage answer incorrectly.

3b) This question was answered correctly in virtually every instance.

3c) This question presented no problems, and was virtually always answered correctly.

3d) Some very good answers, incorporating a variety of points such as: historical; present day; making aliyah; a 'homeland'; and the coming of the Messiah, with only a few candidates exploring all of the points. However, all relevant approaches were creditworthy.

3e) Generally, the arguments were against the statement, but all responses were able to comment from both sides. There was a range of reasons given, why Torah study, important as it is, had other aspects of Judaism which were equal to it. Some candidates mentioned earning a living in addition to the observance of the mitzvot.

B587 Muslim Texts 1 (Qur'an)

General Comments

More candidates were entered for this Unit this year than last, but the number was still small, less than 100, so the following comments need to be read with this caveat in mind.

Many candidates gave general answers to a number of the questions and did not adhere to the particular points being asked for in the question. Although the statements may have been correct in themselves, they did not answer the question set, so gained little or no credit!

As was the case last year, the least popular question seems to have been Question 2; higher marks were generally gained on Question 3.

Many answers to parts a) to c) were often in far more depth than needed and also failed to answer the particular question.

Part d) answers were, on the whole, well answered with the exception of Question 1d) where many responses were very limited due to a lack of specific detail. However, some candidates just presented lists which meant they were unable to access the higher level of response.

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

There were few rubric errors and candidates seemed to use the allocated time correctly. However, candidates do need to indicate clearly when a part question is to be continued on another page. Also, candidates need to carefully read the set question and not answer the question they hoped was set!

Comments on Individual Questions

1a) Almost all candidates answered correctly.

1b) Again, most candidates answered correctly.

1c) This part caused many students problems as it would appear they did not see the words 'in this Surah' in the question.

1d) Most responses reached level 2 but not many candidates managed to give enough depth of understanding of what happened in order to reach level 3.

1e) This question was well answered with candidates approaching the issue from many different angles and showing a good understanding and knowledge of the position of the Qur'an within Islam.

2a) Most candidates, but not all, gave a correct answer. Again, the reference was Surah 30; 20, specifically.

2b) Again, too many candidates did not relate the answer to Surah 30 as the question indicated. Also, the question referred to What not Who.

2c) Most candidates managed to gain at last 2 marks for this question with the many responses referring to equality and mutual support.

2d) Fairly well answered by many candidates with most referring to many of the points detailed in the mark scheme.

2e) Although well answered by some candidates, many referred to the Day of Judgement and not to The Signs of Surah 30 around which the whole question was based. Many answers were also very one sided with little reference to other standpoints.

3a) Almost all answers were correct.

3b) Most, but not all candidates, answered correctly, though a few clearly had no idea.

3c) Most candidates who answered this question confused Surah 88 with Surah 98 and so gave incorrect answers, as the question, clearly referred to Surah 98.

3d) A well answered question by most candidates, though some do seem to have seen the word Why rather than How in the question.

3e) Some very thoughtful answers were given to this question with the higher responses differentiating between a non believer and one who is not a true believer, whilst others grappled with what it means to be a true believer rather than just a believer. A number of candidates clearly engaged with this question.

B588 Muslim Texts 2 (Sunnah and Hadith)

General Comments

Very few candidates were entered for this Unit, so the following comments need to be read with this in mind.

The most popular question was Question 3.

A number of candidates gave general answers to parts of the questions and did not refer specifically to the particular points being asked for in the question.

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 able to express a supported personal viewpoint

There were few rubric errors and candidates seemed to use the allocated time correctly. However, candidates do need to indicate clearly when a part question is to be continued on another page. Candidates need to carefully read the question before attempting to answer it!

Comments on Individual Questions

- 1a) Generally answered correctly.
- 1b) Many candidates gave general reasons rather than those specifically asked for from this Hadith.
- 1c) The best answers clearly stated it was Allah who did the judging and intention played a crucial part. Some candidates also referred to it happening at the beginning of the end of time.
- 1d) The best answers went beyond just saying one was good and the other bad, and explained the importance of the differences in intention.
- 1e) There were some thoughtful answers to this part with the higher level responses tackling the issue of how to judge one's intention. Other candidates considered the link between strength of intention and determination to succeed.
- 2a) Most candidates gave an accurate answer.
- 2b) Many candidates gave a fairly general, rather than specific response to this question. The question was referring to Hadith 48, but some candidates failed to realise this.
- 2c) Once again, some candidates failed to link their answer to Hadith 38.
- 2d) This question was fairly well answered with candidates approaching it from different angles.
- 2e) The higher level response answers tended to also consider the importance of trusting the Prophet (referring to his Sunnah), as well as seeing members of the Ummah as important. Many candidates also referred to the practical implications of trust in daily life
- 3a) Most candidates answered correctly.

- 3b) Most candidates gave correct answers.
- 3c) Many candidates showed an understanding of the difference between the two types of Hadith, though some candidates wrote more than was necessary.
- 3d) This question was fairly well answered by most candidates who showed a good understanding of the importance of the life of the Prophet as a role model of how to live the perfect Muslim life.
- 3e) There were some very good response to this question, with candidates considering the difficulty in interpretation for modern issues (ie smoking) and moral issues, not specifically covered by the Sunnah. Some candidates also referred to the belief that Muhammad was the final Prophet with a timeless message

B589 Perspectives on World Religions

General Comments

The majority of responses for this paper were considered from the point of view of the Christian religion.

Candidates found parts a) to c) of the questions particularly accessible. Part d) of each question challenged candidates to demonstrate their understanding of an ethical issue in relation to the religion they had chosen. Many candidates rose to this challenge and addressed the thrust of their chosen question, expressing a clear understanding of the underlying attitudes of the religion, drawing on appropriate knowledge as required. Some candidates provided a sound, but generalised response, which needed to be better focused on the issue in the question. Candidates who offered knowledge of the teaching which underpins the ethical attitude of a religion tended to provide good responses.

Part e) of each question tests AO2 and it was encouraging to see good examples of responses where candidates weighed evidence and offered a personal response, which was also supported with evidence and argument. These candidates offered a discussion or a conversation between the views expressed in the response. Some candidates offered a more formulaic structure for these responses, although they generally scored satisfactorily, they were sometimes in danger of focusing on knowledge and understanding of the issue rather than providing the required evaluative discussion.

It was pleasing to note that reference to the religion studied was very strong in some responses. Other candidates needed to express the view or views of the religion chosen more clearly.

Some candidates found it hard to manage their time effectively. The mark allocations for the parts of the questions are provided to guide candidates, however, some wrote at considerable length in their responses to parts a), b) and c). Other candidates wrote an extensive response to part e) of their first question and then ran out of time in the second question. Candidates who tackled part e) of their chosen questions first, sometimes struggled to recognise the significance of the issue in the stimulus, possibly because they had not been prepared for it, as they would have been had they worked through the parts of the question in order.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A Questions 1-6

- a) Most candidates offered an appropriate example with pollution or global warming being common responses.
- b) Candidates offered a range of practical responses including joining an organisation to combat the problems and prayer.
- c) The emphasis here was on the origin of the world and not the origin of humanity. The majority of candidates referred to the creation stories of their chosen religion and supported their response with textual evidence.
- d) Many candidates responded with examples of the religious response and some, with possible practical responses, such as joining a protest against cruelty to animals. Higher level responses from the point of view of the Christian religion focused on the ideas of dominion and stewardship and supported the explanation with reference to teaching in Genesis or to Jesus reference to God's care for the sparrows.

- e) Almost all candidates found that they had something to say about this issue. It was encouraging to see candidates focusing on the question of whether humans have the right to do things to the world. Many candidates developed the views expressed in part d) about the mistreatment of animals and evaluated the ideas of stewardship and dominion. Others successfully demonstrated how attitudes towards the use of the world's resources had changed, whilst others suggested that a balance had to be struck between necessary exploitation and conservation.

Section B Questions 7-12

- a) The majority of candidates responded accurately to this question, referring to ideas such as self defence or to the need to 'right a wrong'.
- b) Responses such as peaceful protest, refusal to fight and prayer were common.
- c) Most candidates responded well to this question, offering a relevant teaching and descriptive development of it. Descriptions of the Just War or, one of its conditions, were common responses, as was a description of Jesus' behaviour towards the money changers in the temple.
- d) Higher level responses offered knowledge and understanding of the reasons which underpin the support which a religious person might give to those fighting for human rights. Ideas about equality springing from the teaching, that all are made in the image of God, were frequently quoted. Most candidates also offered a practical response, such as joining an organisation like Amnesty International or joining the fight, preferably through peaceful protest. Some candidates recognised that sometimes violence could be considered necessary, supporting this view with reference to the Just War theory or Liberation Theology.
- e) The stimulus provoked a wide range of discussions about the rights and wrongs of warfare. Candidates who focused on the issue of cowardliness fared best. Arguments about the rights to express one's views and beliefs, and act upon them, were often well balanced with the recognition of the need to protect family and country, something which many candidates considered only a coward would refuse to do.

Section C Questions 13-18

- a) Candidates found this question accessible, offering examples such as unequal pay for similar jobs or restriction of dress in some countries.
- b) Responses referred to practical actions such as calling the police, organising protests, prayer and speaking out against the discrimination.
- c) Good responses focused on one view and showed how it was rooted in the teachings of the chosen religion, for example, in the teaching that as God created all people no one should be thought of as inferior or be the subject of prejudice. Jesus' teaching about judging others was also offered by many candidates.
- 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 members of another faith. Many candidates expressed an understanding of the different approaches possible within a religion, and of changes that have come about as religions have become better acquainted with each other.

- e) It was encouraging to note how some candidates grasped the central issue in the stimulus that women and men can never be equal, enabling them to access the full range of marks. These candidates used their knowledge and understanding to discuss the progress that has been made towards equality of the sexes and to make a judgement about possible future progress.

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

This Unit is common to both specifications A (J120 J620) and Specification B (J121 J621).

For a detailed report on this Unit, please refer to the Report to Centres for GCSE Religious Studies Specification B (J121 J622).

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
1 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB1 2EU

OCR Customer Contact Centre

14 – 19 Qualifications (General)

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations
is a Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England
Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU
Registered Company Number: 3484466
OCR is an exempt Charity

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
Head office
Telephone: 01223 552552
Facsimile: 01223 552553

© OCR 2011

