

**Religious Studies B
(Philosophy and Applied Ethics)**

General Certificate of Education **GCSE J621**

General Certificate of Education (Short Course) **GCSE J121**

Reports on the Units

June 2010

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

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(Philosophy and Applied Ethics) (J621)**

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(Philosophy and Applied Ethics) (J121)**

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Chief Examiner's Report

This was a very encouraging start to the new specification. There was evidence that many candidates had been well prepared for the new specification with evidence of some very good teaching. Having said this, comparatively few candidates managed to achieve level four on part e questions and this is due in part to candidates and, perhaps centres, failing to grasp the implications of the new level descriptors. Part e questions are aiming to differentiate between candidates based on their ability to grapple with an issue and enter into a dialogue with the statement. Many candidates failed to achieve the top level because while they gave alternative points of view, including religious ones, they failed to give reasons for these, or justified arguments in support of their own points. There was limited use of evidence and examples which was a little disappointing. It is worth noting that according to the level descriptors, candidates who failed to give a personal view point could not progress beyond level two. Where a view from an alternative religion is given as an alternative view point, care should be taken that this is done appropriately and in a way that genuinely addresses the question. Again, use of reasoning and argument are essential.

Many candidates were entered for these units in year 10, or even 9. While this is expected and is a logical way to approach the qualification, it should be noted that all papers are marked to the full GCSE standard and that candidates in years 9 and 10 may not have the maturity of thought and expression to excel at AO2.

Having said this, entry levels were encouraging in all papers and candidates are achieving across the mark range, with some exceptionally good answers. It is also encouraging to see an increasing number of students attempting one or more questions from the non-Christian religions offered.

There were comparatively few rubric violations although there were still a few candidates attempting to address all sections, or even all questions. Some candidates had clearly been advised to attempt part e first. While the reasons for this are clear, it is not always a helpful approach since parts a-d often help to "set up" a good response to part e.

There is every sign that this specification will continue to perform well in future years and that it will achieve a good level of differentiation.

B601 Philosophy 1 (Deity, Religious Experience, End of Life)

General Comments

It was very pleasing to see that the examination was accessible to all abilities. There was little evidence of timing issues. The rubric was generally well understood and there was a full range of responses from candidates. It is evident that schools have generally prepared their candidates well for the new approach to this examination.

The vast majority of centres appear to have prepared the candidates for questions based upon the Christian religion, with questions 2 and 14 being by far the most popular questions answered. However, it is pleasing to see that there are some centres who, very successfully, have taken the opportunity to explore a wider range of religions at KS4. There was evidence of some excellent responses by candidates who had studied Buddhism and Hinduism, to a standard higher than GCSE. Some Centres had prepared their candidates to answer two questions from two different religions. There was no evidence of being disadvantaged or muddled in their knowledge and understanding.

Some able candidates were spending too long on the point marked questions (a) to (c) to the detriment of time spent on (d) and (e) questions. Most candidates gained marks fairly easily in the first three parts of the questions, rewarding knowledge and recall of the specification. This gives a sense of achievement and confidence for candidates, as they can quickly engage with the examination. Candidates are also to be encouraged to answer the questions in the order in which they are set on the paper. A few candidates began with (d) and (e) questions because of the higher marks available and found either they were rushed at the end or did not get the paper finished. They missed out on the opportunity to be led into parts (d) and (e), through parts (a) to (c), which helped them to formulate thoughts and ideas for the longer, more challenging questions on the paper.

Both (d) and (e) questions differentiated the cohort of candidates very well.

With regard to (d) type questions, many candidates were able to apply their knowledge to the question demonstrating sound understanding of religions, making the links between one aspect and another, eg. how prayer deepens the faith of a believer.

However, this is an area where further support and guidance may be needed for candidates. Some read the question and treated it like a knowledge question and wrote all they knew about a subject. For example, rather than explaining how prayer deepens faith they saw the word 'prayer' and wrote everything they had learned about different types of prayer. Unless this was related to the wording of the question, the higher levels of response were not awarded. It should be noted that to get a good level of response candidates need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the question. In general the (d) questions were the least well answered. Some candidates did not always look carefully enough at the wording of the question and apply their knowledge and understanding to the set question. Some candidates answered a different question to the one set, eg Q14 d) candidates saw the words beliefs about life after death and proceeded to describe Christian beliefs about heaven, hell and purgatory instead of explaining how such beliefs impact upon one's behaviour whilst here on earth.

It is to be recommended that centres spend more time preparing candidates for answering (e) type questions. Whilst many had very structured responses to the questions, there was not enough evidence of justified reasons, using the knowledge and understanding gained from studying the topics, making it difficult to award the highest levels. There were many competent responses but fewer good level responses. The examination requires candidates to provide a

dialogue between the various views expressed. Just to state different views, will not get the higher level marks. Centres do need to encourage candidates to understand why people are atheists, agnostics or believers of faiths. It is too simplistic to say that some people do not believe in God and so do not agree with whatever the statement is, in (e) questions, because there is no proof. More informed responses, using religious knowledge and understanding, argument and justified reasons are required for (e) questions. Sometimes the reasons given were too general, even though accurate, and there was little evidence of candidates being prepared for the differences of views within faith communities, as well as between faiths and none. Their personal view also needs to be a discussion in relation to other views presented, with a conclusion as to their own personal view in the light of points already made. Where candidates started off with their own view there was little link to the rest of the response. The question asks candidates to include different, supported points of view and then a personal viewpoint. It is recommended that candidates follow this order and engage with the points of view expressed in their own personal viewpoint.

This new examination is testing different assessment objectives and the weighting of the two assessment objectives has changed considerably from the old legacy papers. The examination tests higher order thinking skills, particularly for (d) and (e) type questions. Centres should consider when is the most appropriate time to enter their candidates for the examination. The ability to have a dialogue, around various complex and diverse issues and beliefs, needed to reach the higher levels in both (d) and (e) type questions, requires a degree of maturity, both emotionally and intellectually. Whilst this examination is modular, and provides centres with flexibility to enter candidates at different times of the two year period at KS4, it might be more beneficial for centres to think about when is the right time for their candidates to be entered.

Comments on Individual Questions

The mark scheme provided a wide range of responses to the questions and proved to be a good measure for the examiners to gauge the responses offered by the candidates. There were no candidates offering a different interpretation to a question and there was not any question that was confusing to the candidates. Where answers were good, examiners saw a fairly complete description of the topic, clear understanding of the question and a range of justified points, using an in depth knowledge of the religion studied. Weaker responses were either due to the ability of the candidate or a lack of religious knowledge and detail being evident. It is recommended that all teachers use the mark scheme with the candidates to gain an insight into the depth of knowledge and understanding required for this examination.

Section A : Belief about Deity

Q1-6(a) What is a miracle? This simple question produced a wide range of responses, as was allowed for in the mark scheme. A degree of accuracy is needed for one point answers. Where candidates wrote a miracle is an act of God in which the laws of nature were affected, or a divine intervention into the laws of nature, this achieved the mark.

Other responses accepted were eg an extraordinary event or some defined the word differently, away from a strictly religious perspective eg the miracle of birth.

Q1-6 (b) This was very well answered and nearly all candidates gained two marks for this question. Some candidates described the two beliefs rather than simply state them, which is what the question required. They lost time because of this.

Q1-6 (c) This very general question produced a range of responses but there was no indication of any candidate being at a disadvantage depending upon which religion they had studied. Most gave three simple statements about The Buddha, Jesus etc. Others described one point with elaboration and exemplification. Either way, candidates generally achieved the full three marks.

With all the part (a) to (c) questions, even though they are point marked, the Examiner is looking for knowledge of Religious Studies based upon study of the specification, not just general knowledge.

Q1-6 (d) The mark scheme showed that there were several beliefs which could be explained regarding miracles. Whichever religion from which this question was answered, the focus of the question was upon explaining beliefs about miracles, not what are miracles or types of miracles. Some candidates were unaware of the different beliefs held by faith members towards miracles. Many wrote about types of miracles rather than explain beliefs about miracles and consequently did not achieve the highest level.

Q1-6 (e) This statement produced a wide range of justified arguments, demonstrating sound knowledge and understanding of religions. Discussions around the philosophical arguments for the existence of God, evidence of upbringing, answered prayers, miracles, divine experiences, holy books, evidence from the founders of the religions, history of the religion were amongst many of the responses included by the candidates to this statement. Many were able to show appropriate study of the religion, with specialist terms being used throughout.

However, fewer candidates reached level 4, a good response, because they did not engage with the points of view in a dialogue. The question is asking for a discussion around several points of view. It is not asking whether candidates agree or disagree with the statement.

Also, there was not enough evidence presented which justified the points of view. For example, to say that atheists would disagree with the statement because there is not enough proof that God exists is accurate but why do they say this? What is proof? Why is something proof to one person and not to another? What counter arguments do atheists present to a theist? The examiner is looking for more in-depth responses to these types of questions.

Section B: Religious and Spiritual Experience

Q7-12 (a) This was correctly answered by most candidates, though some described an example of fasting which was not required.

Q7-12 (b) Whilst most candidates understood the key word 'list' (two examples), rather than describe or explain them, some candidates did not fully understand the meaning of the word 'symbol'. This resulted in some responses being unable to be accredited. The mark scheme allowed for a wide range of responses and most achieved two marks if they knew what 'symbol' meant.

Q7-12 (c) This question required a list or short statements about ways in which Buddhists etc worship. Most candidates achieved three marks. It showed a range of both sophisticated responses and over simplified responses. For example, one candidate wrote "Christians pray in the morning, in the afternoon and at night" and it did not get three marks, whereas "Christians pray regularly, read their bible, say grace before a meal," for example, were better responses and awarded three marks.

Q7-12 (d) This question was not very well answered. Many candidates knew about prayer or meditation or types of prayer but not how and why people of faith use prayer or mediation to deepen their faith. AO1 requires candidates to demonstrate a use of knowledge and understanding to a question. Analysis is needed and there was less evidence of this in the responses seen. Many did not achieve the highest levels. The mark scheme allowed for a range of responses. Perhaps more practice at such questions is needed.

Q7-12 (e) There were different statements given for these questions because of the different stances held by the religions about art. This did not affect the quality of responses in any way. Many were able to give a range of examples of art or symbols in their discussions. Also, some candidates talked about the performing arts, such as music. This was accredited, though it was not the original intention of the question because art can refer to performing art as well as the more traditional understanding of the word 'art.'

As with Q1-6 (e) many of the general points made about approaches to these types of questions apply to this question. Please see comments made to Q1-6 (e)

Section C : End of Life

This whole section was the least well answered by candidates. Many lacked the depth of knowledge required to achieve the higher levels. This in turn affected the outcomes of (d) and (e) questions. There were some centres which had prepared their candidates very well and achieved very high grades, particularly Hindu responses, but they were in the minority for this particular section.

Q13 (a)-18 (a) Many candidates had little idea what 'rites' meant. It is in the specification but they interpreted it as 'rights', such as freedom of speech. Consequently many did not achieve one mark. Examiners were looking for reference to rituals or traditions that mark special occasions, for example.

Q13 (b) Because funeral rites are not in the specification for Buddhism different questions have to be asked for this religion. All candidates who attempted this question achieved two marks but candidates must not spend too long on these two mark questions. A simple description is all that is needed.

Q14 (b)-18 (b) Because so many candidates did not know what rites meant there were some very poor answers to this question. However, where candidates had been taught about funeral rites there was a wide range of responses accepted for this question and most achieved full marks.

Q13 (c)-18 (c) This was a challenging question which also differentiated very well. Weaker candidates simply described what the soul was or what happened to the body at death. The question required candidates to describe the relationship between the two. If the candidates only referred to one aspect ie body or the soul they did not achieve the full three marks. Some credit was given for accurate information about the soul but full marks could not be awarded, no matter how good the description of the soul was, because it was not answering the set question. The specification is very clear and asks candidates to study beliefs about the relationship between the body and the soul.

Q13 (d)-18 (d) This question was not very well answered. The mark scheme allowed for a wide range of responses. There were many competent responses given by the candidates who had understood the question. Weaker responses were those in which much descriptive knowledge about beliefs in life after death, as believed by Christians etc. was stated. However, the question was asking candidates to use skills of application and analysis to show their understanding of beliefs and practice. Many did not make the connection and did not explain how one's moral behaviour could be affected due to one's personal beliefs about life after death.

Some candidates wrote at length about beliefs in life after death which would have been more appropriate for part (e) questions rather than (d) question.

Other candidates focused upon the second part of the question and proceeded to describe in full how one should behave in everyday life, making no reference to the link to life after death. Whilst

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accurate information was given, it did not answer the question set and so there were very few highest level responses to this question.

On all the religions studied there is a very clear link between moral behaviour and future rebirths, resurrection or reincarnation etc. Candidates need to fully understand the religious concepts behind the practices and be able to articulate these links.

More practice at answering such questions is needed, in which demonstrating understanding of knowledge, rather than just stating knowledge, is evident.

Q13 (e)-18 (e) The question was requiring candidates to discuss different beliefs/views about life after death, whether there is any form of life after death and their own view about life after death. Many responses were over simplified or lacked justified reasons for the views given. There were not many level 4 responses.

Again the examiner is looking for reasons given for the views but too often the candidates merely stated what a believer, an agnostic or an atheist thought. There was also little evidence of knowledge about differences between the members of the same faith or between other faiths and none.

As with Q1-6 (e) many of the general points made about approaches to these types of questions apply to this question. Please see comments made to Q1-6 (e)

B602 Philosophy 2

General Comments

Overall the paper was satisfactory. There does not appear to be a topic or question which was avoided by a majority of candidates.

The (a), (b) and (c) parts of the questions worked well. However some candidates, usually the most able, wrote a paragraph or more in response to these 1, 2 and 3 mark questions. This depth of response is unnecessary in these points marked questions, where a list of single words, or a few of sentences achieved the same marks as some of the extended answers.

The (e) part of the questions appears to have produced the expected differentiation between the most able candidates, with candidates of all abilities attempting the section and gaining some marks. It is worth noting that level 4 answers in this section contained a breadth of knowledge and/or a sophistication of analysis which requires practice and experience as well as detailed knowledge of the specification content. Some examiners expressed concerns at the number of entries they perceived as being from year 10 candidates and suggested that these candidates might lack the level of knowledge and skill to fully achieve AO2.

The majority of responses were on Christianity but there were responses of all levels from the full range of religions available in the specification. Many able candidates also made use of a range of religious viewpoints, including humanism, in their discursive (e) part answers. While not required for the highest levels this enabled those candidates to fully engage with the discursive nature of the questions. It is important however that candidates choosing to do this do not lose sight of the question itself, as reference to the religion specified is required of a higher level answer.

Comments on Individual Questions

Section A - Questions 1-6

- a) The overwhelming majority of candidates who answered this question did so appropriately.
- b) Most candidates used the terms natural and moral evil, as anticipated by the mark scheme. A range of other acceptable answers was also seen. However many candidates misinterpreted the question, giving examples of evil acts or of suffering when the question requires causes.
- c) The most common error with this question was candidates answering with why people should behave morally, instead of how they can do so. Some answers of this type were creditable (for example 'trying to follow the example of Jesus') but did not achieve full marks. The more able candidates often wrote over-complicated answers with very detailed scenarios creating moral dilemmas.
- d) Very variable responses to this question. Some candidates gave outstanding philosophical discussions of theodicy (above and beyond the requirements of the specification), others discussed religious specific examples such as Job and the testing of faith. Less able candidates gave totally generic answers which gained some marks at the lower levels. Some examiners reported misunderstandings of the question, with descriptions of the nature of suffering being given instead of the explanation of why it happens as required by the question. Candidates were often familiar with the problem of evil and the inconsistent triad, and gave good accounts of this but were sometimes unable to relate this specifically

to the question. Mid-level candidates often gave their own opinion on the issue, which was not required by the question.

- e) Some outstanding responses were seen here. However some examiners expressed concerns that candidates were approaching these as they would have done the (c) section of the legacy specification, giving one argument on each side and adding a personal response at the end. This gained some marks but limited the discussion and engagement with the issue. This question was answered better than other (e) sections by candidates with limited religious specific knowledge as they could draw on a wide range of personal examples and experiences to support their views. Most candidates had strong personal opinions on this issue, and set them out clearly, while the highest level responses showed a full grasp of the significance of the issue.

Section B - Questions 7-12

- a) Generally answered well. A small number of candidates gave quotations from scripture rather than naming a holy book or section thereof, which was unexpected.
- b) This was a generally poorly answered question. Many candidates wrote that they were not sure what a revelation was and some responses which were given were obviously guesses.
- c) Generally answered well. This was the only 'points marked' question which did not specify a number of responses, candidates were therefore free to elaborate on one example or provide a list of several. The latter was the more common choice.
- d) Answers were commonly simplistic and descriptive rather than explanatory. Candidates who had not chosen Christianity seemed to have more to say here and to be able to give greater explicit explanation.
- e) Some examiners reported limited answers, while other reported excellent responses. This seemed to vary with centres. Examiners suggested that the scope of the question was potentially very broad, posing a problem for some candidates. Able candidates fully demonstrated their skills with this question, with approaches ranging from discussion on the subjective nature of any human experience to the importance of a personal experience of Jesus in some Christian denominations. Overall it seems that this question achieved appropriate differentiation between the most and the least able. As with all (e) parts on the paper some examiners expressed concerns that candidates were approaching these as they would have done the (c) part of the legacy specification, giving one argument on each side and adding a personal response at the end. This gained some marks but limited the discussion and engagement with the issue.

Section C - Questions 13-18

- a) Although most candidates answered well, a surprisingly large minority did not recognise the word 'origins'. Some examiners expressed concerns that the mark scheme allowed candidates to gain the mark without understanding by simply rewording the question, but the number of candidates who did not do so suggests this concern may be over-stated.
- b) Generally well answered - by those candidates who read the question carefully. The errors occurred with misreading or ignoring 'uses'. These candidates suggested examples of animals of which religious people might disapprove or cited 'cruelty', 'abuse' and other generalities which cannot be considered 'uses'.

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- c) All candidates were able to offer some responses to this question, although those who only gave generic, social responsibility type answers did not achieve full marks. More candidates gave repetitive answers here than the other (c) part questions.
- d) Performance on this question seems to have varied by centre. Some examiners reported that all candidates responded well with discussion of how religious stories and scientific accounts could intertwine. Other examiners reported all candidates giving a simple recounting of the creation story, as given in the relevant scripture, without comment or further explication.
- e) Most candidates engaged passionately with this question, but answers tended to degenerate into an account of which approach they personally thought was true. Most examiners reported this, and expressed concern that this question was answered more briefly than other part (e) responses; the majority of candidates seemed to be aware of only one possible viewpoint on this issue, and religious content was generally limited - expect in the case of candidates arguing from a professed personal religious conviction. Some examiners expressed concerns that candidates were approaching these as they would have done the (c) section of the legacy specification, giving one argument on each side and adding a personal response at the end. This gained some marks but limited the discussion and engagement with the issue.

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

General Comments

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

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

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

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

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

Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A: Religion and Human Relationships

- a) The vast majority of candidates offered a correct response. A small number of candidates stated that contraception was a way of protecting a person from sexually transmitted infection without reference to protection against pregnancy.
- b) Most candidates offered a method of contraception appropriate to their chosen religion. Some went on to explain why the method was acceptable, which was unnecessary.
- c) Responses seemed to be polarised between those which demonstrated a sensitive and sound understanding of the attitude of the religions chosen towards this and those which could only give a simple response that faith members would be against premarital sex. For the full marks, examiners were looking for a statement plus development and /or exemplification.
- d) The few candidates who chose to answer from Buddhism or Hinduism had little trouble in achieving three marks defining celibacy and then usually giving an example of what this might mean or the extent to which it was expected to be a permanent state or a temporary part of the religious life.
- e) Many candidates responded well to this part of the question, however, there was a tendency to give generalisation without any back up, either from sacred texts or practice within the religion. A number of candidates linked it with the previous question and often just repeated what they had said before.

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- f) A substantial number of candidates took this to be an opportunity to discuss the attitude of their chosen religion towards contraception and missed the reference to overpopulation completely. These responses could not be credited fully. Centres should note the importance of addressing the issues in the specification - personal, social and global issues. The prelude to each unit in the specification gives useful guidance which is critical to the appropriate delivery of the material in the specification.

Section B: Religion and Medical Ethics

- a) The vast majority of candidates responded accurately to this question although some gave a response which could be applied to murder or to suicide without any sense of the death being caused to prevent or end suffering. Responses of this sort could not be given credit.
- b) Candidates had no problem giving two reasons – money problems and depression being two common ones. A small number of candidates gave reasons which were too similar and could only be awarded one mark.
- c) The majority of candidates could access this question and in some cases wrote at considerable length, often well in excess of the amount required for 3 marks. Many candidates gave well informed responses and a significant number of candidates, responding to the Christianity questions, were able to identify attitudes with denominational groups and explained the underlying reasons for the denomination taking that view.
- d) This question also proved very accessible but some candidates failed to plan their response well enough and did not go into sufficient depth in their explanations. Candidates are not expected to be able to quote from the scriptures of the religions to which they have chosen to respond, but candidates who are able to make reference to material in the sacred writings or to specific teaching, as the reasons behind the attitude, are judged at a higher level. A disturbing number of candidates seemed to believe that euthanasia was practiced frequently and that it was acceptable to religious people who would see it as a loving thing to do.

- e) The stimulus provoked wide range of discussions some of which reached the highest levels. A number of candidates used this as an opportunity to express their own views in detail with no reference to their chosen religion. Others repeated the arguments given in part (d) and on a number of occasions in part (c) without commenting on them or attempting to weigh them up or come to a conclusion. Centres need to be aware that the AO2 requires candidates to discuss issues which are not achieved by restating knowledge. The best responses took a stance at the beginning and commented on other views throughout their answer drawing a conclusion, with a personal response evident in the answer as a whole.

Section C: Religion, Poverty and Wealth

- a) Candidates found this question accessible and usually identified a sound cause such as war, natural disasters or imbalance in the world's economy.
- b) Rather than stating reasons, some candidates offered examples of what religious people might do to relieve poverty. Some candidates, having stated a reason went on to explain its rationale. This was unnecessary and could not be credited beyond the two marks allocated.
- c) Candidates approached this in a variety of ways. Some stated several aspects of teaching, whilst others offered one teaching, which they explored and developed. Others offered a teaching with an explanation and stated another teaching. All these approaches could be credited and full marks given for appropriate responses.
- d) There were some excellent religions specific responses which showed candidates had a good understanding of the rationale behind the attitude of the religion towards wealth. Responses which attained the higher levels stated the attitude of the chosen religion and supported the reasons for the attitude by reference to religion specific teachings or by alluding to sacred texts or official statements from authoritative sources. There was however a larger number of general responses which gave bland unsupported statements along the lines that wealth and religious belief do not go together and that most religious people would not approve of wealth at all.
- e) The stimulus evoked a creditable response from nearly all the candidates who selected this question. Some recognised and argued cogently that money itself was not the problem but that the love of money and associated greed were at the root of much of the evil in the world. Some candidates veered into an unprofitable discussion about how we might abandon the use of money altogether. For the most part, candidates grasped the issue and managed to link it to the attitude of the religions they had chosen. As with the part (e) question in the previous section, some candidates focused too much on their own points of view to the exclusion of any religious viewpoint at all. Others stated views without discussion and omitted any viewpoint of their own.

B604 Peace and Justice/Equality/Religion and the Media

General Comments

The question paper achieved a good level of differentiation with the full range of marks being awarded. There was, however, a marked difference between centres with some achieving the full range and others rarely achieving more than half marks, usually due to a lack of appropriate development in part (d) and (e) questions. It was a little disappointing that many candidates merely stated opposing views in part (e) questions without addressing the reasons for them or entering into the genuine discussion and engagement with the question, which is required for level 4.

The vast majority of candidates answered all questions from a Christian perspective. There was a significant minority of centres, however, where most candidates answered from an Islamic perspective, or answered one question on Christianity and their second on Islam. There is a small but increasing number of questions answered from a Jewish or Hindu perspective and the majority of these are answered very well. However, a few candidates clearly know very little about these religions and give answers which are vague and generic with little specific religious content. Where this happens, the candidate would often have done better by answering from a Christian perspective. Where candidates answer from their own standpoint it is important that in part (e) questions in particular they are sufficiently objective and analytical to access the higher levels and do not merely expound a single viewpoint.

Questions 2 and 8 were by far the most popular.

There were few rubric errors, but a few candidates answered all three questions, usually in insufficient detail to achieve the higher levels. Very few attempted all questions or answered more than one from each section. A significant minority answered their first question in a great deal of detail but then had insufficient time to complete a second. Some answered part (e) first with varying degrees of success, attempting the question with most marks whilst they were "fresh" but in some cases answering parts (a) to (d) first would have given them a better idea of where to go with part (e).

Comments on Individual Questions

Section 1: Religion, Peace and Justice

- a) Whilst most candidates gained the mark for this easily enough, a worrying minority did not know what capital punishment is, many taking it as any state sponsored punishment.
- b) Most gained the marks for this, often with an impressive, but unnecessary amount of development. A few misunderstood the question and gave examples of punishments.
- c) There were some excellent answers here. Many gave a balanced argument using Biblical teachings for and against capital punishment. It was surprising that very few mentioned Old Testament teachings or attitudes to the death penalty directly. One concern here is that some candidates wrote far more than was needed for part (c), leaving themselves with less time to complete parts (d) and (e). It was worrying that some candidates wrote more for part (c) than they did for parts (d) or (e), so disadvantaging themselves unnecessarily. Some candidates who had answered part (a) wrongly struggled with this, some even suggesting that capital punishment is a good thing as it allows prisoners to learn from their mistakes and become better people.

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- d) There were some excellent answers to this question. Some candidates gave good general Christian teaching on equality and forgiveness but struggled to relate it to the question asked. Many referred to the work of Elizabeth Fry. Some did this very successfully, but again, some merely gave descriptive accounts and failed to explain the relevance to the question. Some limited themselves to a discussion of capital punishment. There were some excellent Islamic answers to this question, discussing Shariah law and whether there was a difference in attitude between Eastern and Western Muslims.
- e) While many did very well on this question, a significant number failed to address the question, giving generalised answers about the quality of prison life or, again, the death penalty, but failing to progress beyond this. Many struggled to apply Christian and Biblical teachings appropriately. There is a tendency to see Roman Catholicism as "strict" and Anglicanism as "liberal" in a way which is not always accurate or appropriate.

Section 2: Religion and Equality

- a) A surprising number of candidates equated racism with prejudice in general, including issues such as gender, age and sexuality in their definition.
- b) Most candidates gained the marks for this question.
- c) A common mistake here was that candidates explained why, rather than described how Christians might tackle racism. It is necessary to read the question carefully in order to avoid throwing away marks unnecessarily.
- d) Answers to this were often quite vague and made general reference to treating people equally rather than to specific teachings. Some concentrated particularly on a single issue such as race or gender, often very successfully.
- e) Some read the question as being about religious tolerance, in other words that people should treat people of other religions as equals. This was credited as a valid interpretation and where it was done well achieved level 4. Again, though, too often answers were vague and gave viewpoints without appropriate development or justification.

Section 3: Religion and the Media

- a) Most achieved the mark for this question.
- b) Again this was generally well answered. Candidates who failed to achieve the marks usually gave two examples of types of media.
- c) This tended to be very well answered.
- d) This was a little disappointing. A worrying number of candidates failed to understand the term "portrayal" despite its appearance in the specification. Several read it as "betrayal". Answers were satisfactory and tended to revolve around Ned Flanders, Father Ted and the Vicar of Dibley. Whilst these were often quite successful it would be good to see candidates engage with some less superficial issues. Some good candidates entered into a discussion over religious figures who do good getting very little media time, whilst others who do not (the issue of alleged child abuse within the Catholic Priesthood was mentioned) are front page news. It would be encouraging to see more evidence of this kind of thinking and that candidates have been exposed to a variety of views and examples in their lessons beyond the Simpsons.

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- e) Again answers tended to be vague and often repeated the material used in part (d), although there was the potential to go beyond this in part (e). There was little evidence of in depth engagement with the issues even amongst more able candidates. This is a potential area of development in the teaching of this specification.

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