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RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Paper 0490/01

Paper 1

General comments

There was a small entry for this subject, consisting of handfuls of candidates from a variety of Centres around the world, and therefore only the most general comments can be made about the candidates' performance. Candidates were, on the whole, well prepared, although some individuals demonstrated occasional gaps in their knowledge. The best answers were very impressive in the range and depth of knowledge and understanding.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

A surprising number of candidates did not know anything about Epiphany. Some knew it was the end of the Christmas period, but the best answers focused on the revelation of Jesus to the gentiles in the person of the Magi. Some covered the liturgical aspects of the whole season, but this was not expected.

Question 2

This was well known, and generally good attempts were made to explain the importance of the Hajj for Muslims.

Question 3

This question was generally well answered; most responses to part (c) concentrated too heavily on the importance of the synagogue for worship and religious ceremonies, without mentioning its social and educational uses by the community.

Section B

Question 4

Some candidates were struggling here, making general assertions about locations in the Holy Land being places of Christian pilgrimage. Good answers focused on places like Lourdes, Rome or Walsingham and gave full accounts of the importance of these places for Christians.

Question 5

Some answers did not give enough detail about the actions Muslims perform during prayer, but most were aware of the need to perform wudu' beforehand. Surprisingly few mentioned the need to face Makkah.

Question 6

Many attempts were rather thin and did not give enough detail about what happens *in the home* at Shabbat.

Section C

These two alternative questions were chosen in about equal proportion.

Question 7

Candidates were generally more secure on the rules of Ramadan than on those for Yom Kippur, and the Jewish aspect of the answer was usually rather brief. In part **(b)**, not many answers dealt with why adherents of Judaism and Islam believe it important to eat special foods in addition to going without food.

Question 8

This straightforward question was not very well done on the whole; candidates had a fairly limited grasp of important features in the church and mosque (the pews in a church are hardly one of the three 'main' features) and struggled to explain how their chosen features reflected beliefs.

Paper 0490/02

Paper 2

General comments

There was a small entry for this subject, consisting of handfuls of candidates from a variety of Centres around the world, and therefore only the most general comments can be made about the candidates' performance. Candidates were, on the whole, well prepared, although some individuals demonstrated occasional gaps in their knowledge. The best answers were very impressive in the range and depth of knowledge and understanding.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question on holy books was generally answered well.

Question 2

Some candidates tended to stray into the preparation aspects of weddings, or answered a question about marriage rather than the specific ceremony, but others showed a good knowledge of the requisite elements.

Question 3

Although at the very least, part **(a)** could be answered with a bare list, better candidates made a selection of their selected 'main' rites of passage and gave some description before launching into the explanation of why followers may feel they are important.

Question 4

Teaching children about their faith is undertaken quite formally in Judaism, but few candidates showed much knowledge of this, or appreciated why most Jews feel that it is very important.

Question 5

Most candidates correctly concentrated on the 'local community' in their answers and were not tempted to write about international aid organisations. However, many did not give specific teachings (appropriate verses from the Bible in Christianity, *Zakah* from the Five Pillars of Islam) for part **(a)**.

<p>Paper 0490/04</p>

<p>Paper 4</p>

General comments

There was a small entry for this subject, consisting of handfuls of candidates from a variety of Centres around the world, and therefore only the most general comments can be made about the candidates' performance. Some candidates wrote at too *great* a length – rewriting or giving a précis of the entire passage in its every detail does not demonstrate much skill in selection or an understanding of the complexities of the issues. The best answers showed candidates' individual and personal responses to the issues raised in the passages, as well as selection of salient points and important ideas; a few papers were truly outstanding.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

An explanation of the rights stated in this section of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights would have been enhanced by candidates showing some realisation that in many situations these rights can be only theoretical and that their practical implementation is beyond the resources of less developed countries, even with the help of the religious aid agencies which are the topic of the paper.

Question 2

Candidates were generally confident with their handling of Source A, but found B and C more challenging.

Question 3

Many candidates did not appreciate that there were only 10 marks for this question and wrote at too great a length about Source G – and in doing so did not show any selection of which points they considered 'important'.

Question 4

This question targets Assessment Objective B (Understanding and Interpretation) and, apart from those who just wrote out Sources D and E in lengthy paraphrase, most candidates made a fairly successful attempt to show their skills. Candidates who ignore the Picture Sources I, J and K have their overall mark for the question scaled down to reflect this omission; the best candidates found a great deal to write about J and K by way of interpretation.

Question 5

A few candidates approached this question by giving a brief outline of each source in turn, which was not a successful method. It is important that candidates focus on the central requirements of the question: 'what do you think about...' and 'give reasons for your answer'. The best candidates brought extra knowledge to their answers, but this was not required for the top level, which can be achieved by intelligent argument based solely on the material in the sources. The key to success in this question is the demonstration of the ability to recognise the complexity of issues raised, and to express valid opinions about different points of view that are well supported by evidence and argument.