



# **Examiners' Report**

## Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2017

Pearson Edexcel GCE  
In Religious Studies (6RS04)  
Paper 1B Implications - Ethics

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## **2017 Report on 6RS04**

With some thoughts on the Anthology in the new Spec.

### **Introduction:**

There were a significant proportion of scripts that were truly excellent. Examiners had opportunities to read outstanding scripts showing independent thought. Credit should be given to candidates and their teachers who have prepared the thoroughly, fostered a love of the subject and nurtured degrees of insightfulness. Candidates used a variety of methods in their answers to these textual questions. Some concentrated almost entirely on the selected passage, analysing each part and referring to their wider knowledge. Others set the passage within the context of the overall article illustrating key points from the passage itself. Whatever method is used the fundamental requirement is an examination of the passage. These principles will apply to the anthology passages used in the new Spec in the compulsory questions taken from the Anthology. (See conclusion below for more on this topic of Anthologies in the new Spec.)

### **1B Ethics**

The standard this year was excellent in most cases. The candidates understood how to answer the questions and understood the key points of LaFollette's article. Williams and Rachels featured strongly and candidates used such scholars with a clear understanding of their positions. Others like Wolff, Nagel and Hobbes made an appearance in some of the stronger scripts. When used, Rawls and Nozick complimented the work of LaFollette and showed an understanding of the veil of ignorance, which highlighted the ideas of impartial morality. The Utilitarian and Kantian ethical theories were common but this year Virtue Ethics and Situation Ethics were more prevalent. Natural Law when used in some scripts showed a clear understanding, especially the idea of bringing up and educating children. The Euthyphro Dilemma made an occasional appearance and did not really work to any good effect. This passage was sometimes used by those who studied Psychology and a few of the scripts performed well.

Fewer than normal scripts made links with Jameson and Schneewind but generally, used them very well. The ideas of the dominant conception were not as prevalent as one might expect, but occasionally the ideas of foundationalism and coherentism were used to good effect.

As for the case studies, the Bulger case was evident again but not as often as in previous years. Fritzl was used to good effect to explain how bad personal relationships need not affect the person. In addition, to elaborate the lack of personal relationships, Genie the feral child was used to good effect. This year most candidates did not go into much detail about the cases but focused on the implications.

Most scripts clearly identified (a) and (b) which was very useful. Many scripts showed a good understanding of the whole of the essay and it was obvious that candidates had prepared well.