

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Religious Studies
(5RS07/01)

Unit 7: Religion and Life Based on
a Study of Sikhism

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Introduction

The unit continues to attract non-Sikh pupils as well as Sikh pupils from centres that have entered candidates for other papers. Candidates found it hard to secure full marks for part b) questions. They need to develop two distinct points, perhaps by offering an example or supporting quotation or fact.

Section 1

Candidates appeared to have focused on the argument from design to the detriment of other aspects of the specification for this section. Question 1c was poorly answered in the main and some pupils introduced the design argument to pad out their brief knowledge of the cosmological argument. In 2c scientific explanations of how the world began were sometimes used as evidence for the design argument rather than as a support for non-belief in God. Answers to 1d could have been improved by focusing specifically on the words in the question – natural evil and God's creation of the world. Question 2d on the media was answered well as candidates were able to provide specific examples to support their points.

Section 2

In general, this section was answered to a high standard as pupils were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter in every question. To improve, the Glossary definitions should be learned so that all pupils earn two marks, for example, in relation to the 4a question about the 'paranormal'. Pupils should also look carefully at the wording of questions. 4c only required answers about why some Sikhs accept abortion. It did not ask for a personal response or explanations why some Sikhs disapprove of abortion. There were interesting evaluations of Questions 3d and 4d, which dealt with the media and world poverty, respectively. Candidates were able to refer to a range of non-religious material to create the context within which they could use religious material.

Section 3

Pupils did not look carefully at the precise wording of questions in this section. In question 5d many of them confused pre-marital sex and extra-marital sex, resulting in discussions about adultery. In 6c some candidates explained not only why some Sikhs accepted contraception in order to address the question, but also why some Sikhs believe that it is wrong. In 6d a discussion of whether attitudes towards divorce have changed too often became a discussion of whether divorce is right or wrong.

Section 4

The candidates who attempted 7d were still prone to confusing multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies with the result that the question on racial harmony was often interpreted as one about religious harmony. Questions 7c and 8c were answered excellently demonstrating a solid grasp of community cohesion and sexual equality. However, when attempting 8d some candidates limited community cohesion to religious tolerance and freedom.

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