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Examiners' Report June 2010

GCSE Religious Studies 5RS13

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Hinduism

This is the first year the new specification for Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies has been assessed; it has introduced new topics and new assessment objectives. There were higher than expected entries for this new unit, which provides an interesting course based on the study of Hinduism.

Teachers and candidates should note these general points in order to improve candidate's achievement in future years:

Candidates are asked to indicate which question they have answered by crossing in a square at the top of the paper, some candidates did not do this and should be reminded to do this as part of examination preparation.

The amount of lines given is more than adequate for candidates to achieve maximum marks. If candidates write more than can be inserted into the allocated space they may be using up too much time on that particular question and could place themselves at a disadvantage later in the paper. Almost all the candidates who used extra paper had already achieved the maximum marks of that question.

Section 1

This section was attempted successfully in general and some very insightful answers were given, especially to the (b) questions. However, question 1(d) required some reflection over the implications everyone following the same Hindu teachings which were rarely considered. Candidates need to ensure that they consider the reasons why people might not have the same opinions as themselves when they study a topic. Teachers must remember the weighting of the paper for AO2 - evaluation has increased to 50% in the new specification.

Section 2

There were some thoughtful responses to 3(d) and 4(d). However, some candidates were unable to put forward three reasons why someone might disagree with them. It is important that when teaching these topics candidates consider the reasons why someone might not hold the same opinion as themselves. Only one of the six responses to a (d) question needs to refer to Hinduism. 4(c) was a new topic to this specification and was pleasingly answered well, with candidates usually able to provide four reasons why ISKCON is important for some Hindus.

Section 3

There were some very good answers to questions in this section. Candidates were obviously familiar with Hindu festivals and celebrations and some included examples from personal experience. Candidates must be careful to ensure that they fully answer the question and pay attention to the amount of marks available for each sub-question. 5(c) and 6(c) were well answered with candidates able to give reasons in a coherent manner. However, answers to 5(b) and 6(b) were less successful, candidates need to learn that development of a reason must link to the question asked and not be vague; examples are a good way to develop a reason. The (d) questions caused very few problems for candidates, most were able to give three reasons backing their view in d(i) and three reasons for an alternative view in d(ii). More able candidates used examples and quotations to support their opinion.

Section 4

The section was answered satisfactorily but not as well as the other sections possibly because candidates had written too much in the previous sections. Candidates should be taught to spend approximately 20 minutes on each section and use the remaining 10 minutes as checking time. Some problems were caused in questions 7(d) and 8(c) because candidates confused specialist words; it is very important that candidates learn the glossary definitions otherwise they may not understand the wording of some of the questions. Most candidates responded well to the new layout of the (d) question and were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in d(i).

Grade boundaries

Grade	Max. Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Raw boundary mark	80	64	54	44	35	29	23	18	13
Uniform boundary mark	100	90	80	70	60	50	40	30	20

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