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Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Religious
Studies (5RS12/01)

Unit 12: Judaism

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This unit was sat by a reasonable number of candidates who mainly achieved good results. There were some strong candidates who performed well showing high standards of knowledge, understanding and personal opinions; weaker candidates struggled with some of the key words, ideas and issues. There were several centres which entered individual candidates who performed well.

Generally, candidates were able to respond well to question b and d, giving their own developed reasons as well as taking into consideration alternative views in question d. However it is important to note in question b the candidates must state what their personal opinions and reasons are for their point of view to gain full marks. In question d candidates must give reasons to support their point of view and reasons why others may disagree with their opinion, including a reference to religion and or Judaism to gain the highest marks.

Section One: question 1 was more popular than question 2 and this may be due to confusion over the key word 'shekinah'. However, generally stronger candidates were aware of the key words and could give their meaning accurately although some specific Judaism terms were muddled and seemed more difficult for weaker candidates.

In section one some weaker candidates struggled with the term Mishnah and all candidates would benefit from having key terms clearly understood. In question 2d most candidates could give their opinions about the Shema being the most important prayer or not to gain at least two marks but some struggled with question 1d referring to the Ten Commandments but not linking them to the nature of the Almighty. Both question 1c and 2c were both done well reflecting good levels of teaching and learning.

In section two the questions were equally popular. Question 3b was done well by strong candidates but some weaker candidates were unsure of what Hasidic Judaism is all about. Question 3c and 4c were done equally well by the majority of candidates. In question 3d almost all the candidates were able to give reflective and sensitive answers as to why the Holocaust should never be forgotten. In 4d most could explain the reasons for and against whether all synagogues should have the same features.

In section three the questions were equally popular. The vast majority of candidates knew the key words but there was some confusion generally among weaker candidates about the different Jewish festivals, their meaning and importance, and some were very vague only giving generic answers but not really explaining or detailing anything specific about the festivals of Hanukkah or the importance of the celebration of Brit Milah.

In section four the questions were equally popular. In question 7b there was some confusion over the term social and community cohesion some candidates only referring to Israel rather than the UK. In question 7c some weaker candidates struggled in explaining the importance of the Noachide Laws.

Generally the paper was completed by the majority of candidates to a very high standard indicating excellent coverage of the syllabus and a good understanding of the required examination style.

