

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Paper 0490/11

Paper 1

## Question 1

- (a) (i) Many candidates were able to give two accurate responses. However, a small proportion wrote responses such as: Holy Friday (rather than Good Friday); Holy Sunday (rather than Palm Sunday). A few candidates went on to unpack the meaning / relevance of these days. This had an adverse impact on their overall performance in the examination as they often failed to complete other parts of this question.
- (ii) Most responses could identify some of the main aspects of Lent and why it is a special time of year however many failed to describe Lent as a period of reflection and self-improvement for Christians.
- (b) Many candidates answered this part of the question well, correctly identifying the main events leading up to Easter. Some candidates however did not go on to explain how these events are significant for Christians.
- (c) Most candidates answered this well. Weaker responses came from the few who failed to grasp, at least in depth, that the direct consequence of this should be action to relieve suffering. Some were unable to look at another point of view and therefore were limited. Good one sided arguments were able to achieve Level 3 and it would not have taken much of an analysis of the other side to take them into Level 4.

## Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this well. However, many candidates listed non-Christian organisations such as WHO, Unicef or Red Crescent.
- (ii) Those candidates who were unable to name Christian organisations were still able to have some credit for this question if the actions they outlined were similar or the same as Christian organisations. The weaker responses presented general comments such as: 'assistance towards self-sufficiency'.
- (b) This question elicited some weak answers, particularly in respect of *agape*. Candidates needed to understand the concept of looking to the welfare of other people. Stronger responses made good use of references to the Two Great Commandments and Jesus' own acts of compassion.
- (c) Candidates seemed to be able to access this question more successfully than 1(c) though responses tended to be polarized: very good or very weak. It is important that candidates refer to Christianity in their answers.

## Question 3

- (a) (i) Many candidates responded well to this question giving a good account of what Zakah is. There were few references though to the idea that it is usually paid at the end of Id-ul-Fitr.
- (ii) Candidates seemed to answer this question not so well. Those who knew what Zakah was used various versions of 'the poor and needy' in their answers to who should receive it for the most part completely missing, for example, travellers, collectors of Zakah or those who had recently reverted to Islam.

- (b) There were many good answers to this question from candidates who knew that the Shahadah was the first of the five pillars and a declaration of faith in one God. However a significant number of candidates struggled to explain its importance to Muslims and did not link it with practices such as reciting the Shahadah at birth and death.
- (c) Many responses to this question focused too much on listing and explaining the five pillars rather than assessing whether or not they should apply equally to men and women. Better answers explored Islamic ideas that everyone is equal under God. Some candidates presented one sided arguments which prevented them reaching the higher levels.

#### Question 4

- (a) There were some excellent responses to this question with candidates giving good accounts of Muslim beliefs about life after death which included good descriptions of heaven, hell, judgements and the involvement of angels. Some candidates mis-read the question and outlined funeral rites and after death practices rather than beliefs about life after death.
- (b) Some candidates answered part (a) here, describing life after death rather than exploring the influence of these beliefs, which could not be given credit. Better answers referred to the idea that people are free to follow or reject the teachings of Islam but they must face the consequences of their decision at the Last Judgement, so complete obedience to God's commands is an important element in a Muslim's life.
- (c) To achieve the higher levels candidates needed to grasp the idea that living this life as a good person and helping others because it is a good thing to do might be better than worrying about what might happen after we die. Again, candidates need to refer to the religion (in this question Islam) in their responses.

#### Question 5

- (a) (i) This question was answered consistently well by the majority of candidates who attempted it. The few weaker responses tended to mix up the events in the lives of Abraham and Moses.
- (ii) As with part (a)(i) candidates responded well to this question except for those few who mixed up these Patriarchs.
- (b) There were many good responses which demonstrated a sound understanding of the interaction of the covenant relationship with God with the daily life of Jews. Weaker responses, while being able to discuss the covenant relationship, were unable to make it clear how or why this covenant can be kept, such as through prayer, keeping the commandments or keeping the food laws. Very few responses explored that daily lives may be affected if one were an Orthodox or a Liberal Jew.
- (c) There were many excellent responses to this question where candidates demonstrated a sound understanding of the importance of the example to be found in the lives of Abraham and Moses. To get to the higher levels candidates needed to look at more than one side of the argument.

#### Question 6

- (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give thorough accounts of what happens when a Jewish boy becomes Bar Mitzvah; including the ceremony, the celebrations and the implications for the boy's life. It was important not to mix up Bar Mitzvah with Circumcision.
- (ii) Most candidates successfully answered this question though a few did not know the age when a Bat Mitzvah takes place.
- (b) Fewer candidates were successful in producing full answers to this question. Responses tended to focus on either the responsibilities of a Jewish adult male in either worship or in the home but not both as the question demanded.
- (c) Many candidates struggled with this question producing vague and unfocused responses. Some, for example, discussed how religion brings families together, or not, but failed to explore the extent to which Jewish celebrations or festivals can be seen to do this. Better responses wrote of how support found in worshipping can help people to follow and keep their religious principles.

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Paper 0490/12

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- (c) Most candidates answered this well. Weaker responses came from the few who failed to grasp, at least in depth, that the direct consequence of this should be action to relieve suffering. Some were unable to look at another point of view and therefore were limited. Good one sided arguments were able to achieve Level 3 and it would not have taken much of an analysis of the other side to take them into Level 4.

## Question 2

- (a) (i) Most candidates answered this well. However, many candidates listed non-Christian organisations such as WHO, Unicef or Red Crescent.
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- (b) This question elicited some weak answers, particularly in respect of *agape*. Candidates needed to understand the concept of looking to the welfare of other people. Stronger responses made good use of references to the Two Great Commandments and Jesus' own acts of compassion.
- (c) Candidates seemed to be able to access this question more successfully than 1(c) though responses tended to be polarized: very good or very weak. It is important that candidates refer to Christianity in their answers.

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- (b) There were many good answers to this question from candidates who knew that the Shahadah was the first of the five pillars and a declaration of faith in one God. However a significant number of candidates struggled to explain its importance to Muslims and did not link it with practices such as reciting the Shahadah at birth and death.
- (c) Many responses to this question focused too much on listing and explaining the five pillars rather than assessing whether or not they should apply equally to men and women. Better answers explored Islamic ideas that everyone is equal under God. Some candidates presented one sided arguments which prevented them reaching the higher levels.

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- (a) There were some excellent responses to this question with candidates giving good accounts of Muslim beliefs about life after death which included good descriptions of heaven, hell, judgements and the involvement of angels. Some candidates mis-read the question and outlined funeral rites and after death practices rather than beliefs about life after death.
- (b) Some candidates answered part (a) here, describing life after death rather than exploring the influence of these beliefs, which could not be given credit. Better answers referred to the idea that people are free to follow or reject the teachings of Islam but they must face the consequences of their decision at the Last Judgement, so complete obedience to God's commands is an important element in a Muslim's life.
- (c) To achieve the higher levels candidates needed to grasp the idea that living this life as a good person and helping others because it is a good thing to do might be better than worrying about what might happen after we die. Again, candidates need to refer to the religion (in this question Islam) in their responses.

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- (a) (i) This question was answered consistently well by the majority of candidates who attempted it. The few weaker responses tended to mix up the events in the lives of Abraham and Moses.
- (ii) As with part (a)(i) candidates responded well to this question except for those few who mixed up these Patriarchs.
- (b) There were many good responses which demonstrated a sound understanding of the interaction of the covenant relationship with God with the daily life of Jews. Weaker responses, while being able to discuss the covenant relationship, were unable to make it clear how or why this covenant can be kept, such as through prayer, keeping the commandments or keeping the food laws. Very few responses explored that daily lives may be affected if one were an Orthodox or a Liberal Jew.
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- (b) Fewer candidates were successful in producing full answers to this question. Responses tended to focus on either the responsibilities of a Jewish adult male in either worship or in the home but not both as the question demanded.
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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Paper 0490/13

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# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Paper 0490/21

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance on Paper 2 was good. Many candidates achieved a consistently good standard across all three Assessment Objectives in parts (a), (b) and (c) of questions.

In part (b) of questions, the Assessment Objective is understanding and interpretation, but there was a tendency among some candidates to give descriptions or lists only, rather than the required explanations of e.g. the importance of an issue or topic. See the comments below on **Questions 4(b)** and **5(b)**.

Some candidates gave excellent answers to parts (a) and (b) of questions showing knowledge and understanding but were weaker on the evaluation in part (c) of the questions. The most common error was that answers explored only one point of view, often expressing a one-sided opinion, well supported with argument, but achieving only Level 3 marks for a satisfactory performance. Assessment Objective C, evaluation, requires candidates to explain the arguments for one or more views in order to achieve the higher levels of marks.

The choice of religions was evenly covered by candidates. Some candidates were strongest on their first choice questions and candidates should be advised that an even performance across two religions is required in order to be successful. Some candidates were less accurate with technical terms in the second religion chosen and candidates should be advised that they must use correct technical terms in each religion.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A Christianity.*

#### Question 1

- (a) (i) Many candidates managed to achieve very highly for their knowledge of believers' baptism by immersion but others did not and they described infant baptism.
- (ii) Responses on what happens during confirmation appeared to depend upon local practice rather than on a description of confirmation as a rite of passage within the church. Many candidates did achieve highly, but a few answers confused confirmation with confession (of sins).

Some described reasons for baptism and confirmation in **1(a)** instead of in **1(b)**.

- (b) This was generally well answered as most candidates managed to focus on the importance of baptism and confirmation. Candidates showed understanding of the theology of baptism and confirmation and their role in making one part of a community. Weaker answers presented only general responses.
- (c) This evaluation question was generally well answered as most candidates provided alternative and varied opinions both in favour of public declarations of faith and discussing different arguments as to the level of their importance in Christianity. Some candidates also commented, very perceptively, on the dangers of public declarations in certain situations of persecution or strained inter-faith relationships. Many candidates argued in favour of public declarations as an effective evangelising strategy. Some candidates thought that if faith was a personal matter, it should be private and there was not enough awareness of the way in which the personal might be public. A number of candidates argued strongly against personal 'confessions' in public. Some answers did not have any religious views, hence could not achieve high levels.

## Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates managed to identify most of the Ten Commandments. A common error was to include the Two Greatest Commandments as part of the Ten.
- (b) Generally, many candidates could answer this question and explain the importance of the commandments to Christians both historically and in daily life. There were some excellent, high level responses. Some very general responses concentrated on 'being good' and 'keeping out of trouble' and were valid but did not meet the higher level descriptors.
- (c) Candidates generally argued enthusiastically on this topic and many showed an awareness that excessive strictness can be counter-productive whilst acknowledging that a system of rules should be maintained to govern behaviour and put Christian belief into practice. Arguments were based on reason and analogy, often drawing upon personal experience.

## Question 3

- (a) Candidates who understood that the question asked for a description of how a Minister or Priest leads a service of public worship, performed well. However, many candidates misunderstood the question and converted it into an answer on the general role of the priest/minister in a Christian community and only touched upon public worship briefly and so only achieved the lower levels of marks.
- (b) Some candidates answered well and showed a perceptive awareness of why private acts of worship might be important to many Christians. Other candidates produced answers which were generalized and repetitive about 'getting closer to God' but not showing any real understanding.
- (c) Answers varied in standard, some candidates answered well, others did not. Whilst many candidates argued for the benefits of church attendance, other candidates were totally unaware of the community dimension of religion and saw church as an optional (and sometimes too expensive) extra. Many thought that you could read the Bible just as well at home and be a good Christian. Some candidates were answering a slightly different question and comparing the advantages of private and public prayer. Very few candidates showed an awareness that church attendance is only one aspect of Christianity, which might be seen as necessary but which should also be combined with other important aspects of putting belief into practice.

## Section B Islam.

### Question 4

- (a) Generally, candidates managed adequately to describe how Muslims pray in a mosque. Many were able to use technical terms correctly and describe the sequence of prayer. There were some excellent, full mark answers but there was also a general trend to miss out one or two of the important details. A few candidates missed the point of the question and explained why Muslims attend the mosque rather than describing how they perform prayer.
- (b) This question was not well done by most of the candidates as they focused on describing the different roles of the Imam rather than explaining the significance of his work in the community.
- (c) Most candidates, at all levels of ability, explored the different sides of this issue. Many answers compared the need for a direct relationship with God in order to obey his commands and the importance of a relationship with the ummah/community as part of that obedience. Candidates also showed an awareness of the need to learn about Islam from the wisdom of others.

### Question 5

- (a) Many candidates found it hard to identify a Muslim aid organisation. There were largely general responses on this question which showed basic knowledge about helping the poor and homeless. Very few candidates had any specific knowledge of one aid organisation run by the Muslim community and its specific projects.



- (b) This question was well done in most cases as candidates focused on the religious implications of charity work in Islam and answers generally showed an understanding of the principles and the teachings that inspire it.
- (c) This was reasonably well answered and most candidates offered a number of arguments and analysis of the issues concerning the fairness of compulsory giving according to one's means (Zakah) and the necessity for voluntary charitable giving (Sadaqah).

#### Question 6

- (a) To answer this question it was important not to confuse the Hijrah with Cave Hira and the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet or with Hajj. This was a clear instance of a large number of candidates being unfamiliar with the technical terms in the Syllabus.
- (b) The performance on this question was much better than on **6(a)**. There were many very good and excellent answers on the nature of Muhammad's (pbuh) prophet-hood.
- (c) Good answers explored more than one point of view and maintained the focus on Islam, to argue the relative merit in knowing the history of the development of Islam and its relationship to belief and practice. Candidates mostly kept to the point of the question, achieving marks mainly in level three or four.

#### Section C Judaism.

#### Question 7

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the Western Wall of the Temple in Jerusalem and Yad Vashem as two places of historical significance. Some candidates answered with Egypt, the Red Sea and Bethlehem, or places of Christian significance. Some candidates, who identified the places correctly, did not describe them but explained at length what might happen on a visit there. Some candidates did give a full description of the places and gained the higher levels of marks for their response but a large number of candidates achieved Level 1 or Level 2 marks.
- (b) On the whole, the performance was better on this question than on **7(a)**. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the need felt by believers to remember the sufferings of their ancestors and the more recent history of Judaism in order to be grateful for the continued existence of their religion. A number of answers were excellent.
- (c) Generally a good performance, candidates usually expanded upon their answer to **(b)** to provide arguments for and against the statement. A few answers, which were otherwise very good arguments about the importance of the past and the future to human beings, needed to refer to Judaism.

#### Question 8

- (a) This was well answered by candidates who had studied the festival in detail. Other candidates did not recognise Shavuot and usually described Passover.
- (b) Candidates with a good knowledge of Shavuot also demonstrated a good understanding of the importance of the festival and its meaning as both a harvest festival and a celebration of the giving of the Torah, especially the Ten Commandments.
- (c) This question could be answered without specific knowledge of Shavuot and so candidates who were unsure for **(a)** and **(b)** could still make a satisfactory attempt to respond and they did so. Other candidates achieved a consistently high standard across all three parts of **Question 8**.

#### Question 9

- (a) There were some very good, detailed answers to this question showing knowledge of the artefacts, practices and rituals carried out in a Jewish home. For some other candidates, their knowledge (across the two questions chosen) appeared very limited.

- (b) There were some good answers on the importance of family life in Judaism, in terms of practising the laws and rituals, the roles of family members and the teaching and nurturing of children. Only a few candidates showed understanding of the importance in traditional Judaism of birth to a Jewish mother or marriage to another Jew. Some candidates answered about families in a very general way without specific reference to Judaism and so limited their achievement.
- (c) Some candidates interpreted this as a question about an individual's preference for private or public worship. Even candidates, with a satisfactory achievement in part (a) and (b) of this question appeared to misunderstand the traditional roles of both family worship and synagogue worship in Judaism. Many answers were general and vague and about being able to concentrate better in one place than another, or being 'closer to God'.

Only a few candidates showed an awareness that, for Jews, both the rituals in the home and the rituals in the synagogue, are indispensable to a correct observance of their faith and that home and synagogue worship is often interlinked, as at festivals.

#### Other comments

There were a number of rubric errors where candidates answered two questions from all three sections of the paper.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Paper 0490/22

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance on Paper 2 was good. Many candidates achieved a consistently good standard across all three Assessment Objectives in parts (a), (b) and (c) of questions.

In part (b) of questions, the Assessment Objective is understanding and interpretation, but there was a tendency among some candidates to give descriptions or lists only, rather than the required explanations of e.g. the importance of an issue or topic. See the comments below on **Questions 4(b)** and **5(b)**.

Some candidates gave excellent answers to parts (a) and (b) of questions showing knowledge and understanding but were weaker on the evaluation in part (c) of the questions. The most common error was that answers explored only one point of view, often expressing a one-sided opinion, well supported with argument, but achieving only Level 3 marks for a satisfactory performance. Assessment Objective C, evaluation, requires candidates to explain the arguments for one or more views in order to achieve the higher levels of marks.

The choice of religions was evenly covered by candidates. Some candidates were strongest on their first choice questions and candidates should be advised that an even performance across two religions is required in order to be successful. Some candidates were less accurate with technical terms in the second religion chosen and candidates should be advised that they must use correct technical terms in each religion.

## Comments on Specific Questions

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#### **Question 1**

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- (b) This was generally well answered as most candidates managed to focus on the importance of baptism and confirmation. Candidates showed understanding of the theology of baptism and confirmation and their role in making one part of a community. Weaker answers presented only general responses.
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### Section B Islam.

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- (b) The performance on this question was much better than on **6(a)**. There were many very good and excellent answers on the nature of Muhammad's (pbuh) prophet-hood.
- (c) Good answers explored more than one point of view and maintained the focus on Islam, to argue the relative merit in knowing the history of the development of Islam and its relationship to belief and practice. Candidates mostly kept to the point of the question, achieving marks mainly in level three or four.

#### Section C Judaism.

#### Question 7

- (a) The majority of candidates identified the Western Wall of the Temple in Jerusalem and Yad Vashem as two places of historical significance. Some candidates answered with Egypt, the Red Sea and Bethlehem, or places of Christian significance. Some candidates, who identified the places correctly, did not describe them but explained at length what might happen on a visit there. Some candidates did give a full description of the places and gained the higher levels of marks for their response but a large number of candidates achieved Level 1 or Level 2 marks.
- (b) On the whole, the performance was better on this question than on **7(a)**. Many candidates showed a good understanding of the need felt by believers to remember the sufferings of their ancestors and the more recent history of Judaism in order to be grateful for the continued existence of their religion. A number of answers were excellent.
- (c) Generally a good performance, candidates usually expanded upon their answer to (b) to provide arguments for and against the statement. A few answers, which were otherwise very good arguments about the importance of the past and the future to human beings, needed to refer to Judaism.

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- (a) This was well answered by candidates who had studied the festival in detail. Other candidates did not recognise Shavuot and usually described Passover.
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- (a) There were some very good, detailed answers to this question showing knowledge of the artefacts, practices and rituals carried out in a Jewish home. For some other candidates, their knowledge (across the two questions chosen) appeared very limited.

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#### Other comments

There were a number of rubric errors where candidates answered two questions from all three sections of the paper.

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Paper 0490/23

Paper 2

## General Comments

The overall performance on Paper 2 was good. Many candidates achieved a consistently good standard across all three Assessment Objectives in parts (a), (b) and (c) of questions.

In part (b) of questions, the Assessment Objective is understanding and interpretation, but there was a tendency among some candidates to give descriptions or lists only, rather than the required explanations of e.g. the importance of an issue or topic. See the comments below on **Questions 4(b)** and **5(b)**.

Some candidates gave excellent answers to parts (a) and (b) of questions showing knowledge and understanding but were weaker on the evaluation in part (c) of the questions. The most common error was that answers explored only one point of view, often expressing a one-sided opinion, well supported with argument, but achieving only Level 3 marks for a satisfactory performance. Assessment Objective C, evaluation, requires candidates to explain the arguments for one or more views in order to achieve the higher levels of marks.

The choice of religions was evenly covered by candidates. Some candidates were strongest on their first choice questions and candidates should be advised that an even performance across two religions is required in order to be successful. Some candidates were less accurate with technical terms in the second religion chosen and candidates should be advised that they must use correct technical terms in each religion.

## Comments on Specific Questions

### *Section A Christianity.*

#### **Question 1**

- (a) (i) Many candidates managed to achieve very highly for their knowledge of believers' baptism by immersion but others did not and they described infant baptism.
- (ii) Responses on what happens during confirmation appeared to depend upon local practice rather than on a description of confirmation as a rite of passage within the church. Many candidates did achieve highly, but a few answers confused confirmation with confession (of sins).

Some described reasons for baptism and confirmation in **1(a)** instead of in **1(b)**.

- (b) This was generally well answered as most candidates managed to focus on the importance of baptism and confirmation. Candidates showed understanding of the theology of baptism and confirmation and their role in making one part of a community. Weaker answers presented only general responses.
- (c) This evaluation question was generally well answered as most candidates provided alternative and varied opinions both in favour of public declarations of faith and discussing different arguments as to the level of their importance in Christianity. Some candidates also commented, very perceptively, on the dangers of public declarations in certain situations of persecution or strained inter-faith relationships. Many candidates argued in favour of public declarations as an effective evangelising strategy. Some candidates thought that if faith was a personal matter, it should be private and there was not enough awareness of the way in which the personal might be public. A number of candidates argued strongly against personal 'confessions' in public. Some answers did not have any religious views, hence could not achieve high levels.

### Question 2

- (a) The majority of candidates managed to identify most of the Ten Commandments. A common error was to include the Two Greatest Commandments as part of the Ten.
- (b) Generally, many candidates could answer this question and explain the importance of the commandments to Christians both historically and in daily life. There were some excellent, high level responses. Some very general responses concentrated on 'being good' and 'keeping out of trouble' and were valid but did not meet the higher level descriptors.
- (c) Candidates generally argued enthusiastically on this topic and many showed an awareness that excessive strictness can be counter-productive whilst acknowledging that a system of rules should be maintained to govern behaviour and put Christian belief into practice. Arguments were based on reason and analogy, often drawing upon personal experience.

### Question 3

- (a) Candidates who understood that the question asked for a description of how a Minister or Priest leads a service of public worship, performed well. However, many candidates misunderstood the question and converted it into an answer on the general role of the priest/minister in a Christian community and only touched upon public worship briefly and so only achieved the lower levels of marks.
- (b) Some candidates answered well and showed a perceptive awareness of why private acts of worship might be important to many Christians. Other candidates produced answers which were generalized and repetitive about 'getting closer to God' but not showing any real understanding.
- (c) Answers varied in standard, some candidates answered well, others did not. Whilst many candidates argued for the benefits of church attendance, other candidates were totally unaware of the community dimension of religion and saw church as an optional (and sometimes too expensive) extra. Many thought that you could read the Bible just as well at home and be a good Christian. Some candidates were answering a slightly different question and comparing the advantages of private and public prayer. Very few candidates showed an awareness that church attendance is only one aspect of Christianity, which might be seen as necessary but which should also be combined with other important aspects of putting belief into practice.

### Section B Islam.

### Question 4

- (a) Generally, candidates managed adequately to describe how Muslims pray in a mosque. Many were able to use technical terms correctly and describe the sequence of prayer. There were some excellent, full mark answers but there was also a general trend to miss out one or two of the important details. A few candidates missed the point of the question and explained why Muslims attend the mosque rather than describing how they perform prayer.
- (b) This question was not well done by most of the candidates as they focused on describing the different roles of the Imam rather than explaining the significance of his work in the community.
- (c) Most candidates, at all levels of ability, explored the different sides of this issue. Many answers compared the need for a direct relationship with God in order to obey his commands and the importance of a relationship with the ummah/community as part of that obedience. Candidates also showed an awareness of the need to learn about Islam from the wisdom of others.

### Question 5

- (a) Many candidates found it hard to identify a Muslim aid organisation. There were largely general responses on this question which showed basic knowledge about helping the poor and homeless. Very few candidates had any specific knowledge of one aid organisation run by the Muslim community and its specific projects.



- (b) This question was well done in most cases as candidates focused on the religious implications of charity work in Islam and answers generally showed an understanding of the principles and the teachings that inspire it.
- (c) This was reasonably well answered and most candidates offered a number of arguments and analysis of the issues concerning the fairness of compulsory giving according to one's means (Zakah) and the necessity for voluntary charitable giving (Sadaqah).

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