GCSE EXAMINER'S REPORT

GCSE (LEGACY)

RELIGIOUS STUDIES SPECIFICATION A: Roman Catholicism 2

SUMMER 2018
Grade boundary information for this subject is available on the WJEC public website at: https://www.wjecservices.co.uk/MarkToUMS/default.aspx?l=en

Online Results Analysis

WJEC provides information to examination centres via the WJEC secure website. This is restricted to centre staff only. Access is granted to centre staff by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

Annual Statistical Report

The annual Statistical Report (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

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General Comments

The paper was accessible to most candidates and a range of marks was evident. I saw some excellent scripts with full or almost full marks. Questions that proved to be more difficult for some candidates were 1(b), 1(d), 2(b), 2(d) and 2(e). There was some confusion in question 1(b) where candidates referred to how faith is shown during times of suffering rather than why it should lead to a response to suffering. Many candidates struggled to answer the evaluation question 2(d) concerning ecumenism and a number of candidates left gaps. Regarding evaluation questions, the use of certain mnemonics for evaluation skills continue to be unhelpful to candidates whose answers tended to be stilted as a result of feeling the need to stick to a formula. Those candidates that focused on extended reasoning of fewer points did better than those who tried to cover brief points in favour and brief points against. Particularly unhelpful is advice given to candidates to repeat earlier information in the conclusion. Candidates appeared to take extra care with SPAG and the majority scored above 3. In fact, the majority of candidates scored between 4 and 5. Centres can be congratulated on their encouragement to students in their use of subject specific terminology.

Question 1

(a) This question was very well answered on the whole with many candidates being able to refer to key terms such as omnipotence, omnibenevolence, God as Creator and the Holy Trinity.

(b) Candidates who understood the question answered this well. However, misunderstanding led to candidates writing about ways in which faith could be shown rather than why having faith should lead to a personal response to suffering.

(c) Very well answered on the whole with the majority of candidates being able to refer to moral evil, natural evil and metaphysical evil with examples.

(d) There was a variety of approaches to this evaluation. Candidates made good links to the Biblical stories in creation. The focus of many answers was the existence of the Devil and good answers developed reasoning further basing it on theological understanding of the Bible as the authoritative word of God. The majority of candidates were successful in giving two distinct reasons and developing them.

(e) There were some excellent answers which included a range of theological teaching about the inconsistent triad of statements regarding God and the existence of evil and suffering. Others referred to natural disasters and mankind’s powerlessness to effect change. Most candidates referred to the use of free-will which could either effect change or make it impossible to change anything.
Question 2

(a) This was answered very well on the whole with candidates being able to refer to ways in which respect can be shown. They were also able to refer to the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Many candidates referred to practical ways but also referred to sexual morality as a means of showing respect.

(b) Many candidates struggled with this question. Most references were regarding challenges caused by racial tensions and interfaith marriage. On the whole answers tended to be weak.

(c) This was answered quite well on the whole. Most candidates were able to refer to acts of charity or following Biblical teaching to ‘love one another’. Some candidates made good links between faith and practice. Others made good links to aspects of the course which involve support for Fair Trade etc..

(d) Candidates found this question very difficult indeed. Many candidates left gaps. There were however some that included reference to communities such as Iona and Taize that promoted ecumenism. On the whole though, this question proved to be very difficult.

(e) This question proved difficult for those candidates who did not know what vocation is. Answers on the whole tended to be weak with few candidates focusing on the ‘calling’ form God as being part of one’s individual purpose. Although I did witness some very good scriptural references in particular Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 1:5

Question 3

(a) This was answered fairly well with many candidates being able to refer to the teachings of Jesus about ‘loving one’s enemies’, ‘turning the other cheek’, ‘blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God’.

(b) Very well answered on the whole with candidates being able to cite the conditions for a war to be seen as ‘just’.

(c) Answered very well on the whole with candidates being able to refer to the aims of punishment within the general context of Catholic teaching. In particular the notion of forgiveness was referred to and the chance to reform. Some candidates made links between punishment and penance and reform with repentance. Some good candidates linked the responsibility of Catholics to pray for those who had sinned so that they would be converted.

(d) Answers tended to rather vague and general on the whole. Candidates did, however, link the notion of peace with love.

(e) I saw some excellent answers which drew on knowledge and understanding about Christian arguments in favour of and against Capital punishment. Many candidates were able to use good key terms relating to the aims of punishment in their answers. Good answers linked the notion of the sanctity of life with capital punishment.
Question 4

(a) Most candidates knew the key term and were able to refer to the notion of conscience being God’s ‘voice’ to enable a person to make decisions between right and wrong. Some candidates were able to state how conscience is informed through the Bible or Church teaching.

(b) The majority of candidates referred to either the teleological argument or the cosmological argument. Some candidates misunderstood the question and wrote about arguing against the existence of God.

(c) Candidates were able to refer to the importance of the Pope as the Head of the Church. A few candidates were able to use in their answers, the titles given to the Pope to explain the different roles that the Pope has.

(d) It was rather disappointing not to witness more answers with full marks here. Many candidates lost marks because answers which contended the statement tended to be rather weak and very general.

(e) Most candidates made a good effort to evaluate the statement. The focus for many was on the lack of relevance of the Bible to the moral issues of the twenty-first century. Some good answers linked the arguments to the support from the Magisterium where the Bible was unclear.