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Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of 'REconnect'. Previous editions have proved very popular with centres and we hope this will be just as useful. Our magazine aims to provide suggestions for teaching the reformed specifications and key information relating to our WJEC/Eduqas Religious Studies qualifications. If you haven't already done so, visit our resources site to see our free teaching resources: www.eduqas.co.uk/Resources

We hope you find the information contained in the articles useful and that they serve to engage your learners and support your preparation for these courses. Many thanks go to those who contributed their ideas to this edition. If you would like to contribute to the magazine with an article, or share a few top teaching tips, please get in touch via e-mail.

We look forward to working with you in the months ahead.

Best wishes

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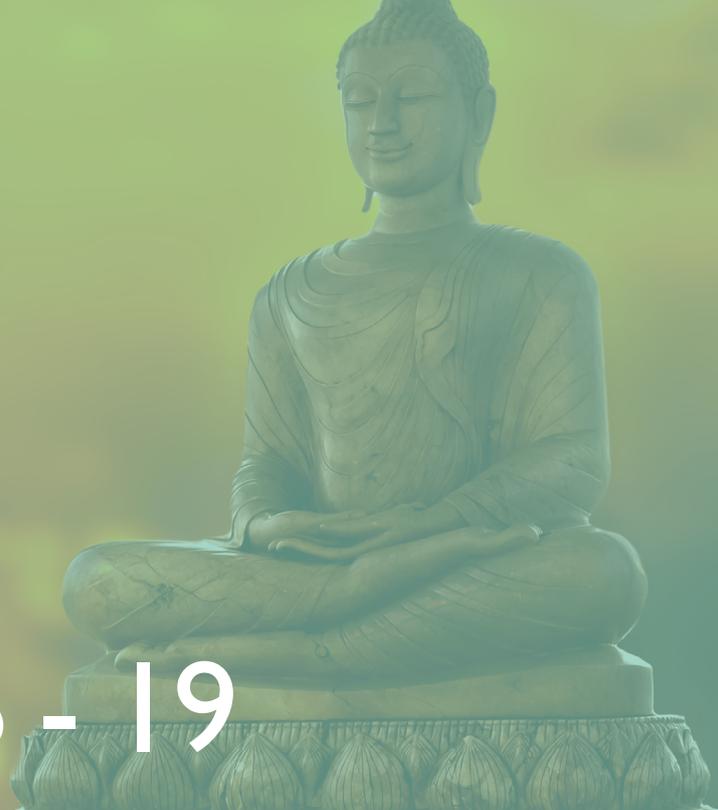
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Flipped Learning in the RE Classroom

Clare Lloyd

Sometimes, it feels like a race against time to cover a course before examination. I have seen a range of approaches to this problem:

- GCSE RS becomes a three-year course
- A Level teaching seeps into the Christmas and Easter holidays through full study days
- Saturday classes, twilight classes, lunchtime groups are provided
- Holiday workbooks are given to students so that they can learn chunks of the course by themselves

There is something rather unsatisfactory to me about these kinds of approaches where precious rest time is lost for both teacher and student. So, is there a better way?

The flipped learning approach can be a way forward that takes pressure off both teacher and student and allows time for everyone to consider AO2 material in more depth. When I started my YouTube channel, this was my goal with my students. What I learned was that this approach must be well structured if it is to succeed.

The premise of flipped learning is that the easiest part of learning material (presenting facts) is done outside of the lesson, whilst the more challenging skills such as analysis and evaluation are covered in lesson time with teacher support.

Three effective structural developments that I used were:

1. **A YouTube channel / A Virtual learning environment / TES blendspace lesson.** This is an agreed place where I would upload all the content that the learners need to cover outside of the lesson through films, worksheets, online resources or PowerPoints that they should work through.



2. This method worked well when I had a full set of films to use on my channel, but films are not the only way to flip! Students can read relevant chapters of a text book, research ideas online, read departmental notes or watch a lecture by a scholar. With VLE's or sites like TES blendspace you can upload any content as separate lessons that can be clearly labelled and ordered for students.

3. At the start of a section of work I provided a calendar of events and a copy of that part of the specification. The calendar included:

- A list of the date and content of each lesson for this section of the course
- A list of tasks and deadlines to be completed by the student
- How to get help: My contact details (Work email, department extension) and workshop times

So, my students knew lesson one might be an introduction to Situation Ethics and the difference between antinomian, legalistic and middle way approaches. In advance of this lesson they were expected to watch the relevant 10-minute YouTube video from my channel. (The calendar could have a QR code or similar so that they have a direct link).

4. Online register / Entry Tickets / Split-page note taking method. This is a way of checking that the work has been completed prior to the lesson so that the lesson itself can be meaningful to the student.

- Some VLEs can link different types of content in a lesson and then mark a register for you when a student completes a task.
- Alternatively, students arrive at your lesson with an entry ticket that lists three things they learned, two things they want to know more about and one question they have. The entry tickets become the lesson plan: They are put in a hat, drawn out at random by students who either answer, confer with others and answer, or give to the teacher for help. We complete this process in a circle together as a class. The questions can be AO1 where content needs clarifying or AO2 for analysis and evaluation.
- Split-page note taking could be used for tasks where students take notes from your resource on the left of their page, but on the right, they note down questions where they are confused, or have a point of evaluation to make. They bring these points to the lesson and can add to them during class discussion.

The important part is that AO1 content is learned outside of the room, leaving time for you to do clarification, analysis and evaluation in the room. Larger quantities of material can be covered in a lesson, there is no need for students to listen to us teach material they can understand independently, and lessons are differentiated according to the questions that students bring.

Clare Lloyd is a teacher of Philosophy, Ethics and Religious Studies with 19-years' experience. She is a CPD presenter and has also spent many years as an examiner of AS, A-level and GCSE.

Clare produces resources for teachers and students from her online business, 'Philosophy Ninja' and is the author of three revision guides for the 'My Revision Notes' series with Hodder.



Virtue Theory (AS/A-level)

Mark Lambe

Greek philosopher, Aristotle (384–322 BCE) developed what we now call ‘Virtue Theory’. Aristotle reasoned out a set of virtues (or human characteristics) that would help a moral agent to be a successful member of their community. Aristotle believed this would bring them happiness (‘eudaimonia’). He argued that eudaimonia was the main aim of every member of a community. Aristotle studied those around him, particularly studying members of society he thought had achieved eudaimonia (happiness from being a successful member of a community). From these studies, Aristotle developed what he believed were the essential virtues that would enable a person to achieve eudaimonia.

There were two types of virtues, moral virtues (12) and Intellectual virtues (9). We are just concentrating on the moral virtues here. Aristotle believed that these 12 moral virtues could be developed only through habit/practice. One of the 12 moral virtues is below:

Excess of the moral virtue (vice)	Moral Virtue	Deficiency of the moral virtue (vice)
Buffoonery	Wittiness	Boorishness

The moral virtue is in the middle column: in this case ‘wittiness’. However, you will notice that the moral virtue has the excess of the virtue (on the left) and the deficiency of the virtue (on the right). These are the vices (i.e. the wrong way to try and achieve the moral virtue). Aristotle does this so that not only does he tell you what the good moral virtues are, but he also tries to explain how to achieve them.

He does this with what is known as the ‘doctrine of the mean’ or the ideal ‘middle way’. According to Aristotle we all have the potential to develop the 12 moral virtues. The way we



do this is to ensure that we avoid the excess and the deficiency of the virtue (the two vices), so that we achieve the 'mean' or middle way point. He argued that achieving the moral virtues was a matter of balancing between the two extremes. Aristotle argued this takes practice until it becomes habit. If through practice we can all take the mean (middle way) with all 12 moral virtues, this would help us to achieve our aim of happiness by being a successful member within our community (eudaimonia). He was keen however to stress that in order to do this you needed to live in a society in which these virtues were allowed to flourish. He also stated that true or 'perfect' friendship allowed the virtues to flourish.

Taking the example of the virtue of 'wittiness'. The way to achieve this moral virtue is to avoid the two extremes (buffoonery and boorishness). Someone who is boorish is boring and therefore they will not achieve eudaimonia. On the other extreme, a buffoon quickly becomes irritating and so this will also not achieve eudaimonia. Therefore, the way to develop the virtue of wittiness is to take the mean (middle way) between the two extremes of boorishness and buffoonery.

Aristotle also believed that underpinning all the moral virtues is phronesis (practical wisdom). Phronesis helps people to decide what the best course of action is. It helps us balance our interests with the interests of others. He believed that phronesis is acquired as we age and become more autonomous. As Aristotle stated: "the virtuous person has practical wisdom, the ability to know when and how best to apply the virtues."

Mark Lambe is an experienced Religious Studies course leader and examiner, who now writes revision guides for both GCSE and A-level RS and offers centre visits to give guidance on all aspects of the course content, along with question/essay structure and revision sessions for both teachers and students across England and Wales.



Is religious language best understood as part of a language game?

Briony Knibbs

The Logical Positivists claim that religious language is unverifiable and unfalsifiable and therefore meaningless. However, when viewed as part of a specific language game, it can be considered to be meaningful to those who understand the rules of that particular game. Is this however the best approach?

A.J. Ayer (influenced by David Hume) introduced the Verification Principle to test the meaning of statements. Any statement that cannot be verified analytically (using logic) or synthetically (using sense experience) is deemed meaningless. This means religious language and statements such as 'Our Father who art in heaven' have no meaning. Ayer believes all language should be subject to the same rigorous testing, and as religious language does not pass this test, it could be seen as inferior to other forms of language.

Antony Flew agreed that religious language is meaningless for the reason that nothing can ever counter a statement. He feels believers go on believing in concepts such as God or an afterlife regardless of mounting evidence to the contrary (unanswered prayers or good people suffering perhaps), so they will allow nothing to counter their belief. Therefore, their statements are unfalsifiable and completely different to meaningful, scientific statements and must be considered meaningless. Is it fair to view religious language in this way?

A third option comes from Ludwig Wittgenstein. He argued that any language that is used as part of a language game is meaningful to the participants of that game. If I do not understand the rules of rugby or know what a try or a conversion is, it doesn't mean these terms have no meaning, as there are people who use and understand these terms in a meaningful way. If we apply this



logic to religion, we see that believers who participate in a language game can use and understand the language of religion successfully. It is unfair therefore for an outsider such as Ayer to come along and call it meaningless. If we consider a phrase such as 'Jesus saves', this is meaningful to Christians and the word 'saves' means something completely different to when it is used in other contexts such as 'the goalkeeper saves'. The second phrase is meaningful to a football supporter and may be completely meaningless to someone who doesn't know what a goalkeeper is. In the same way, 'Jesus saves', may make no sense to a Sikh who is not familiar with the central tenets of Christianity, but it is up to those inside each tradition to decide what does and doesn't have meaning. Wittgenstein called each tradition or group a 'form of life', so Christianity, Sikhism and football or rugby would all be examples of different 'forms of life' that one may be part of. Wittgenstein famously said - when asked what a word meant, - 'Don't ask for the meaning, ask for the use'¹, which demonstrates that meaning can only be judged by those who understand the purpose of a term and how it is intended to be used. He emphasised this in his writing stating, 'The meaning of a word is its use in the language.'²

Wittgenstein's approach treats religious language as non-cognitive. It understands that language does more than simply express things that can be judged to be 'true' or 'false'. The fact that 'Jesus saves' cannot be verified or falsified is of little concern to believers, the statement holds much meaning and does more than state a fact. It can express emotion or prompt devotion. Wittgenstein says, 'Religious people ... don't refer to a verification, but have entirely different ideas.'³ Wittgenstein is also taking an anti-realist stance and not expecting religious statements to relate to an objective reality in the external world. The concept of Jesus as saviour is very much real to religious believers and this is all that matters. It coheres (fits) with their accepted worldview. He states, 'A religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it's *belief*, it's really a way of living, or a way of assessing life'.⁴

This approach is therefore advantageous as it can help avoid religious language being labelled nonsensical by outsiders. New Atheists such as Richard Dawkins could easily make a claim that religion should no longer be taken seriously due to its claims being meaningless gibberish (using a Logical Positivist approach). However, Wittgenstein's approach highlights that the language of religion is no more meaningless than the language of Atheism, when both are considered as part of each relevant form of life. Wittgenstein is not arguing for special treatment for religion, then, but simply for all language to be viewed in the same way and not written off by those who do not understand it.

Other approaches sometimes argue that religious language should be understood in a different way to other language, for example as myth, symbol or analogy. Whilst these approaches have their merits and can be said to solve the problems of religious language, they argue for religious language to be treated differently to other language and this can anger New Atheists or Humanists as they do not see why religion deserves to be bracketed as immune from criticism. This is not something that Wittgenstein or his supporters are arguing for and this can be seen as a benefit of viewing it as part of a language game.

Finally, one interesting point to note whilst discussing this approach is that Wittgenstein never used the term 'form of life' with reference to religion.⁵ It was in fact later scholars who championed the use of Wittgenstein's ideas in this way, with Norman Malcolm stating, 'Religion is a form of life; it is language

1 Clack, Brian *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) p16

2 Wittgenstein, Ludwig *Philosophical Investigations* quoted in Clack p16

3 Wittgenstein *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology & Religious Belief* (ed. by Cyril Barrett, Oxford, Blackwell, 1970) p70

4 Wittgenstein *Culture and Value* (ed. by G.H. Von Wright, trans. By Peter Winch, Oxford, Blackwell, 1980) p64

5 According to Clack *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Religion* p87



embedded in action – what Wittgenstein calls a “language game.”⁶ However, I shall leave you to decide whether you agree with them as to if it is the best approach to the problematic nature of religious language.

Briony Knibbs is Curriculum Leader for A Level Religious Studies at Gower College in Swansea. She is also an experienced examiner and is currently completing an MA in Religion and Philosophy: Eastern & Western Thought

Helpful key term definitions:

Useful terminology

Analytic statement – something that is true by definition as the predicate is contained in the subject.

Anti-realist – a philosophical position that something is true if it fits with the views of the community.

Falsification Principle – Flew’s device for assessing meaning by establishing whether there are any grounds that would make a statement false.

Form of life – the activity that language belongs to and is specific to.

Humanist – someone who trusts the scientific method as the best way of understanding the universe.

Language game – the idea that the meaning of language can only be understood if the rules of its particular context are understood (Wittgenstein).

Logical Positivism – the view attributed to the Vienna Circle that the scientific method is the best way of discovering the meaning of language, also popularised by A.J. Ayer.

New Atheist - a member of the early 21st century movement that sees religion as a threat to the survival of the human race.

Non-cognitive – the view that language does not express propositions which can be discovered to be ‘true’ or ‘false’.

Synthetic statement – something that must be checked for truth using the senses as the predicate is not contained in the subject.

Verification principle – Ayer’s device to assess meaning by looking at whether a statement can be verified analytically or synthetically.

6 Malcolm, Norman ‘The Groundlessness of Belief’ in 1972 quoted in Clack *An Introduction to Wittgenstein’s Philosophy of Religion* p87



Duck. Bullet. Vet. – Good AO2 Responses

Gregory A. Barker

Help students to 'see' what they can accomplish with the part (b) A level questions -says Greg Barker.

Once upon a time there was a duck merrily flying merrily along through the skies. The duck was minding its own business - on a trajectory, altitude and speed that was both comfortable and predictable.

And then, something terrible happened! A hunter was waiting patiently in the marsh below. When our duck passed over, he raised her gun and fired! Our duck was struck by the bullet and plummeted to the earth.

Our tale does not end here. As fortune would have it, there was a vet in a nearby field. This vet just happened to be an anti-hunting campaigner. She heard the shot and ran over to the scene. Before the hunter's dog reached the duck, the vet snatched up the duck - whose heart was still beating – and rushed back to her surgery. She quickly donned surgical gloves and went to work.

And on this note, our story abruptly ends! What happened to the duck you ask? Was the vet able to save the duck – or did the duck die? All I can tell you is that the vet was skilled and applied all her abilities to revive the duck.

(I wish to thank Kate Blackie at Bablake School for sharing this story – and the idea - with me!)

Visualising an AO2 Response

There are some fine writing frames that teachers are using with their students for AO2 question responses. These often come in the form of acronyms such as PEEL (Point, Explain, Evaluate and Link back to the question) or my new favourite: ABCD (Answer it, Back it up, Challenge it and Decide). The

idea is that an excellent response will explore not one but several issues for one question in this way.

These frames encourage students to not merely describe, but to do the work of evaluation, which involves weighing up strengths and weaknesses of the points and arguments presented. Of course, many students need no such 'frame' – they intuitively grasp the challenge of evaluation and are raring to go!

However, many of us are visual learners at heart. The phrase 'a picture is worth a thousand words' is so commonly used because images help us remember and recall points effectively and efficiently. So, consider telling this story to help your students visualise the evaluative task:

1. There's a duck! This is one of your points, issues or arguments that you are advancing in response to an evaluative question. What type of duck is this? What is its destination? What is its altitude? The answer to these questions is they are descriptive – we need to demonstrate that we understand the points that we are making, knowing their context and background.
2. Let's say that a question asks the student to evaluate the views of symbolic language as a meaningful form of communication. The first paragraph of a response would present a duck that is merrily flying along: perhaps Tillich's view that scientific forms of language cannot express much of what we experience in life. This 'duck' is described with a paraphrase of Tillich's teaching, or perhaps a quote. An example might be given of a symbol that expresses 'ultimate concern'. From all this we know that the student really understands quite a bit about this duck.
3. There's a bullet! Oh no! That duck is getting shot out of the sky! This is a challenge to the point that has just been made. This challenge is nothing less than an assault on the duck. What is the calibre of this bullet? What metal is it made of? What is its trajectory? Students will show that they are well versed on the background of that challenge. This challenge is effective because it 'collides' directly with our point, just as the bullet has hit the duck. Now the duck is plummeting to the ground!
4. Back to our example of Tillich. Tillich's point, like the duck, has been flying merrily along: for, Tillich believes that only symbols can adequately convey our deepest concerns. However, A. J. Ayer is hiding down in the marshes! Ayer raises his gun and shoots – his bullet is the insistence on analytic and synthetic statements as the only meaningful forms of language – and this hits the duck! Tillich has only used vague and imprecise language to build points that cannot be properly assessed! Now the duck is plummeting to the ground!
5. The vet gets to work! Everything until now has been at the descriptive level – students have shown an awareness of focused points that can be related to the question and have been able to describe arguments. However now comes the evaluative work of determining the outcome of our story. Is the vet able to revive the duck? Has the challenge been successful in 'killing' our point? Or, does the point survive? The dramatic conclusion to the story may be different in EVERY single paragraph of an AO2 response. This means that the student reaches their own 'mini-conclusion' as to the 'survival' of each point they've made.

Back to our drama: Tillich is now bleeding and in the vet's surgery. Can his point be revived after colliding with Ayer's bullet? Perhaps Tillich's view on the ubiquity of human symbols or the fact that existential searching that cannot be stopped even by the progress of the empirical sciences will be enough to revive the duck? Perhaps it won't? Only the student knows....

The Heart of the Evaluative Task

This visualisation of **Duck. Bullet. Vet.** points to qualities examiners are looking for in an effective evaluative response. Many students are able to make relevant points and describe challenges. Whilst those abilities are relevant to the response of an evaluative question, they only take the student part of the way there.

It is the drama of whether or not the point can be 'saved' or 'revived' after meeting the challenge that determines whether or not the student has exercised evaluative abilities. Here's another way to say this: has the student conveyed a sense of which is stronger – the duck or the bullet? The point or the challenge? Have they weighed things up, coming to a mini-conclusion?

A strong evaluative response does not leave all of the drama to the end of the response! A strong response presents a few different ducks, each merrily flying along, each hit by a different bullet! There are several vets at work, some of them successful and some of them not. Admittedly this is a somewhat violent metaphor! However, no one said that academic exploration was a peaceful enterprise.

Gregory A. Barker is a Fellow at the University of Winchester and leads revision events and CPDs at schools and colleges across the country.

Digital Resources for A Level RS



Component 1E Hinduism Scheme of Learning

<https://bit.ly/2FFj1Ti>



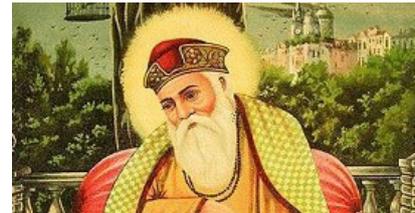
Component 1A Christianity (A level Yr 2)

<https://bit.ly/2Pyzrkx>



Component 1C: Judaism

<https://bit.ly/2AHWXIz>



Component 1 Sikhism (Yr 2) - supporting AO2 resources

<https://bit.ly/2IEol3Y>



Component 3 (A level) aspects of Themes 1,2 and 4 : Religion and Ethics

<https://bit.ly/2lbdpQx>



Component 1 (A Level) Islam (Yr 2) – AO2 supporting resources

<https://bit.ly/2K7wFiM>



Eduqas Component 1 A Study of Religion - Option B : A Study of Islam (A level Yr 2) - further resource lists for AO1

<https://bit.ly/2rhrK73>



Further support for A level RS Component 2 Philosophy of Religion (AO1 and AO2 Resources)

<https://bit.ly/2HHIehw>



AO2 support for A level Eduqas RS : Component 1D Buddhism

<https://bit.ly/2pvps40>



Supporting resources for AO2 A level (Yr 2) Hinduism

<https://bit.ly/2pk9aKN>



Supporting resources for AO2 Eduqas A level Judaism

<https://bit.ly/2xvVb8j>



Islam AS and A level Schemes of Work

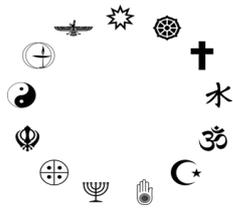
<https://bit.ly/2xpdOvo>



Buddhism A level (Yr 2) Scheme of Learning

<https://bit.ly/2DajazY>





*Further support for A level RS
Component 3 Religion and
Ethics*

<https://bit.ly/2lbqooQ>



*Component 1C - Judaism
A level Year 2 further A01
resources list*

<https://bit.ly/2Oyz2xz>



*A level Component 1D Buddhism
Yr 2 Further AO1 resources list*

<https://bit.ly/2NR0kCl>



REconnect Magazine - Issue 1

<https://bit.ly/2svB76U>



*GCE Judaism exemplar schemes
of work*

<https://bit.ly/2xtTUPe>

Additional RS resources might be added in future, please visit :

<https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/>

Important Exam Dates – GCE

Paper	Date of Exam	Date of Examiners' Conference
AS Component 1 – An Introduction to the Study of Religion (Options A to F)	Thursday 16th May	Sunday 23rd May Village Hotel Coryton
AS Component 2 – An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion	Thursday 23rd May	Monday 3rd June WJEC, 245, Western Avenue, Cardiff
AS Component 3 – An Introduction to Religion and Ethics	Monday 3rd June	Thursday 13th June Village Hotel Coryton

A Level Component 1 – A Study of Religion (Options A to F)	Tuesday 4th June	Saturday 15th June Village Hotel Coryton
A Level Component 2 – Philosophy of Religion	Tuesday 11th June	Thursday 20th June WJEC, 245, Western Avenue, Cardiff
A Level Component 3 – Religion and Ethics	Monday 17th June	Thursday 27th June WJEC, 245, Western Avenue, Cardiff



Other useful links - GCE

Relaunched Eduqas GCE RS Google map

Due to the new GDPR regulations our previous very successful map had to be removed. Please complete the questionnaire here if you would be interested in setting up a new map which will allow you to contact other centres to share teaching and learning ideas and resources.

<https://bit.ly/2P89nfh>

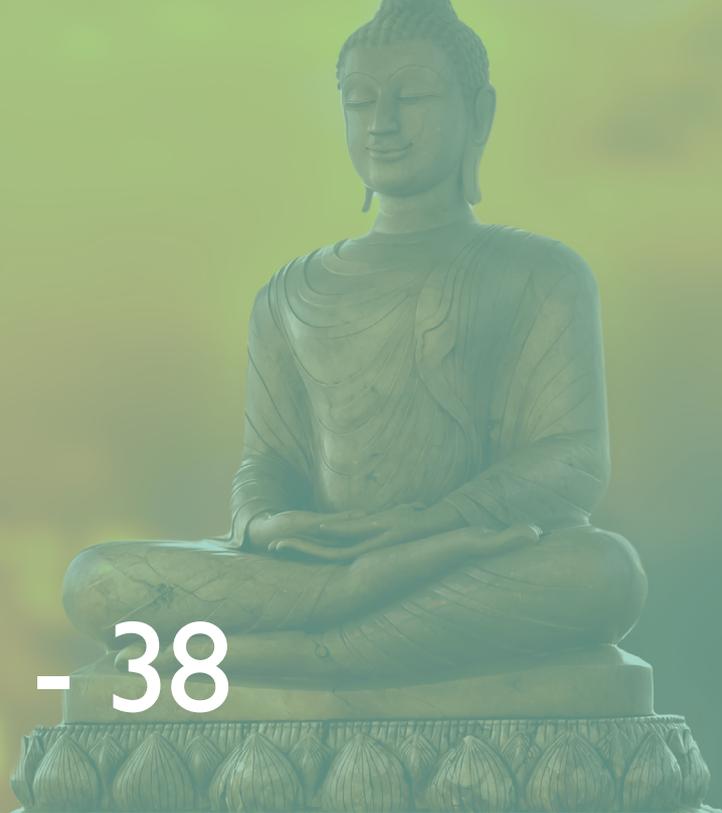
Eduqas GCE RS future Resource planning:

In order to help us and other providers identify areas of 'greatest need' in terms of resources, please complete the following support request questionnaire:

<https://goo.gl/vMQ2cR>

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GCSE Hinduism: Shrine Project

Luke Hart, Head of RS Crickhowell High School.

Students at Crickhowell High School completed a project to assist them with understanding Hindu worship in the home as part of the systematic study of Hinduism for GCSE.

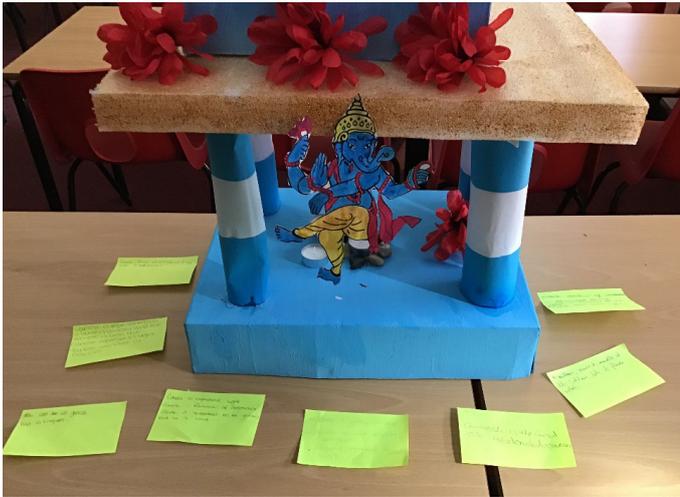
Before the start of the project, students were taught the essential features surrounding Hindu worship in the home through videos and visual stimulus. Then, students were split up into groups and given access to a number of resources to construct their own Hindu shrines. Once the shrines were complete, students visited the models made by other groups to label the different features that they could recognise on post-it notes. Here students were able to apply their knowledge already learned about Hindu worship at the home shrine. After this, students were able to peer-assess each other's models, commenting on the accuracy and suggesting areas to improve.

The aim of this project task was for students to engage with the content of the systematic study of Hinduism and apply their knowledge in a practical setting. This was able to engage and challenge learners from all ability levels, especially the more kinaesthetic learners. As a result, students' understanding of Hindu worship in the home was greatly improved through this activity. One comment made by a Y10 student stated: ***"I have developed a high understanding of Hindu puja. This lesson was very fun and helped me with what a Hindu puja tray looks like and how a worship happens at the home shrine. I enjoyed this and wish to do it again"***.





Y10 students engaged and busy with their creations!



An example of a completed model shrine with students' labels.



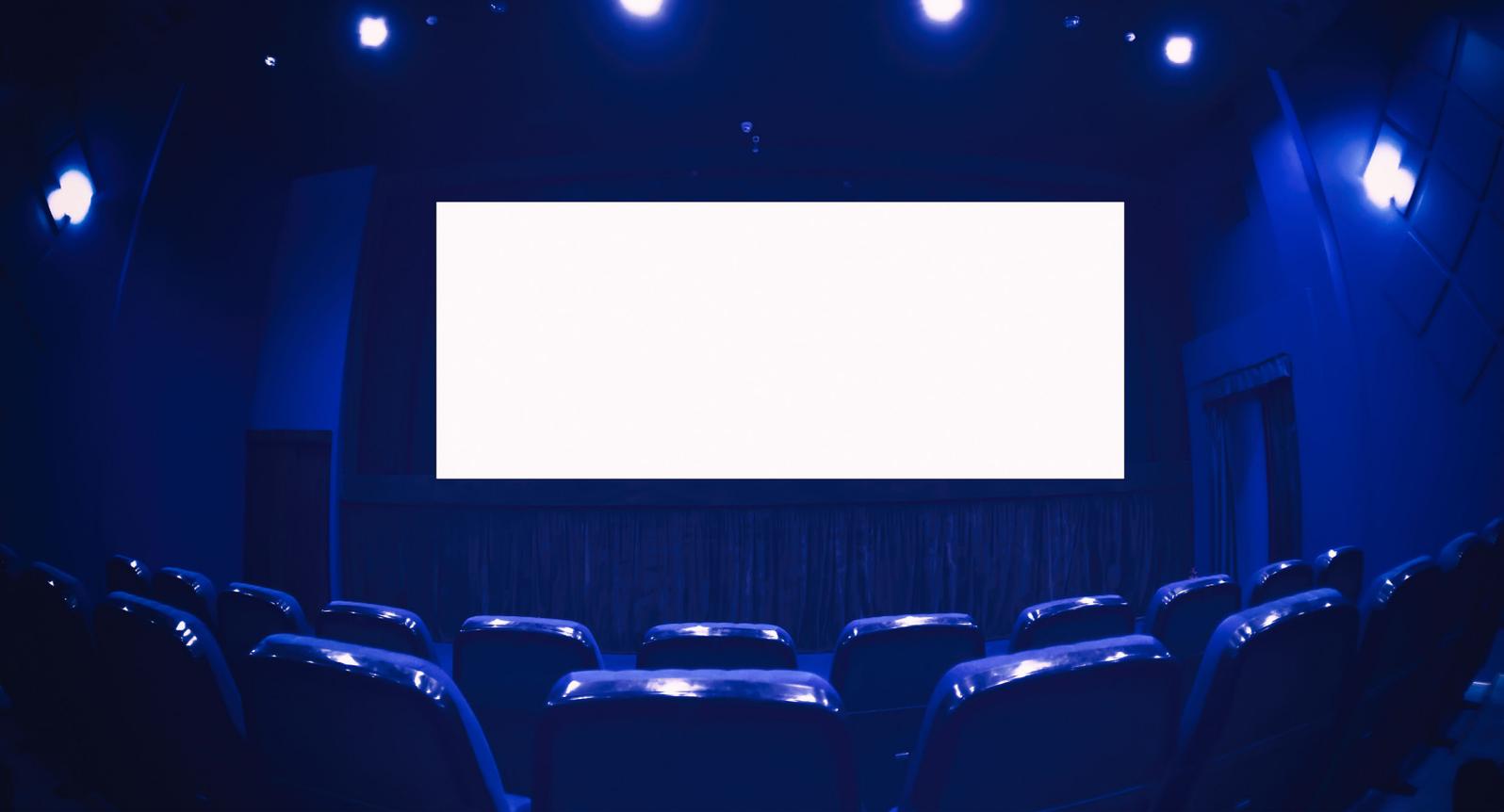
Example of a completed shrine.



Another example of a completed shrine.



Some Y10 students with their models



Religious Studies at the Movies

Damien Lane.

I have always used films as a teaching resource. If you get the right film, it is an ideal way to get pupils involved and if you can get them involved that is over half the battle won!

When teaching the new RS course recently I used the 2014 film ***Selma***. It is about the Civil Rights' Movement's protests in Selma, Alabama in 1965. Directed by an African American woman, Ava DuVernay, it is a well told tale of how smart the organisers were. In this case they chose a city where the chief of police, Jim Clark, was well known for his preparedness to use violence against peaceful protestors. Look out for the scene where the white woman, watching at home on her TV, recoils in horror at the violence being meted out to the protestors.

SPECIFICATION CONTENT: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE/PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION/ CONFLICT BETWEEN PERSONAL CONVICTION AND THE LAW

The film is complemented by the fact that Barack Obama went to talk there on the fiftieth anniversary of the protests. He stood in front of the Edmund Pettus bridge and spoke of the fifty years that had passed since the events portrayed in the film. There are plenty of clips available online.

A very recent film that could be interesting for older students is ***Tehran Taboo*** (2017) which tells the tale of the 'desperate search for freedom and happiness, when four young people from Tehran, Iran, are forced to break the taboos of a restrictive, Islamic society.' (IMDB)

SPECIFICATION CONTENT: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE/CONFLICT BETWEEN PERSONAL CONVICTION AND THE LAW

The WJEC's Film Studies course provides an interesting list of films that have a range of resources to support them. ***Rabbit-Proof Fence*** (2002) has a powerful story based on real events. Starring Kenneth Branagh, it portrays the story of three 'half-caste' girls who are torn away from their families in 1931 Western Australia and how they escape the settlement they are taken to in order to try and



re-join their families.

SPECIFICATION CONTENT: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE/PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Other films from the course that could be of interest to teachers of RS are:

The Wave (2008) which is about an experiment in living under a dictatorship **SPECIFICATION CONTENT: CONFLICT BETWEEN PERSONAL CONVICTION AND THE LAW**

District 9 (2009) which is a satirical look at apartheid in South Africa through the lens of aliens that have been segregated in Johannesburg. It is based on the real District Six: <http://districtsix.co.za>

SPECIFICATION CONTENT: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE/PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION

Wadjda (2012) is the story of a young Saudi girl who wants to save up to buy a bike **SPECIFICATION CONTENT: HUMAN RIGHTS/SOCIAL JUSTICE/CONFLICT BETWEEN PERSONAL CONVICTION AND THE LAW**

The idea of using film is, of course, nothing new. Some may object saying they do not have the time and that the emphasis on assessment means this is not a practical use of valuable time. To this I would simply answer that experience has taught me, unequivocally, that students who are engaged in their learning are far more likely to do well in their exams and that we have a duty as teachers to think beyond just setting questions.

Besides, the idea of engaging learning and doing well in life and exams are not mutually exclusive.

Damien Lane.

Damien is currently a teacher of Film Studies. He has been a teacher of RS for twenty years as well as a Head of RS. He has also been a Principal Examiner for WJEC Humanities GCSE as well as examiner and coursework moderator for RS GCSE. He co-wrote the Humanities course textbook and has been a subject officer for a global awarding body.





Break In To The Question

Gregory A. Barker

An ancient text points students towards excellent responses for the GCSE 15-mark question – says Greg Barker

Have you seen an obscure verse in Hezekiah which says, **‘Put not thine trust into a writing frame to saveth thou, for she that does so may putteth her (d) question response at great risk.’** (Hez. 38:17a, NRSV, Canadian edition)

Teachers across the country are using many excellent writing frames to help their students approach the part (d), 15-mark question. These frames are effective when they remind students of the need to move beyond merely describing and/or explaining positions to evaluating them. As long as they reflect what is required in the Board’s mark scheme, they can be a valid path up the 15-mark ‘mountain’.

Writing frames provide a ‘container’ in which to place one’s thoughts – the writer of this passage in Hezekiah assumes they will be used. However, this passage challenges students to not become complacent once they possess a frame. The next step in the process is developing the skills of evaluation so that a great answer can be unleashed in the face of any 15-mark question.

Evaluation Skills-Building

One skills-exercise that can be used is ‘break into a question.’ This is a four-part strategy that can be used throughout the year, as well as in special sessions aimed at exam excellence. The intention of the exercise is to help students slow down, focus on the question, and find relevant ways into their responses.

At the beginning of this exercise, give students a list of possible (d) questions. Then, ask them to:

1. Circle a key word(s) in each question. The first two steps in this process focus on defining



key words. Of course, students do not have to define the word in the exam response to a (d) question; they can assume that the Examiner knows the word. Yet, how many students stumble on these questions because they do not know the terminology? Working on definitional-skills is a key part of exam preparation. So, students simply circle a word in a practice question for which one would need a solid definition in mind in order to provide an answer. For instance, in the hypothetical question, 'Where a person worships simply isn't important', the word to circle would be 'worship' – for, it would be inconceivable to consider answering this question without knowing this term.

2. Define the key word. Now, have students write down a definition of the word they have just circled - without looking at their notes or a textbook. This reinforces the necessity of (i) knowing specialist language and (ii) maintaining one's focus in a response. With our example, students will hopefully write down something along the lines of, 'an expression of adoration of praise for God/ The Divine'. Any struggle with this step is positive in that it may prompt students to work harder with their key terms. Again, they do not need to define the word in a response in an actual exam question – but defining words in preparation for the exam is critical.
3. Determine the point to break in. Evaluative questions are so interesting because they can be debated! Ask students to insert a wedge or an arrow under the word or phrase that can best be 'broken into' because it is one-sided, opinionated or exaggerated.
4. In the question, 'Where a person worships simply isn't important.' the phrase 'simply isn't' is precisely that location – because for some religious believers the issue is just not that simple! Another example might be 'Religious beliefs cannot help those who are suffering.' (break in at 'cannot help') Or, 'Jewish food laws are easy to follow.' (break in at 'are easy')

It is wonderful for students to have a visual representation of this 'breaking in' – it reminds them to keep their argumentative focus. So, ensure they mark-up those questions like this:

'Where a person worships simply _^ isn't' important.'

'Religious beliefs cannot _^ help those who are suffering'

'Jewish food laws are _^ easy to follow.'

5. Use 'it depends'. Finally, have students to list as many 'it depends' statements as possible – this will fuel their response to a (d) question. It is just amazing to see that when a student begins a practice response with the two simple words 'it depends,' their answer moves from simple to the complex. I know some teachers who give students the task of writing their views on an evaluative area without any guidance. Then, they next ask them to repeat the exercise beginning with the two words 'it depends'. There is usually a transformative effect in their writing. So, taking the first example from above, a student might write:

- ***It depends on what one means by 'worship'...***
- ***It depends on what one considers to be a 'place of worship'...***
- ***It depends on the religion one belongs to...***
- ***It depends on how literally one interprets commands about worship in their sacred text....***
- ***It depends on how seriously one takes their religion....***
- ***It depends on how one interprets the word 'worship'...***

- ***It depends on whether one is an atheist, humanist or not...***
- ***It depends***

Students can develop any one of these statements into a paragraph (and think of others). This means they are developing a sense of alternative and/or opposing viewpoints that can be explored in a (d) question.

So, on the sheet of paper with several possible exam questions, students will have (i) circled each key word, (ii) defined these, (iii) drawn arrows to indicate the points at which they are breaking in, and (iv) begun responses with the words 'it depends'. The abilities they gain from these activities can support any writing frame they are using.

Then, when they are facing a real exam question, they will be able to pause, focus on the question and know how to 'break into the question' in an evaluative way.

I hope, too, that the author of Hezekiah 38:17a would be pleased with this approach, for the goal is for students to trust less in their writing frame to take them to the finish line and more in their evaluative skills.

Gregory A. Barker is a Fellow at the University of Winchester and leads revision events and CPDs at schools and colleges across the country.



Using Sources of Wisdom and Authority Effectively.

Angela Hill

The new GCSE qualifications place more emphasis on candidates recognising that sources of wisdom and authority (including, but not confined to, sacred texts) are a crucial part of understanding religious beliefs, teachings and practices.

Often, one passage can be used to support many different parts of the specification content. An example is given below.

Nature of God

The afterlife

Forgiveness and punishment

Wealth and poverty and social justice



A small-scale survey of GCSE examination performance in England in 2018

Introduction:

This analysis of data gathered in a one-week survey of secondary teachers was conducted in order to support subject leaders in writing reports on the examination performance in the autumn term 2018. Previous [NATRE secondary surveys](#) had found that there was considerable variation in the way that GCSE was delivered in secondary schools. These variations included when teaching of GCSE began in relation to pupils' school year, over what period it was taught in school years and the number of hours of teaching time provided for the teaching.

Whereas, the pre-2016 specifications might have provided some opportunities to compensate for these delivery methods, it was clear that the new specifications would not. [Ofqual accredits all GCSE specifications](#) on the basis that a full course will require between 120 and 140 guided learning hours to be taught. This requirement is based on the expectation that one GCSE is equivalent to any other in the curriculum.

Since the short course GCSEs have been removed from the list of those that count in performance tables, the entries for this course have declined rapidly (figure 1). Unfortunately, many teachers of RE have then been required to teach GCSE full course in the time previously allocated for a short course i.e. approximately an hour a week over 5 terms; approximately 70 guided learning hours.

Summary

1. **Performance in 2018 was similar to 2017:** In most schools, the new specifications examined in 2018 resulted in a broadly similar level of performance from 2017 or better. This outcome was reported by 74.1% of schools that responded to the survey.
2. In the majority (65%) of schools, results were either at, above or considerably above the national average
3. **Teaching time has a large impact on results especially when top grades are concerned:** Most schools (63.5%) in our sample are provided with the correct amount of teaching time expected by Ofqual but this means 36.5% expected teachers to find ways of allowing pupils to achieve their potential on fewer hours than expected.
4. Where schools expected the GCSE full course to be delivered in the time expected for a short course, *it more than four times more likely* that the students would achieve results *significantly below* the national average and twice as likely to report results that were *below* the national average.
5. Where schools provided the time expected by Ofqual for the GCSE course, students are *twice as likely to achieve considerably above* the national average performance and *almost twice as likely to achieve a result that is at or above* the national average performance.
6. 71% of the schools where results were equal to or stronger than English Language, taught the Religious Studies GCSE on the Ofqual recommended teaching time of at least 120 hours. If the school expected the GCSE to be taught in fewer hours than that, it was twice as likely that pupils would under-perform in comparison to English.
7. **Teaching the course over three-years has a detrimental impact on results:** The most popular delivery model is still a two-year course begin in year 10. This plan was followed by almost 48% of respondents. However, just over 40% of schools are now delivering RS GCSE over three years beginning in year 9.
8. 43% of the schools adopting the two-year, 10-11 delivery model achieved results that were *considerably above* the national average, as opposed to 19% of those adopting the three-year model.
9. 73% of the schools that achieved results that were *at, above or considerably above* the national average with the traditional two-year delivery model as opposed to 58% of schools using the three-year 9-11 model.

10. **More students in option groups achieve results considerably above the national average and more in full cohort groups perform below or considerably below the national average. However, both groups are equally likely to achieve results at or above the national average.** RS GCSE is compulsory for all students in 49.1% of the schools that responded and taught in an option group in 40% of those schools.
11. 81% of the schools where students had opted for RS GCSE performed either at, above or considerably above the national average. 51% of the schools where the whole cohort were entered achieved the same results.
12. In schools making full cohort entries as well as those entering option groups, 33% of schools achieved at or above the national average

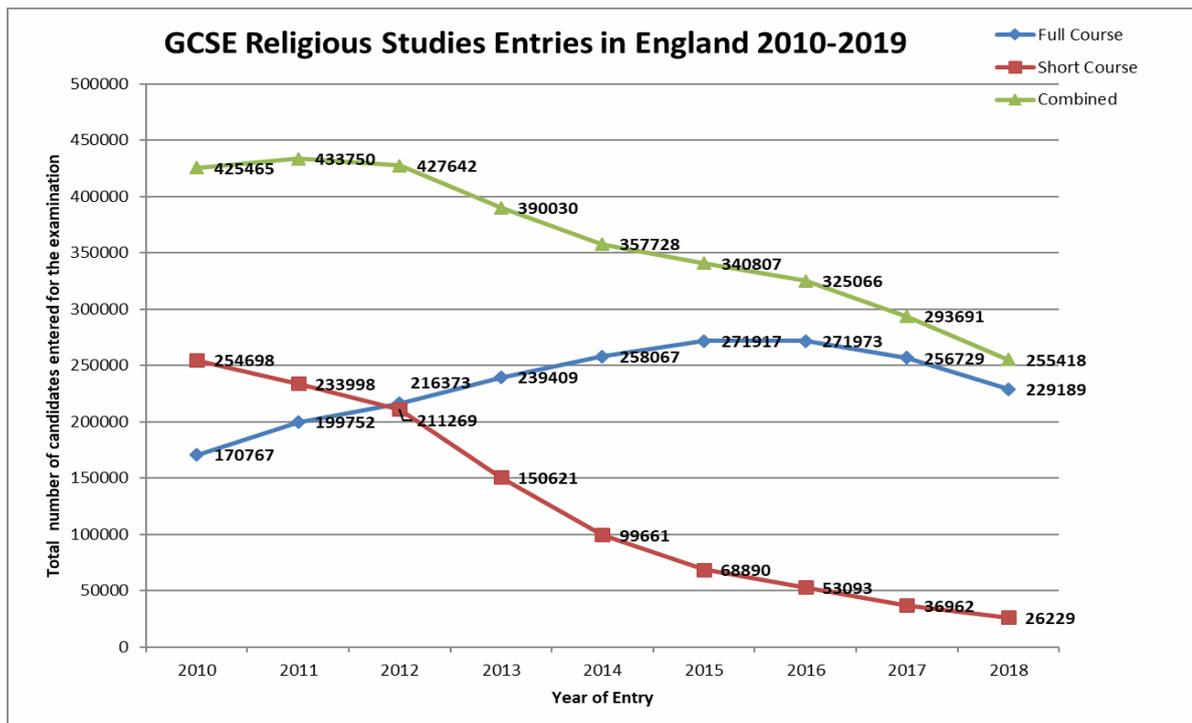
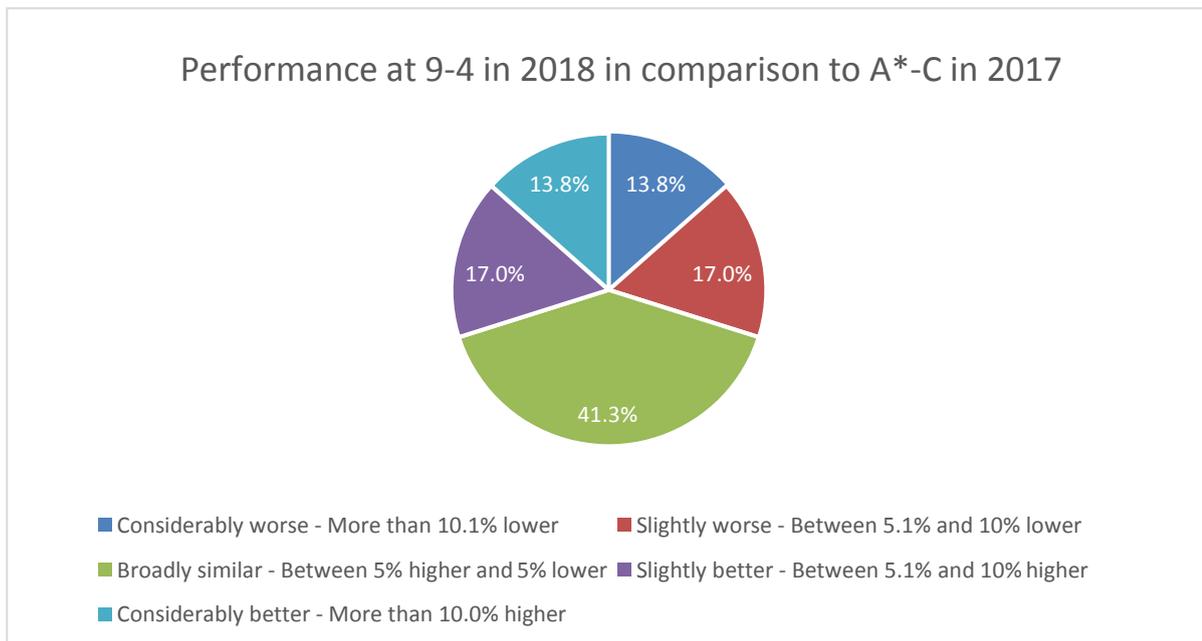


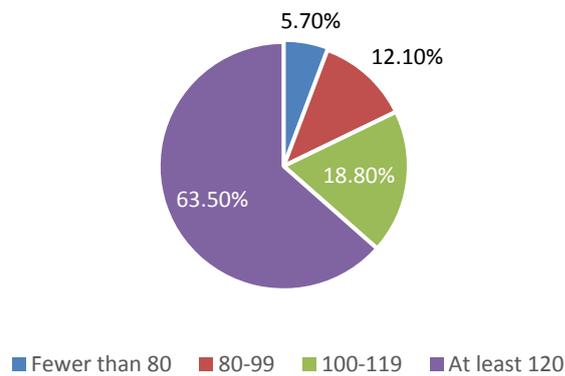
Figure 1

Findings

Around three quarters of schools (74.1%) achieved broadly similar or better results in comparison with last year.

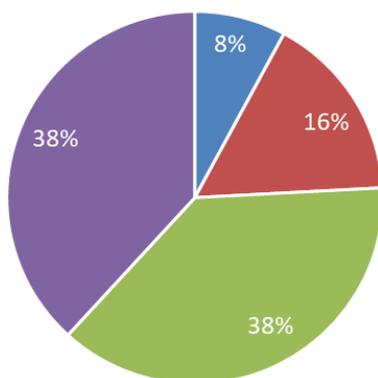


Percentage of schools offering different amounts of teaching time

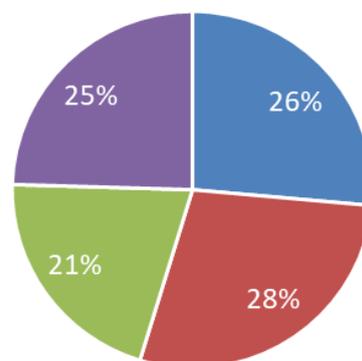


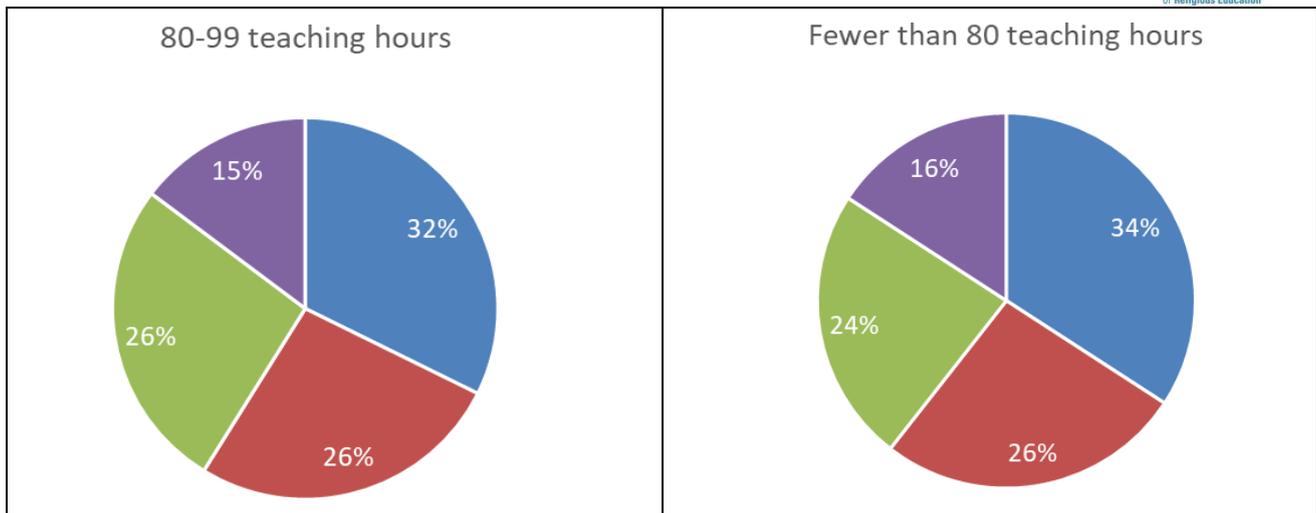
The majority of the schools (63.5%) in our sample are provided with the correct amount of teaching time expected by Ofqual. It is an obvious, but often overlooked fact that GCSEs in different subjects are intended to be comparable. It is one of the key aspects of the work of Ofqual, to ensure that this is so. This means that when Ofqual accredits a GCSE it expects the awarding organisation to demonstrate that the expectations of the assessments, including the assessment objectives and studying the content can be met in a specific amount of time. There are lots of debates about this, such as if candidates are developing knowledge or practising the skills required in one subject in different one, or when their prior learning gives them an advantage over other students, but Ofqual stipulates the requirement for a GCSE is 120-140 guided learning hours.

At least 120 teaching hours



100-119 teaching hours





- Considerably below the national average (58% or less)
- Below the national average (more than 58% but less than 72%)
- At or above the national average (more than or equal to 72% but less than 86%)
- Considerably above the national average (86% or more)

Predictably, one the conclusions from this survey is that the number of teaching hours provided has a significant impact on results. It was **more than four times more likely** that the students in schools providing around an hour per week would achieve significantly below the national average as schools providing the Ofqual recommended time. These schools were twice as likely to report results that were below the national average.

Similarly, in those schools providing the Ofqual expected time for the GCSE course, students were twice as likely to achieve results *considerably above the national average performance* and almost twice as likely to achieve a result that is *at or above the national average performance*.

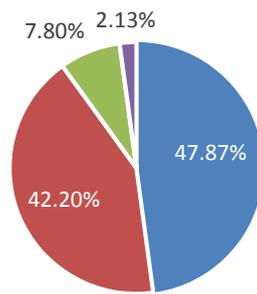
Impact of different delivery models

This survey shows that just over 40% of schools are now delivering RS GCSE over three years beginning in year 9. This is a similar result as reported in the NATRE Secondary Survey in 2016. Nevertheless, most schools (almost 48%) are using the traditional method of offering GCSE over two years in Years 10-11. The pie charts that follow show that the most reliable means of achieving results that are considerably above the national average is to teach the course over two years to the students for whom the GCSE is designed i.e. 14-16 year olds.

43% of the schools adopting this delivery model achieved results that were considerably above the national average, as opposed to 19% of those adopting the three-year model. Likewise, 73% achieved results that were at, above or considerably above the national average with the traditional two-year delivery model as opposed to 58% of schools using the three year model.

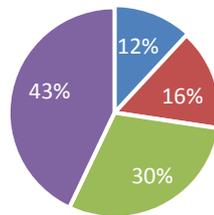
Only 7.8% of our sample were delivering GCSE over two years from year 9 and 10 so this is too small a sample size to draw firm conclusions, however, this model led to the poorest results including the highest proportion of results that were below or considerably below the national average. Ofsted has recently criticised the practice of beginning GCSE in year 9 since it often, though not always, leads to a premature narrowing of the curriculum for students. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework>

How do schools deliver GCSE Religious Studies?



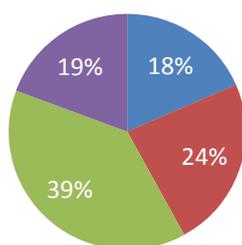
■ Over 2 years in year 10-11 ■ Over 3 years in years 9-11 ■ Over 2 years in year 9-10 ■ Other

Religious Studies GCSE delivered over 2 years in years 10-11



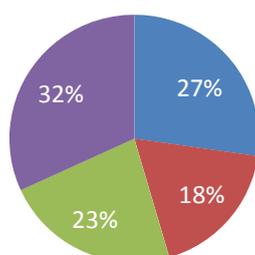
■ Considerably below the national average (58% or less)
 ■ Below the national average (more than 58% but less than 72%)
 ■ At or above the national average (more than or equal to 72% but less than 86%)
 ■ Considerably above the national average (86% or more)

Religious Studies GCSE delivered over 3 years in years 9-11



- Considerably below the national average (58% or less)
- Below the national average (more than 58% but less than 72%)
- At or above the national average (more than or equal to 72% but less than 86%)
- Considerably above the national average (86% or more)

Religious Studies GCSE delivered over 2 years in years 9-10



- Considerably below the national average (58% or less)
- Below the national average (more than 58% but less than 72%)
- At or above the national average (more than or equal to 72% but less than 86%)
- Considerably above the national average (86% or more)

The NATRE executive wishes to express their gratitude to all those teachers that took the time to complete this survey at a busy time of the school year. We hope that the information in this report will help teachers of Religious Studies to be able to contextualise their examination results. It is important to make the point that teachers cannot be held accountable for the impact of other people's decisions. We plan to use the results of this survey with Ofqual and the awarding organisations to support members further.

26th September 2018

This is a summary of a longer report available on the NATRE website.
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PLEASE NOTE: THE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED IN ENGLAND BUT AS SOME OF THESE CONCERNS MAY WELL BE VERY SIMILAR, IT WAS FELT THAT THE FINDINGS MIGHT ALSO BE RELEVANT AND USEFUL FOR COLLEAGUES IN WALES.

Important Exam Dates – GCSE

GCSE RS – Eduqas

Paper	Date of Exam	Date of Examiners' Conference
Component 1 – Religious, Philosophical and Ethical Issues in the Modern World (Route A) and Foundational Catholic Theology (Route B)	Monday 13th May	Tuesday 21st May – Holiday Inn, Manchester
Component 1 – Foundational Catholic Theology (Route B)	Monday 13th May	Tuesday 21st May – Holiday Inn, Manchester
Component 2 – Study of Christianity (Route A)	Monday 20th May	Tuesday 4th June – Jurys Inn, Birmingham
Component 2 – Applied Catholic Theology (Route B)	Monday 20th May	Tuesday 4th June – Jurys Inn, Birmingham
Component 3 – Study of a World Faith (Options 1 to 5)	Monday 23rd May	Wednesday 12th June – Jurys Inn, Birmingham



Latest Digital Resources for GCSE RS



What! No Stable!

<https://bit.ly/2OilYiY>



Skills-builders

<https://bit.ly/2I5B4BW>



REconnect Magazine - Issue 1

<https://bit.ly/2OwpDqh>

Additional RS resources might be added in future, please visit :

<https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/>





Other useful links - GCSE

A new resource: **The Audiopi resources were written to support the Eduqas qualification, but will also be useful for much of the content on the WJEC (Wales) specification for Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Catholic Christianity.**

Audiopi links to Eduqas Audiopi <https://www.audiopi.co.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/eduqas/christianity>

<https://www.audiopi.co.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/eduqas/islam>

<https://www.audiopi.co.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/eduqas/judaism>

Eduqas Catholic Christianity: <https://www.audiopi.co.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/eduqas>

Relaunched Eduqas GCSE RS Google map.

Due to the new GDPR regulations our previous very successful map had to be removed. Please complete the questionnaire here if you would be interested in

setting up a new map which will allow you to contact other centres to share teaching and learning ideas

and resources. - https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScdC8oL7VRslGQfFePWwVi7Qro2BKi6gUcCthySSeGzT2_JUg/viewform?usp=sf_link

Important Reminder:

All specification content must be covered. All content can be assessed more than once, so a topic assessed in 2018 for example, could be assessed in future examination series.

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