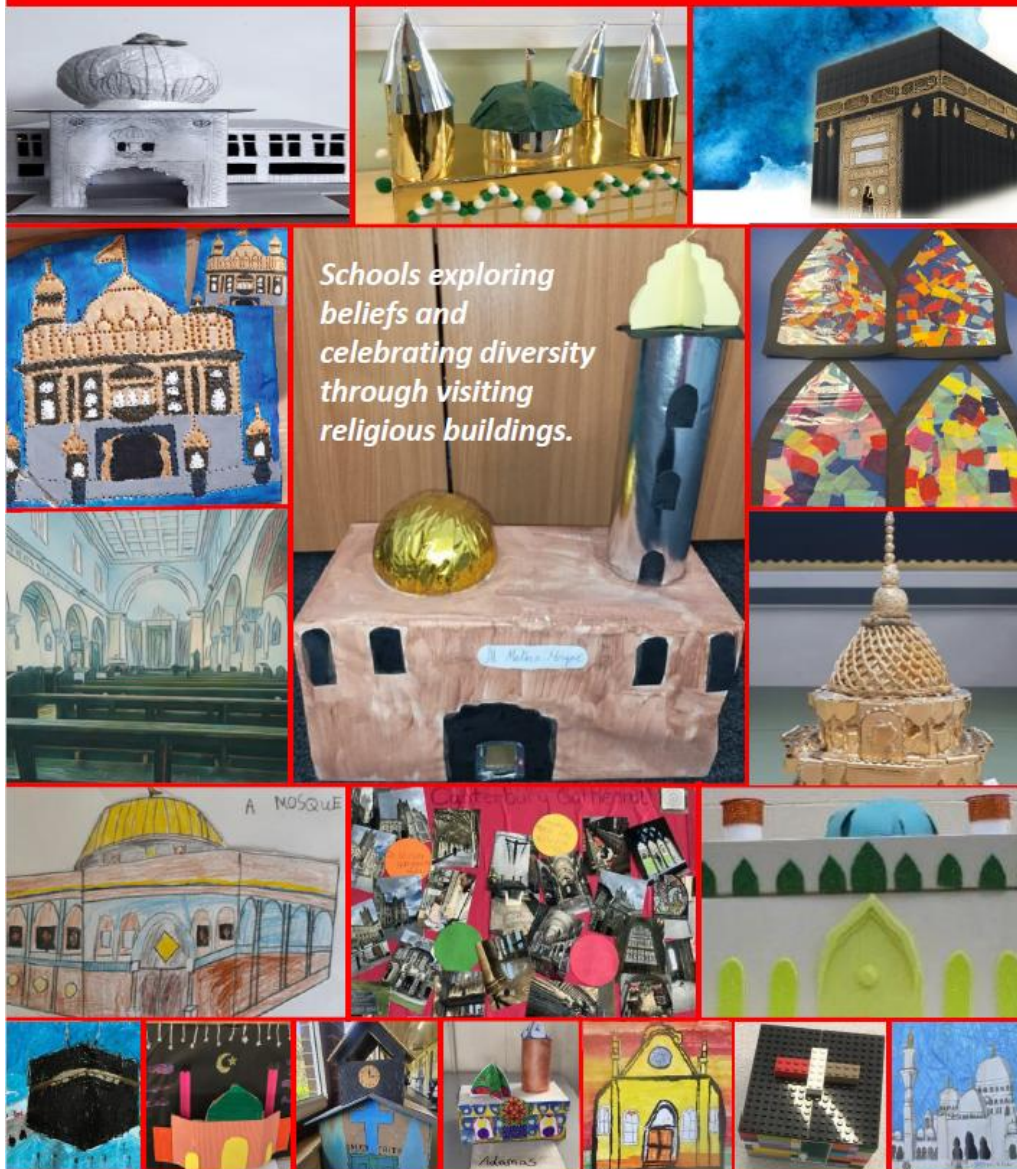


# B&D SACRE

## Visit a Place of Worship competition

Visit a Place of Worship competition 2025 – 2026



*Schools exploring beliefs and celebrating diversity through visiting religious buildings.*

For more details on how your school can enter this year please go to <https://bdsip.co.uk/2026-place-of-worship-competition/>

Winning classwork by Beam, Eastbury, Five Elms, Godwin, James Canbell, Manor, Montegale, Northbury, Ripple, Southwood, Valence and Village Primary Schools.

**BDSIP** | HELPING STUDENTS SHINE

**Barking & Dagenham**

# 2025-2026

## A Guide for RE subject leaders in Primary Schools

Welcome to our 2025-26 pack to help support you in school to get out into the community and into different places of worship during the rest of the academic year, or to meet them virtually on-line. If your school is part of the RE advisors database you will have been sent this year's database of places of worship via e-mail who have responded to us saying they would welcome your school to visit them or to come in virtually – there is a choice of over 40 different places of worship to choose from, which is great! There will be other places of worship who although have not responded would still welcome your children and school to visit I am sure, so don't let the list limit your options or what you have done before and thought was successful. Often your own school links into different religions are always the best to use.

One of the reasons we run these visits is so that we ensure that B&D pupils are getting to meet people with different beliefs from their own and to reflect on what this means to them. We will run for the second time the 'Visit a place of worship' competition this year in B&D, where pupils have the chance to enter their work produced from going on a visit to a place of worship into a Borough wide competition. Entries are to be uploaded onto our B&D shared google drive by a schools RE leader – after school internal judging.

We hope after the success of our couple of competitions schools will find a way for the whole school or a year group to enter work into this new competition for 2025-26. This booklet has been put together to help you as SLT or as the RE middle leader to ensure you understand the ideas behind the competition. Along with this booklet you will have been sent a poster PDF which can be printed on A3 paper and displayed in your school. There are also some postcards that can be printed doubled sided on A4 paper and cut up so that each teacher can have their own information on the competition. The poster PDF can also be used in a school's newsletter and on your website to highlight this work.

If you have any questions around the competition, then please do get in touch with our RE advisor.

## 1. Planning a Visit

The success of your visit or having someone virtually come into your school depends on the planning and preparation beforehand. Here are a few points to help things go smoothly:

- **Do visit the place of worship beforehand.** This means you can undertake a risk assessment, the places of worship on the database have not been risk assessed by RE Advisor, but most places of worship will have done their own risk assessment that could identify for you things to be aware of in your visit. In addition you may wish to prepare materials based on your visit and take photographs to use in lessons as a way to prepare the children and young people for their visit. If using a virtual visitor then also try and meet them before hand to set up their visit. This gives you the opportunity to let them know what you need them to be prepared to say/talk about and how it will all work with the pupils virtually.
- **Do plan well in advance.** Many places of worship will have events taking place every day with ceremonies such as funerals, marriages, blessings and formal services, so it is suggested that teachers contact places of worship **at least a month before the visit** - the earlier the better. The places of worship will want to know when you would like to visit, so it is good to have a couple of options, number of children coming, their age and an e-mail contact and mobile number so they can ring in case of anything needing to change;
- **Do talk to the member of the faith community to explain the purpose of the visit.** This will ensure they understand the educational nature of the visit. In addition, you may want to suggest to him/her the kind of questions that the children are likely to ask or what you are interested in seeing during the visit. This is also your chance to say that you don't want the children to spoken to for longer than 10-20 minutes, that you need the visit to be active; and
- **Do inform parents of your plans.** A few sample letters are included in this pack to help to explain to parents the educational nature of the visit. If parents are concerned about their children visiting a place of worship it is worth spending time explaining the purpose of the visit and what the children will do when they are there, assuring them that they will not be entering into any form of worship. Of course, inviting parents to join the visit is often a very effective way to ensure that their child does take part, and then you can use them to let other parents know what a fabulous trip it was. The most important thing for parents to understand from your letter to them is that the **children will not be asked to worship or participate in any worship/prayers/meditation when visiting the place of worship.** Knowing this will help many parents to allow their child to come on the visit to a place of worship.

It is often in the first couple of years of starting leading these visits that schools encounter concerns from the parents, and the RE advisor can put you in contact with other schools who have successfully navigated troubled waters in this area if that would help you. Some schools have put on an RE event after school for children and their parents, with an RE quiz with edible prizes so it gives an opportunity to talk informally with parents about the purpose of RE and why they want to go out and visit a range of places of worship. Other schools have trained up their home visit team to talk to parents at homes about visit to places of worship. Some school have invited in local religious leaders to talk to parents about the importance of their children going on these visits. You can contact the RE advisor via her phone 07950 701933 or e-mail [claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk](mailto:claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk) for any further support.

## 2. Preparing for the visit

Many children will have experience of going to a place of worship on a regular basis in B&D, however there may be some children who have never been inside a place of worship. Here are some suggestions for preparing children for a visit:

- It is important for TA's and teachers to be prepared to enter into the place of worship being visited. It will be **VERY** offensive to members of that community if staff from a school wait outside whilst the children are on their visit. It would also not be wise in terms of health and safety of the children (if a member of staff is from that religion there may be for women times within the month when they would not enter their place of worship normally as within their religion this is forbidden. This needs to be spoken about and how this visit is not for worship. Faith leaders have assured the RE advisor that this therefore does not become an issue – the person can enter without any offence or disrespect being given);
- It is important for staff to know what to do when entering a religious building. In churches and Synagogues shoes can be worn and heads do not need to be covered. At Mosques, shoes will need to come off and some mosques like women to cover their heads – mosques in B&D do not expect this as they understand the educational nature of the visit – they know people are not coming in to worship. At Gurdwara's shoes come off, hands must be washed and all heads covered – for both male and female. At Hindu and Buddhist temple's shoes come off, and hands are often washed.
- Pupils, regardless of their age, should be reminded that for the religious believers who worship there this place is very special. The term *sacred* may be used with the pupils;
- Pupils should have some knowledge and understanding of the place before they visit it. This will enable them to ask deeper questions about the purpose and nature of the building and what goes on there. Children may be given preparation tasks e.g. looking at places special to them, going on a 'visualisation' to a place of worship, watching a video of worship taking place on the IWB and looking at pictures of places of worship;
- There are a number of schemes of work on the 2024 B&D Agreed Syllabus schools may use to support learning and teaching about places of worship. A visit to a place of worship during the year may be part of one of these schemes of work and could take a particular theme e.g. community, celebration, worship, belonging and symbolism. Sharing the theme of what you want to find out with the place of worship leader/guide would be helpful to them to be able to prepare for the focus of your visit to them. Here are some examples from each Year group:
  - Year 1: What does it mean to belong to Christianity?
  - Year 1: What does it mean to be a Muslim?
  - Year 1: What does it mean to be a Sikh?
  - Year 1: What does it mean to be a Hindu?
  - Year 2: Why are different books special?
  - Year 2: How do we know Easter is coming?
  - Year 2: Why did Jesus tell stories?
  - Year 3: How are special sayings and symbols used in religions?
  - Year 3: How do Jews celebrate?
  - Year 3: How did Buddha and Jesus stop and make people think?
  - Year 3: What do art, signs and symbols tell us about Christian beliefs?
  - Year 4: Which religions are represented in our neighbourhood?

- Year 4: Why is Easter important to Christians?
- Year 4: How do Hindu's worship at home and in the mandir?
- Year 4: Why is the Bible special?
- Year 4: What happens when someone gets married?
- Year 4: What makes me the person I am?
- Year 5: What do different religions believe about God?
- Year 5: How do Christians try and follow Jesus' example?
- Year 5: Why is Muhammad important to Muslims?
- Year 6: What do religious leaders do?
- Year 6: What similarities and differences do religions share?
- Year 6: What qualities are important for a religious leader?
- Year 6: What happened on the first Easter Sunday?

### 3. Suggestions for your visit

The key to a successful visit is that it is **interactive** and that the pupils are engaged in what they are doing. This means that from Foundation Stage through to Year 6, pupils should have activities to do and not be passive listeners on their educational visit.

**The teacher in charge on the visit must always protect the children from the best possible motives of the religious leaders who might ask pupils to join in with what they are doing. We need to reiterate we can watch them worship, pray, bow down, sing, but the children are here to observe and are not there to participate.**

### 4. Follow up to the visit.

One of the aims of the 'Visit a place of worship' competition is to encourage high quality work in Religious Education (RE) within B&D schools. The work that is entered into the competition will be judged and prizes for excellent RE work will be awarded.

A photograph of the work, or a PPT containing an explanation of the work and examples of work from different angles can all help to put what the pupils have done and achieved in context for the judges. Work should be emailed to the RE advisor by **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026**, and it will be judged by SACRE members after this.

There will be a Celebration event for the giving out of certificates and prizes on a date TBC in late June or early July. The event will have poetry and song, food, prizes and certificates for winning work at a Primary School to be announced nearer to the date.

It is suggested that as a school you look to the winning work power-points from 2025 from to give you some inspiration for work that you can encourage your teachers to do with their classes

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BxpNnD1hZO7gs1B4WAZR7hqnCC1ZHi5Z/edit?usp=drive\\_link&ouid=110716215118442234519&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BxpNnD1hZO7gs1B4WAZR7hqnCC1ZHi5Z/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=110716215118442234519&rtpof=true&sd=true) . This will also help to show the standard of the winning work to teachers and children alike. Work can be written, drawn, 3-dimensional, painted, shaded, modelled, sewn or glued. The most important factor is that it shows clearly what the children have learnt from going outside the classroom on their visits.

# **2026 Prizes to be awarded**

There will be prizes for the following:

EYFS - Best response (individual)

EYFS - Best response (individual runner up)

Primary School – Best individual response Key Stage 1

Primary School – Best individual runner-up response Key Stage 1

Primary School - Best individual response Key Stage 2 years 3&4

Primary School – Best individual runner-up response Key Stage 2 years 3&4

Primary School - Best individual response Key Stage 2 years 5&6

Primary School – Best individual runner-up response Key Stage 2 years 5&6

Best SEND individual

Best ICT entry EYFS

Best ICT entry KS1

Best ICT entry KS2

Certificates and prizes will be awarded to all winning work at the celebration event.



## **5 Expectations at the end of each key stage for RE**

### **What pupils should be able to do:**

One of the key elements we will be looking for in the Visit a place of worship competition is how the pupil's work exemplifies the Religious Education attainment targets. To help you consider the tasks you might set pupils we have included the B&D Expectations for the end of each key stage. We have linked them to a visit to a place of worship.

#### **At the end of Key Stage 1 (so when they are aged 6/7):**

Children should be able to:

- identify some religious practices that take place in e.g. a church and know that similar practices take place in other places of worship e.g. prayer, singing.
- suggest meanings behind symbols that they see in the church e.g. a cross, candle, font, banners.
- respond sensitively to the different feelings that the religious believer has about their place of worship e.g. the church.
- Reflect on their learning about a particular religion.

#### **At the end of Key Stage 2 (so when they are aged 10/11):**

Children should be able to:

- describe the key beliefs and teachings of the religious believer they meet and compare them with their knowledge of another religion.
- show what belonging to a religion involves e.g. articulate what a religious believer does when they go to a place of worship, how the place of worship supports the community.
- show how religious beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways in the place of worship e.g. through symbol, art, music, dance, sculpture, gardens etc
- ask questions about significant experiences of religious believers, puzzling aspects of life and matters of right and wrong. They should be able to suggest their own answers to these questions based on what they have learned in the place of worship/from religious believers they meet.
- Reflect on what they have learnt from visiting a place of worship.

# Place of worship visit letter ideas

Schools do this in a number of ways, some via the school newsletter (so flagging up next week Yr 2 will be visiting a Gurdwara on Wednesday afternoon), other schools send a letter home to inform parents of the visit to places of worship. Legally once a parent has signed a visit form in reception or Year 1 the school is covered to take children on visits, but it is important that the school finds a way of informing parents when these trips will take place precisely to cover themselves against possible accidents.

For all trips the school would also need to do a risk assessment before taking the children out of school.

## Wording example 1:

Children are currently learning about... *(the similarities and differences between Christianity and Judaism for example)*. As part of their learning in Religious Education lessons *(or as part of the RE curriculum)*, the children will be visiting...on.. *(place of worship and date)* to find out more about.... *(to explore the religious building; ask questions about what people believe and at this place of worship to find out from someone who attends...)*

The aim of the educational visit is to give children first hand experience of a place of worship. When this visit takes place the children will not be asked to join in with or take part in any act of worship, prayers, meditation or offerings. They are visiting to learn more about a religion, not to participate in worship. The visit is in accordance with the Local Education Authority's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education that all faith groups have approved being taught in our B&D schools.

## Example letter 2:

As part of the religious education curriculum it is required that your child participates in visits to places of worship throughout their primary school career.

This year your child will go to ...*(Give details of POW to be visited)*

I would like to reassure you that your child would not be participating in any aspect of religious ceremonies whilst on this visit. It is a visit to observe religious customs and to explore the place of worship to enable your child to consider what they can learn about the people who come to this place of worship therefore deepening their learning in Religious Education.

It is extremely important to your child's education that they attend this educational trip as it is part of the B&D Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, and it has been approved by all the main faith groups within B&D who are part of SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for RE). These visits also encourage an understanding and tolerance of different cultures and religions, which we feel here at this school is an important value that we want to see grow in the lives of our pupils.

Your support in allowing your child to attend this educational visit also supports the school in fulfilling its legal obligations.

We greatly appreciate your support in providing your child with a well rounded education experience. If you have any concerns then please do not hesitate in making an appointment to see me....*(Place in here your contact details that you want parents to follow)*



# Top tips from Newham RE teachers

## Do's and don't of a visit

1. Prepare questions with children before hand and let places of worship have them in advance.
2. Each visit should have a clear focus
3. Prepare children by explaining what the expectations will be regarding clothes etc, and the reasons why e.g. respect not worship
4. Keep the letter to parents factual, follow up any concerns in person
5. If you are taking parent helpers with you on your trip, give them information about the trip well in advance
6. Timings – not any longer than an hour on the trip
7. Use the places of worship suggested by Claire

## Entering the competition, getting good quality work done back in class from the visit

1. Share with staff your RE overview, so they can see when in the year their RE visit to a place is worship is coming up
2. Brief staff about entering competition at a staff meeting by showing examples of winning work of previous winners at staff meeting
3. Make links with other subjects to create as much follow up time to producing work for the competition (can they link RE with art or DT, ICT or literacy?)
4. Keep reminding staff about competition and how things are going
5. Winning work wins because of the artwork and the voice of the child explaining what their artwork shows so – so annotate work, or use AFL openers to help them reflect on their learning so that can be captured by teacher or TA

## Dealing with parents and concerns

1. Think about having an annual meeting for parents where RE can be shared with before any trips take place, as a way to personally address any concerns parents have, so hopefully more children allowed to come on trip to places of worship
2. Make sure we take parental concerns seriously
3. Faith leaders from local community could also be invited to be present at this type of meeting, again that might help certain parents to hear a message if their faith leaders are saying it from their faith viewpoint
4. Training up nursery/reception intake visit team to be able to knowledgeably talk to parents about Place of worship visits and school procedure at interview when school trip permission form is signed.
5. Use existing members of staff within a school from different faiths or none to talk with parents or children about visits (TA's as well as teachers)
6. Recruit parents to come on trips who could be talkers in a good way about trips in the playground to other parents
7. Meet with parents individually if needed to talk through concerns – often they don't quite understand

Remember the RE advisor is around to support school with these types of issues if things get hard

# Benefits of educational visits

## Learning

- The primary reason for school trips is their educational element. First-hand experience of a subject **reinforces ideas** and **provokes further discussions** that perhaps would not have even been thought about before. It gives young people **huge satisfaction** when they can see what they have been learning about in real life- locking it into their **long-term memory**.
- Educational visits encourage children to **learn in a very different way** than they do in the classroom. It's a world away from working in the classroom, and hopefully will give them **skills they can use in real life**. Visits will **broaden the mind**, inspire a hunger for learning and increase the **children's engagement** in the classroom after the visit.

## Social and Community benefits

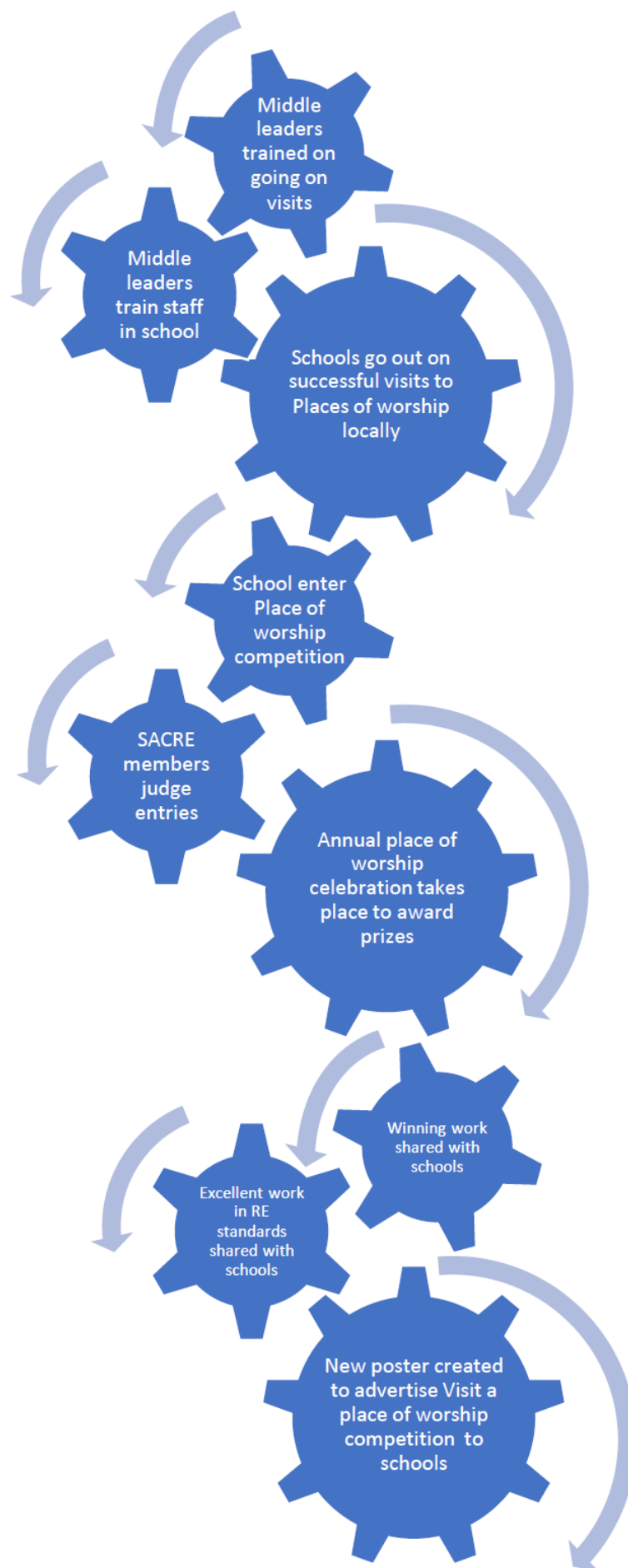
- Educational visits will undoubtedly have a **social aspect**, the children will have the opportunity to talk to spend time with children and adults from their class in a way that differs from being in the classroom, building relationships. They may find out that someone in their class is an 'expert' in the place they are visiting and so the idea that **we can learn from peers as well as teachers** will be reinforced.
- Educational visits teach children **how to engage with new people and in new situations**. They will have the opportunity to see inside places they walk past on a regular basis. They will have the opportunity to share their new knowledge with friends and family, **breaking down barriers** based around prejudice, ignorance and misinformation.

## Personal development

- Educational visits have a profound effect on the **development of a child's character**, they will always learn something new about the place they visit, and about themselves.
- We are providing the children with an opportunity to visit places they might not have the chance to experience otherwise. We are giving them a **real-life context** for practising the skills of observation, questioning and analysis. They can begin to **make connections** between themselves and others.
- Pupils develop a **greater appreciation for their immediate world** as they discover new cultures, history and ideas (SMSC- awe and wonder). Going somewhere different, even if it's only five minutes up the road, provokes an **innate curiosity** amongst young people that allows them to thrive throughout the rest of their school and personal lives.

*Taken from a workshop lead by Marie Hardie, deputy head at Brampton Primary school.*

## Place of worship: how it all works together



## Visits and SMSC

Going out on visits give your school some important evidence of the way in which Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education is embedded in your school. Also with the governments agenda flagging up how schools need to be supporting British Values and confronting where they find a lack of these. These visits provide good evidence of how the school is supporting the value of Tolerance. Having systems in place that show how your school has tackled (or tried to) families whose initial response is that they do not want their children to attend will also be important. Visits build up links into your local community.

Entering work into the Borough wide competition will also give your school evidence of how tolerance is given time in the classroom as children work on their entries and reflect upon their learning.

For any further support please contact Claire Clinton on 07950 701933  
or e-mail her on [claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk](mailto:claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk)

**We look forward to seeing the evidence of your trips through the Visit a place of worship competition later in the summer term.**

*Celebrating  
Diversity!*



**SACRE**



FUNDED BY STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION