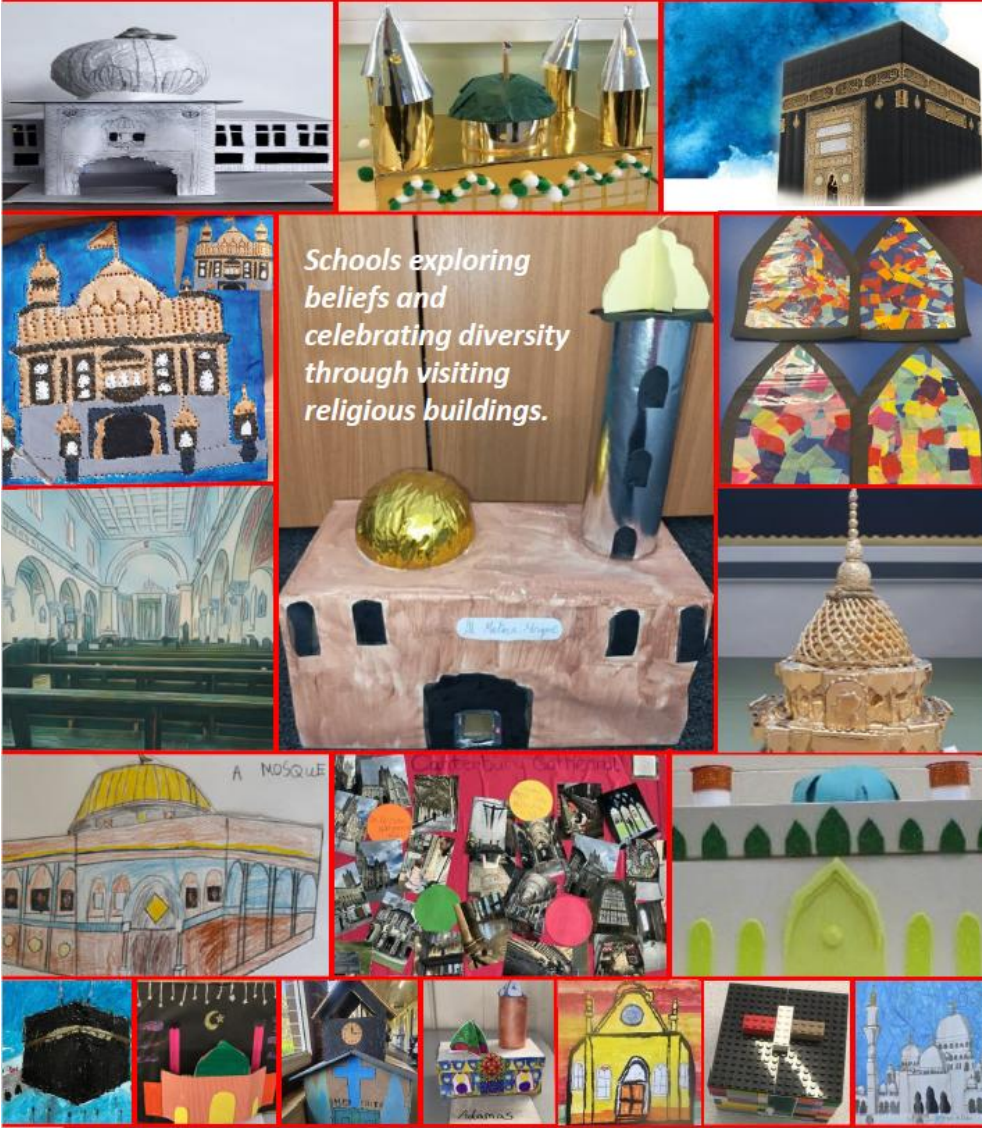


# B&D SACRE

## 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 Beorn, Eastbury, Five Elms, Godwin, James Cambell, Manor, Monteagle, Northbury, Ripple, Southwood, Valence and Village Primary Schools.

**BDSIP** | HELPING STUDENTS SHINE

**Barking & Dagenham**

## 2025-2026

### A Guide for RE leaders in Secondary 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 pupils 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 first 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 into our B&D POW google drive by a RE lead – after school-based judging.

We hope after the success of our first two years of the competition schools will find a way for the whole school or a year group to enter work into this new competition for 2026. This booklet has been put together to help you as an RE department to ensure you understand the ideas behind the competition and it is straight forward to enter. 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 schools' 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.

## Planning a Visit

The success of your visit 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 BDSIP, 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;
- **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 two weeks before the visit** - the earlier the better as some of our best visit places do get booked up early. 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 pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils to be 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 child/ren visiting a place of worship it is worth spending time explaining the purpose of the visit and what the pupils will do when they are there, assuring them that they will not be entering into any 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 **pupils will not be asked to worship or participate in any worship 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 I 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 pupils 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. Other schools have trained up their home visit team to talk to parents at that home visit about going to places of worship. Some schools have invited in local religious leaders to talk to parents about the importance of their child/ren going on these visits. Get in contact with me via my phone 07950 701933 or via e-mail at [claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk](mailto:claire.clinton@rematters.co.uk) for any further support.

## 1. Preparing for the visit

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

- It is important for teachers (and any support staff on the visit) 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 pupils are on their visit. It would also not be wise in terms of health and safety of the pupils (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. Pupils 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 2020 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.

## 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 pupils 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 pupils are here to observe and are not there to participate.**

## 2. 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 judged by SACRE members after this.

There will be a Celebration event for the giving out of certificates and prizes in late June or early July – venue and date TBC. The event will contain 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-point from 2025 from B&D schools on the our google drive - [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) - to give you some inspiration for work that you can encourage your teachers to do with their classes. This will also help to show the standard of the winning work to teachers and pupils 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 pupils have learnt from going outside the classroom on their visits.

## **2025-26 Prizes to be awarded**

There will be prizes for the following:

Secondary School – Best individual response Key Stage 3  
Secondary School – Best individual response Key Stage 3 runner up

Secondary School – Best individual response Key Stage 4  
Secondary School – Best individual response Key Stage 4 runner up

Secondary School – ICT entry

Secondary School – Best work from a SEND pupil  
Secondary School – Best work from a SEND pupil runner up

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 3**

Students should be able to:

- apply their knowledge to explain the different teachings within a religion e.g. different denominations, traditions and groupings e.g. how different Christians celebrate the Eucharist.
- explain what it means to belong to a faith, taking into account the differing expressions of that faith e.g. the variety of forms of worship within Hinduism
- explain how different groups and traditions place a different emphasis on aspects of religious expression. e.g. that the concept of Shirk has an impact on Muslim expression of faith
- compare and contrast the impact of inspirational religious leaders on the lives of believers and their communities
- compare and contrast a range of perspectives on questions of meaning, purpose and morality e.g. comparing Hindu views on the importance of community

# 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 7 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 Year 7 the school is covered to take pupils 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 pupils out of school.

## Wording example 1:

Pupils 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 pupils 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 pupils first-hand experience of a place of worship. When this visit takes place the pupils 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/ward participates in visits to places of worship throughout their primary school career.

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

I would like to reassure you that your child/ward 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/ward 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/ward'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 pupils before-hand and let places of worship have them in advance.
2. Each visit should have a clear focus
3. Prepare pupils 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 on the B&D database

## 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 pupil explaining what their artwork shows 0- so annotate work, or use AFL openers to help them reflect on their learning so that can be captured a=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 pupils 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 knowledgably 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 pupils 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 pupils 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 **pupil's engagement** in the classroom after the visit.

## Social and Community benefits

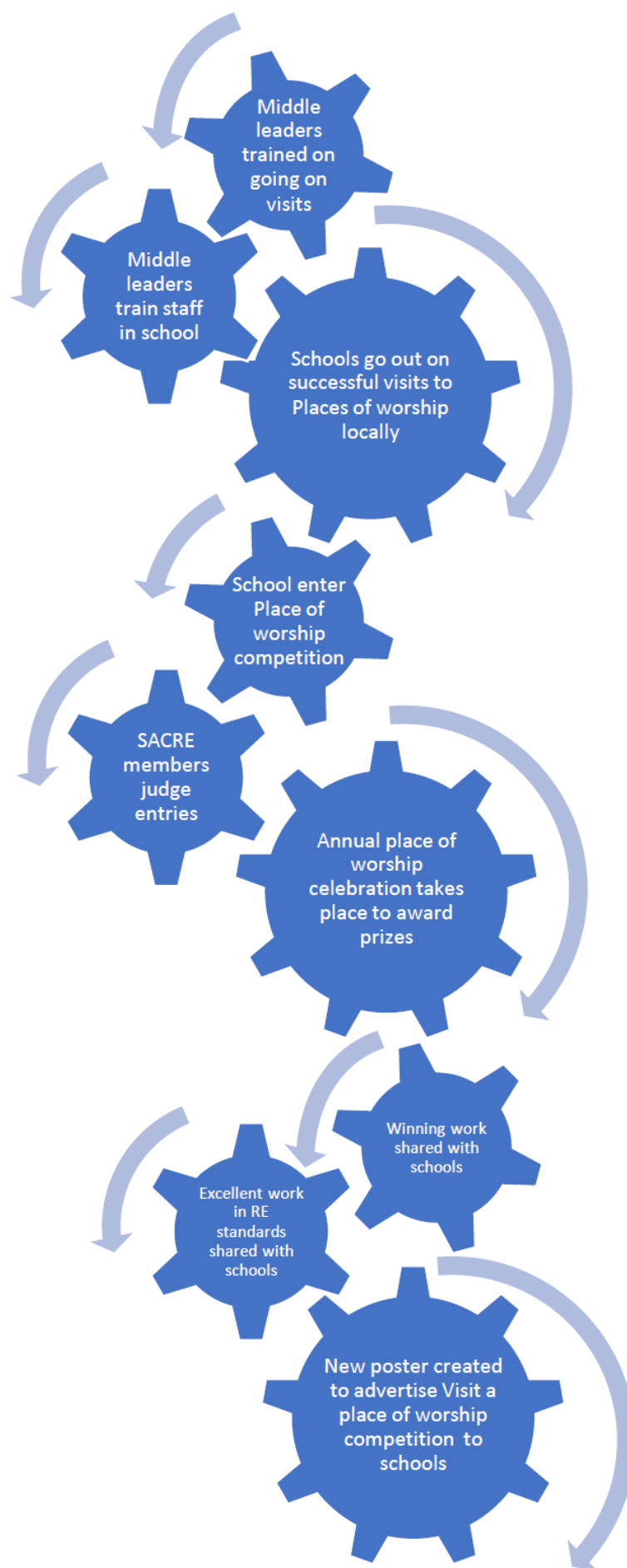
- Educational visits will undoubtedly have a **social aspect**, the pupils will have the opportunity to talk to spend time with pupils and adults from their class in a way that differs from being in the classroom, building relationships. They may find out that someone in their class is an 'expert' in 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 pupils **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 pupil's character**, they will always learn something new about the place they visit, and about themselves.
- We are providing the pupils 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 child/ren 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 pupils 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