

Building Bridges Burnley Report to SACRE - April 2023

Building Bridges Burnley is an interfaith group, which operates to promote social cohesion, encourages the exploration of the spirituality of different faiths, and works closely with public sector partners on social action.

The number of schools accessing the 'Offer to Schools' is steadily increasing. This academic year almost 50 schools have concluded a service level agreement, with a significant number of these being for the first time.

We have two admin staff, Rehana and Salma, who are working well together, to the extent that we have cleared the backlog of visits from bookings made during the pandemic, and are now contacting schools who have not renewed their SLAs for this year. We are confident that this situation will allow us to make earlier bookings in the next academic year.

The demand for the service has required us to expand our team of 'faith friends', as we refer to the volunteer school visitors. We have additional volunteers for Sikhism, Judaism and Hinduism, but are still in need of more volunteers for Islam in the central / western side of the county. We have also made arrangements with more places of worship for visits from schools. These include the new Fishergate mosque in Preston, the mosque in Blackpool, the Buddhist centre in Lancaster, and the synagogue in Bury.

Further expansion of the scheme is anticipated, both for our main users – primary schools – but also with some secondary schools who have been making enquiries. We also want to explore ways of more formally aligning the content of the visits to schools with the curriculum. Finally, a longer-term idea is to introduce virtual tours of places of worship.

Peter Lumsden
Project manager
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