

Building Bridges Burnley Report to SACRE

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. For the year 2023 / 2024 we are very excited to have been chosen by Burnley Football club as their charity partner. See: https://youtu.be/xC_ywzVOdFg?si=QGnHRznYJ707NJ6.

In the last academic year just over 50 schools accessed the 'Offer to Schools', with a significant number of these being for the first time. The demand for the service has placed pressure on our team of 'faith friends', as we refer to the volunteer school visitors. We are in critical need of additional volunteers for Judaism and Hinduism in particular, but volunteers from any faith background are welcome. Additional support for delivering Islam has come from the ambassadors for 'Faith the Future' based at Lancaster University and the project lead, Dr Sayjda Talib. We are looking to share some material for training new volunteers.

Visits to places of worship benefitted from new locations – including the new Fishergate mosque in Preston, the mosque in Blackpool, the Buddhist centre in Lancaster, and the synagogue in Bury. Benefitting from the proximity of locations in the Broadgate area of Preston, some schools were able to visit more than one place of worship on the same day.

Most schools have paid the fee set out in the service-level agreement, but there are three or four who have not responded to repeated requests for payment.

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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