

SCHOOL VISITS TO FAITH COMMUNITIES

ENRICHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING

A GUIDE TO OPPORTUNITIES
AND RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS



2022



**faiths
united**
TAMESIDE

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Tameside
Metropolitan Borough



Contents

Introduction : Building Better Understanding	4
Directory of Opportunities	5
Buddhist	6
Christian	7
Hindu	8
Humanist	8
Jewish	9
Muslim	11
Sikh	12
Planning a successful visit	13
Educational content	13
Practical arrangements	14
Communication	14
Visitors to school	15
Doubts and reluctance	16
Ideas to use on a school visit	17
Support for faith communities	20

Introduction : Building Better Understanding

This guide and directory has been prepared to support schools planning visits to or from faith communities. Dialogue between students and people of faith enriches religious education, nurtures tolerance and builds bridges of understanding within our local communities.

Engagement can take the form of a visit to a faith community or receiving a visitor in an assembly, class or special event. Other opportunities can be taken on-line.

Many schools find it invaluable to arrange such dialogue to help students to broaden their understanding and experience of our communities and world. The benefits include:

- enriching religious education and fulfilling requirements of the local agreed syllabus;
- promoting fundamental human values of respect and tolerance;
- broadening pupils' experience and perspectives;
- developing critical thinking;
- building bridges within our local communities.

The *Schools Welcome* project aims to support and facilitate this engagement through:

- encouraging and supporting **educational visits** to and from faith communities as part of religious education and SMSC development;
- producing a **directory of contacts** in Tameside and beyond;
- providing **training and support** for faith communities which offer this service.

Although the project supports visits, individual arrangements must be made directly between a school and a faith community or organisation.



Faith Communities which have participated in training and which meet other basic criteria can display the *Schools Welcome* badge to indicate that visits support delivery of the local RE syllabus. Further details are outlined below.

The Schools Welcome project has been developed with financial help from the Westhill Trust and support from Pennine Learning Associates and Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.

Directory of Opportunities

This list is provided to help schools contact faith communities. Such engagement can enrich students' religious education and enhance awareness, understanding and tolerance of religious diversity in our region.

The list is intended for Tameside schools, but wider details are also included. The list is only as good as the information offered and received. There are always many gaps! We very much welcome additions and suggestions from schools, faith communities and individuals. Please contact enquiries@penninelearning.com if you would like to offer or suggest ideas to share with colleagues.

Resources for six local places of worship have been developed to support school visits. These include a PowerPoint presentation and notes that can be used to prepare for a visit and an activity booklet that can be used on the day. These are available to schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Buddhist	Manchester Buddhist Centre
Christian	St Michael and all Angels Church, Ashton
Hindu	Ambaji Hindu Mandir (Temple), Ashton
Jewish	Whitefield Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox)
Muslim	Ashton Central Mosque
Sikh	Guru Gobind Singh Ji Gurdwara and Educational Centre, Chorlton

Full contact details for all these places of worship are included in the directory below.

There are many other communities and organisations supporting school visits and some of these are also listed below, arranged according to religion. There are also local and regional links and schools can make contact directly with local places of worship. In particular, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches operate parish systems where there is always a local church with pastoral responsibility for the local community. It is generally easy to make contact directly or, if necessary, through the Anglican dioceses of Manchester and Chester and the Roman Catholic dioceses of Salford and Shrewsbury.

The purpose of visits envisaged here is to support the education of young people, not in any way to persuade or proselytise. However, we hope that direct engagement with people of faith will enliven and inspire pupils' thinking so they can make their own judgments and develop their own understanding.

Although due care has been taken to check that individuals and organisations are appropriate and bona fide, it is not possible for us to conduct safeguarding or quality assurance checks in a comprehensive way. Please be clear that is the responsibility of individual schools to undertake normal safeguarding and quality assurance procedures for themselves. However, we are very happy to receive feedback which will help to ensure this list is as useful and up-to-date as possible.

Any arrangements should be made directly with the people on this list. Please also check any financial arrangements. Many do not make a charge. In other cases they are commercial organisations or individuals whose livelihood derives from this educational work. We have indicated where charges are likely. Even where these visits are *pro bono*, it is always appropriate to offer travel and incidental expenses and perhaps a donation.

Many places of worship are already offering online material and virtual tours – this has been noted in their entry. Others are beginning to develop their resources in this area, so it is worth checking.

Buddhist

Manchester Buddhist Centre

Offer educational visits

16-20 Turner St, Manchester M4 1DZ



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Website: www.manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk

Contact: 0161-834 9232

Christian

You can contact your local church. The churches below offer a particular service to schools:

St Michael and all Angels Church, Ashton

Church St, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 6XE

Contact: Peter Lee brucelee659246@gmail.com or 07961143890



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Dukinfield Old Chapel Unitarians



Old Road, Dukinfield, Cheshire SK16 4EN

Welcomes visits from schools and colleges; offering visits in relation to our history (links with the Dukinfield Astley family and Beatrix Potter), worship, rites of passage, visits associated with art (our stained-glass windows and unique architecture). Refreshments can be available. On-line visits also possible.

Charges: Free to schools

Website: www.ukunitarians.org.uk/dukinfield

Contact: Mrs Dawn Buckle dawnbuckle@ymail.com

Glossop and Tameside Methodist Circuit

The Glossop and Tameside Methodist Circuit has 16 Methodist Churches throughout Tameside: Ashton, Audenshaw, Denton, Dukinfield, Hyde, Hollingworth, Mossley (details below) and Stalybridge. As the name suggests there are also a few Churches over the border in the High Peak area around Glossop. The Circuit welcomes enquiries from schools and colleges offering visits to the churches and school assemblies.

Charges: Free to schools.

Website: www.glossopandtamesidemethodist.church

Contact: The Rev Robert Balfour robert.balfour@methodist.org.uk, 0161 343 5253

Mossley Methodist Church



Chapel Street Mossley, OL5 0HE

Mossley Methodist Church welcomes enquiries from schools and offers visits to the church and school assemblies.

Charges: Free to schools.

Website: www.mossleymethodistchurch.org.uk

Contact: The Rev. Robert Balfour, robert.balfour@methodist.org.uk, 0161-343 5253

Hindu

Shree Bharatiya Mandal - Indian Association Tameside

103 Union Rd, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 8JN

The Ambaji Hindu Mandir (Temple) at Indian Association Tameside, welcomes schools or other faculties of education on a guided tour of our place of worship. Trained and DBS qualified staff will assist in exploring the Hindu faith and its celebrations to support the RE curriculum and workshops.



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Charges: Free, donation welcome.

Website: <https://sbm.org.uk/>

Contact: Dinesh Chauhan dineshelenchauhan@gmail.com and Hariom Bhatt hariomb@gmail.com

Oldham Mandir

Krishna Sisodia can arrange visits to the temple, or sessions and assemblies in school. Please contact krishnasisodia@hotmail.com

Humanist

Humanists UK school speakers

Humanism is a non-religious worldview held by millions of people in the UK. Humanists use reason, evidence, and science to understand the world around them. They make ethical decisions based on empathy and compassion for others. Humanists conduct weddings (legally recognised in Scotland and Northern Ireland, and many other countries), funerals, and birth, naming and coming-of-age ceremonies. Humanists speak frequently at interfaith discussion groups and conferences, and work toward societies' having the fullest spectrum of human rights.

Remote visits can be held on your school's online meeting platform. The visit could include:

- Classroom talk with Q&A
- Interfaith panel discussion
- Pre-recorded video answering students' questions

<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/school-speakers/>

Prof Kevin Malone, Humanist member of Tameside SACRE, is available for school visits, in person or virtually. He holds a DBS Basic Certificate and there is no fee for his humanist activities. He can be contacted at kevin.malone@manchester.ac.uk

Jewish

Synagogues

These synagogues are available for visits. Thanks to the Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester and region for this information. Please use the relevant contact details.

The Hale Synagogue (Orthodox)

11, Shay Lane, Hale Barns, Cheshire, Cheshire, WA15 8NZ

Contact: 0161 980 8846 info@haleshule.com

Menorah Synagogue (Reform)

198 Altrincham Road, Manchester, M22 4RZ

Contact: 0161 428 7746 office@menorah.org.uk

Whitefield Hebrew Congregation (Orthodox)

Park Lane, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7PB



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at

<https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Contact: 0161 766 3732 office@thewhc.co.uk

School visits from volunteers

Within Greater Manchester the Jewish Representative Council of Greater Manchester & Region have a group of volunteer teachers who are willing to visit schools for an hour or a morning or afternoon.

Zoom sessions are also possible. For more details, please contact Sandra Stewart

(sandra.oakdene@btinternet.com).

Teachers

The following are teachers who offer a professional service. For their programmes and charges please contact them. They will offer sessions lasting from an hour to a whole day.

Ann Angel is a Manchester-based professional Jewish educator who runs interactive, creative workshops for primary, secondary and special needs students, as well as offering CPD for teachers on various aspects of Jewish Life. Ann conducts visits in person and also through virtual platforms, bringing Jewish customs and stories, Hebrew language and an insight into the diversity of Jewish life directly to you. Contact: ann@annangeleducation.org website www.annangeleducation.org

Tamar Bacall, “Tamar’s Jewish Adventures” who can be reached at tamars.jewish.adventures@gmail.com
website: www.tamarsjewishadventures.com

Simon Caplan, an experienced teacher of Jewish studies, who can be reached at scaplan59@aol.com www.J4s.me.uk

Eric Cohen, a retired headteacher, can be reached at ecohen9673@aol.com

Other provision

Freddy Naftel

Enrichment presentations and workshops for students aged 7-13, focusing on the legacy of the Holocaust and antisemitism today, from a personal point of view and concentrating on his family history. Zoom presentations available as well as in-person visits, covering a variety of topics and aimed at different year groups. The latest presentations are: *The History of Antisemitism from Medieval Times to the Present Day*, which takes in myths and stereotypes, expulsion of Jews; and *The Holocaust and my own Family Story*, which he recommends for students who have already covered the Holocaust in general. Both talks include personal experience and allow for further discussion from the students. Charges apply. Feedback and references available upon request. Freddy is the Jewish representative on Calderdale, Kirklees and Knowsley SACREs.

Contact: Freddy Naftel 07305 241353 or fredericknaftel@virginmedia.com

Manchester Jewish Museum

Cheetham Hill Rd, Manchester ½ mile from Victoria Station.
School visits welcome by arrangement.

Website: www.manchesterjewishmuseum.com

Muslim

Ashton Central Mosque

Welcomes school visits. Interactive presentations linked to the age and needs of pupils. Normally 2 hour morning sessions. Free of charge; donation welcome.



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Website: www.ashtoncentralmosque.com

Contact: Nabeela Akram nab21akr@aol.com

Equilibria: Explore Islam Workshops, Assemblies and Mosque Visits



Equilibria Experience is a West Yorkshire-based charity committed to encouraging a better understanding of Islam through interactive pupil workshops, assemblies and mosque visits. Workshops include: Calligraphy (with bamboo pens and water based ink), Islam and Nature, Diversity, and many more. Workshops are currently offered online with accompanying artefacts and resources delivered to schools in advance.

Website: www.equilibriaexperience.org.uk

Contact: contact@equilibriaexperience.org.uk

Islam e-Resources Portal and remote learning offered by Muslim Learner Services

Imran Kotwal offers workshops about Islam for pupils and CPD for teachers. He is now offering remote and virtual Islam assemblies and workshops as well. Prices/packages information can be found on the Muslim Learner Services website: <http://www.Islamresources.co.uk>
The organisation offers subscriptions to an Islam e-resources Portal which offers full access for one year to all teaching and learning materials, including powerpoints, quizzes, stories and teaching notes.

Sikh

Guru Harkrishan Gurdwara

12 Sherbourne Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester M3 1FE

Balbir Singh is also available to visiting schools to give talks.

Contacts: Bachan Singh 07882-503160, Balbir Singh 07791-991223

Guru Gobind Singh Ji Gurdwara and Educational Centre

57 Upper Chorlton Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 7RQ

Parkash Singh also does talks and day sessions at schools.



Student workbook and a PowerPoint presentation are available for visits and preparation as part of the Schools Welcome project. These are available to Tameside schools at <https://tamesideservicesforschools.uk>.

Contact: Parkash Singh 07909-517494, bobby@db-computers.co.uk

Central Gurdwara (Manchester)

32 Derby Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester M8 8RY

Visits led by a team of volunteers and include exploring the significance of the gurdwara, the principles of being a Sikh and the importance of the 5 K's. The Holy Scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib Ji) are shown and their special place explained. Visits are interactive and include Q & A and langar, allowing the students to try the communal meal.

Contact: Bobbi Sahni 07815-042435

Planning a successful visit

A visit will only be as successful as the preparation behind it. This will involve:

- The faith community or organisation
- Your own school's internal processes
- Parents
- Pupils
- Any other teachers or helpers

Most of the suggestions that follow will apply, or be adaptable, to external visits or to receiving a visitor from the community.

Educational content

Although there is value in simply 'getting to know' another part of your community or another faith, it is also critical that there are **specific, shared educational objectives**. Ensure there are clear aims linked to the RE syllabus or other areas of the curriculum and school ethos. Vague aims will result in vague learning. Don't try to learn everything about a world faith in a 2-hour visit!

Discuss and agree these aims with the host of your visit well in advance so you have a shared plan for the content of the day. Agree what role teachers will have and what activities will be led by the host. Behaviour management will always remain the responsibility of the teacher. If possible, arrange to visit the location and discuss the visit directly with your host, also becoming familiar with the physical environment and facilities. If a prior visit is not feasible, ensure there is a full discussion by phone.

Prepare your pupils through prior teaching about the topics and faith to be covered. A visit is not a replacement for ongoing, sequential learning in RE. It is a way of enriching and extending RE, a natural next step on the learning road, not a diversion or entertaining sideline. In particular, it is good to help pupils to prepare some questions and areas to explore well in advance of the visit. Communicate these to your host. This does not prevent spontaneous enquiry on the day but ensures there has been prior thinking. Hosts will generally very much welcome open and frank questions. Courtesy does not mean withholding genuine doubts, questions, fears and uncertainties in an erroneous attempt to avoid giving offence.

Practical arrangements

Clarify any **logistical arrangements**. These may include:

- Precise time and place to meet
- Parking or drop-off and road safety
- Mobile phone numbers in case of delay or difficulty
- Access
- Refreshments
- Toilets

Share any **specific needs** with your host. This may include particular special needs, access or dietary requirements. It will also include preparing a risk assessment. Most localities will have a generic risk assessment that can be made specific to the particular visit.

Make sure you know any specific **protocols for the visit**. For example, covering heads or removing shoes. Check that pupils are aware of these and the reasons for them.

Ascertain what **charges** will be made (if any) or agree any donation. It is always good to make a donation even if no charge is levied. Although school budgets are stretched, volunteers will have given their time freely and the place of worship will have many costs involved to which it seems fair to offer a contribution.

Decide what **help is needed** on the day. It can be good to include some parent helpers, not least as a way of communicating the value and importance of such visits.

Communication

Timely and effective communication is essential in promoting a successful visit.

Share the nature, purpose and content of visit with parents and children at an early stage. This can be included in a newsletter or on the website as well as in a specific information letter.

Heads and teachers will be aware of any **particular sensitivities** within the local or school community. A visit can be an opportunity to move these forward if communication is careful and based on trust.

On a basic level, share **contact details** between the school and organisation. Voluntary organisation, including faith communities, do not always have phones or emails monitored every day, so try to obtain a contact number that is readily accessible, especially on the day.

Appropriate publicity is often helpful and a school may wish to keep a visual record in a scrapbook, on the website or in the newsletter.

Volunteers and communities will always appreciate a **'thank-you'**, especially from the pupils and it is good practice to evaluate the visit together, sharing good practice and ideas to improve for the future.

Visitors to school

Schools often use visitors as well as, or instead of, arranging an external visit. Unless such an occasion is specifically part of the RE curriculum or an act of collective worship, there is no statutory right to withdraw. It can still enable pupils to understand about different people and cultures.

This directory may help with ideas but there will also be local and personal contacts within the school community. If a visitor's contribution is supported appropriately, they do not have to have extensive teaching skills or public speaking experience. An interview or prepared questions can be a very effective way of helping pupils to learn about a visitor's faith, culture or experience. This also maintains overall handling of the occasion in the professionals' hands, which may help a visitor and ensure the fluency of the interview or presentation.

There are some key things to consider in planning the visit:

- What are the aims? Have these been discussed and shared with the visitor?
- Ensure the school is managing the event throughout. This will help the visitor as well as you.
- Follow normal safeguarding procedures, while also offering appropriate welcome and hospitality.
- Prepare the pupils, staff and parents; celebrate the occasion and links with the wider community.

It is good to remember that staff (not just teaching staff) and parents may be a source of diverse experience that can be celebrated in school and learnt from by pupils. Sensitivity is needed, and such contributions need to be appropriate to the willingness, confidence and experience of the person concerned. At the same time this participation can affirm and enrich the participant.

Doubts and reluctance

Sometimes parents or carers are reluctant to allow their child to participate on a specific visit. All school visits require parental consent and parents have a legal right to withhold such consent. While schools must always respect (and be seen to respect) these statutory rights, teachers can reasonably encourage full participation as part of every child's right to a broad and balanced education.

Be aware that parental reluctance may stem from a number of reasons and should not be automatically dismissed as ignorance or prejudice. Although these may be a factor for some, there can also be genuine fears and doubts and it is always good to encourage a parent or carer to articulate their questions and to offer reassurance.

Schools have found some of the ideas below useful in dealing with doubts or in building a culture where visits and visitors are part of the yearly routine and welcomed by all.

- It is good practice to ask to **discuss concerns face to face**. There may be specific reasons why a parent is reluctant to allow consent. A meeting gives the opportunity to reassure and for the parent to think through what is best;
- Be very **clear about the facts** – communicate the nature, purpose and content of the visit at an early stage and continue to do so;
- **Expound the value** of the visit – how and why it will be helpful for pupils and how it links to the curriculum;
- **Celebrate the event** through displays and information on newsletters, website or parents' evenings. Use last year's pictures to help promote this year's event;
- **Link it into a wider school context**, for example as part of a sequence of visits or events that engage with diversity or as a contribution to a wider anti-bullying or tolerance agenda;
- **Communicate the enjoyment** and participation involved. It's a shame if a child misses out on the experience shared by others in the class;
- **Involve parents** – as helpers or through sharing what is happening.

Ideas to use on a school visit to a place of worship

Journey around a place of worship



Plan a journey around the place of worship with 3 or 4 key stopping points. Choose and plan each stopping point carefully. Include a short explanation and have any relevant objects/pictures ready. Answer the questions: 'What is this?', 'What happens here?', 'Why is it important?'.

Photographs of each area/artefact being used in worship will help pupils to understand how the building is used by the community. If there are other volunteers to help with the visit, this could be done as a carousel with small groups taking turns to hear about each area.

Pictures and photographs

Pictures and photographs make a good starting point for a visit. It is worth laminating pictures that are likely to be used regularly. Here are some easy ideas for using pictures with primary pupils:

- Provide a photo of your place of worship with people in it. Ask the children to talk about what they see happening. What questions do they have? How is it different from the time of the visit (when it is likely to be empty).
- Arrange a small selection of photos on a single page. Ask the children to look carefully around and see if they can spot where the photos were taken. This could be a 'walk around' activity, or one that can be done as an introduction whilst sitting in a single place looking all around.
- If schools have brought iPads/cameras to take photos, challenge them to choose what they think is the most important area/object to take a photo and then share ideas about what they chose and why. What might a member of the worshipping community choose? Why?
- Alternatively, give each child a small 'picture frame' cut out from cardboard. The aperture needs to be no bigger than 6cm x 4cm. Invite them to walk around the building and 'frame' the most important objects/areas then discuss as above.



Artefacts

- Younger children will enjoy guessing and then pulling objects out of a 'feely bag'. Invite children of all ages to make suggestions and ask questions about an object/religious artefact. Allow them to handle the object, if appropriate.
- Tell the story of a particular object/artefact. How old is it? How did it come to be in the place of worship? How is it used now? Why is it special to the community/to you personally?
- Play 'Kim's game' – prepare a selection of significant objects (or photos) covered by a cloth and divide the class into teams of about 6. Invite one at a time from each team to come and look before telling their team what they saw. Which team can make a list of all the objects (named or described)?



Multi-sensory approaches

Consider how to move beyond having pupils sitting and listening. How might movement and all the senses be included as part of the visit?

- Are there sounds and smells associated with the building that children could be invited to experience? (e.g. bells, call to prayer, music, incense). There may be food associated with the place of worship. Make plans **in advance** with the teacher if you intend to include any tasting to avoid allergy issues or any misunderstandings (it is important that this is clearly an educational visit, not a participation in an act of worship).
- **'Corners' quiz:** Give each corner of the room a letter or name. Ask some carefully worded multiple-choice questions and ask children to move to the corner of their choice to show their answer. More than one correct answer could be included in the selection to promote discussion.

Examples of possible questions:

- Which Holy book do we read here?
- What do people do when they arrive in this building?
- How many books/chapters/words/pages are in the holy book?
- Why do people cover their heads when they come here?

Card sorting

Provide a set of cards for children to sort in small groups. For example:

1. A selection of statements about what happens here. Children can sort them into most important /least important. Include a few 'red herrings'.

2. A selection of festivals, holy books, places , objects, people. Can the children pick out the cards associated with this particular place of worship/faith community?



Support for faith communities

Free training and support are available for leaders and volunteers from local faith communities who visit schools or welcome schools to their place of worship.

Training

A free half day course enables participants to:

- Learn about the local RE syllabus and how a visit can enhance pupils' learning
- Ensure that visits are effective and successful for the community schools
- Explore some activities that can be used on a visit to inspire and inform pupils
- Ensure awareness of safeguarding and handling sensitive issues
- Explore ideas for alternative activities such as virtual tours and online Q and A events
- Meet and network with other people welcoming schools to their places of worship

For details on the next available course contact enquiries@penninelearning.com or go to www.penninelearning.com. Courses are free but places must be booked. Please note that, although safeguarding is covered as part of the morning, the course is not a substitute for full safeguarding training which is available through the local authority or, usually, through a faith community.

Recognition



The *Schools Welcome* badge of recognition is awarded to faith communities and other organisations who fulfil five specific criteria, outlined below. It aims to give confidence to schools about the quality of the visit that can be expected. It may also be awarded to individuals who visit schools. The badge is awarded for three years and is renewable subject to feedback and after attending update training.

The badge recognises and affirms the commitment of the faith community or individual to work in partnership with schools to deliver an effective and appropriate contribution to education. To achieve this, volunteers or employed staff will have received training about safeguarding, RE and appropriate learning strategies. The organisation will have safeguarding policies and protocols in place.

The badge is not a replacement for due diligence and schools remain responsible for their own safeguarding. However, it should give confidence to organisers of visits about the integrity of the education offered.

Communities and individuals receiving the Schools Welcome recognition badge will have fulfilled the following criteria:

1. Educators have attended training and have good understanding of the role of RE in school and what makes a good quality visit
2. Visits are carefully planned with the school, relate directly to the curriculum, and include varied activities and clear communication
3. Safeguarding policies are in place and educators are safeguarding trained
4. Information and contact details are clear and reliable
5. Facilities are accessible and clean with adequate toilet and washing facilities. Where appropriate there is space for pupils to have a drink or lunch, though it is recognised that not all venues will be able to offer this.

The small print



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FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact enquiries@penninelearning.com.
We welcome feedback, suggestions or ideas and will include any changes or amendments in future editions.