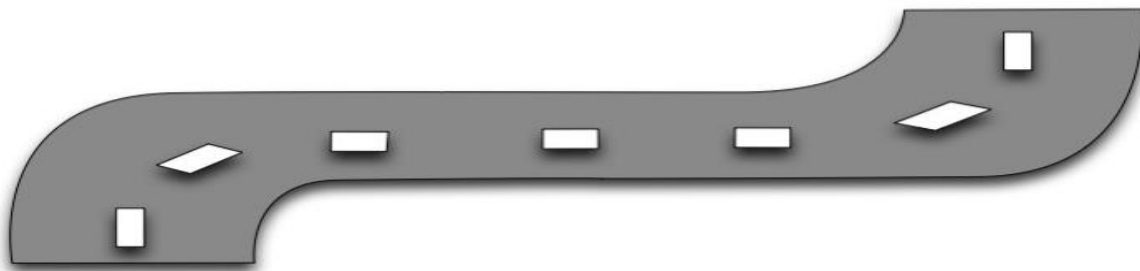


## RE Road Map: Approaches and Resources for Teachers for Use in School



**This document will lead teachers towards becoming an expert in teaching Sikhism within your classroom. It is not intended for pupils.**



### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

#### **Diwali / Bandi Chor**

Make sure if you are exploring the festival of Diwali with children in the early years that you also let them know that Sikhs celebrate this festival too as well as Hindus.

Sikhs do not solely celebrate Diwali for the same reason as other faiths, Sikhs mainly celebrate Bandi Chor Divas (often translated as Prisoner Release Day or Day of breaking from False Bonds) on Diwali. This is the occasion of the return of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, who was freed from imprisonment in 1619 along with 52 Hindu Kings and Princes who were being unjustly detained. Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji returned to

Amritsar around the time of Diwali, the people lit up the whole city with thousands of candles, lights and lamps in celebration.

The full story can be read here:

[https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Bandi\\_Chhorh\\_Divas](https://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Bandi_Chhorh_Divas)

Engage with practical aspects of the festival, such as making diva lamps, lighting candles and watching film clips of fireworks, but ensure they know why these things are included in the festivities (their symbolic significance: diva lamps and candle lights are lit to remind Sikhs to ignite the internal flame of hope within our minds and ask God to free us from our worldly bonds, to always stand for justice and help those in need).

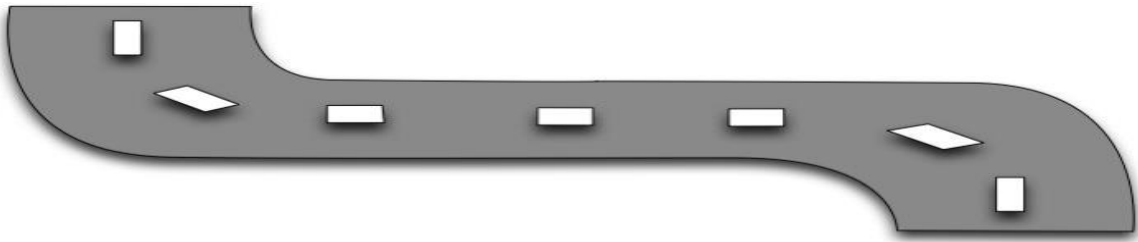
### Sikhs Today

Share images of Sikhs today and display in the classroom so that young children recognise there are Sikhs living alongside them in their communities.



## Sikh Persona Doll

A Sikh Persona Doll is available from <https://shop.retoday.org.uk/160116> and is a useful resource for teaching about Sikh dress and symbols.



## Primary

### Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Include the Guru Granth Sahib Ji in any topic that looks at special scriptures. This, the sacred scripture of the Sikh Faith, is considered the 'Living Guru' and is treated like a king. Whilst being read, a *Chaur Sahib* (a whisk/fan made from yak's tail hair with a wooden or metal holder, traditionally used to keep dignitaries cool as a symbol of honour and respect) is continually waved over the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. At night the Guru Granth Sahib Ji is covered in cloths (called *rumalas*) and placed into an elaborate bed within a special 'bedroom' (*Sachkhand*) for the Guru Granth Sahib Ji to reside in. It will then be awoken the next day for reading. Whilst being read it will be placed on a *manji* (a stool). The *manji* is on the *takht* (a raised platform) and it is all covered by the *palki* (canopy). Let the young children practice waving the Chaur Sahib over a pretend scripture and set up a bed with special cloths for it to reside in.

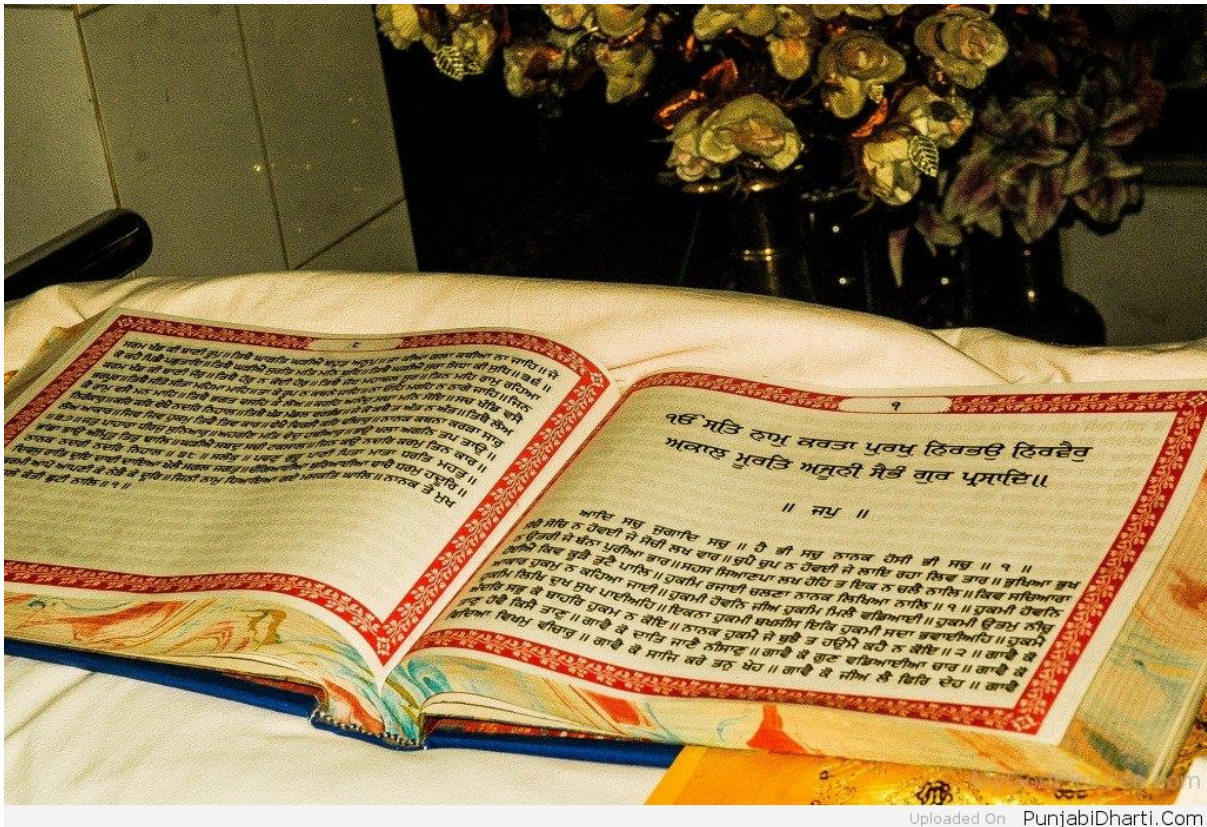
This clip features the Guru Granth Sahib scriptures:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx4v8>

This clip shows the Guru Granth Sahib Ji being taken to its resting place in the gurdwara:

[http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=381/consultants\\_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2FsukhAasan02%2FSuchKhand.html](http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=381/consultants_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2FsukhAasan02%2FSuchKhand.html)





## The Gurdwara

A visit to a local Gurdwara would be most appropriate at this age. Pupils will be able to see the Guru Granth Sahib Ji being read and experience a simple vegetarian meal in the langar hall. They should be prepared to cover their heads and remove their shoes when entering. See the end of this document for details regarding local gurdwaras you can visit with your pupils. They would be expected to cover their heads during the visit and should be instructed to avoid pointing their feet at the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

If you cannot visit a gurdwara, a virtual tour is the next best thing:

<https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/holy-cribs-gurdwara>

This clip offers an overview of what it is like inside a gurdwara:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx57w>

'Charlie and Blue go to the Gurdwara' is a good clip for younger children (KS1): <https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/charlie-and-blue-go-gurdwara> and there is an accompanying lesson plan downloadable from here: [https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/charlie-and-blue-do-some-soul-searching?tab=lesson\\_plan](https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/charlie-and-blue-do-some-soul-searching?tab=lesson_plan)

'A Day in the Life of a Granthi' shows how the Sikh holy scripture is read: <https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/day-life-sikh-granthi>

This clip explains about the Sikh Holy Scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji, and shows the scriptures being taken to its special room in the gurdwara after reading: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2LbTwwGsAY>

Sikh Dharma International have produced this video: 'Your First Visit to a Sikh Gurdwara' ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXP\\_MxG9q1o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXP_MxG9q1o))

### Gurdwara Visualisation

Visiting a local gurdwara is the best way for pupils to encounter the Sikh faith but if it is not possible conducting a 'visualisation' in the classroom is also effective. Invite children to sit calmly in a quiet classroom. Pupils can take a few deep breaths ready for their journey. Use the following as ways to engage pupils with different aspects of the gurdwara:

- Show an image of the outside of the gurdwara, with the Nishan Sahib (flag) flying.
- Hold up a Nishan Sahib (explain the symbol on it represents Sikhism and is called a *khanda*).
- Now, as part of the visualisation, invite them to close their eyes and imagine entering the building and a small hall where they will take off their shoes and place them onto racks because removing shoes is how they show respect to the Sikh holy scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. There are already several shoes there on the rack because Sikhs come in and out of the gurdwara all day to worship. Invite them to open their eyes and actually take their own shoes off placing them quietly in front/beside them. They might also want to act out washing their hands here.
- Eyes closed again, invite them to imagine the pictures on the walls of very important men, the Gurus of Sikhism. Ask them to open their eyes and show them a picture of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, explaining how special he is to Sikhs as the founder of their religion.
- Continue the visualisation, moving to the main prayer hall. Ask them to imagine a large hall and at the front of it is the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji*. It is under a canopy and up high. A *granthi* is reading it and people are listening. You are listening too.
- Play a sound clip of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji being read (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETvO6Bi8gv0>)
- Invite pupils to imagine the *granthi* waving the *chaur sahib* over the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. What would it feel like to hold it and wave it like you are fanning a very important person visiting you?

- Invite them to open eyes. Pass round a *chaur sahib* for pupils to feel the horsehair.
- Closing eyes again, invite them to continue to look around the prayer hall. Can they hear music? It is the music created by instruments as Sikhs worship. They are singing *shabads* (hymns)
- Play a sound clip of Sikh worship (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TFFfJDzXOCs>)
- Close eyes again to continue the visualisation. Explain they are now leaving the prayer hall and on exit are offered some *karah prashad* (make some for tasting at this point if you would like!). It tastes sweet. Now they can smell more food. They are entering the langar hall and here they can see many people sitting together on the floor enjoying delicious food together.
- Show an image of the langar meal.
- Eyes closed again. Invite them to imagine they are hungry now and to take a tray and sit down with everyone else to eat. Invite pupils to look down at their tray. They will see a round bread called a *roti*, some warm lentils and sweet-smelling rice pudding for dessert. Imagine the smell and taste!
- It is time to leave this wonderful place. Invite them to wave goodbye to everyone still enjoying their langar and to walk back to the shoe racks. Open eyes and put shoes back on.
- Spend some time quietly reflecting. What parts would they really like to know more about? Was there anything surprising?

Sikh artefacts are available to purchase here:

<https://shop.retoday.org.uk/160117>

<https://www.natre.org.uk/resources/termly-mailing/inspiring-re/sikhs/what-happens-at-the-gurdwara?/>

### 'Make a Gurdwara' Group Task

In groups, ask pupils to use recycled and/or construction materials to construct a gurdwara, ensuring they have all the important aspects:

- Diwan Hall (main prayer hall where the Guru Granth Sahib Ji is read)
- Langar Hall (kitchen and dining area)
- Entrance Hall (with shoe racks and sinks for washing)
- Sachkhand (bedroom for the Guru Granth Sahib Ji)



- Nishan Sahib (flagpole and flag outside the gurdwara)

Pupils can add labels and be prepared to explain the different parts and their knowledge about each of these. Models could be used as part of an exhibition for parents and governors/visitors.

### Gurdwara Picture Match

In pairs, give pupils pictures of parts of the gurdwara and the artefacts found inside. Have the name of these on the back of the images. Describe each one, asking pupils to see if they can identify it from the images and encouraging them to use the correct vocabulary.

### Karah Parshad

At the gurdwara visitors are offered parshad in the prayer hall. The karah parshad is a sacred food; if you are offered the food you can say no. Sikhs would rather you refrain from eating it rather than waste it or put in the bin (it may be interpreted by some Sikhs as an insult.) You can make parshad using a recipe such as this one here:

<http://www.askauntyji.net/parshad-recipe/>

### The 5Ks



The 5Ks are 5 articles of faith which show a Sikh is a member of the Khalsa brotherhood. This short clip helps children to connect the idea of symbolic wearing with their own uniform:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zvn34wx>

This clip looks at each of the 5Ks in turn, showing them on the person of a Sikh young man: <https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/five-ks-sikhism>

This is another useful clip, showing young Sikh children:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx5lv>

When looking at the 5Ks, be sure to talk about the spiritual significance of each. These links have good detail on this:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/customs/fiveks.shtml>

<https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/introduction/the-sikh-identity-5ks>

This clip shows primary school pupils examining artefacts for the 5Ks:

[http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=617/consultants\\_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2F5kT%2F5kT.html](http://www.cleo.net.uk/resources/displayframe.php?src=617/consultants_resources%2Freligiouseduc%2F5kT%2F5kT.html)

See also using a Sikh persona doll (Early Years) (again not sure about the persona doll?)

Remind pupils not all Sikhs are members of the Khalsa or wearers of the 5Ks, so there will be Sikhs who have short hair.

### Prayer

This clip teaches how to pray like a Sikh:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzmBRI8LoVs>

The Mool Mantra is the Sikh statement of belief and an important prayer:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/znnmtv4/revision/2>



## Sewa

*Sewa* is the Sanskrit word for 'service' and describes an important part of what it means to be a Sikh. It goes beyond just the langar meal. There are 3 aspects to *Sewa*: *tan* (physical service), *man* (mental service) and *dhan* (material service). Guru Nanak Dev Ji built the original Sikh community around *sewa* and *simran* (remembering god at all times). Find out about charities such as Sewa UK: <https://sewauk.org/> and Khalsa Aid: <https://www.khalsaid.org/> and the work they do here in the UK and abroad.

<https://www.natre.org.uk/resources/termly-mailing/inspiring-re/sikhs/What-is-sewa-Going-beyond-the-langar/>

## The Gurus

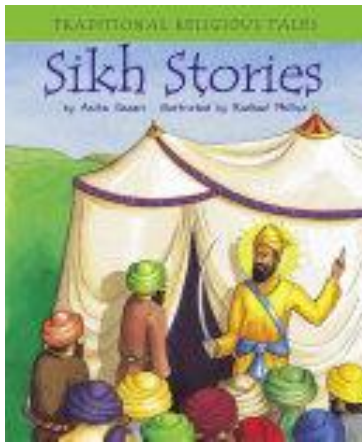
For information about each of the 10 gurus, see here:

<https://www.sikhs.org/10gurus.htm>. Pupils should understand that Guru Gobind Singh Ji named the Sikh holy scripture, the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji*, as his successor, making the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* the 'eterna'-living guru', which is why it is treated with such respect, including having the *chaur sahib* waved over it during reading and putting it to rest each night in its own special bed and bedroom. It is afforded the utmost respect.

For a film clip about Guru Nanak Dev Ji and the beginnings of Sikhism, use this link: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zgyr87h>

## The Khalsa

Use these clips: <https://www.truetube.co.uk/film/formation-khalsa> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx6vs> or a book such as Anita Ganeri's *Sikh Stories* ([https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Sikh\\_Stories.html?id=9rP3D1tKEOIC](https://books.google.co.uk/books/about/Sikh_Stories.html?id=9rP3D1tKEOIC)) to share the story of the creating of the Khalsa Brotherhood by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. The willingness to sacrifice is a concept in other faiths, such as Abraham and Isaac in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Reassure pupils that all shall be well if they are particularly sensitive towards the story.



Further Sikh stories can be found here:

<https://www.sikhnet.com/stories>

### Vaisakhi

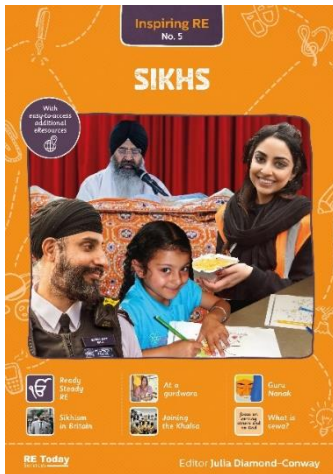
For a good clip on this important Sikh festival, watch this:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx76l> or this cartoon clip:

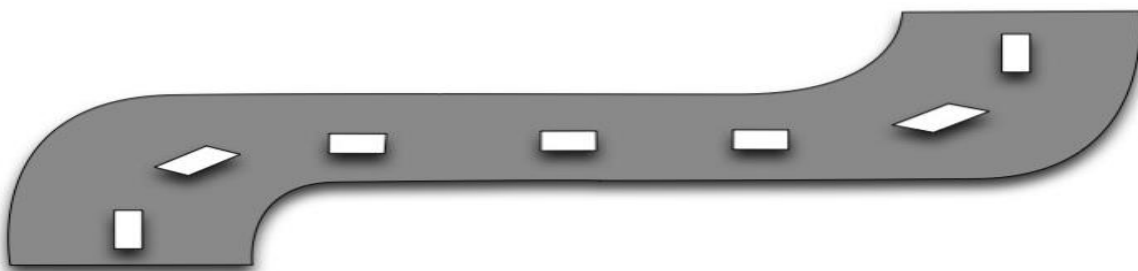
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zsjpyrd/articles/z6qqy9q>



On page 12-13 of the additional SACRE Unit 2.9 'What Does it Mean to be a Sikh in Britain Today?' you will find an excellent 'mystery activity' which can be used to explore Vaisakhi with pupils.



This is a very useful resource book on Sikhism by RE Today, suitable for KS1 and KS2.



## **KS3**

### **The Khalsa**

The Khalsa at KS3 can be explored in a variety of ways. You may use the Khalsa to support students learning on 'what difference does it make to believe...?' (Coventry and Warwickshire SACRE Agreed Syllabus)

For the Khalsa you may wish to explore the historical significance and implications of the Khalsa. How the Khalsa as a community came about, investigating the significance of this and the impact the historical event has for Sikhs today in Britain and worldwide.

<http://www.sikhs.org/guru1.htm>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zghyr82>

You may want to focus on the religious significance of the Khalsa for Sikhs in Britain today. Here you may focus on the commitments Sikhs make to join the Khalsa. This will cover the 5 Ks Sikhs wear, as part of their commitment to the Khalsa community.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/customs/fiveks.shtml>

You can also link the Sikh 5 Ks to a discussion on the religious rules and laws Sikhs follow. This may be supported with the link to the significance

and what difference it makes whether Sikh's wear one, two or all of the 5 Ks? This can link directly back to the CWAS of whether it makes a difference to be a Sikh and if so, what is that difference? Students identify and explain using their knowledge of the 5 Ks and what difference this makes, if any.

The Amrit ceremony – The ceremony must take place in front of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. You may wish to link the Amrit ceremony into the difference this makes to follow the Sikh faith but moreover, the symbolism of committing to the Sikh faith in such a way.

### **Sewa**

The Guru Granth Sahib Ji says 'there is no worship without good deeds.' The point of Sewa is to worship God by helping others. Students may discuss in a similar way again, 'What difference does it make to believe...?' (CWAS) Sikhs can demonstrate their Sewa by giving time, money or caring for others. You may wish to compare how Sikhs demonstrate Sewa to what they can do to help others. You may wish to debate with students, do you have to be religious to want to help people? Does it make a difference if you have a religious belief or not and wanting to help others? Should Sikhs be motivated by religion to want to help people or should it be everyone's responsibility, regardless of religious belief? You can then analyse the significance of Sewa for Sikhs today and the impact this has on both the Sikh and non-religious community.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zmcf3k7/revision/3>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zmcf3k7/video>

### **Celebrations**

Diwali/Bandi Chor – This worldwide celebration can be applied to the CWAS strand of, 'What is good and what is challenging about being a teenage Sikh in Britain today?' For Sikhs, the Diwali (commonly referred to as Bandi Chor) celebration is to remember the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Ji who rescued himself and 52 princes from imprisonment in 1619. The celebration of Diwali can be used to address the positives and challenges of being a Sikh in Britain today by exploring the historical significance of this celebration, using the 'British Sikh report 2015' online (a quantitative analysis of the attitudes and actions of the British Sikh community).



Encourage students to begin to list ways Sikhs view life in Britain as good, i.e. British Values/SMSC awareness of local/national celebrations of Diwali; is your local community celebrating Diwali? If so, how? Why? When? Encourage students to take part and be involved. (Raising awareness of how Sikhism makes a positive contribution to life in Britain).

Identify the challenges Sikhs face in Britain – link directly back to the celebration of Diwali. What are the challenges faced by Sikhs today who wish to practice their faith, i.e. celebrate Diwali?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zv3c7ty/revision/2>

Identify and discuss case studies using British Sikhs and how they celebrate Diwali, include reference to the significance of this celebration for Sikhs and non-religious believers. Discuss the difficulties Sikhs may face trying to celebrate Diwali in Britain today.

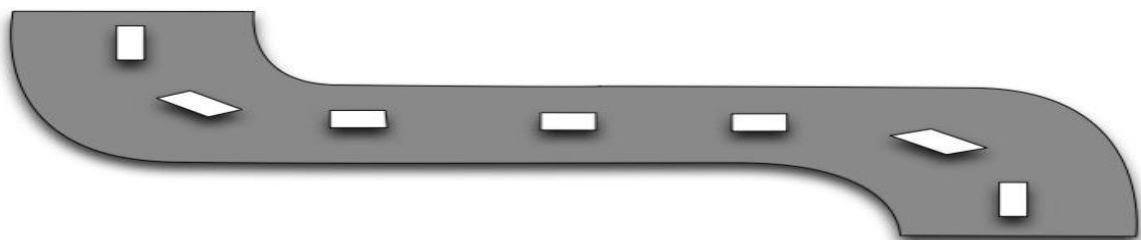
## **The Gurdwara**

As part of the Sikh celebrations of Diwali, you may discuss with students the use of The Gurdwara as part of the Sikh's celebrations.

How the Gurdwara is used? Why is the Gurdwara significant to Sikh's today? How is the Gurdwara used during Diwali?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zgrkxnb/revision/1>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02mx57w>



## **KS4 GCSE**

### **Key beliefs**

#### **Beliefs about the nature of human life**

- The role and importance of the Sangat (religious community)

Students are expected at GCSE to be able to analyse the significance and importance of the Sangat (religious community). This can link directly to students visiting a Gurdwara or inviting a Sikh believer into lessons to explain the important role the Sangat plays within the religious community.

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/rs/AQA-806217-SOW.DOCX>

Sewa – You can build on the KS3 topics and explore at GCSE the role Sewa plays in the Sangat and why service to others is a priority in Sikhism. For example, while visiting the Gurdwara with students, you may encourage students to explore the Langar and the importance of this to the Sangat and worldwide community. You may wish students to take part in the Langar to experience the importance of this for Sikhs and the local community. Moreover, you can link the Sewa to how Sikhs have helped others on an international scale.

<http://www.realsikhism.com/index.php?subaction=showfull&id=1210528039&ucat=14>

<http://sikhsewa.org.uk/>

## **Practices**

### **Worship and Service**

- Religious features of the Gurdwara: design, furniture, and artefacts

Students can as part of their GCSE be taken on a tour of the Gurdwara and informed about the significance of the design of the purpose built Gurdwara. As part of their tour they may take into account particular furniture or artefacts which are within the Sikh place of worship. Students may explore how the Gurdwara is used by individuals and the Sikh community. When students enter the Gurdwara, they will be expected to cover their heads, take their shoes off, both are done as a sign of respect.

The GCSE specification refers to “furniture” - the takht and palki – but students may misunderstand this and think there are chairs or pews. This is not the case. This is referring to the throne and canopy in which the Guru Granth Sahib Ji sits on.

The term for worship in Sikhism is “diwan”. This needs careful explanation because it distinguishes it from worship in other religions. A diwan is the court of a ruler and in the gurdwara the “guru” is the ruler, nowadays the Guru Granth Sahib Ji. Coming into its presence with the proper respect is

worship. The prayer hall is of great significance for Sikhs as this is where they will come into the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

Students may also experience the langar hall and discuss the significance of this for both Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike.

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/ritesrituals/gurdwara\\_1.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/sikhism/ritesrituals/gurdwara_1.shtml)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/znwr97h/revision/5>

- The role of the Gurdwara within the Sikh community

As part of the student's tour, students will be able to explore how the Gurdwara is used within the Sikh community. On reflection of their visit, students may undertake the activity of 'Be the architect', where they design a Gurdwara. They are given the basic shape and images to help create a design. They must describe and explain the significance of each feature and the use of the Gurdwara in the Sikh community. Students may wish to link how the Gurdwara is used by the Sikh community as an expression of key beliefs, clearly explaining why Sikhs use the Gurdwara for a particular event or festival.

Students should ensure they are aware of why the Gurdwara is used in a particular way:

### **The purpose of a Gurdwara**

- To grow spiritually
- A place for religious ceremonies
- It's a place where children learn the Sikh faith, ethics, customs, traditions and holy scriptures
- A Gurdwara is also used as the centre of the community, offers food, and companionship to those who need it

[https://www.reonline.org.uk/specials/places-of-worship/sikhism\\_video.htm](https://www.reonline.org.uk/specials/places-of-worship/sikhism_video.htm)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9R98e03In6c>



For all year groups, facilitating 'encounter' with Sikhism as a living faith is very important. Visiting the place of worship or inviting in a faith representative into school are excellent ways for pupils to encounter the living faith.

#### Local Sikh Visitors:

Jatinder Birdi (Warwickshire Inter Faith Network/Warwickshire SACRE Member): [jatinderbirdi@gmail.com](mailto:jatinderbirdi@gmail.com)

Jatinder Singh (Coventry SACRE Member): [jatsta@gmail.com](mailto:jatsta@gmail.com)

#### Local Gurdwaras for School Visits:

Gurdwara Sahib Leamington & Warwick  
Tachbrook Park Drive, Warwick, CV34 6RH  
Tel: 01926 424297

<http://www.gurdwara-leamingtonandwarwick.com/visits.html>  
[info@gurdwara-leamingtonandwarwick.com](mailto:info@gurdwara-leamingtonandwarwick.com)

Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara, Harnell Lane, Coventry  
71-81 Harnall Lane West, Coventry CV1 4FB

[ggnp.sikhtemple@gmail.com](mailto:ggnp.sikhtemple@gmail.com)  
<https://www.facebook.com/ggnpcoventry/?rf=404689949653365>

#### Additional information on all local gurdwaras here:

<https://www.allaboutsikhs.com/world-gurudwaras/gurudwaras-in-united-kingdom-v15-2612>





Gurdwara Sahib, Leamington Spa



Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara, Coventry



For further support on Sikhism subject knowledge download our Sikh Subject Knowledge Session Clips here:

<https://i.warwickshire.gov.uk/book/export/html/20725>

RE Online offers Sikhism subject knowledge here:

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/subject-knowledge/sikhism/>

Thanks to Westhill Endowment and Coventry & Warwickshire's SACRE for granting funding to make the SACRE RE Subject Knowledge Enhancement Programme possible. [www.westhillendowment.org](http://www.westhillendowment.org)

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