

**CONSORTIUM OF GUJARATI SCHOOLS**  
**Biennial General Meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018**

**Report for 2015-18**

The Consortium of Gujarati Schools was formed on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at a General Meeting held at Kadwa Patidar Samaj Hall. It was attended by 34 members representing 14 different schools. There were 12 Apologies. It was chaired by Madhuben Kalaria. After going through the Agenda and approving the 'Rules of Consortium of Gujarat Schools', a committee was elected with Jayantbhai Tanna as Chair and Vijyaben Bhanderi as the Secretary.

The committee worked hard on various aspects of their work as outlined below.

**1) OCR Examination Board and GCSE/A Level Examinations**

The Gujarati examinations at GCSE and A Level conducted by OCR had been threatened with closure by the Board owing to a huge drop in the number of candidates taking these examinations. In order to avert this danger, CGS worked tirelessly in meeting with local Gujarati communities, Gujarati newspapers, NCGO, local councillors, local education department officers, schools, Members of Parliament, DfE officials and the OCR Board among others. It was owing to all the combined efforts that we achieved success and Edexcel Pearson agreed to continue offering these examinations from 2020.

**2) Training for Gujarati Teachers**

- a) We organised one day training in partnership with the Oshwal Community for all our Gujarati teachers on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2016 at the EKTA Centre in Kingsbury. The theme was Planning, Teaching and Assessment. The sessions were on Lesson Structure, Learning Styles, Planning and Assessment led by Jayantbhai Tanna. Shobhaben Joshi led the sessions on Improving Gujarati Spellings, Grammar, Vocabulary and Sharing Good Practice. We had 90 teachers who participated and we received very positive feedback from them.
- b) In August 2016, BAPS organised some training for teachers in London and Leicester when they invited Jayantbhai Tanna to deliver sessions on Monitoring and Review of pupil progress through long term and short term assessments. He also emphasised the urgent need to 'push' more of our able GCSE students to go on to take A Level Gujarati courses and examinations.
- c) We organised half-day training for primary teachers on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in partnership with Oshwal Community at the EKTA Centre. There were separate sessions on teaching strategies for 4-6 year olds, 6-8 and 8-10. The sessions included strategies for teaching all 4 skills. We received very positive feedback from the 50 teachers who attended.
- d) We organised a session for all members to review the new Content and Assessment arrangements for A Level courses from September 2018. This was held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at the EKTA Centre. There were 16 participants. We discussed and agreed on our recommendations to the DfE and Ofqual. The main issue was to press

for including Speaking assessments to Listening, Reading and Writing, Unfortunately, we did not succeed and the new A Levels will be assessed on only 3 skills; Listening, Reading and Writing.

- e) We had a meeting with all the Gujarati school Head teachers and co-ordinators on 2<sup>nd</sup> Sept 2017. There were 31 members from a variety of schools who participated. We discussed - the GCSE and A Level results of summer 2017; the fall in the number of GCSE candidates to 518 and A Levels to 19; the new draft specifications for GCSE and A Levels; and successes and challenges in our schools.
- f) In order to boost the number of candidates taking A Level Gujarati, CGS decided in January 2018 to offer a 50% payment of the examination entry fees. Six candidates have been supported (@£60 per candidate) by CGS. Nine support sessions will be held at the Education Building of Shree Kutch Swaminarayan Satsang Temple, Kenton to give them guidance and encouragement. All six will take their AS and A2 Level examinations in summer 2018. We are most grateful to the Trustees of Shree Kutch Swaminarayan Satsang Temple for agreeing to be the examination centre as well as to give us the use of their Computer Room without any charge.

### **3) CGS Membership and School Information Forms**

We sent out Membership Forms and School Information Forms to all those who attended our General Meetings in 2015. We have 22 registered organisational schools and 4 Individual Members.

We sent out School Information Forms to gather information about the number of pupils in our Gujarati schools and of those, the ones preparing to take GCSE and A Level examinations. We received returns from 28 schools. The survey indicated we are likely to see an increase in the numbers taking GCSEs in the future, if they continue to remain in their schools through their school careers. This information proved to be vital in persuading the authorities to continue examinations in Gujarati.

However in 2017, only 16 schools returned their information. This does not help us in planning future strategy. We respectfully urge all schools to persevere and complete this information for us.

### **4) Edexcel/ Pearson Examination Board and Ofqual**

The Gujarati examination board Edexcel has published the new Specification for GCSE examinations from 2020. They have also published the draft specification for the Gujarati A Level examinations from 2020. Both these courses start in September 2018. There will no longer be any face to face training for teachers by the Board but they will provide support on their website. It is our intention at CGS to use this support and carry out training sessions for our teachers in the near future.

In the meantime, CGS has kept the membership aware of any new posts or opportunities provided by the Board for positions like Chair of Examiners, Assessors, Reviewers, etc. We have also kept in touch with Ofqual and provided them with our input on the new examinations.

## **5) GCSE and A Level Examination Centres**

It has come to our notice that many mainstream schools either refuse to enter external students for Gujarati examinations or charge exorbitant fees to conduct these examinations. We have worked with Shree Kutch Swaminarayan Satsang Mandir in Kenton and are most grateful that they have agreed to be a Centre for our A Level Gujarati candidates this year. They have also offered to enter private external candidates for GCSE as well.

We are looking to work with mainstream schools to see if we can get their support to enter their candidates for Gujarati if we can provide teachers to conduct Speaking tests.

## **6) GCSE and A Level Examination Entries**

We are deeply concerned about the drop in the number of entries in 2017 and the lack of information from Gujarati schools for 2018 examinations is an added concern. There are many parents and even established organisations who are not sufficiently aware of or keen on supporting the learning of Gujarati for our children. This is a pity!

We also have a huge challenge that we have to meet by making our Gujarati lessons more interesting and enjoyable using more 'mainstream' teaching strategies and resources including IT.

We therefore urge all Gujarati parents, students, teachers, trainers, community organisers and Trustees as well as Gujarati newspapers, radio and TV presenters, opinion formers and Gujarati experts and writers to work tirelessly to save our Gujarati Bhasha – our future. We at the CGS are committed to do so. Please join us.

## **7) Appreciation and Thanks**

We are most grateful to all our committee members and all our teachers who have worked so hard during the last 2 years.

We are also most grateful to the Trustees and Madhuben Kalaria of Shree Kadwa Patidar Sanstha for allowing us the use of their premises for our committee meetings on a regular basis without charge.

We are grateful to the Oshwal Community and Tusharbai, Nirmalbai and Rekhaben for giving us the use of the EKTA Centre for our training sessions without charge and for providing refreshments.

And finally our thanks go to Shree Kutch Swaminarayan Satsang Mandir and Arvindbai, Kantibhai and Dineshbhai for giving us the use of their Computer Room for A Level sessions and for being an A Level examination centre.

And finally, a very big THANK YOU to all of you who have sacrificed their precious time and made the effort to attend this important meeting!