



# STEPHEN HAWKING SCHOOL

## Preparing a Religious Education Unit of Work for Children with Severe Learning Difficulties

### Introduction

As a general guide, there are themes that emerge when teaching world religions: special books, special people, special places (e.g. of worship), special events (festivals) and finally a sense of community and belonging.

### Starting points

As with all children, to promote achievement and to ensure progress, it is important to build on their own previous experiences, knowledge and understanding. Children with SLD are likely to be motivated by or interested in people, places, objects and experiences that are most familiar to them. Therefore, linking learning about aspects of world religions to the child themselves is essential to ensure that learning opportunities are meaningful and strive to ensure high levels of engagement of the child.

Start by making a special book or box about the child and include in it all of the people, places and events that are important to them:

- Who are the important and special people at home and at school?
- Where are the child's favourite places at home and at school?
- When is the child's birthday and how does s/he celebrate? What else does s/he celebrate and with whom?
- Does s/he go to a place of worship with their family? What does s/he do there?
- S/he also belongs to the community of your school; wears the school uniform, joins in with assembly, helps friends by carrying out jobs such as taking fruit to the playground, lines up at lunch time, etc.
- Each week a new page of photos and/or objects could be added to the child's special book or box. Headings may include:
  - Special People at Home
  - Special People at School
  - Special Places/Where I belong
  - The way I help others
  - The way others help me
- You could send a camera home and ask parents to take photos of the child getting ready to go to Mosque/Church/Synagogue, with special family members, undertaking any specific family rituals.
- During class topics that cover different religious festivals, learning is likely to be more multi-sensory and helping the child to join in may be a little easier, e.g. making Diya lamps for Diwali, dressing up in new clothes for Eid, making Christmas party food... etc.