

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

January 2017

*Dear Constituent,*

Thank you for contacting me about faith schools.

The Prime Minister has made clear that the Government is dedicated to making Britain a true meritocracy and that education lies at the heart of that mission. In September 2016 the Government published a consultation that asked for views on a range of proposals aimed at creating an education system that extends opportunity for everyone, not just the privileged few. This consultation has recently closed and the responses are being analysed so I look forward to reading the Government response when it becomes available.

At present, the stark reality is that demand for good school places only continues to grow, and too many children in this country still do not have access to a good school. The proposals that have been put forward look to deliver an even more diverse school system that gives all children, whatever their background, the opportunity to achieve their potential.

Faith schools have a strong record of high pupil attainment and are often very popular with parents. Current rules, however, stop more good faith schools from opening, without succeeding in promoting integration. The proposals would see the current cap on the number of pupils who can be admitted on the basis of faith when the school is oversubscribed removed, as the cap is preventing new Catholic schools opening, and has little impact on many Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu schools because they tend not to appeal to parents of other faiths.

This rule will be replaced with more effective requirements to ensure faith schools are properly inclusive, and allow more good schools to open. I can assure you that the Government will ensure that safeguards are in place to promote diversity and inclusivity in faith schools, so that pupils of all faiths and none are able to play a full part in the life of the school.

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**