



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

February 2018

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about supporting autistic children in schools.

It is essential that we have an education system that works for all children, including those with special educational needs such as autism. It is vitally important that autistic children are given the additional support they deserve to achieve educational success and lead happy and fulfilling lives. This is why I welcome the recent 'Autism and Education in England 2017' joint report from the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism and The National Autistic Society.

While this report recognises that more can be done to support children with autism in schools, I can assure you that there has already been notable progress in improving the educational infrastructure for children with special educational needs and disabilities. In order to deliver autism awareness training and advice for teachers and other staff, the Department for Education has provided funding to voluntary sector organisations, including the Autism Education Trust (AET). I know the AET has trained more than 150,000 people since 2012, including teaching and support staff, in addition to publishing national autism standards and frameworks.

£215 million of capital funding has also been made available to support the expansion of existing provisions for pupils with special education needs and disabilities, including those with autism. There has also been a focus on opening more specialist schools that support children with autism. Under the Free Schools Programme, there are now 29 special free schools in England, including 17 which provide places for children with autism. A further 60 special free schools are due to open in the future, 33 of which will offer provision for children with autism. Last year I visited Daventry Hill School in my constituency, a new co-educational all-through (4-18) school for pupils with special educational needs in Daventry. The school is open to pupils in all age groups and aims to educate all the pupils so that they are fully ready for the next stage of their adult life.

I will continue to follow this matter with great interest and thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY