

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

*New Commitment,*

**RE: VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOLS.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Voluntary Aided Schools; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

I welcome the measures announced to create more places across the diverse school system, including through enabling the creation of more voluntary-aided faith schools, to give families greater choice and raise standards for pupils.

Faith schools have long been a part of the education system, and currently one in three state-funded schools are faith based. Many faith schools are good or outstanding, and are popular with parents. I know that more want to open, and I believe the Government should enable them to do so, so that we can continue to benefit from the richness of the diversity of our school system.

The Department for Education will help to create new voluntary-aided faith schools to meet local demand. The voluntary-aided route already allows for schools to apply to open with up to 100 percent faith based admissions. It is important to note that when admitting pupils, faith schools may only use faith-based selection criteria if they are oversubscribed.

I can assure you that all schools are expected to fulfil their legal obligations under the *Equality Act 2010*, to promote community cohesion and to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. Indeed, faith schools, as with all other schools, are expected to be inclusive and play an active role in their communities, as well as promote integration and an understanding of different faiths and communities. I know the Department for Education will continue to work closely with faith schools to promote and support integration.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**