

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i ymchwiliad y [Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg i weithredu diwygiadau addysg](#)

This response was submitted to the [Children, Young People and Education Committee inquiry into Implementation of education reforms](#)

IER 12

Ymateb gan: Unigolyn

Response from: Individual

Nodwch eich barn mewn perthynas â chylch gorchwyl yr ymchwiliad. | Record your views against the inquiry's terms of reference.

I am writing as a resident and employee of [REDACTED] with regards to the educational provision post age 11.

I am a teaching assistant with [REDACTED] experience and I currently work in a primary school within [REDACTED]. I work very closely with those children who struggle academically and are often on the autistic spectrum. Although I have worked with all age ranges, most recently I have worked with Year 6. Part of my role is to prepare them for comprehensive school, which for most of the children that I work with, is a very daunting thought, certainly much more than it is for neuro-typical children.

I feel that primary school provision for those with additional/greater needs are excellent. Schools treat children as individuals and identify the way in which they learn best. This often means a change in the way teaching is provided to allow these children to access the curriculum. In many cases, it is the employment of teaching assistants working with these children that ensures this is delivered at a high standard, especially with children on the autistic spectrum. The word 'spectrum' is emphasised as children can display their difficulties in different ways and to different degrees. For many of these children they are unable to survive the mainstream environment without adaptations such as visual timetables and visual aids to prepare and help them.

This latest academic year in particular has troubled me! Whilst primary schools work extremely hard to 'include' these children, I have noticed that once they leave this provision they simply fall into a big black hole. The majority are simply required to follow others into the mainstream comprehensive system and the 'nearest' provision is provided which is simply not suitable and not acceptable. I would like to give one case in particular as an example. I have worked extremely close with a boy who is on

the autistic spectrum and finds difficulties coping in mainstream primary. He has worked in a small, supported group with me and I have adapted the provision to enable him to achieve academically. There are certain things within primary that he is simply unable to participate in effectively. He has been assessed by the Educational Psychologist who identified that he has [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] To get him to write anything has been extremely difficult and at these times he will demonstrate task avoidance. Working with the Educational Psychologist, we identified that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. I could tell you much more about this boy but I am sure you already have a good insight into the difficulties experienced. In light of these difficulties, and following consultation with his parents, the Additional Needs Coordinator, and the Educational Psychologist, it was agreed that an application for a Special Needs Resource Base at a local comprehensive was needed. I was left disappointed and stunned when he did not get a place! We were told that had it been a different year, he probably would've got in! However, this year, the number and type of applications meant he didn't get a place. How on earth is provision of this type of dependent on luck? Luck of your postcode, luck of the year, luck of who else has applied! Regrettably we had to accept that he would go to the local mainstream comprehensive [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] But the distress didn't stop there! During a move up day to this comprehensive, which I attended with him, he struggled greatly. Then, during a transition meeting with the comprehensive they were shocked they had to receive this boy. In their words, they 'can't cater for a boy like this'. So, who does cater for him then? I am outraged that after all the hard work I have put in over the last year to make his life easier and school more accessible that I have now waved him off to an awful life! This is not even about progression. This is about letting a boy into a place he cannot function within. Image his quality of life! We are letting him down!

But this boy is not the only one. There are many children across the [REDACTED] and indeed other [REDACTED] who simply have to 'put up' with the educational provision granted as there are simply not enough places in the appropriate provision. Year on year there are numerous cases declined at the Special Needs Resource Bases. Isn't this telling us something? But I do wonder if this is fed to higher levels within the education authority. This lack of suitable provision is the big black hole that I refer to! I am lucky as a parent I have not needed such provision, however as a conscious, caring, and hardworking teaching assistant I am disgusted with what families have to experience. There needs to be something done about this as this problem is not going away. It will only get worse as we see more and more children enter primary school with difficulties.

I felt strongly enough that I have written to you today. I face another year working with Year 6 children and the prospect of declined cases for the Resource Base. With this in mind I would like to hear your thoughts on this matter and what can be done to provide the educational placements our children need and deserve.