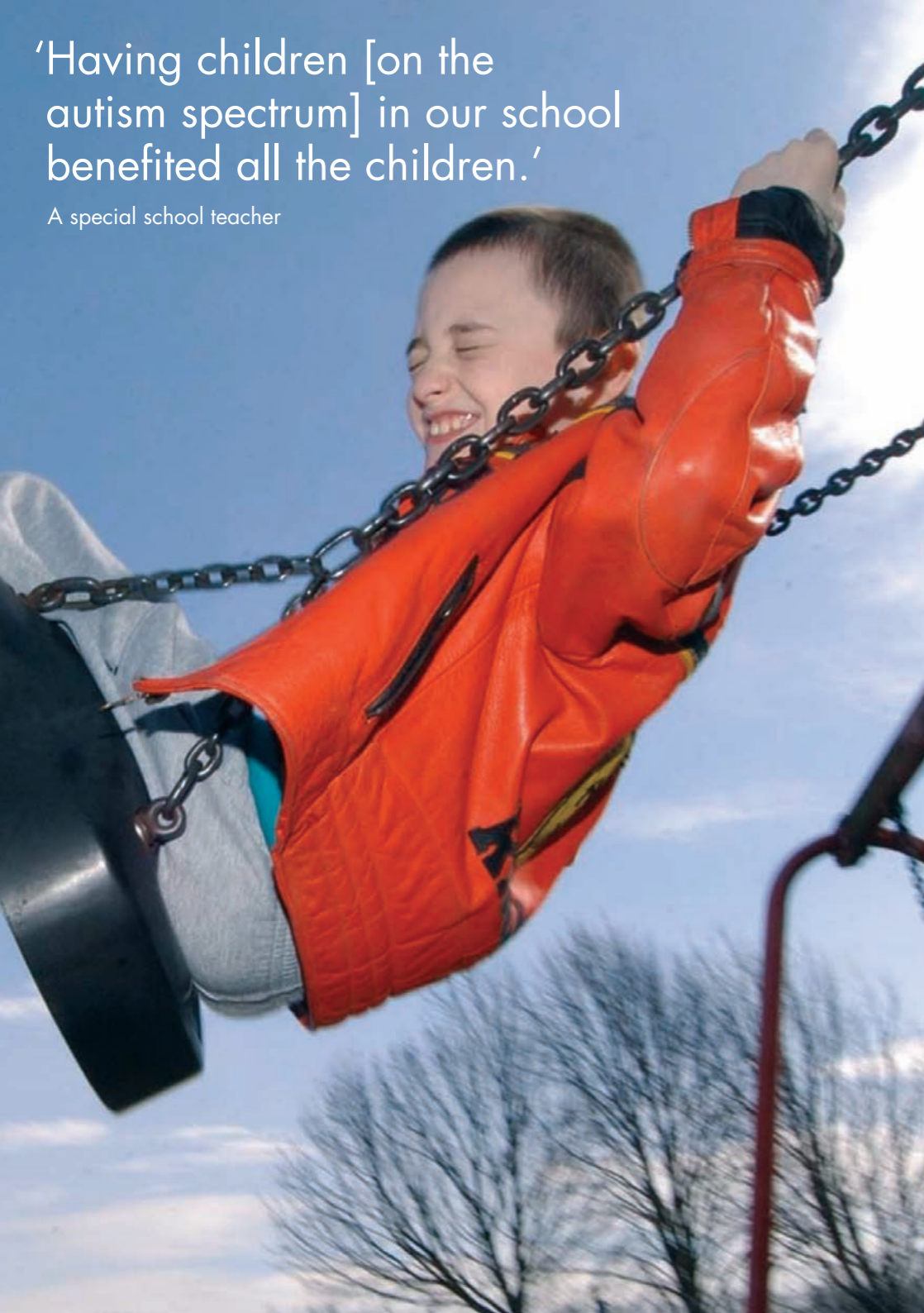


'Having children [on the autism spectrum] in our school benefited all the children.'

A special school teacher



To find out more:

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Quotations taken from *Educational provision for children and young people on the autism spectrum living in England: A review of current practice, issues and challenges* carried out for the Autism Education Trust by

The Autism Centre for Education and Research
University of Birmingham (Jones et al., 2008)

Visit www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk to read the research in full.

If you have particular needs which make it difficult for you to read this, or would like it in a different language, call 07795 667749 or email info@autismeducationtrust.org.uk and we will try to help.

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**the autism
education trust**
how we can help



contact us to find out how you can be involved

Why do we need the Autism Education Trust?

Autism is a complex, lifelong developmental disability. It affects around one in 100 people. People with autism have said that the world, to them, is a mass of people, places and events which they struggle to understand. In particular, understanding and relating to other people, and taking part in everyday family and social life may be harder for them.

Education is one of the most important issues facing children and young people on the autism spectrum and their families.

- An estimated 1% of children and young people in England are on the autism spectrum.
- Over 47,000 pupils in state-funded schools who have significant special educational needs (SEN) (i.e. supported through a statement or at School Action Plus) in England have autism as their primary need. 70% of these pupils are in mainstream schools¹.
- Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need (SEN) are over three times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than the rest of the school population. The 2006 National Autistic Society's 'make school make sense' campaign² found 1 in 5 children in the sample had been excluded from school (67% of these had been excluded more than once).
- 40% of children on the autism spectrum have been bullied³, and children on the autism spectrum are three times more likely to develop mental health problems than the rest of the population⁴.
- Substantial public funds are invested in the education of children and young people on the autism spectrum. (The estimated annual cost of autism to the UK economy is £28 billion⁵.) It is important that these funds are used wisely and have maximum impact. Policy makers and service commissioners require independent and good quality information and advice.

What is the Autism Education Trust?

The Autism Education Trust (AET) was launched in November 2007 with funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and founded by TreeHouse, the Council for Disabled Children and The National Autistic Society. It is dedicated to coordinating and improving education support for all children with autism in England. The AET is the only umbrella organisation in England working specifically on autism education across the voluntary, public and private sectors.

What is the purpose of the Autism Education Trust?

- to continue to raise awareness of the importance of appropriate educational provision for children and young people on the autism spectrum
- to bring organisations involved in delivering autism education services together in order to promote good practice and share information
- to involve children and young people on the autism spectrum (together with their families and carers), in the planning and delivery of information and resources to enhance and improve autism education across the country

'The school my sons attend is excellent. They cater for all their needs educationally and socially. The staff are exceptional and also find the time to broaden their knowledge and experience of all special needs.'

A mother of two children on the autism spectrum (9 and 12 years old).

...and how will the Autism Education Trust achieve this?

- It will commission research in order to remain relevant and fully informed of current practice across England
- It will provide a platform for the promotion and sharing of good practice that succeeds in improving the education needs of children and young people on the autism spectrum
- It will provide a link between users, professionals, policy makers and central government involved with autism education

The Autism Education Trust Programme of Work

In its first year, the AET commissioned an independent piece of research to map the current state of autism education across England. The report, now available online at www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk, has enabled the AET to prioritise projects and develop areas of work to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

These include:

- Developing an online resource to meet the specific needs of professionals, parents and children and young people on the autism spectrum
- Developing an AET Advisory Council and sub-groups, representing all those with an interest in the AET, as a way for people to get involved in and inform the work of the AET Steering Group
- Developing participation channels for children and young people on the autism spectrum through the establishment of a Youth Council
- Commissioning relevant and timely research to continue to inform the work of the AET – including research into 'appropriate outcomes' for children and young people on the autism spectrum
- Developing effective channels to improve access to support for 'hard to reach' groups

¹ DCSF (2008) Special Educational Needs in England, January 2008

² Batten, A., Corbett, C., Rosenblatt, M., Withers, L. & Yuille, R. (2006) *Make School Make Sense. Autism and Education: the reality for families today*. London, National Autistic Society. P.25

³ Batten, A., Corbett, C., Rosenblatt, M., Withers, L. & Yuille, R. (2006) *Make School Make Sense. Autism and Education: the reality for families today*. London, National Autistic Society. P.25

⁴ Green et al (2005) Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain 2004, Office for National Statistics

⁵ Knapp, M et al (2007) The economic cost of autism, Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities

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