



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Parkside Community Primary School  
Aycliffe Road  
Borehamwood  
WD6 4EP

12<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Dear all,

Thank you for welcoming me to your school last Friday. It was a pleasure to meet you all and mark International Women's Day by taking part in the *Let Girls Play* initiative with you. It was also great to listen to your views and answer some of your important questions about politics and our local area.

As promised, I am writing to answer your questions about free sports opportunities in communities and government funding for school equipment.

I was pleased to see how enthusiastic you all are about sport and the importance of getting outdoors. Millions of people across the country play, watch, and enjoy sport every day – it is central to our communities and has the power to change lives for the better. While I was the Sport Secretary, I saw just how important sports and activities are for young people.

The Government firmly believes that every child, no matter their background or ability, should have the opportunity to play sports and do regular physical activity. This is why our ambitious Get Active strategy aims to ensure that all children do 60 minutes of physical activity per day (or 20 minutes for children with a disability), with a target of getting 1 million more children and 2.5 million more adults active by 2030. To achieve this, we are working with local communities to improve access to high quality sport facilities, with a historic level of investment (over £400 million between 2021 and 2025). This will involve:

- Creating and upgrading up to 8,000 football and multi-sport facilities across the UK.
- Renovating over 3,000 public park tennis courts.
- Supporting public swimming pools and providing investment to make facilities sustainable in the longer-term.

As of January 2024, the Get Active strategy has invested a total of £47,660 in Hertsmere, ensuring that you and other local people all have access to quality, low-cost (or free) sports. This has included:

- £25,000 of funding to Borehamwood Youth Football Club
- £1,200 of funding for goalposts at King George V Playing Field.
- £4,455 of funding for goalposts at Monksmead School.
- £11,000 of funding for the tennis courts at King George Recreation Ground.
- £6,005 of funding for the tennis courts at Meadow Park.



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You will be pleased to know that, in addition to this, the Government has also invested over £400 million through Sport England since 2021.

We know that schools have a key role to play, too. For that reason, on International Women's Day in 2023, the Government announced over £600 million to boost school sport, including funding for the PE and School Sport Premium and the School Games Organisers network. This announcement also committed to new equality criteria, where primary and secondary schools will be rewarded for successfully delivering equal opportunities for girls and boys, partly through the Schools Games Mark. We are also investing £57 million to help schools make their sports facilities open and accessible outside of the school day.

If you feel there are sports projects in our local area that could benefit from additional funding and attention, then please ask your parents or the school to get in touch with me and I will do all I can to help.

On your second question, about upgrading school equipment, I want to reassure you that I am absolutely determined that children in Hertsmere and around the country should receive the best education possible. This, of course, involves having suitable, high-quality equipment.

This is why the Government is investing more money than ever before in schools. In 2024-25, the total core schools budget will be at its highest ever level – over £59.6 billion. This means that mainstream schools in England, like yours, will receive an average of around £6,000 per pupil, with additional funding for teacher pay on top of that. This can be spent on school trips, classroom equipment, or anything else that you need.

The Government has also invested over £13 billion since 2015 to maintain and improve school facilities across England, and we are committed to a long-term School Rebuilding Programme, renovating 500 schools in England over the next decade.

I hope that I have been able to offer some insight into the steps the Government is taking to provide you all with the opportunities you deserve in school and sport. I look forward to hopefully meeting some of you again in the future and hearing about your achievements.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP**  
**Member of Parliament for Hertsmere**

*Great to see  
you all!*