

I started this week with a visit to St Mark's primary school in Eccles to see 9 year old Finn play sport with his friends. This may sound unremarkable yet Finn has cerebral palsy and playing a team sport at school is not always possible. The school are brilliant at including Finn in PE thanks in part to the passion of headteacher Mr Bassett about school sport. However despite all their efforts there are obviously limitations to what Finn can do alongside his buddies. When he told me this and mentioned that he'd like to try basketball it was an absolute no brainer for me, with the benefit of departmental contacts, to pick up the phone to British Wheelchair Basketball and tell them the story.

What happened next was beyond all my expectations. British Wheelchair Basketball brought down to Eccles ten top of the range chairs along with current, past and future paralympians to run a coaching session for Finn and his classmates. I don't believe children are born with prejudices about equality but I do think that on Monday, when everyone was in a wheelchair, they probably learnt a little bit more about what it means.

Sport is empowering. Age, race, gender or physical ability should be no barrier to playing a sport. That time you spend at one with a ball, bike or bat is liberating. This is why I get so excited about implementing my sports strategy because it is designed to breakdown barriers, real or perceived to get people active.

On Monday Finn's smile made everyone's day. He was happy to be playing a sport alongside his school friends and through the generosity of Wheelchair Basketball and Youth Sport Direct he was given a new sports chair for him to keep. I have a feeling that we might be seeing a lot more of Finn and his freewheeling St Mark's classmates in the future!