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England Men's Test Captain Stokes joins calls for more school sport

England Men's Test captain Ben Stokes is backing calls for every child to be guaranteed at least two hours of PE a week in school.

Stokes spoke of the importance of cricket being played in more state schools as he visited Newcastle's Hawthorn Primary School. Its pupils have been receiving free cricket lessons as part of an expanded schools programme funded by the ECB and delivered by Northumberland Cricket and charity partner Chance to Shine.

Ahead of the election on July 4, the ECB has joined forces with other sports governing bodies the FA, RFU, RFL and the LTA to urge political parties to back school sport, by guaranteeing a minimum of two hours of quality Sport and Physical Education mandated within the National Curriculum and every child guaranteed the opportunity to be active for an hour a day inside and outside of the school setting.

“Bringing cricket and sport and more PE time into schools has got to be good,” said Stokes. “You’d hate someone who from a young age has potentially got talent not to be able to progress because of opportunity. It all comes down to opportunity. For me it’s all about what can we do to see the next England stars and that starts at school and then onto club cricket as well.

“It’s more than the physical side of PE and sport in school that’s great. It’s the mental side of things as well. What sport does, and particularly cricket as it’s a team sport, is it creates an environment where kids can create relationships, it teaches them about working together as a team, or working towards a goal. It teaches kids from a young age what it is to be part of a team and how rewarding it can be, not only from the success that you can get from sport, but also going through hardship to get there as well. Sport is just great and I would encourage the more PE the better.”

Hawthorn is one of hundreds of primary schools receiving free cricket sessions as part of an expansion of the ECB’s funding of cricket in state schools, which has particularly targeted schools where at least 40% of children are on free school meals.

The ECB’s long-term partnership with Chance to Shine already funds the delivery of cricket in around 4,000 state schools, and last academic year we expanded this specifically to target an additional 300 schools and 38,000 students who have the greatest chance of missing out on the opportunity to play cricket.

This has since been extended further, offering up to 20,000 more students in another 150 schools the chance to pick up a bat and ball for free as part of the school day.

With additional Government funding over the next five years, this work is set to be expanded further, enabling every school child in inner-city locations

from across 16 cities hosting either the Women's T20 World Cup in 2026 or the Men's T20 World Cup in 2032 to access the programme.



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