

Visit to Winnersh Primary School

I am grateful to the staff who hosted me at Winnersh Primary School yesterday for a visit. I was made to feel very welcome. The School prides itself on providing a friendly and positive approach through teamwork and valuing every pupil.

I was asked to talk to the top year group of pupils about my work as an MP. I briefly explained how an MP is elected, how the MP represents the local community in Parliament and puts its case to the government, and how the MP seeks to explain or criticise government policy to the constituents. I talked in neutral terms about paying for schools and education, about how people have changed between Labour and Conservative led governments in elections, and about the four parts of the UK given the current topicality of the movement for Scottish independence.

I left plenty of time for questions. I was asked a series of questions which seemed to have been pre prepared and were often written down about the UK's progress to net zero, and about single use plastics.

During the course of answering a teacher challenged my statement that the U.K. has cut its carbon emissions more than any other major economy. I seek to be careful when making factual claims. I have since checked the figures which underwrite the point I was making and are reproduced below for the 30 years from the 1990 carbon dioxide baseline:

Increase or decrease in output of CO2 1990-2020

China +381%

India +302%

South Korea +129%

Brazil +97.9%

Mexico +40%

South Africa +38%

Australia +38%

Canada +19%

Spain - 7%

Japan -8%

USA -10%

France -27%

Russia -30%

Germany – 37%

UK -46%

It was also put to me that the UK had a high per capita output of CO₂. The figures provided on Worldometer below show that there are 19 countries with more than double the UK's output per head, and there are many more above the UK including large economies like Germany, Japan and China.

Per capita emissions in tons USA 15.5, Russia 11.44, Canada 18.58. South Korea 11.85, Saudi Arabia 15.94, Australia 17.1, Taiwan 11.72, Kazakhstan 13.01, UAE 23.37, Kuwait 25.65, Qatar 37.29, Oman 19.61, Turkmenistan 14, Trinidad 25.38, Estonia 17, Montenegro 25, Luxembourg 17.5, Brunei 18, Bahamas 11,

UK 5.5 tons per capita

I hope these figures are useful to pupils as they study these matters.