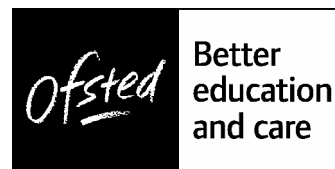


Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045
F 020 7421 6855
www.ofsted.gov.uk



05 February 2007

Mrs C Beaton
Headteacher
Swithland St Leonard's Church of England Primary School
Main Street
Swithland
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE12 8TQ

Dear Mrs Beaton

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme 2006/7: Healthier Eating in Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 30 January to look at your overall work on promoting healthier eating and the provision of school meals within this.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our evaluation and reporting. Any published report is likely to list the names of the institutions visited but we will not identify individual institutions within the report itself.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit. The evidence used to inform the judgements below comprised interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of school documentation, a sample analysis of pupils' work, and observation of eating arrangements at lunchtime. I also ate a school meal myself.

The overall effectiveness of the school's provision is satisfactory with some good features.

- The standard of school meals

This is satisfactory overall. The planned content of the meals meets the required standards. However, there are two key weak points. The first is the quality of the food at the point of consumption, which is poor. This is principally because of deterioration in terms of both flavour and texture between cooking (off-site) and serving. The second is the failure regularly to achieve a close match between the supply of the various meal options and pupil preference. This means that the 'apparent' choice, i.e. on the menu, can be considerably greater than the 'actual' choice on the day, at least for those served in the later

stages of each sitting. Both these weaknesses significantly undermine the take-up of school meals (both whether they are purchased in the first place and whether they are eaten subsequently) and hence the contribution they make to pupils actually eating healthily.

- The quality of the dining experience

This is satisfactory. Lunchtime is well managed within the serious accommodation constraints of the serving and dining areas and pupils are well behaved. However, the time available for each sitting and the cramped accommodation limits the opportunities to make lunchtime a positive social and learning experience. The ability of staff to work effectively with pupils is also significantly constrained by the time and space available.

- Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

This is satisfactory. The presentation of menu choices in the form of full meals only does mean that pupils having a school lunch are presented with a balanced meal. However, as referred to above, there can be a considerable difference between what is presented and what is eaten. Whilst staff make a reasonable attempt to encourage pupils to eat all that is provided, their success is variable and depends substantially on the options provided each day. On some days, food wastage is high. Little advice is provided to parents, for example on the content of lunchboxes.

- Developing pupils' knowledge and personal skills

This is good. Pupils have a very good grasp of the key principles of healthy eating and of basic hygiene rules. School routines reinforce the latter and toilet and washing facilities are satisfactory overall. There has been a long term engagement of the school council with the issue of the content and quality of school meals. Pupils feel that this had led to some improvements. The school has also conducted regular surveys of pupils' views about both the meals and eating arrangements. Whilst these have been useful in broad terms, in informing the debate about the quality of provision, the nature of the surveys limits the scope for establishing clear trends.

- Teaching about healthier eating

This is good. Weekly lesson planning documents for personal, social and health education (PSHE), science, and design and technology all have appropriately detailed references to nutrition and healthy eating. All staff use the same terminology, emphasising the key principle of food intake 'balance'. Good use is made of materials and advice available from outside the school, for example from the National Healthy Schools Scheme.

- Planning the curriculum

This is satisfactory. There is no overall healthy eating policy, although some key components are in place. Existing curriculum planning documents focus too narrowly on what happens in the classroom and not enough on learning in other settings and activities, such as lunchtimes. There is no systematic consultation with parents.

- Managing the school's approach to healthier eating

This is satisfactory. There is good awareness of what else needs to be done to develop an overall healthy eating policy and this is a development priority for the school. However, the policy is currently very much 'work in progress' only. Staff are aware that some pupils regularly eat little of what is provided and this has on occasion been raised with parents. However, such monitoring and follow-up is not systematic. There is also little systematic evaluation of the impact of the school's activities in terms of what children actually eat.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- the development of a healthy eating policy which encompasses all relevant aspects of provision, not just what takes place in the classroom
- the provision of better guidance to parents on the content of packed lunches
- more systematic evaluation of the impact of the school's activities in terms of what children actually eat.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote healthier eating in the school.

As I explained during the feedback, this letter will be copied to your Local Authority and will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Cordwell
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools