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Mr M Read  
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Dear Mr Read

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 14 December 2006 to look at your work on healthier eating and school meals.

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. Thank you, in particular, for the resources you gave to me which could be used in case studies.

The evidence base used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with yourself, the school catering staff, subject coordinators and Year 6 pupils; scrutiny of school documentation; observation of three lessons; lunch in the dining room with the school council; and the school Christmas concert.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit, to support development in healthier eating and school meals. This follows.

The overall effectiveness of school meal provision is good with some outstanding features.

- The standard of school meals

This is good. The food served in school meets the new standards. The meals, produced by Cambridge Catering Service, are frozen and then re-heated on site

and supplemented by fresh fruit and salad. The food served is tasty and nutritious and liked by pupils. The catering staff take time to encourage pupils to try new foods and there is a good working relationship between them and the school. Although the take-up of school meals had gone down it is now beginning to improve and over a third of pupils take school lunches. Menus are not displayed prominently enough in the dining hall.

- The quality of the dining experience

This is good. The length of the lunch break is sufficient for pupils to eat their food properly and the dining room is attractive, with effective displays about healthy eating. Lunchtime is well organised and a shift system operates to reduce the amount of queuing. The Lunchtime supervisors are well-trained and vigilant. They encourage good manners and there is a calm and civilised atmosphere which pupils appreciate. However, apart from Year 6, pupils are not able to sit with friends who bring packed lunches.

- Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

This aspect is outstanding. The school is part of the NHS programme and is very much aware of its role in promoting healthier eating habits. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices in lessons, break and lunchtime. The catering service has set up a website 'Your School Lunch' where pupils can log on and find out what is on the menu. The school has also piloted a game 'Top Grub' to help make healthy eating fun. These initiatives have had a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding about healthy eating. The school has provided some advice to parents, through the school newsletter, about healthy packed lunches. This has not had much impact and many packed lunches contained white bread, crisps, sweetened drinks and chocolate bars.

- Developing pupils' knowledge and personal skills

This is outstanding. Through a range of subjects, pupils have gained excellent knowledge and understanding about balanced diets and healthy eating. Even the five year olds know why it is important to eat fruit and vegetables. They apply their knowledge by not eating many sweets and restricting trips to fast food outlets. They are able to follow basic hygiene rules because toilet facilities are good. There is an outstanding range of enrichment activities which reinforce pupils' learning in a practical way.

- Teaching about healthier eating

This is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and committed. They strive to make lessons interesting and imaginative. This was especially evident in the food technology lesson where pupils were designing a labelling for a healthy sandwich.

Lessons seen were well planned and teachers had good classroom control and discipline. There was an outstanding session in the foundation stage class where children were eating their fruit and discussing its benefits with their teachers. Most teachers use the *Balance of Good Health* plate model but, in Year 6, this idea was confused by using the food pyramid at the same time.

- Planning the curriculum

This is good. There are excellent links between subjects but there is no whole school food policy yet in place. This is planned for spring 2007 when the National Healthy School Programme is launched. The school works exceptionally well with external agencies to enhance its work on healthy lifestyles.

- Managing the school's approach to healthier eating

This aspect is good. A teaching assistant who is also a governor is leading on the NHS development and there has already been a day's training for all staff to raise awareness. Monitoring of lessons does take place but is not yet sufficiently extensive. Take-up and quality of school meals are monitored and there is some useful analysis of nutritional values. Inclusion throughout the school is excellent. Pupils taking free school meals are dealt with sensitively and minority ethnic children are integrated well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- pressing ahead with accreditation for NHS and writing a whole school food policy.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop healthier eating and school meals 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

Margaret Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools