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Mr R Halls  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Halls

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 25 January 2007 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 would not identify individual institutions within the report itself.

The evidence base used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with yourself, the school cook, subject managers and Year 6 pupils; scrutiny of school documentation; observation of two lessons; and lunch in the dining room with the school council.

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.

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

- The standard of school meals is good

All the food served in school meets the new standards. The food served is tasty and nutritious and liked by pupils. The cook takes time to encourage pupils to try new foods and there is a good working relationship between her and the school. The take-up of school meals has risen since last year but still less than a quarter of pupils take school lunch.

- The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory

The length of the lunch break is sufficient for pupils to eat their food properly. Lunchtime is well organised and a shift system operates to reduce the amount of queuing, but conditions are still a little cramped and noisy. Menus are not displayed prominently enough in the dining hall.

- Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

This aspect is satisfactory. Although not yet part of the National Healthy Schools programme, the school is very much aware of its role in promoting healthier eating habits. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices at break and lunchtime. The school has provided some advice to parents about healthy packed lunches but this has not had much impact and many packed lunches contained crisps, sweets, sugary drinks and chocolate bars.

- Developing pupils' knowledge and personal skills is satisfactory.

Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding about balanced diets and healthy eating. They know they should eat five fruit and vegetables a day but are less sure about the reasons behind this. They apply their knowledge by not eating as many sweets and restricting trips to fast food outlets. Many pupils do not follow basic hygiene rules before eating. Pupils have good opportunities to express their views about healthy eating through the work of the well organised school council. The pupils have written their own vision statement for the school which includes healthy lifestyles.

- Teaching about healthier eating is good.

Teachers strive to make lessons interesting and imaginative. They act as good role models and have high expectations of both learning and behaviour. Lessons seen were well planned and teachers had excellent classroom control and discipline. Effective use is made across subjects of the *Balance of Good Health* plate model.

- Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory.

Well thought through schemes of work are in place across subjects. These include an emphasis on healthy eating but the links between subjects are not planned systematically or coherently. The school has adopted the area healthy eating policy but, as yet, this has had little impact and there has been little consultation with parents and governors about school food. The school makes effective use of outside agencies to promote healthy eating. For example, a local dentist makes a presentation in lessons and the school is involved with a medical research project on the genetics of obesity. An annual healthy lifestyles week is enjoyed by pupils.

- Managing the school's approach to healthier eating.

This aspect is good. Pupils taking free school meals are dealt with sensitively. The senior management team includes the PSHE co-ordinator and takes responsibility for health promotion. The team has improved healthy eating in school by the provision of water and fruit breaks in the afternoon and by establishing the healthy lifestyles week. The school recognises the need to become part of the National Healthy School Programme.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- improving the liaison with parents, governors and the community about healthy eating
- providing more guidance to parents about healthy packed lunches
- carrying forward plans to join NHSP.

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