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Mrs B Groves
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Groves

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Healthy eating in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, students and parents during my visit with my colleagues from the School Food Trust on 29 September 2009 to look at your work on healthier eating and school food provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half term.

The evidence base used to inform the judgements made included interviews with parents, students and staff; scrutiny of school documentation, including your school evaluation and school food policy; analysis of students' work, and observation of a lesson, as well as the breakfast club and school lunch.

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating is good.

Compliance with the DCSF's food-based and nutrient-based standards for school food

Compliance with the DCSF's food-based and nutrient-based standards for school food is good.

- The school meets all the food-based standards for school lunches and breakfasts. It complies with almost all the nutrient-based standards for school lunches.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- The school has worked hard to make the best of a difficult situation since the dining room is surrounded by building work. Students take their time to talk over meals, staff eat with students and queuing is minimised. As much as possible, the area has been reorganised in response to students' suggestions, for example, to enable them to eat outside when they wish.
- The plans for the new dining room, at present being built, reflect the ethos of the school. Students have been involved fully in discussing the layout and organisation of the space.
- Take up of school meals is high. This is because the school cook is highly effective. The menu is closely matched to students' preferences and the cook ensures they can 'taste' before they buy. In addition, your policy discourages students from leaving the school site.

Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

Strategies for helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices are satisfactory.

- The school uses a variety of strategies to engage parents in supporting students' healthier choices. The parents said that they liked the ideas in the school's regular newsletter on healthy choices for packed lunches.
- Parents liked the opportunities to try school meals when they attended after-school events because they provide a chance to taste the foods their children are given.
- Planning for 'Let's get cooking', due to begin in October 2009, has an appropriate focus on involving parents and extending their understanding of healthy foods.
- Students know they need to drink plenty of water. The increased number of water fountains enables this to happen. Students said that they now drink fewer fizzy drinks. Their concerns have been listened to in positioning the new fountains, so students are confident that they are not tampered with.

Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

Development of students' knowledge and personal skills is good.

- Students talked with confidence about making healthy food choices. They understood the importance of taking exercise and eating sensibly.
- Take up in extra-curricular physical education is good. The school prides itself on encouraging a wide participation in sports. It is responsive to the interests of students and after-school activities such as street dancing and boxing are evidence of this. In addition, provision is inclusive and fully

representative of the school. School teams, for example, are not confined to only the best players.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Students are knowledgeable about healthy eating in a range of subjects. They know which foods they should eat little of and what to add to their choices to make them healthier.
- Food work encourages them to cook and develops their understanding of how to prepare and cook fresh foods, so they can make a wide range of meals from raw ingredients.

Planning the curriculum

Planning the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Healthy eating and nutrition are taught in science, food technology, physical education, and personal and social development. But the school has not monitored its provision to ensure good continuity from subject to subject and a progressive understanding of the complexities of healthy eating.
- The school teaches both the 'food pyramid' and the 'eat well plate'. This gives confusing messages, especially for those who find learning difficult.
- The school has begun to develop its own allotment. Plans are well advanced to develop this into a course which will enable students to gain a level 2 qualification. Staff and students are keen to exploit this resource further by growing and cooking their own food.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- Your vision is shared successfully by all your staff and they see themselves as part of a team. The school cook and her staff are fully included in this team.
- Your policy on school food policy is mostly satisfactory but it does not include guidance on snacks and packed lunches.
- The school takes its responsibility for care very seriously and, through the pastoral care system, it ensures that it supports students effectively. The school is aware of the need to extend its limited breakfast service. Plans to extend this once the building work is completed are appropriate.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:

- ensure that the 'eat well plate' is taught and not the 'food pyramid' to avoid confusing students

- improve continuity and progression across subjects to ensure consistent messages are taught and built upon
- develop the school food policy to include snacks and packed lunches to guide parents and carers.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop healthier eating and provision for food 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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector