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03 November 2009

Mrs C Entwistle
Headteacher
Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School
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Dear Mrs Entwistle

Ofsted survey inspection programme – Healthy eating in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, pupils and parents, during my visit with my colleagues from the School Food Trust on 7 October 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. 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 used to inform the judgements included interviews with parents and pupils; scrutiny of school documentation, including your policies and evidence of pupils' work; observation of two lessons, as well as the breakfast club and the school at lunchtime.

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating is good.

Compliance with the Department for Children, Schools and families' (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 satisfactory.

- The school, working with the caterer, complies with most of the nutrient-based standards for school lunches, but does not yet meet all of the food-based standards.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- The quality of school meals is satisfactory. The take up of school meals is very low; this is in part because the cost is relatively high. It is also because pupils cannot sit easily with their friends; those on hot dinners do not sit with those on packed lunches. Pupils and parents are not as involved as they could be in shaping menus and food that appeal to pupils at Walton-le-Dale.
- The Key Stage 1 hall is too noisy and is understaffed. The hatch is too high for young pupils to see the choices on offer and pupils cannot sit easily with their friends.

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 pupils' healthier choices. Newsletters convey information about the food on offer at school, access to water, healthy eating lessons and themed weeks, and about school lunches.
- Parents and pupils have little influence or input into the types of food served. Many of those we spoke to during our visit said the meals were too costly, there were not many choices, and popular meals ran out so some pupils were left with very little that they liked to eat.
- Parents and pupils were very enthusiastic about the cookery club in Year 2. This was effective in encouraging healthy eating and teaching about how to prepare and make healthy food.

Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills

Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills is good.

- Pupils talked with confidence about making healthy food choices. They understood the importance of taking exercise and eating sensibly. This was particularly noticeable in Key Stage 1. The youngest children could articulate what sorts of foods and ingredients should be eaten sometimes, often or rarely.

- Many pupils could explain what should or should not be included in packed lunches or school meals to help them to be healthy.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is outstanding.

- Pupils make very good progress because they are actively involved from an early age in cutting, making and evaluating food. This work encourages pupils 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.
- Pupils made very good progress in their vocabulary, as well as in their skills and understanding.

Planning the curriculum

Planning the curriculum is outstanding.

- Healthy eating and nutrition are taught in science, design and technology, physical education, and personal and social development. The school has devised the curriculum well so that it is coherent and pupils are able to make very good progress in their skills and understanding.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- The school's management of teaching, learning and the curriculum is excellent. The teaching staff are motivated, committed and are part of a team delivering high quality outcomes for pupils.
- The management of the food service is just satisfactory. Pupils and parents are not as involved as they could be. Governors have not successfully fulfilled their role in monitoring the food- and nutrient-based standards to ensure the school is fully compliant. The caterer has not taken effective action to ensure meals are cooked in the right way to meet the standards.
- Neither the school nor the caterer has taken effective action so far to improve the dining experience or to increase the proportion of pupils taking a nutritious meal. Neither have they monitored or evaluated the uptake of meals for different groups of pupils.

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

- Improve the dining experience for all pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 1 by:
 - increasing the staffing in the Key Stage 1 dining room and ensuring pupils can see the meal choices
 - enabling pupils on packed lunches to sit with pupils on school meals
 - ensuring the noise levels are acceptably low

- Improve the quality of monitoring and evaluation to ensure the school:
 - complies with all food and nutrient-based standards
 - is able to monitor the uptake of meals for different groups of pupils

- Increase the uptake of school meals by:
 - identifying and tackling barriers to increasing the number of hot meals taken by pupils
 - involving pupils and parents more in shaping the menus and options for Walton-le-Dale primary

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 published on the Ofsted website. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr
Her Majesty's Inspector