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Mr D Donaldson
Headteacher
Britannia Bridge Primary School
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Off Warrington Road
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Dear Mr Donaldson

Ofsted 2009-10 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 colleague from the School Food Trust on 1 December 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 contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified within the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with you and senior and middle leaders, a group of pupils and a group of parents; scrutiny of school documentation, including curriculum planning; and observation of the school's break time and lunchtime provision.

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

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 good.

- The food and drinks provided for mid-morning break were fully compliant with the food-based standards for all school food other than lunches.
- The food-based standards for lunches were not met in full. There is insufficient fruit and there is no alternative to starchy food on the days that a starchy food cooked in oil or fat is provided. Based on the evidence provided, all 14 nutrient-based standards were met.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- The cook and other staff know all pupils by name and keep a careful eye on their consumption and food choices.
- Pupils are encouraged to try unfamiliar foods and to make healthy choices.
- Most pupils cannot sit with their friends because pupils that eat packed lunches sit on separate tables. Pupils sitting at the top table can choose a friend to sit with them.
- The school does not make full use of opportunities to display information about healthy eating in the dining room.

Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

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

- Displays around the school promote healthy eating and hygienic practices. Pupils are given very good guidance about hand washing.
- There are effective arrangements to support the youngest children at lunchtime.
- Pupils and parents receive menus and the school provides guidance about healthy eating. Regular newsletters provide additional information. The school's expectations about the content of packed lunches are shared with parents, but parents do not take sufficient account of guidance provided so many lunchboxes contain crisps and chocolate.
- The school is aware that not all pupils that are eligible for free school meals take up the option.

Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills

The development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills is good.

- Pupils know how to make healthy choices and they know the importance of eating a balanced diet, although some do not always choose to do so.
- Pupils are encouraged to take regular exercise and they make good use of the water fountains.
- Pupils have opportunities to grow fruit and vegetables and take care of the raised beds. They sample the produce.

- Dining at the top table is used as a reward. This helps pupils to regard eating as a pleasurable, social activity.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Teaching ensures that pupils know what foods contribute to a healthy lifestyle.
- Teaching about food and nutrition is integrated into many subjects so pupils know about cultural differences and changes over time.
- Links between teaching and learning and food offered in school are strong so positive messages are reinforced.

Planning the curriculum

Planning the curriculum is good.

- Curriculum planning is thorough and detailed. The school has introduced a creative curriculum which is based on current guidance and takes account of curriculum changes planned for 2011.
- Planning identifies key skills, many of which promote making sensible choices and living healthy lifestyles. Planning and content are adapted well to the needs of pupils. This makes learning interesting and helps pupils to consolidate their understanding.
- All staff are involved in curriculum planning and pupils make a strong contribution by identifying what they would like to find out.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- School leaders promote healthy eating well and the school has a strong focus on improving pupils' personal development and well-being.
- Subject leaders are knowledgeable, skilled and enthusiastic. The school monitors the impact of its actions carefully and provides additional support for staff to ensure that provision is consistent and effective.
- Vulnerable pupils are supported very well.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- working closely with the catering provider to obtain the evidence of compliance and ensure that this is actively shared with the whole-school community
- evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies used to improve the content of packed lunches and working closely with the caterer to improve opportunities for parents to learn about healthy eating and nutrition

- monitoring closely the take-up of school lunches, particularly those pupils who are eligible but do not take free school meals.

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, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority and will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Christine Graham
Her Majesty's Inspector