

Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040
F 020 7421 6855
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



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Mr Phillips
Headteacher
St Edmund Arrowsmith Catholic High School
Rookery Avenue
Ashton-in-Makerfield
Wigan
WN4 9PF

Dear Mr Phillips

Ofsted 2009-10 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 8 December 2009 to look at your work on healthier eating and school food provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified within the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with parents and students; scrutiny of school documentation, including your policies, and evidence of students' work; and observation of three lessons, as well as the breakfast club, mid-morning break 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 good.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is good.

- The dining hall has been extended recently to accommodate more students. The school has made a good effort to maximise its use so that students can sit with their friends and socialise while eating.
- The quality of school meals is good. The school offers six different outlets for food: hot food; hot light bites; the salad bar; soup and jacket potatoes; the cart; and the unit, which are all popular with students.
- Behaviour in the dining hall is good and many staff choose to eat there and supervise the students during break and lunchtimes.
- The catering team, led by the catering manager, are proactive in promoting the choices on offer. The success of this can be seen in the well above average take up of a school lunch.

Helping students and parents to make healthier choices

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

- Students have an opportunity to influence the choices of school meals through the school council and regular liaison with the catering manager. She runs competitions, monthly promotions and theme days, and winning menus are offered in the dining room.
- New parents are invited to taster sessions before joining the school which are well received. The catering staff organise taster sessions and promotions at parents' evenings and guidance nights throughout the year.
- The school does not yet do enough to engage parents in the choices of school meals or in the promotion of healthy lunch boxes.

Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

The development of students' knowledge and personal skills is outstanding.

- 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 with a diverse range of activities on offer.
- The school responds well to the needs and interests of individual students. Cycling, aerobics, cheerleading, dance and the range of competitive sports on offer are evidence of this.
- In food technology lessons, clear messages are given about what constitutes healthy eating through the 'eat well' plate and 'licence to cook' opportunities.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Teaching of healthy eating across the school is good because teachers have good subject knowledge.

- Food work encourages students to develop their understanding of how to prepare and cook fresh foods. Lessons encourage a good balance of practical cookery and evaluation.
- Year 7 students were observed baking a healthy scone. Students were very knowledgeable about which ingredients they needed to change and which ingredients were healthier, for example the addition of fruit, wholemeal flour and skimmed milk.

Planning the curriculum

Planning the curriculum is good.

- Healthy eating and nutrition are taught in science, design and technology, physical education, and the personal development curriculum. These departments work together well to ensure progression in the understanding of the complexities of healthy eating.
- The school has made some good links between curriculum areas to promote healthy eating. Students studying performing arts use a healthy living theme to re enforce '5-a-day' and the 'eat well plate' messages in local primary schools.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- The school's management of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good. Healthy eating is a high priority within the school. This is evident in school policies and schemes of work.
- The management of the food service is very good due to the excellent monitoring of the provision by the governing body and the innovative drive to maintain very high standards. Senior staff supervise the dining hall each day which ensures that behaviour is exemplary.
- The catering staff are enthusiastic and there is a focus on professional development. Plans are in place to ensure that all catering staff have first-aid training.
- Taster sessions are promoted regularly at a range of school events such as parents' evenings.
- Students and parents are not as involved as they could be in formulating the schools' food policies.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the consultation with students, parents and the wider community in developing the schools' food policies
- improving the dining experience by providing more information about healthy eating choices.

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

Yours sincerely

Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector