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Mrs J Ashley and Mrs A Livesey  
Acting Headteachers  
St John's CofE Primary School  
Church Street  
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Dear Mrs Ashley and Mrs Livesey

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 9 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 pupils; scrutiny of school documentation, including your policies and evidence of pupils' work; and the observation of two lessons, as well as the breakfast club, the tuck shop 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 lunchtime provision was compliant with all except one of the food-based standards. Pupils were encouraged effectively to select vegetables and salad with their lunch, but there is further scope for increasing the

provision of fruit as a dessert option. All of the 14 nutrient-based standards for lunches were met.

- The food and drink provided at the breakfast club and tuck shop met the food-based standards for food other than lunches, with the exception of the full-fat milk available for all pupils at the breakfast club, and the provision of breadsticks and flavoured rice cakes at the tuck shop.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is good.

- The dining hall is in the process of having the roof replaced which restricts access to one hour each day. Despite this, pupils enjoy their school meals in a large dining hall with plenty of space to sit and socialise with their friends. They make sensible choices about eating healthily, encouraged by the kitchen staff. The vegetables and the salad options are very popular.
- The take up of school meals is above average at 44% and rising. This is as a direct result of the new regeneration kitchen which enables meals to be cooked on site.
- The experience has also been enhanced by the provision of plates instead of trays, which pupils enjoy, and a much improved choice of meals.

Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

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

- The school engages successfully with parents through newsletters and good marketing from the catering provider about themed days and menu choices.
- Pupils who bring a packed lunch to school are invited to try school meals on themed days, such as 'Harry Potter Day', Diwali, St George's Day and at Christmas, and take up is very good. Parents said that they enjoyed these opportunities as they encouraged many pupils to change to a school meal.
- The school gives good advice and support to parents to help them prepare healthy packed lunches, but, despite the school's best efforts, these messages are not always acted upon. Packed lunches seen during the visit contained too many unhealthy foods such as chocolate and fizzy drinks.
- Parents are not currently as involved as they could be in the production of school food policies and the school has identified the need for a more comprehensive packed lunch policy.

The development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills

Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills is good.

- Pupils, from the very youngest to the oldest, talk confidently and knowledgeably about what constitutes a healthy meal. They understand

which food groups to eat to keep healthy, which ones they should eat a lot of and which ones a little. In the dining hall, many pupils choose both vegetables and salad with their meals.

- The take up of extra-curricular physical education is good. The school caters for individual needs by providing clubs which engage and interest all pupils, such as cheerleading, wrestling, multi-skills, fit for fun, cross-country running and judo.
- Older pupils are very proud of their fundraising efforts alongside the school catering manager to enable them to develop the school gardens to grow vegetables.

### Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Pupils make good progress because they are given consistent messages about health eating from a young age. Reception children were able to say why they eat fruit at break times and what effect it has on their bodies.
- Pupils in Year 3 could confidently sort produce into food groups around the 'eat well plate.' The teacher had collected a range of produce, some of which were unfamiliar to the pupils. This challenged their thinking about food and extended their knowledge of basic foods such as pulses and beans.
- In lessons, teachers take every opportunity to reinforce basic messages, for example by explaining when food is part of the recommended 'five a day', which food should be eaten often and food which is only for a treat.

### Planning the curriculum

Planning the curriculum is good.

- Curriculum planning is organised into themes which incorporate healthy eating across all subject areas.
- There are very good links between topics in science, design technology and personal, social and health education which build on previous learning and highlight healthy lifestyles.
- Enterprise activities, planned across the year, have a healthy-lifestyle theme. These include; The Healthy Café, the Healthy Sandwich Company and the Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch.
- Despite the very good curriculum coverage there are limited opportunities for pupils, especially the youngest, to handle and prepare food on a regular basis.

### Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The school's management of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good. Healthy-lifestyle messages are given a very high profile and are highlighted in all schemes of work.
- Teachers and the Parent Support Advisers are motivated to improve pupils' life chances and work closely with pupils and families to develop healthy lifestyles.
- The management of the food service is good and has improved substantially in the last year.
- Pupils and parents are not as involved as they could be in the production of school policies on healthy eating.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- improving the opportunities for pupils to handle and prepare food on a more regular basis across the school
- engaging more widely with pupils and parents in the production of the school food policy and packed lunch policy.

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

Joy Frost  
Her Majesty's Inspector