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Mrs A Hodgson
Headteacher
East Herrington Primary School
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Dear Mrs Hodgson

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 12 January 2010 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 within the main text.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, learners and parents; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three lessons and school and nursery lunch.

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.

- The school, in consultation with pupils, parents and governors, has developed a range of policies and procedures which promote the development of healthy eating very effectively.
- Parents are very pleased with the food offered in the school. They are confident that their children receive healthy and nutritious food before, during and after school.
- Healthy eating is integral to the school's view of pupils 'being healthy' and to pupils' overall achievement and their ability to live successful lives.

Compliance with the food-based and nutrient-based standards for school food of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

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

- The lunch time provision is not compliant with the final food-based and 14 nutrient-based standards. There is insufficient fruit provision and too many deep fried and starchy foods. Only 12 of the 14 nutrient-based standards were met; the lunch provision was not compliant with iron and sodium.
- The types of food and drink provided at the breakfast club and after school club are compliant with the food-based standards for all school food other than lunches.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is good.

- Nursery children can stay for lunch on the days that they attend nursery. Nursery lunch is served in a separate purpose-built room. The room is very attractive and children and staff sit together around a large table.
- Pupils in the main school are served in the school hall. The hall is attractively decorated and spacious. Queues disperse promptly and relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. There is a salad bar staffed by pupils.
- Pupils who stay for packed lunch sit at a separate table. Pupils commented that this meant that they could not always sit with their friends.

Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

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

- The cook has particularly good relationships with children, staff and parents. She knows families well and she and her staff ensure that children are encouraged to make healthy choices at lunchtime or at other times in the school day.
- The food policy was written after extensive consultation with pupils, staff, parents and governors. The policy is online. Parents receive very good feedback from staff if there are concerns about children's diet or food choices or the content of their packed lunches.
- The menu is displayed in the dining room but it is not visible to all pupils. Parents do not receive a copy of the menu.

Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills

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

- Pupils of all ages talk very knowledgably about all aspects of healthy eating. The school ensures that it links teaching about healthy eating to other health promoting activities.
- The school's work with the wider community, its effective partnerships with health professionals and its extended provision, including after-school activities, day trips and visits, promote pupils' knowledge and personal skills very effectively.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Pupils make good progress because teachers have a thorough understanding of healthy eating, nutrition and hygienic practices.
- Activities are well matched to pupils' needs. There are lots of practical activities which provide pupils with memorable experiences.

Planning of the curriculum

The planning of the curriculum is outstanding.

- You have very high expectations for all aspects of the school's development. You have used curriculum development to drive improvement in the school and this has resulted in an innovative and interesting curriculum which engages pupils and allows staff at all levels to work together and share skills and expertise.
- The school makes very effective use of teaching time and 'maps' the provision made for healthy eating through lessons and enrichment activities. Curriculum planning documents promote the development of pupils' practical and investigative skills and all pupils gain first-hand experience of food preparation.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are outstanding.

- Your deputy leads all aspects of pupils' personal, social and health education. This ensures that the subject has status in the school and that new initiatives are taken seriously.
- Subject leadership is very effective. You promote leadership at all levels and allow staff to develop their interests and individual skills. Subject leaders are confident and have an accurate view of the strengths of their subjects and of any areas for development. They work together very effectively and this ensures that pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of healthy eating and nutrition.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that the lunch provision is compliant with the mandatory final food-based and nutrient-based standards for school lunches, and obtaining minimum evidence of working towards compliance
- actively promoting school food to parents and pupils, for example sharing the school menu (send a copy home each time it changes) and publicising it on the school website.

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

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent 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

Christine Graham
Her Majesty's Inspector