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Mr M Byron
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Byron

Ofsted 2009-10 survey inspection programme: healthy eating in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and students, during my visit with my colleague from the School Food Trust on 19 January 2010 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 staff; scrutiny of documentation; and observation of the breakfast club, lunchtime and two lessons.

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 satisfactory with good features.

- The school uses formal and informal opportunities well to give consistent message to students about healthy eating throughout the day.
- The provision in the breakfast club is good. It has a warm and welcoming atmosphere with clear signs about the healthy foods and adults who work effectively with students to encourage them to make healthy choices and to start the day with a positive attitude.

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 lunchtime provision was compliant with most of the food-based standards but confectionery was used in one recipe and the extra bread included added fat on two occasions during the three-week menu cycle. On the evidence provided it was not entirely possible to assess if the lunch provision met the 14 nutrient-based standards for secondary boys as the provision had been evaluated against the nutrient-based standards for primary schools but it seems to be broadly appropriate.
- The food and drink provided at the breakfast club was compliant with all the food-based standards for school food other than lunches.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- The suitably timed and well-organised lunch break enables all students to eat calmly and comfortably. They are called up to receive the meal of their choice in an orderly manner and sit in year groups with a member of staff. The multi-purpose hall is functional and has been enlivened with healthy-eating posters. Meals are transported from a hub primary school.

Helping students and parents to make healthier choices

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

- Parents are pleased with the high level of care the students receive and appreciate that students are encouraged to eat a balanced meal and to generally think about healthier food choices. The school runs a very good breakfast club. Students get the day off to a good start both nutritionally and socially due to the excellent support from academic and support staff. Parents would welcome a copy of the menu.

Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

The development of students' knowledge and personal skills are good.

- Students understand which foods they should only eat occasionally and the importance of fruit and vegetables in their diet. They all enjoy very high-quality practical cooking experiences and some now take a related GCSE. The 'lets get cooking' scheme has had a good impact as students are more interested in healthy recipes. Students learn how to modify recipes to make them tasty without too much salt. They understand the

'five a day' message and the importance of regular exercise. The boys are active and keen football players.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- The students' experience good teaching about healthier eating in food technology and science lessons. Well-planned lessons are matched effectively to the students' ability and skills levels. Good patient teaching ensures they get the right impression about healthy, sociable eating and good nutrition. Students gained key skills such as modifying ingredients to suit personal preference during their 'smoothie' making. The school has begun to listen to students' ideas and suggestions so they feel they have an input into how school lunches develop. The garden and building project offer valuable life-long skill opportunities that students' value.

Planning the curriculum

Planning of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- Consistent messages are given in food technology, physical education and science lessons. However, the progression of knowledge and skills in relation to nutrition and health is not mapped sufficiently well across the subjects and year groups. These subjects are backed up by appropriate personal, health, social and emotional education.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- You and the governors all regard eating healthily as important to the welfare of your students. The uptake of school meals is good. You promote healthy lifestyles effectively. However, although you are aware of the food-based and nutrient standards, your monitoring of them is not yet sufficiently rigorous and there is insufficient evidence that some elements of these are being fully met.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- working with the relevant authorities to get support to ensure that the age-appropriate nutritional analysis of menus is carried out and that there is a checklist showing full compliance with the food-based standards
- monitoring and evaluating the impact of your interventions more rigorously to ensure you are efficiently developing the curriculum and a healthier school community.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to focus on developing healthier eating.

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

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector