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Ms K Khan  
Interim Headteacher  
Horizon School  
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Dear Ms Khan

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, students, parents and carers, during my visit with my colleague from the School Food Trust on 20 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 nominated staff, parents and carers and a group of students; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of students' work; and observation of two lessons, snack times, break times and the school's lunchtime arrangements.

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.

- The school provides a good and pleasant dining experience for its students, who have a wide range of special needs and/or disabilities.
- Parents and carers consider the school to be very approachable and helpful about dietary issues. Strategies to help students, parents and carers to make healthier choices are satisfactory.

## 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 not compliant with all the food-based standards. There is a need to include oily fish more frequently on the four-week menu and remove fat spread from the extra bread. From the graphical evidence provided, it was not possible to assess if the lunch provision met the 14 nutrient-based standards.
- The food and drink provided at the mid-morning break were not compliant with all the food-based standards for school food other than lunches. There is a need to reduce the frequency at which sausage rolls are provided and to remove snack products with added salt.

## The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is good.

- The dining hall is light and airy. Queuing arrangements are good. Students have good opportunities to sit in friendship groups where it is appropriate to do so and to chat. They have opportunities to serve and tidy away food.
- Music and table top games are used well in one sitting to make the dining experience for students more enjoyable and to encourage sociability. Students are supported well by staff.

## Helping students and parents to make healthier choices

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

- Students are able to make healthy choices at lunchtimes and some can also do so at break times from a food trolley during the morning break.
- Parents and carers have few opportunities to find out about menus and healthy eating options. Students also have limited opportunities to learn about meals in advance. There is scope to display menus more prominently around the school and in classrooms.

## Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

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

- Students' understanding of hygiene is well developed and they understand the importance of drinking water regularly. They appreciate the importance of a sensible diet and have a good understanding of what foods are healthy due to effective pastoral support and good liaison between home and school on dietary issues.

- Students are able to make healthy choices at lunchtime.

Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is satisfactory.

- Teachers prepare resources satisfactorily, make appropriate use of additional adults and ensure that students are adequately engaged in practical activities in food lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall.

Planning of the curriculum

The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- A new topic-based curriculum has recently been introduced that includes satisfactory opportunities for teaching about healthy eating.
- The use of the 'eatwell plate' is not evident in food lessons. This would enhance students' understanding of healthy foods and promote consistent messages about healthier eating.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- Training in food handling has been held for half of the staff.
- A new whole-school food policy has been recently drawn up but parents, carers and students have yet to be consulted about it. There is currently no healthy schools coordinator.
- Monitoring of the take-up of school meals by different groups of students is at an early stage of development.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- liaising and working more closely with the catering provider to ensure that the mid-morning break and the lunch provision are compliant with the school food standards and share the evidence of this with parents, carers and governors
- nominating a member of the senior leadership team to be the healthy schools coordinator who will monitor the provision and take-up of school meals by different groups of students
- consulting more widely with students, parents and carers and sharing menus in advance with them.

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

Michael McIlroy  
Her Majesty's Inspector