

Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404040  
F 020 7421 6855  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



8 February 2010

Mr E Fearnside  
Headteacher  
Westlands School  
Eltham Crescent  
Thornaby  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS17 9RA

Dear Mr Fearnside

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 26 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 and learners from all key stages; discussions with parents and catering staff; scrutiny of relevant documentation; analysis of pupils' work; and observation of three 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.

- The school has managed to provide satisfactorily for healthy eating, despite recent extensive reorganisation. The school is continuing to meet the needs of boarders and of pupils in the main school.

## 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 satisfactory.

- With one minor exception, the food provided at lunchtime met all the final food-based standards for school lunches. Nine of the 14 nutrient-based standards for school lunches were met. The menu had been analysed against the nutrient-based standards for secondary schools. There are primary-aged pupils at the school but the catering provider has not yet analysed the menu taking these pupils into account.
- The food-based standards for food other than lunch were met in the daily breakfast club. The school provides food for pupils in its boarding provision. There has not been enough formal planning and evaluation of other food provided within the school day.

## The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- The school has pupils from three key stages. The dining hall is small and is not fit for purpose and is in need of renovation. Despite this, the school has made the best use of its facilities by providing a primary dining room elsewhere in the school, so that all Key Stage 3 and 4 students can eat together and sit with their friends and socialise. The majority of staff also eat school meals and sit in the dining hall with the pupils.
- The take-up of school meals is high at around 65% and Key Stage 2 pupils make good healthy choices encouraged by the kitchen staff. Key Stage 3 and 4 students make less informed choices but they enjoy their lunches and there is little wastage.
- There are no menus or healthy-eating information on display in the dining hall to encourage and help pupils to make informed choices.

## Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

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

- The school council has been involved in working with the cook to improve the quality and choice of school meals. The catering provider has listened to their requests and has improved the amount and range of food and drinks on offer.
- The school does not yet systematically seek the views of parents and pupils when producing policies on healthy eating, packed lunch provision and menu choices. Parents are aware that confectionary and fizzy drinks are not used in school but they are less sure about the menu choices or how to prepare healthy packed lunches.

- Parents are confident pupils are well catered for and the staff know them very well.

## Development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills

The development of pupils' knowledge and personal skills is satisfactory

- Pupils in all key stages were aware of what constitutes a healthy meal. They knew what they should eat often and what to eat less often. They were less sure about different food groups and the effect that each had on the body.
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular physical activities. Pupils also have regular opportunities to take part in outdoor education, weekly enrichment afternoons and a range of sports clubs both at lunchtime and after school.

## Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is satisfactory.

- All students in Key Stage 3 have opportunities to learn how to cook inexpensive healthy meals through the 'License to Cook' initiative. Key Stage 4 students who take up food technology as an option also have good opportunities to cook and handle food.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 have fewer opportunities to work with and handle food, although they are taught the benefits of eating healthily.

## Planning of the curriculum

The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- In the primary curriculum, good links are made between different subject areas to reinforce healthy-eating messages. For example, in a history lesson, pupils made links between the diet of Native Americans and the present day, with an emphasis on which food groups were missing and the effects diet has on diseases such as rickets and scurvy.
- Elements of healthy eating are taught in food technology, science, circle time and personal, social, health and citizenship education. At present, there is a lack of cohesion between departments and across key stages, with no common systems for teaching about food groups, nutrition and diet. This can sometimes lead to pupils receiving mixed messages.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

- You and your colleagues are aware that diet and healthy lifestyles are important to the specific needs of the pupils in the school. The free breakfast club is a good initiative. It is well attended and it ensures that pupils get a good start to the school day.

- The management of the food service is satisfactory. The leadership, including the governing body, has not routinely monitored the catering provider's compliance with the school food standards.
- 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:

- increasing the positive messages, notices, menus and information on display in the dining hall to help pupils make healthy eating choices
- increasing the consultation and engagement with pupils and parents in the development of school food policies and the lunch menu
- continuing to work towards compliance with the nutrient-based standards for school lunches and the food-based standards for food other than lunch, and ensure evidence of the actions taken to do this is available.

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

Joy Frost  
Her Majesty's Inspector