

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

T 08456 404045  
F 020 7421 6855  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)



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Mr T Mason  
Headteacher  
Robert Bakewell Primary School and Community Centre  
Barsby Drive  
Loughborough  
Leicestershire  
LE11 5UJ

Dear Mr Mason

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme 2006/7: Healthier Eating in Schools

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 01 February to look at your overall work on promoting healthier eating and the provision of school meals within this.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our evaluation and reporting. Any published report is likely to list the names of the institutions visited but we will not identify individual institutions within the report itself.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit. The evidence used to inform the judgements below comprised interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of school documentation, two short lesson observations, and observation of eating arrangements at both breaktime and lunchtime. I also ate a school meal myself.

The overall effectiveness of the school's provision is good with some outstanding features.

- The standard of school meals

This is good. The content of the meals meets the required standards and the quality of the food at the point of consumption is good. However, the take-up of paid meals is low. The key factors appear to be price and choice. The 'full meals only' policy means that the full price has to be paid, whether or not a pupil is willing to eat all the component parts of the meal. For those who are not prepared to do this, what they do eat can seem expensive. More straightforwardly, however, some parents struggle to meet the cost of meals even though their children like the food. The low take-up of school meals means that they play only a limited part in helping to ensure that the pupil body as a whole actually eats healthily.

- The quality of the dining experience

This is good. The dining arrangements are well managed and pupils are provided with a satisfactory social and learning experience. The recreational and voluntary learning activities provided for pupils after they have eaten are good. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils and pupils are good and pupils are well behaved throughout the premises.

- Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

This is outstanding. Good advice and guidance is provided to parents, for example on the content of lunchboxes. This is potentially very significant in overall healthy eating terms, given how many pupils bring such lunches. The school uses a good range of measures to get its message across to both pupils and parents. Activities for pupils and parents to engage in together are particularly effective.

- Developing pupils' knowledge and personal skills

This is good. Pupils have a good grasp of the key principles of healthy eating and of basic hygiene rules. School routines reinforce the latter and the toilet and washing facilities are good. The school does not conduct regular questionnaire surveys of pupil views on school meals provision and this limits the ability to identify clear trends. However, pupil and parent surveys are used well to explore eating habits and issues like the content of packed lunches. They have been effective in improving what pupils eat in school.

- Teaching about healthier eating

This is outstanding. Weekly lesson planning documents for personal, social and health education (PSHE), science, and design and technology all have appropriately detailed references to nutrition and healthy eating. The school has also made very good use of "topic web" analysis to identify how healthy eating education can and should be addressed across the full range of subjects (and how this work will in turn make a contribution to those subjects). All staff use the same terminology, emphasising food intake balance. Good use is being made of a range of materials from outside agencies and of input from health service staff.

- Planning the curriculum

This is good. The coverage of healthy eating within curriculum planning is appropriate and well-coordinated. There is no overall healthy eating policy document, although one is under development. The current draft is limited in its coverage of the wider aspects of food provision at the school and the management of lunchtimes. However, there is good awareness of what else needs to be done to complete the process.

- Managing the school's approach to healthier eating

This is good. Leadership of the various curriculum strands and of the initiative to achieve the National Healthy Schools Standard is good. Staff are effective in identifying and supporting pupils whose eating habits give cause for concern. Good steps are taken to find out about children's eating habits more widely and the findings have been used well in developing and targeting provision. However, they are of limited value only in evaluating the impact of the school's provision.

An area for improvement, which we discussed, was:

- developing the evaluation of the impact of the school's provision in terms of what pupils actually eat.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to promote healthier eating in the school.

As I explained during the feedback, this letter will be copied to your local authority and will be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

John Cordwell  
Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools