

16 June 2009

Mrs C Steel
Headteacher
Alderman Knight School
Ashchurch Road
Tewkesbury
Gloucestershire
GL20 8JJ

Dear Mrs Steel

Ofsted Survey Inspection Programme 2009/10: Healthy eating in schools

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit with Mo Roberts' on 08 June 2009 to look at your work on healthier eating and school meals.

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 would not identify individual institutions within the report itself.

The evidence base used to inform the judgements made was: interviews with staff and pupils, a member of the Local Authority health and well-being team and the area manager for the school meals contractor, scrutiny of school documentation including your school evaluation and school development plan, analysis of pupils' work, and observation of two lessons as well as your break and a school lunch time.

I undertook to provide a brief written version of the main points made in my feedback at the end of the visit, to support development in healthier eating and school meals. This follows:-

The quality of provision to promote healthy eating

This is outstanding.

- The nutritional standard of school meals.

Not judged.

The quality of the dining experience

This is outstanding.

- The dining room is organised to ensure that all pupils enjoy eating their meals together. Pupils are polite and care for each other through helping

serve each other with food. They take responsibility for clearing plates away and taking orders for desserts.

- The atmosphere is warm and friendly with a buzz of conversation. Pupils are helped to try new foods and thus little food is wasted. The school ensures that all pupils enjoy their meals and take turns in serving and clearing away.
- Take up of school meals has risen from 42% to 52% because pupils like the fresh food they are served. All staff ensure that pupils are helped to make healthy choices.

Helping pupils and parents to make healthier choices

This is outstanding.

- The school uses an appropriately wide range of initiatives to effectively engage with parents including the Box Clever campaign, Focus on Food and Family Food Time.
- Because of the emphasis that the school places on the importance of healthy eating parents and pupils know how to choose healthy foods. The school newsletter includes information on healthy packed meals and school lunch menus go home regularly.
- The school works very closely with the local authority and the school meals provider who understands the needs of the pupils well.
- Water is available throughout the day, but sometimes those pupils who are the least independent are not always reminded to drink more water when appropriate.

Teaching about healthier eating

This is outstanding.

- Pupils learn through practical work how to choose food and prepare it from fresh ingredients. Thus they can make a wide range of meals from scratch. These include soups, main meals, sauces and desserts.
- Consistent messages are taught in science and personal and social development and these are explicitly linked to helping pupils choose healthy snacks at breakfast, break times and food for lunch. Numbers taking breakfast at school have risen, because pupils know they need to eat breakfast.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of a healthy balanced diet. They know which foods they should eat little of and what they can add to their choices to make them healthier.
- The school takes its role of teaching about healthy eating very seriously and reinforces consistent messages all the time.
- Good life skills teaching means pupils understand the importance of hygiene.
- The school has a well established history of consulting with pupils over lunch time provision. It listens to their views and adapts its practices whenever possible.

Planning of the curriculum

This is outstanding.

- Planning is imaginative, systematic and coherent. Teachers understand the need to continually reinforce healthy eating messages.
- The garden is used well to support pupils to understand how food is grown and they are encouraged to eat healthy fruit and vegetables they have grown.
- They also flavour cooking with herbs and learn to avoid the use of too much salt.
- In addition to following the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance, healthy eating messages are revisited every year and regularly in life skills lessons.
- The school teaches both the 'food pyramid' and the 'eat well plate' model and this gives confusing messages for those who find learning challenging.

Managing the school's approach to healthier eating

This is outstanding.

- You, your senior team and governors all see eating healthily as a cornerstone for the education the school provides.
- Take up of breakfasts and lunches are monitored so that provision is matched to pupils' needs and likes and dislikes; the school ensures that all pupils have breakfast.
- You are proactive in solving eating issues and support all pupils very well no matter how complex the situation.
- The sensitive management of pupils ensures that even those with the most complex needs are supported to participate fully and try new foods.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensure that the 'eat well plate' is taught and not the food pyramid to avoid confusing pupils
- remind all pupils to drink more water when necessary.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop healthier eating and school meals 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

Michelle Parker
Her Majesty's Inspector