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Mrs J Pruchniewicz  
Headteacher  
Westborough High School  
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Dear Mrs Pruchniewicz

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

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff, students and parents, during my visit with my colleagues from the School Food Trust on 15 December 2009 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, a group of parents and two groups of students; scrutiny of school documentation; observation of a food technology lesson and observation of the school's before-school, break-time and lunchtime food provision.

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.

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 inadequate.

- The food provided at lunchtime and across the school day does not meet the food-based standards, as too many meat products, foods flash-fried

during manufacture and starchy foods cooked in fat or oil are provided at mid-morning break and lunchtime. Confectionery (including decorative confectionery and cereal bars) were also available. Although sufficient vegetables and salad were provided, the provision of fruit should be increased.

- The lunchtime menu cycle has been analysed against the nutrient-based standards and the evidence provided indicated that 11 of the 14 nutrient-based standards had been met. However, the analysis included main meal options only and should be revised to include other items provided at lunchtime. As the standards have not been met, evidence of working toward compliance should be produced, to demonstrate the steps being taken to develop a fully compliant menu cycle.

The quality of the dining experience

The quality of the dining experience is satisfactory.

- Students from Years 7 to 10 are served in the main dining room. This is attractively decorated and there is a range of seating and a variety of food outlets. This ensures that although there is some queuing students are served promptly. The youngest students are served last because older students carry out lunchtime responsibilities. The school has ensured that the full range of options is available. The time allocated for the mid-day meal is appropriate and students say they are not rushed and have time to socialise with others.
- Most students have a school lunch but the small number of students that bring a packed lunch can sit with their friends. Teachers supervise the dining room and provide appropriate reminders about food choices and behaviour, but the school does not monitor the choices made by individual students.
- Students who are eligible for free school meals have to queue for tickets.
- Information about the food on offer is displayed on menu cards and there is some labelling, particularly of products made with halal meat. The caterers have not provided you and the governors with accurate information about the dishes and food choices on offer. This means that guidance provided for students and their parents is not always accurate. Students say that they receive good guidance from catering staff and teachers and that this helps them to make appropriate choices. This is particularly the case for students with specific dietary needs.

Helping students and parents to make healthier choices

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

- Students and parents receive satisfactory information about the variety of meals and snacks available in school. The school council and the senior leadership team have considered the range of foods and have requested that certain foods be provided or withdrawn.

- The school provides students and their parents with very good advice and support. The Parents' Forum discusses healthy eating during their meetings and there are parent and child cookery classes. Students look after the school's organic kitchen garden, allotments and its chickens.
- Students are given guidance about the food and drinks which can be brought into school.
- Students are provided with good information which helps them to understand how to live healthy lifestyles. However, the food provided in school does not always help them to make healthy choices.

#### Development of students' knowledge and personal skills

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

- In discussions, students demonstrated a very good understanding of healthy eating. The school ensures that it links teaching about healthy eating to other health-promoting activities and students' learning and progress.
- The school's work with the wider community, its effective partnerships with health professionals and its extended provision, including residential visits, promote students' knowledge and personal skills very effectively.

#### Teaching about healthier eating

Teaching about healthier eating is good.

- Students know what foods contribute to a healthy lifestyle and they are encouraged to eat a balanced diet.
- GCSE courses in food technology are popular and the proportion of students attaining A\* to C grades is usually high.

#### Planning the curriculum

The planning of the curriculum is good.

- Teaching about healthy eating is integrated very well into all aspects of the school's work.
- The curriculum is planned very well. Subject departments have worked together to identify all aspects of healthy living. These are then taught by subject specialists. Curriculum planning includes after-school and enrichment activities and there are good links with health professionals. There are themed weeks and a very interesting range of activities. These help students to enjoy learning and prepare them for their future lives.
- The specialisms make a strong contribution to the curriculum. Healthy living has been the focus of work within the school and with local primary schools. Some primary schools have grown fruit and vegetables and used the produce to make soups and chutneys. They have drawn up plans to market their goods. The school is to produce a DVD which will feature primary-aged pupils teaching their peers about healthy living.

## Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good.

- The school promotes healthy eating well. It encourages students to consider the link between healthy lifestyles and their overall achievement, learning and progress.
- The school has taken effective action to increase the take up of school meals and ensure that students remain on site at lunchtime.
- The curriculum is interesting and is matched well to students' interests and needs. It provides them with interesting practical and investigative activities which have a positive impact on their knowledge and understanding.
- The school is very inclusive and it considers the needs of all of its students.
- The governors and senior leadership team are aware of their responsibilities in this area but they have not monitored the nutritional value of the foods offered sufficiently rigorously and they have not ensured that all the food provided meets their expectations. This means that some of the guidance provided for parents is incorrect and that the very positive impact of teaching and the curriculum is undermined by the food choices that are offered during the school day.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- reviewing the food provision to ensure that the food-based standards for lunches and for food other than lunches are met in full, and producing evidence to demonstrate that you are working toward compliance with the nutrient-based standards for lunches
- ensuring that senior leaders monitor the impact of these actions rigorously
- ensuring that students who are eligible for free school meals cannot be identified.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop healthier eating and provision for food in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Graham  
Her Majesty's Inspector