

Lunchtime Observations Report & Proposed Actions

Sacred Heart Primary School



Wiser Choices Working Group for Mr J Brading | **28 June 2018**

Summary

In order to understand if there was room for improving our school meals at SH, we have conducted 3 observations sessions, by 3 different people, between 22 and 25 June 2018. We have interviewed children, dining room staff and Edwards and Ward kitchen staff. We have held a 1.5h meeting with Edwards and Ward management, including management taking care of all Wandsworth Schools as well as the manager responsible for Sacred Heart RC Primary and 18 others in the borough.

Based on these, we believe there is definitely room to improve our lunches, and E&W will support all initiatives in this direction. In their view, "we are slightly behind other Wandsworth Schools", and they have provided extensive guidance and suggestions on how we could do better based on our findings.

Key areas of improvement have become apparent based on observations and interviews, namely: excess of options, large portions for smaller children causing excessive cooked food waste, excess of sugary treats and puddings, excess of starches on pizza days, low quality and lacking surveillance or quality guides for packed lunches, no plans to combat or educate on food waste and raise awareness.

Key actions proposed, which have been agreed and are supported by Edwards and Ward, based on a meeting we have had with them on 26 June 2018, are detailed below, but can be summarised as follows:

Proposed actions

Starting immediately

- Fruity Friday to be started asap (no pudding except fruit and yogurt on Fridays)
- Removing puddings from Wednesday too (quiet launch, leaving only fruit and yogurt option)
- No bread to be served on pizza days
- Decrease portion size of children up to Y3; they can raise hands for seconds

Starting in September

- Active serving by the salad bar (e.g. dedicated staff member there, instead of walking around the room; or rota of older children)
- Roll into two option menu vs current three, to improve overall organization and reduce waste
- Implementing a transparent bin liner policy for cooked food waste; start a Waste-o-metre game and incentive system to raise waste awareness among children, staff and parents
- Implement a 'sticker' reward system for various good behaviours (e.g. eating healthy options, good table manners, clean plates, etc.)
- Communicate and deploy **SH Packed Lunch Policy**

Observations, comments and proposed actions in full

	Observation / question / issue raised	E&W meeting / Options & Actions
O V E R A L L N U T R I T I O N &	<p>The plates had all OR a combination of: large chunks of roast potatoes (between 2 and 4, on average 10 cm long and the thickness of 4 chunky home chips each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a square slice of pizza, about 10x10 cm, quite thick and well risen; a slice of white bread 1cm thick and the size of the palm of your hand; a large ladle-full of baked beans <p>Almost no-one had the overcooked yellow-green peas. I saw it chucked into the bin half way through the second half of the lunchtime, just as the veg curry, which was poured down the bin too. (Sonia, 22 June)</p>	<p>We had a constructive discussion on portion size, to reduce for the children up to Y3.</p> <p>Smaller portion sizes for the little ones can be mandated by the headmaster and they will abide by this; head of kitchen and the Wandsworth lead from E&W are fully supportive of this and encourage us to do it.</p>
	<p>Why so many starchy foods in one meal? (Clara, 25 June)</p> <p>I'm aware that Friday is a bit of a tricky day, being meat free. However, the portions of pudding were simply staggering. The amount of carbs served in a single meal is shocking. (Sonia, 22 June)</p> <p>Overall the kids seemed to enjoy the food but the younger kids are overfed and the older ones don't get enough. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>Sometimes culture or tradition and to give options. Bread on the lunchtime is a cultural issue for most Wandsworth families.</p> <p>Note on the bread: looks white but is half wholemeal.</p> <p>They are happy to remove bread on pizza day; this is already a norm in many schools they cater to. If we want to remove it on more days, we can ask for it and/or run a parent consultation and they will adjust</p> <p>We will start Fruity Fridays as of Mr Bradings' e-mail to them and remove bread from pizza day. We can do this <u>immediately</u>.</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">O R G A N I S A T I O N</p>	<p>What is the nutritional value of each lunch, especially sugars and protein? What's the energy target? How many calories each lunch & pudding should have? What guidelines are being followed? Who decides portion sizes? And the amount of vegetable? Are the grams of fat and sugar measured? Calories counted?</p> <p>Don't serve a pudding on a pasta / pizza day. (Sonia, 22 June) (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>One child had a plate of sweetcorn and a slice of bread. Need to be aware of food groups. Pasta, boiled potatoes and slice of bread, too much carbohydrate. More protein less carbohydrate (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>Have to align school food with what some children are eating at home, some unfortunately are eating bland/beige food so taste buds affected. Keep it simple, healthy and nutritional. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>They follow the guidelines of <u>Standards for school food in England</u> and also have invested in an in-house nutritionist; they do not use of minimise use of processed foods and cook everything from scratch inhouse; they don't use salt and canned items like the pears observed are in fruit juice, not glucose; however, they are happy to substitute them for natural fruit.</p>
	<p>Why do we need three different menu options, since our school is Catholic and, as such, not as diverse as others in the Borough which might call for greater diversity in choices to cater to their students' backgrounds and religious beliefs? (Clara, 25 June)</p> <p>Mixing sides? (eg. interchangeable veggies for the two menus?) (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>It's because of historic reasons, but does not obey to a need and/or make school meals better for Sacred Heart. 12 / 19 schools in Wandsworth only offer two choices; all the Catholic ones offer only two, as there is no need for three.</p> <p>"We should take heed", according to E&W, it will remove some complication, allow kitchen staff to focus on better quality and a more diverse two option menu; refocus on salad bar and improve flow management, so we can focus energy on rewards for less waste, eating more mindfully and healthier and other initiatives; it is also easier for the children.</p>

<p>S U G A R</p>	<p>Can we do less puddings? It seems from the menu and the portion sizes eaten that the proportion of actual meal that is sweet and quite high in sugar and calories is considerable. If presented with two options, it's only natural that children will select the sugary one, especially if that's what they have at home. (Clara, 25 June)</p> <p>Need to cut out puddings to 2 days, and just have yoghurt and fruit instead. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>The pudding was served in <u>breakfast</u> bowls. The choice was: large chunky pear Williams canned, halved with /without chocolate custard - at least 2/3 of the bowl (1 portion is 2 halves); some kind of fruity crumble, 2/3 of the bowl with /without custard; fresh oranges and apple crescents. (Sonia, 22 June)</p>	<p>Yes, it's up to the school!</p> <p>We cannot change the menus too much, but we can request to drop unhealthy options.</p> <p>Fruity Friday (only fruit and yogourt served).</p> <p>We will also ask Mr Brading to ask them to remove pudding from Wednesdays as a general routine (starting September) and leave just fruit and yogurt on that day too; maybe, after that, we can add another pudding-free day. The communication on this should also be managed via newsletter to argument the healthy outcomes of the decision (invoking PHE and Childhood Obesity news) and our goal to be a leader in this area in Wandsworth.</p>
<p>S A L A D S</p>	<p>The salad bar was used more by the KS1, than KS2. Normally, <u>there is no-one by the salad bar</u> for the KS2 lunch. Children in KS1 are asked by the dinner ladies if they want any salad veg and their are helped by them. So I decided to stand beside it and offer the veg to the KS2 children as they were passing. <u>When offered</u>, about 70% took at least few slices of cucumber.</p> <p>What I was very surprised about was the fact, that by the time KS1 left, the salad bowls contained 2 slices of beetroot, up to 10 slices of cucumber, 3 pieces of tomato quarters, some iceberg lettuce sliced, and up to 10 spoonfuls of coleslaw. When the kitchen staff saw it, they commented: "That's enough for KS2". (Sonia, 22 June)</p>	<p>We have agreed to 'man' the salad bar; this could also be done by older kids on a rota, since the location of the salad trolley cannot be put anywhere closer to the main buffet. We can do it for a week and evaluate salad uptake increases, then make it a permanent situation if it seems to work (based on Sonia's experiment, it does).</p> <p>It has been discussed and agreed that it's better to have someone on the salad stand proactively serving the children, as the salad itself cannot be moved to the main buffet line since there's no space and the special lights are not available there.</p> <p>If we request grated carrot this is fine, and also probably less labour intensive than cutting carrot, so win-win all around.</p>

	<p>Salad, if it's going to be served should be served properly. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>Is there any way, there could be a bowl of chopped cucumber & carrots on each table? (Sonia, 22 June)</p> <p>Salad bar is slightly out of the way and not controlled by a person, as such, very little salad on children's plates, even though staff is doing the rounds about the tables. Maybe we can find a more efficient way to dispense salad? Also, new textures, like grated carrot instead of simply sticks? (Clara, 25 June)</p>	<p>E&W suggested we consider to commission salad duty to older children on a rota. As Paula suggested "they love any form of activity and responsibility where they get to wear latex gloves". This could be proposed by Mr Brading to Lorraine and become routine in the dining room.</p>
<p>W A S T E</p>	<p>Massive amounts of waste. Portion size, according to head of kitchen, cause by the fact that "everyone pays the same, so they need to get the same amounts of food". However, this leads to a completely unbalanced amount of food on the plates of nursery and Y1&2 kids and not enough for the older ones. (Clara, 24 June)</p>	<p>This has been discussed with E&W and agreed that, if they have a school mandate, they can reduce portion size for little ones; especially hungry ones until Y3 can then ask for seconds if needed of the non-protein foods.</p>
	<p>Waste, so much cooked food waste. How can we improve this, which is directly tied to the above observation? (Clara, 25 June)</p> <p>Waste was shocking, slop bins being regularly emptied as platefuls of food is tipped away. Clean plates were either rare or non-existent. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>Proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear bags to showcase food waste - Waste-o-meter around bins and incentives to make less waste - Smaller portions to smaller children - No bread on pizza day rule
	<p>Food is pre-plated, it's unclear if this is for efficiency purposes or because the catering staff feel the necessity to allocate the same portion size to nursery and Year 6 pupils. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>This pre-plating is inefficient and leads to extra waste, so they will reduce portion size for the little ones. They can ask for seconds if they are still hungry. They cannot however, serve on the spot based on hunger, due to time constraints.</p>

	<p>It seems due to the speed needs of the lunch service there is little time to educate the children. Could we implement some rewards system that would encourage them to behave, eat better, eat more of their plate or focus on healthy choices? (Clara, 25 June)</p>	<p>There are many initiatives that they are seeing and supporting in other schools in Wandsworth which could be implemented in Sacred Heart.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparent bin bags to showcase and educate on food waste (children, but also parents by sending photos in the newsletter) - Waste-o-meter to create challenges such as “let’s target a 25% less full waste bag of cooked food for next lunch”. Engage children and refectory staff around these initiatives would reduce waste, as it has done in many other schools - Older children manning the bins and sending others back to eat a bit more; this is working in other schools. -
<p>P A C K E D L U N C H</p>	<p>Packed lunches, we are told by Lorraine, can have “Coke in water bottles” and lots of chocolate and other trash food. (Clara, 25 June)</p> <p>Kids bringing in coca – cola in water bottles. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>Considerable pick up of packed lunches for KS2 children. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p> <p>Chocolate and crisps need to be banned from packed lunches as unhealthy options, this used to be the case. (Charlotte, 25 June)</p>	<p>Develop a packed lunch policy and help parents by giving guidance. Some items should be banned, such as Coke as a drink and an excess of processed food items; guidance should be provided to help parent make better choices and lunches. A communication should be sent out before September to make sure then policies are enforced (e.g. confiscating the Coke in the water bottle) nobody gets a shock.</p> <p>Examples of packed lunch guidance materials we can use:</p> <p><u>‘Healthier lunches for children’ Government Packed Lunch Advice</u></p>

		<p><u>What to put in a lunchbox</u> by the Children's Food Trust</p> <p>We can issue our own School Food – Policy Guidance for Packed Lunches in the vein of <u>this excellent yet simple one</u></p> <p>Only water on the tables, jugs and cups should be laid on tables, as they are for children who eat school dinners.</p>
<p>M O R E</p>	<p>Most of the children I spoke to have fair ideas and understanding of what's good for them and what's not so good and should be consumed in moderation, however, some clearly have not seen their family cook at home and have very limited understanding of cooking, food provenance or nutrition. What could be done to help increase understanding of healthy food choices and expand food knowledge? (Clara, 25 June)</p>	<p>E&W does Healthy Talks at schools for children (during school time) and their parents (immediately after); they are done on a per-class basis. We can schedule the first one for the week before Autumn October half term. It's a show and tell format, and for parents also educational and then recipes are shared.</p>
	<p>Other initiatives they can suggest to us to make better lunchtime for the children and improve habits? (Clara, E&W meeting)</p>	<p>Golden Table: special table of the week for best eaters of previous week</p> <p>Clean Plates: stickers for the best eaters (they can provide the stickers; eg. I ate all my veg; I ate well today; I emptied my plate, etc.)</p> <p>Food bin duty: older children by the bins sending back those with plates which have too much food on them, asking them to maybe consider portion time next time or try to get them to eat a tiny bit more</p> <p>Waste-o-metre: Incentives to reduce food waste and showcase to the children the amounts of food we trash; transparent bags and also measuring fullness levels of bags and comparing vs other days; by keeping track and aiming for less waste, we can</p>

	develop awareness in a very visual manner; this can also be shown in photos via newsletter and incentives may be built around the theme of improving food waste.
Further research and actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Issue Survey Monkey for some decisions requiring broader consultation (e.g. 2-3 pudding free days per week plus Fruity Friday)● Remove tinned fruit from menus● Increase chicken and lamb sausages as protein sources● Anything we could do to lower noise levels?