

Item No.	Classification: Open		MEETING NAME: Education and Children's Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Report title:		Free Healthy School Meals Programme – Progress Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy and Commissioning, Children's & Adults' Services	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the committee note the report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Council took a decision to introduce free healthy school meals to all pupils attending primary schools in Southwark as part of its commitment to tackle the high levels of obesity and to tackle poverty and inequality.
3. A decision was taken to phase the roll out. In September 2011 reception and year one pupils started to receive the free meals. In September 2012, this was extended to years two – four. The final phase commenced in September 2013 with years five & six joining the programme.
4. The programme has now been operating in all Southwark primary school settings for a complete school year.
5. Members have received a number of previous reports concerning this programme.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

6. During the first year of the programme the take up reached 91% of reception and year one pupils. In the second year of the programme the take up reached 92%. The take up for the school year 2013/14 reached 93%
7. During the summer term 2013, as previously reported, we carried out an additional weighing and measuring programme with year one pupils. The height and weights of pupils were measured to look at comparisons between reception and year 1. The results did not show statistically significant changes in weight. However, it became clear from the exercise that a number of children were not weighed at reception but were then weighed at year 1 and vice versa. This made it difficult to evidence any changes in weight. However, focus groups with schools highlighted that some pupils and parents reported changes in attitudes to food with more children eating fruit and salad items.

8. Over the summer term, we carried out a further survey with children to test their views and attitudes to school meals. This was carried out at a number of schools with year three pupils. This was a follow on survey from the previous two years when the children were in year one and year 2 respectively. The results are at appendix one.
9. We are working together with our colleagues in public health to develop a health and wellbeing programme with schools. These strategic meetings are chaired by the Director of Education and bring together a range of partners to support schools.
10. Once again, during the summer term we organised a gardening competition for primary schools with the theme of 'how children learn to grow'. This was entered by sixteen of our schools. The judging took place during the summer term and the winning school was John Ruskin.
11. With the roll out complete and the programme having successfully operated for a full school year. We have been looking at how to further reduce the administration requirements. Following discussions with headteachers and finance, from the start of the school year in 2014, we will be paying the schools termly based upon the previous years take up levels.
12. As Members will be aware, the Government has introduced a programme of Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) from September 2014. This will reduce the cost of the Councils programme accordingly.
13. As Members will be aware, the level of pupil premium a school receives is based upon the level of entitled free school meal pupils at the school. To ensure we are able to record accurate numbers, we redesigned the application form with input from schools. The new system means that in the future the parent should only need to complete the form once when their child joins a school. The new system should mean we are able to recheck the eligibility annually through an electronic checking system. As part of the Governments introduction of the UIFSM programme, they have issued a new form that local authorities might use if they wish. The form is identical to the one we sent to the DFE for information.
14. Following the decision to provide a free fruit snack to primary school pupils and building on the Government funded programme for infant pupils, all primary school settings have been asked to extend the scheme to junior pupils. At this time 30 out of 73 schools are now providing the fruit to all of their pupils. Further schools are joining the scheme on a staged basis with the intention that all schools will be offering the fruit by the summer term 2015.

AUDIT TRAIL

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Report Author	Colin Gale, FHSM Project Lead
Version	

Dated		
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Strategic Director for Legal and Democratic Services	No	No
Finance Director	No	No
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Scrutiny Team		Month/date/year