

**Visit: Surrey Square Primary School, Surrey Square, Walworth London SE17 2JY**

**Date: 28 March 2012**

**Present:** School Business Manager; Kelly Rowles  
Cllr David Hubber (Chair)  
Cllr the Right Reverend Emmanuel Oyewole ( Vice Chair)  
Colin Gale, Universal Healthy Free School Meal lead  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project manager

### **Catering arrangements**

The school has an in-house catering arrangement and directly employ all the catering staff. The school used to have external caterers, however they ended this because of the poor quality food; including turkey twizzlers, drinks with additives in and virtually no vegetables. The school looked at various options but decided that all the outside caterers were too commercially orientated.

Eventually they decided to move over the staff and employ them directly. They then improved pay and conditions. The school now follows the Food for Life programme initiated by the Soil Association and they have received the Silver Food for Life award. They are a flagship school.

The catering moved in house in 2007. Since the school moved the catering in house and improved the quality of the food they have noticed a big improvement in behaviour; on a Friday the children used to be served red jelly and there would be 20 or so children sent to the head for poor behaviour, now that is down to about 2.

The school is considering the possibility of buying more food collectively with other schools to get a bulk buying discount.

### **Universal Free School Meals and Packed lunches**

Uptake had increase since the free meals option came in . Parents with children in upper years ask for meals at a reduced cost as some they can't afford it. The school makes arrangements to pay for some children's meals as they do not want children to go hungry.

They arrange food tasting events for parents to attend

They work with parents on improving the packed lunches, and send home information. Some children are very fussy and want control over the food eaten.

The school has invested in less intrusive ways of collecting information on free school meals.

They have over 80 % take up.

### **Children's input into the menu**

The school went through a long process to involve children. They looked at food miles; for example a pizza from Tesco's uses 18,000 food miles, but one prepared in house only 150.

There is a school meals consultation programme; with good and bad suggestions. Children from the School Council are used to consult. The class council nominates a representative who then talks with the other children in the classroom. Parents are invited to give recipes. Menu suggestions and recipes are sent off to consultants for nutritional analysis and ingredients may be adjusted. Ones that they have been introduced include a handmade lamb burger, chicken curry and jollof rice.

Menus are refreshed regularly.

There is an international food day where 450 children cook and invite parents to attend and provide entertainment.

The school caters for dairy free and the meat is halal.

### **Links to gardening, urban agriculture and farming**

The school has a well tended garden and they grow food in the garden. The kitchen prepares the food grown, such as potatoes and spinach. There are links to city farms and allotments and they have growing projects. The school has links with Surry Docks farm.

Year 6 go to a farm for a week for a working holiday.

They have invested in educating children about food and its provenance.

### **Serving arrangements**

Lunch is served in a beautiful pavilion that is architecturally designed and purpose built, with a kitchen and hall to prepare and serve lunch. Special fold away tables are used with traditional cutlery and bowls.

There is staged service.

The children can sit where they like.

### **Children's comments**

The children made positive comments about the food, garden, menu and appeared to be enjoying the meals.

### **Observations**

Virtually all the children appeared to be eating the hand made lamb and home made chips. Not many were eating the salad options.

The quality of the food was very high.

The children were friendly and there was a good atmosphere.