

Item No.	Classification: Open		MEETING NAME: Education Children's Services and Leisure 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 and the progress to date.

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. Members have received a number of previous reports concerning this programme.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. 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%
6. During the summer term as previously reported to this sub-committee, we carried out an additional weighing and measuring programme with year one pupils. The results are still being analysed and will be provided to Members as soon as they are available.
7. 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 have redesigned the application form with input from schools. The new system will mean that in the future the parent should only need to complete the form once when their child joins a school. The new system will mean we are able to recheck the eligibility annually through an electronic checking system.
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 two pupils. This was a follow on survey from last year when the children were in year one. The results are at appendix one.

9. During the summer term we organised a gardening competition for primary schools. This was planned at short notice but was keenly contested by six of our schools. Following the success of this and acknowledging that a number of schools would have taken part but for the short notice, it has been decided to hold the competition again during this school year.
10. As the programme has now completed its roll out, the level of expenditure for the schools has increased considerably. The current method of reimbursement based upon actual numbers being fed means the schools are having to fund the meals from their own budget until the reimbursement arrives. Following discussions with headteachers and finance, from the spring term 2014 we will make an advance payment equivalent to 75% of normal take up at the beginning of each term. The balance would then be paid on actual numbers later in the term.
11. The current method of collecting the take up figures is based on an audit of numbers during a specified week each term. It has been raised by a few schools that the week selected may not always accurately measure the true take up. This maybe due to school trips, unusually high levels of sickness or inset days with schools closed. To address this, from the spring term 2014, schools will be able to choose the audit week from a choice of three weeks.
12. As Members will be aware, the Government has determined to roll out universal free school meals across England to reception, year one and year two pupils from September 2014. The details of how this will operate are still being worked out by the Department for Education. Further information will be provided to Members as it becomes available.

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy and Commissioning, Children and Adults' Services	
Report Author	Colin Gale, FHSM project manager	
Version	Draft	
Dated	11 October 2013	
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
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