

Headteacher: Mrs H Latimer

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Feedback on Questionnaire School Meals



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Dear Parents,

Thank you to everyone who responded to our questionnaire about our school lunches, we were really pleased with the level of response, representing two-thirds of our children. This has given us a broad picture of what you think about the meals and areas that could be improved upon.

Many of your responses were very similar – what constitutes Jollof Rice was mentioned many times! Overall I would say that children like our school dinners, parents appreciate the variety on offer, you do try to encourage your children to have a school meal, and you do appreciate that we aim to not only provide your child with a nourishing hot meal but also to explore different tastes in food. Having said that, many of you would like plainer options and perhaps more fish options.

How does your child select what they want for lunch? Like all areas of school life we do expect that as they get older children will be increasingly more independent –

- ❖ in KS1 menu choices are gone through on a 1:1 basis with children by either the class teacher or the class learning support assistant and are explained as simply as possible;
- ❖ in Year 3&4 the class teacher reads the choices out when she is registering the children for the day
- ❖ in Year 5&6 menu choices are put up on the board and as the children are being registered for the day children will say what their option is

Enclosed is a summary of the main points raised. We know we are not going to be able to please everyone but we will be taking up comments on the menu with the catering company. We will also discuss that many of you would like the opportunity to pre-order with your child at home. Holding taster sessions would be popular too particularly if its not quite obvious what is in a dish.

If you've raised a particular query on your questionnaire we will respond to you personally.

Thank you once again for taking part in our survey.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Latimer
Headteacher



KS1 35 out of 49	KS2 25 out of 50
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The meals are the sort of meals I would expect to see on offer

Positives

- Children like school dinners
- Parents happy with provision, good variety and healthy choices, only a few dishes chdn wouldn't eat
- Variety has encouraged chdn to try different things
- Good choice for vegetarians
- Anita makes the best fajitas, best roast dinner and her Jacket Potatoes are delicious!
- Puddings are good, love the beetroot brownies
- Glad there is a fruit option as parents don't want chdn to be having cake/biscuit/icecream every day.

Even better if

- Plainer options would be good such as beef mince lasagne & garlic bread, tomato and cheese pasta, fish pie, tuna pasta bake mild spicy dishes.
- Appreciate there is a social push towards vegetarianism/veganism but don't like the idea that this is being pushed on to young children. Don't like the soya alternative. Want chdn to have either fish or meat option every day.
- Chdn need basic wholesome meals without trying to be too fancy. Cook does an amazing job with the menu she is given.
- Would like to see more fish on the menu.
- Chdn miss the chocolate tiffin! *(so do the staff)*

Negatives

- Previous provider's menu was better, it had good repetition to it, e.g. they knew Thursday was pizza, Wednesday roast. This menu is harder to create a routine.
- Autumn menu more varied than the spring menu – too much potato, less pasta, no beef spag bol, meatballs, lasagne etc.
- Garlic bread a good filler so why has it dropped off Spring menu
- Descriptions too elaborate and confusing for small children
- Do chdn miss some meals because they're not sure what they are or how they taste
- Name of dish stops child from choosing them, i.e. plant based lentil and tomato whirl (adult wouldn't know what this is from the description), 5-bean chilli. Seems like only option on some days consists of soya or plant based meat or lentils. Should be another option here.
- Food too fancy, doesn't like anything spicy so rules out curry, fajitas etc. Doesn't like the fish, prefers fish fingers. Glad to see sausage & mash is back!
- Menu is more to please adults rather than the child. Dishes such as risotto, jollof rice, fajitas, curry, cous cous, all things we've grown to like as adults.

The meals give enough variety

- Need to simplify it! Find it hard to encourage my child to try a meal when I can't explain what it is.
- Consider the meal description– needs simplifying to make them more attractive.
- Plain pasta with veg – not all chdn like sauces
- Snack box selection so they could have a picnic style lunch with salad bar
- Offer an alternative to chips on Friday – previously there was an option to have plain pasta
- More fish during the week e.g. plain salmon or cod (not in breadcrumbs/batter)



- Perhaps a breaded chicken option
- Could there be a 'sample day'??
- Chd would eat pasta every day if he could
- Hot dogs or cheese burgers
- Larger portion sizes for older chdn, so hungry by 3.30, garlic bread, French bread was an additional filler – *common theme on KS2 responses*
- Curry is a bit mushy
- Bring back the salad bar!
- Meat and veg choice daily, a lot of vegetarian dishes, there is a lot of veg on offer
- Chdn would like chicken parmesano, home made burgers, noodles, sweet & sour chicken
- Option of an international dish such as Chinese or Thai with rice?
- Plainer puddings, not all the fruit bits in cakes
- Single fruit crumble instead of mixed fruit crumble (less for chdn to dislike!)

The meals give too much variety – what do you think could be removed?

- There's a lot of 'plant based' foods with no descriptions – what is the substitute?. If chdn read this and don't understand it then they won't eat it.
- Could remove jacket potato option every day
- Pasta only once per week
- Children almost never choose Option 2 – not saying it should be removed as it is a nice alternative for vegetarians

We've noticed that jacket potatoes are a popular option, so much so that we are a bit concerned that children are just automatically opting for a jacket potato every day without thinking about the alternatives.

My child opts for a Jacket Potato because

- Chdn know they like them. JPs are safe and not scary,
- Good for fussy eaters who are not overly keen on pizza and curries. JP is better than a packed lunch.
- Important for parent to know child has substantial meal to have enough energy for afternoon activities
- Child sometimes chooses this because friend has chosen it
- Picking a JP is an easy option. Parent would like to see JPs only offered a few times a week, not everyday
- Child enjoys JPs, would like to see a wider range of toppings – tuna, egg
- Often chooses a JP because hasn't listened to the other choices. Too many fancy options, if main option is spicy, chd knows what they're getting with a JP
- JP is a safe option – no soya!

A frequent comment was that chdn choose JPs because don't understand/don't like the alternatives.



Cost and payment facilities (KS2 parents)

Do you think the cost of a school meal is reasonable (£2.58)

Very few comments -

- Yes for a meal, no for a Jacket Potato - *school comment is that chdn not only getting a JP, they are getting veg etc. with it and the pudding.*
- Would be happy to pay price if the size of portions is reviewed
- Would rather make a packed lunch costs me less
- Cost is very decent considering the variety of the food and the fact it is cooked on site.

Payment is now all online via the caterer's website. Does paying online put you off from ordering a school meal?

Again, very few comments, no one put off by paying online.

- Hassle is never knowing login details as its all numbers. Could it be email address and a password instead?
- Like that you get an email when account is running low

Additional comments:

- Ability to order online at home with child would be a nice feature so parents have some involvement in choosing healthier options (frequent comment)
- Ordering at home might encourage chdn to try something new with parents helping them to decide.
- Really convenient to pay online
- Website is a pain to use and puts me off. If it was easier to order and pay then would be more likely to do that rather than making a packed lunch.
- Would like more detail about a dish, i.e. what vegetables are in a vegetable risotto, what's a Jollof Rice, Spanish cookie?
- Would like to have a parent tasting session and chdn tasting sessions for new foods.
- Love the fact we have hot school meals at the school
- I like that my chd takes responsibility for his meal choice (with some steering)
- Would be helpful for chd to choose from a photo style menu
- Perhaps before chdn start school they could meet the dinner lady and try food – *School comment – chdn do normally have this opportunity on their new intake days but because of Covid-19 our new intake visits didn't happen in their normal way this year – something for us to bear in mind.*

