



## SCHOOL MEALS SURVEY RESULTS – AUTUMN TERM 2005

**A final total of 1705 surveys were returned and here are the results as @ 23.2.06.**

### **Questions 1) Does Your Child have Schools Meals?**

YES 668 (39%)

NO 1037 (61%)

### **Questions 2) if they don't, have your child ever had School Meals?**

YES 768 (45%)

NO 937 (55%)

### **Questions 3) If your child stopped or has never tried them, was it because?**

a. Portion size of food too small?	291
b. Food not freshly prepared?	746
c. The quality of food was considered too poor?	921

### **Question 4) If they do have school meals, how satisfied are you with these meals?**

Score 1 Highly Satisfied	66
Score 2 Satisfied	233
Score 3 Poor	346
Score 4 Not Satisfied	209

### **Questions 5) Are you aware that we offer vegetarian, nut free, allergy free and faith diets?**

YES 922 (54%)

NO 783 (46%)

### **Questions 6) Would you be prepared to pay more for fresh/organic ingredients?**

YES 1233 (72%)

NO 467 (27%)

### **THE PREDOMINANT ISSUES RAISED BY PARENTS/CARERS**

- **More fresh fruit and vegetables**
- **Fresh food to be prepared at every school**
- **Provide parents with the menu**
- **Bigger portions**
- **Would be prepared to pay more for better quality food**
- **Remove junk from menu and vending machines**
- **Nutritional information about the food**
- **Lunch time should be staggered because the children are being rushed**
- **Food is often cold**
- **Dinner ladies and lunch time supervisors should be better trained and encouraging**
- **Halal meat should be offered and foods from other countries**
- **Jugs of Water should be available**
- **Provide proper cutlery and get rid of the prison trays**
- **Make parents more aware about the availability of Faith Foods, Special Diets, Vegetarian Options, Nut Free and Allergy Free Foods.**

### **And here is just a selection of the 953 comments we received**

I would like more options made available to the children including more fresh vegetables and better quality food. I would also like to see a weekly menu given out of the choices made available. I think it would be a great help if parents were able to see (if they wish) what food was actually on offer and attend a dinner session. One last point I would like to make put some system in place stating whether your child has eaten well or not that day or week, because I don't know what he has eaten on any given day.

My eldest child has only just started full time school and currently takes a packed lunch. However, it's quite likely that he will move to school meals at some point in the future and we're keen for those meals to be as healthy and nutritious as possible. If that requires a greater financial input on our behalf then so-be-it

I was not aware that faith diets were available and my score of 3 for question 4 is mainly for this reason. My child has had packed lunches for the last 2 years, as she did not enjoy having to have fish all the time. She has only recently resumed school dinners and we would prefer if she were able to have a mixed diet, which included Halal chicken and meat.

Oliver stopped having school meals in year 3 because the meals were so poor. Portions are small and food terrible. He took them back up in year 4 when a new chef took over. There is still a way to with better ingredients but they are now much better and Oliver a fussy eater is much happier we didn't need gimmicks just good food cooked imaginatively

I feel that I personally need convincing of the nutrient content in school meals and although they now sound better, are they actually healthier? It would be useful for the council to have an independent nutritional analysis undertaken on the new menus the old meals as this would help to convince people like me. I work for Roe Hampton University and could possibly arrange for one of the Masters students to undertake this analysis as a dissertation project. Please contact me if you are interested. Also parents should be allowed to view/try the new meals and not just 6 parents per school.

School Meals Development Event- 31 January 2006  
Revised 23.2.06

My son has packed lunches because he is a fussy eater but I am happy at what I hear about school lunches at All Saints

It would be nice to see weekly menus in advance; just one notice posted on a board or window would suffice. Have more than a biscuit with sugar on top for puddings. If the meals were healthier then I would use the service more.

Until the Jamie Oliver programme I was happy to give my daughter school meals because I thought they would be as nutritious as they were when I was young. However the programme proved a lot different, after which I stopped my daughter having school meals. Now that I see more of an effort is being made to improve the quality of meals, I have again started giving my daughter schools meals, as a warm meal is much better than a packed lunch.

Maybe I'm cynical but it seems that this survey is a response to the Jamie Oliver campaign. We have been offered appalling school meals for years and no one has ever bothered to consult us before...better late than never!

My child gave up school meals because he is a very fussy eater not because of the school meal service

As a school lunch time supervisor I am quiet surprised that my daughter does not like the meals. However, the roast is definitely a hit with all the kids, but the dryness of something in pastry with mash potato and no gravy is not appetising. Also the descriptions of the dinners are far nicer than that served up. Hopefully things will get better. The kids do prefer the good old-fashioned roast dinners and perhaps once a week is not enough.

My daughter has schools meals, as she prefers hot food to cold lunches. I am aware, as you state in question 5 that you provide a vegetarian option. The system for offering these meals is often the cause of problems. On occasions my daughter, who is not vegetarian, has been one of the last to collect her food and has been left with only the vegetarian option. This is usually due to the children who are vegetarian choosing for example fish fingers on that occasion. If parents choose the vegetarian option then the children should be taking it. I am also sure that last term the children were given the option of 2 meat dishes, something that is not happening this term. So if the children don't like the meat on offer they are only getting potatoes and vegetables.

I would welcome greater awareness of what meals are currently provided. I am unsure of the current menu choices each week and when they are revised and changed. I would like to see greater parent input and would welcome less processed food and more fresh meals (appetizing and more fresh meals rather than cold and tasteless) served/prepared by trained staff. I hope future meals take into account parent's capacity to pay for fresh/organic food. It should be open to all - at a value for money price. I like the current on- site preparation facilities.

Menus should be offered rotationally to avoid food fatigue, maybe one or two options should be made available only, including veggie, rice and pasta to feature often, prepared fruit is more appetising than whole, maybe slice or quarter it, raw vegetables to be made available, deli day where children help themselves to brown bread, butter, salad, cheese, ham etc, to create a sandwich or Scooby snack!

## School Meals Development Event- 31 January 2006 Revised 23.2.06

Ensure contractors provide monthly/quarterly meal planners for parents to retain. Would help if lunchtime supervisors could inform teacher/parents if a child regularly fails to eat all their meals (early primary only). Contractors should be required to source fresh, organic produce from local suppliers to support the local economy. Schools in close proximity should share kitchen facilities/chefs to enable more children to gain access to freshly prepared meals. Spend more £ per pupil. Contracts should not be awarded for too long, so to stop them getting complacent. Robust penalties for non-compliance and regular quality checks.

I would be very keen to pay more if you could guarantee better quality. I do feel the cost of my son's school meals are already quite high but not enough is spent on decent fresh ingredients - too much goes on other things. My son has school dinners mainly because it is convenient for me as I am a full time teacher, but I do feel it has to be possible to feed kids at school with simple, nutritious, freshly made dishes that are well balanced and not costly.

The ingredients would need to be freshly prepared at the school not by a company. The children are not given long enough to eat school lunches or packed lunch, they are rushed out by the dinner ladies and this means for some children they have not had enough time to eat their lunch.

I actually visited my school at lunchtime and would like to suggest: Make the whole ambience/ environment nice not just the food. Cut down noise e.g. have curtains in the hall. Children should not have to wear coats during dinners. Space the children out a bit.

Would willingly pay for a good quality meal - freshly prepared!

I believe that in working together to help develop culturally aware individuals, it is vital for children to experience other cultures. Meal times provide an excellent opportunity to introduce food from various different cultures.

I think it is important that schools have their own working kitchens, where food is actually prepared and cooked from fresh ingredients. School meals should also be an educational/social occasion, with food served on proper plates with proper cutlery, and jugs of water.

As I never see the meals and my son is the one eating them I ask him to fill in the above and asked his views? He tells me the meals are "mankie" by which he means not very fresh and not very palatable. In all I gather he eats them because he has to.

I send my daughter to school with a packed lunch as I know what she is getting and eating, whenever she has had school meals it doesn't seem to be satisfying for her as whenever she gets to eat the choice is not there

My son likes his meals at school. We are always impressed when he tells us about the variety of fruit he had.

A weekly menu would be helpful so that we can see what the children are being offered and also we can plan different meals at home.

Provide menus with ingredients and nutritional analysis for parents.

Sourcing of quality ingredients, particularly meat is really important. Keep the choice limited so the children will have to go for the healthy option. Gradual

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introduction of healthier food so as to not panic them. Teach and involve the children in food.

It would be expensive to pay for three children to have school dinners and as I cannot ensure that the quality is good or that the children will actually eat them, I would prefer to give them a packed lunch.

I would be unhappy if any food travelled, I expect fresh food of a good quality to be prepared on the premises by a chef or appropriately trained personnel in a fully equipped kitchen. Providing a very good quality range of meals meeting the children's needs.

To have summer and Winter recipes-the winter meals would include soup and the summer menu maybe a frozen yogurt.

How many parents are familiar with (or even aware of) Every Child Matters? To my knowledge information hasn't been distributed to parents via the school or local authority! If it was this might go towards putting the healthy school meals agenda into context

I am not aware of Halal meat, I would be grateful if Halal meat could be introduced. There are 100's of Muslim pupils at Rutlish School.

My son is vegetarian and enjoyed meals, I think you have changed the menu and unfortunately my son does not find the food as good and so doesn't eat as much, which is concerning. I believe the vegetarian meals before were reasonably healthy and wonder if they should be re-introduced

Involve children in designing the menu for each school. Possibly run campaigns with school councils. Vibrant advertising of fresh food and value for money diets. Link with a local champion for diets not just icons like Jamie Oliver

It's pointless, in my view, giving children healthy meals, perhaps with unfamiliar ingredients, unless very strong encouragement is given to eat them. I know this would place extra burden on the lunchtime supervisors but I feel it is essential.

Children say now it is to "healthy" burgers and sausages and these are not necessarily bad if they use good quality ingredients.

There has been a HUGE improvement since my daughter stopped having school meals four years ago. She is now satisfied with the quality - More fresh fruit for dessert please.

My child changed from school meals to packed lunch because queuing for meals meant he had less time to play

More variety of foods from other countries, maybe twice a week you could provide foods from different countries.

I would like the children to be given/encouraged to take more time over their meals. I get the impression that they barely have time to eat their savoury dish let alone their pudding. This encourages them to abandon the savoury in favour of the sweet the opposite of that which we would like to see.