

Bradwell Village Middle School Lunchtime Inquiry

Who is involved? How many pupils?

There are two members of staff organising this inquiry, though all teaching staff and lunchtime supervisors have been involved through questionnaires as well as 12 pupils across each year group selected on a numerical basis. Also the School Council has been involved in discussing lunchtimes as part of their half-termly meetings

What are the pupils doing? How are their voices being heard and responded to?

Those pupils selected on a numerical basis have completed questionnaires about lunchtime behaviour before and after the introduction of hot school meals. They have also completed an exercise about safe and unsafe areas of the school. They were given maps of the school on which to colour the areas that they believed to be **unsafe** (red) and those that they believed to be **safe** (green). This was done for both break and lunchtime. Those pupils on the School's Council have discussed lunchtimes with their classes and then fed back to one of the staff members involved in this inquiry. School Council members were able to put forward the views of the pupils and ask questions about lunchtimes. By doing this, the members of staff involved in the inquiry were able to listen and respond to pupils' voices by taking on board their ideas and suggestions and, in some cases, acting upon them.

How is this changing the teaching and learning relationships in classroom?

The pupils feel that they have some ownership over their lunchtimes, because the ideas that they have suggested to their School Council representative have been taken seriously and implemented. E.g. hot school meals and a separate playground for ball games. Hot school meals have been introduced into the school. As a result the teaching and learning relationships after lunch have greatly improved, there are fewer incidents to deal with, and, the children seem to be more focused and much more willing to work. The evidence for this is detailed below.

How is this changing the management and decision making processes in schools?

This is changing management and decision making processes within the school by allowing the pupils to come up with ideas, these ideas are taken seriously and some are implemented. Also members of staff are beginning to see that the pupils can come up with ideas that can solve issues that are a concern to both staff and pupils.

An example of a change

Since the introduction of hot school meals the general behaviour of the children has changed. We, as members of the inquiry, **felt** that the children's behaviour had improved and to prove this perception all staff that were here before hot school meals were introduced were asked to complete a questionnaire. This questionnaire asked about the children's behaviour before and after hot school meals were introduced.

Before hot school meals were introduced:

- 36% thought that the children's behaviour was poor,
- 64% thought that it was ok.

After the introduction of hot school meals:

- 14% thought that the children's behaviour was poor,
- 72% thought that it was ok,
- 14% thought that it was good.

We asked those members of staff who thought that the behaviour had improved to describe how it has changed and these were some of the comments:

- *There are a lot less incidents to deal with after lunch.*
- *Children "appear" calmer.*
- *A general lessening of having to deal with incidents that have happened at lunchtime after lunchtime.*
- *Much less in lunchtime behaviour book considering how this Year 7 are compared to previous Year 7 classes.*

We also gave those members of staff who joined the school **after** hot school meals were introduced the same questionnaire but we only asked them to complete certain questions.

What they thought the behaviour at lunchtime was like:

- 60% thought that the children's behaviour was ok,
- and 40% thought that it was good.

These results show that staff believe that the general behaviour at lunchtimes has improved.

We also decided to ask the children about behaviour at lunchtime and again from the data that was collected, the children themselves believe that the behaviour has improved.

We gave 12 children per year group a questionnaire about lunchtimes and these are the results:

Before hot school meals were introduced:

- 15% thought that the behaviour was very poor,
- 12% thought that it was poor,

- 55% thought that it was ok,
- 12% thought that it was good,
- and 3% thought that it was very good.

Since the introduction of hot school meals:

- 0% thought that the behaviour was very poor,
- 6% thought that it was poor,
- 26% thought that it was ok,
- 36% thought that it was good,
- and 29% thought that it was very good.

We asked those children who had felt that the behaviour had changed, if they could describe how:

- *(Since) school dinner(s) were introduced everybody has been behaving at lunchtime because they want their lunch, fewer classrooms (are used so there is) less noise except for silly people.*
- *There are less fights over football.*
- *The behaviour is better because the classrooms are quieter than they were before school lunches.*
- *There is a lot less swearing and fights are getting rare. People have calmed down.*

Did you encounter any problems?

The only real problem that was encountered was time to carry out the questionnaires and analysis, due to other commitments.

Our future plans

The inquiry, through the questionnaires and the maps, has raised several questions that it would good to investigate further. For example, the reasons why children thought certain areas were unsafe and safe, and, why do certain children get into trouble on certain days. However, as we have found that the general behaviour of the children has improved at lunchtimes, mainly due to the introduction of hot school meals, this inquiry will be absorbed into future inquiries concerned with pupil voice and making BVS a better place to learn.