JULY 2014
FINAL REPORT

# EVALUATION REPORT

## School Food Matters' primary school meals improvement campaign in Richmond – 2007 to 2011

food matters
sustainable, fair food systems

# Food matters

Food Matters (FM) is a not-for-profit food policy and advocacy organisation working on sustainable food policy issues and community food initiatives with the aim of creating sustainable and fair food systems.  FM is working for and with a variety of organisations on a range of diverse issues through consultancy, research, evaluation, training, project management and delivery at both a local and national level.

# Executive summary

## 1. Introduction

The evaluation focuses specifically on the School Food Matters (SFM) school meals improvement campaign that ran between 2007 and 2011. The key questions addressed by the evaluation are:

- Was the campaign effective or would the improvements have happened anyway?
- Did the campaign deliver its goals or were the goals achieved as a result of other stakeholders' efforts?
- Could the campaign be replicated elsewhere or was it a one-off?

## 2. Methodology

The evaluation methodology incorporated both quantitative and qualitative appraisal of evidence and included: data analysis and historical comparison; documentary research; interviews with key stakeholders; questionnaire surveys; and workshops with groups of primary school pupils.

## 3. Context

The evaluation acknowledges the importance of the timing of the campaign and its location as an influence on the success of the campaign. Renewed media focus and high profile national campaigns (including Jamie Oliver's 'Feed me better' campaign) contributed to raised awareness of the issues and a push for change nationally. The 'Richmond effect', reflecting the relative affluence of the Borough and consequent motivation of many primary school parents, also played a significant part in the campaign's success.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1 School meals have been completely transformed since 2007

In 2007 meals were produced in Wales, transported frozen to Twickenham and sent to schools around Richmond to be reheated. Today meals are freshly cooked from good quality, sustainably sourced ingredients in school kitchens. By the end of the SFM campaign in 2011 meals served in Richmond's council provided primary schools met the Food for Life Silver Standard. Today they meet Gold standard.

**Head Teachers** who were surveyed rated today's meals as either good (72%) or excellent (28%) and regarded the most important changes as: how healthy the food is, the cooking of meals from fresh ingredients and the use of ingredients that are of a high quality.
**Pupils** who participated in the workshops recognised the important shift from re-heated frozen meals to food that was freshly cooked in the school. Pupils also highlighted: the variety and range of meals now offered, the opportunity this provides to try out different food, the atmosphere and hygiene of the dining area, being able to sit with friends who have packed lunches and the children's relationship with the kitchen staff.

**School meals uptake** was used as an indicator of improvement in the quality of the meals.
Since the 1970s the uptake of primary school meals in the UK had been gradually decreasing reaching a low of 41% in 2007. In Richmond uptake reached a low of 22% in 2005. Whilst UK uptake increased slowly up to 44% in 2011, Richmond's uptake increased dramatically to 52% in response to the introduction of Richmond Council's new primary school meals contract.

**Key factor – getting the contract right.**

Richmond Council's commitment to provide freshly cooked meals in primary schools required investment in kitchen facilities and the appointment of a contractor that would commit to invest in staff training and conditions and the need for improved dining areas.

## 4.2 Campaign goals have been delivered

**Goal: Stringent school meal contract specifications**

The **2007 contract** specifications for school meals provision in Richmond encouraged providers to adopt a 'best value' approach and contained no specification on how or where the meals were prepared. The contract was very loosely worded and open to interpretation.

In contrast the **2011 contract** set out precise specifications on food quality, nutritional value and the sourcing of ingredients. The contract wording was much more precise and specific allowing much less room for interpretation. A key inclusion was the requirement that meals be freshly prepared from sustainably sourced ingredients in the school kitchens. The contract also strongly encouraged an approach that supported greater integration of school meals and kitchen staff into the school community and a focus on staff conditions and training.

**Goal: Investment in school kitchens**

In 2011 the new contractor – ISS Facilities-Education – was able to freshly prepare food from raw ingredients in school kitchens. The commitment to do this – specified in the new contract – required funding to upgrade and in some cases replace existing kitchen facilities. Funding was achieved through a complex combination of sources including: Central Government; Richmond Borough Council; the new meals contractor; school fund-raising; and the rolling school expansion and upgrade programme (to meet the needs of Richmond's expanding population).

**Goal: Investment in catering staff**

The shift from a 'reheat from frozen' service to the 'cook from fresh on site' as stipulated in the contract required contractors to make significant investment in training staff. The 2011 contract specifications also ensured that the catering staff preparing the food are not only motivated through training and conditions of employment but also valued and respected as an integral part of the school community.

**Goal: Investment in dining areas**

The school meals contract highlights the importance of the dining environment and its influence on the quality of the school meals service and to some extent on school meals uptake. The contract is less clear on how the Council's commitment to this aspect of the school meals service should be put into practice. Investment and improvement projects are mainly achieved through the programme of School expansion; however additional funding was made available through school fund-raising and in some cases through finance raised by schools charging an extra 3p on the price of a meal.

**Goal: Links with local farms**

The delivery of this campaign goal, though reflected in the improved contract, became a much higher priority for SFM following the evaluation period. It's inclusion in the contract specifications was significant in that it laid the groundwork for the work of SFM following 2011 and once the new contractor, ISS, had been appointed.

## 4.3 SFM has an effective campaign track record

The strategy that developed between 2007 and 2011 was very effective. It was powered by the strong personal conviction of SFM Founder/Director Stephanie Wood and her energy, commitment and ability to 'bend ears'. The strategy evolved in response to changes in SFM's impact, developing credibility and focus. SFM's approach evolved from agitation and activism to collaborative engagement and participation in decision-making. The existence of an energetic and well-informed external campaign organisation, representing the voice of local parents and Head Teachers, was seen as an extremely important asset in the process.

## 5. Lessons

A number of factors contributed to the success of the SFM campaign. These included: good timing; strong communication; the 'Richmond effect' and the willingness of SFM to learn from others' experience. SFM also identified a 4 year window of opportunity in Richmond Council's tendering cycle. SFM's evolution from agitator to collaborator was also seen as important.

## Outcomes

- SFM's overarching **campaign aim was achieved**.
- This was the result of a collaborative effort in which SFM played a **key influential role**.
- The process has produced a **model contract**.
- SFM's **campaign goals have been delivered**.
- The campaign has left a **strong legacy**.

## Recommendations for replication

A. **Provide an independent voice** avoiding any perceptions of political affiliation

B. **Represent the school community** which is a harder voice for other stakeholders and decision makers to hear and bring into the process – and present a coherent evidence-based argument to establish a strong mandate for participation

C. **Be flexible and willing to evolve** by being sensitive to the changing role that your campaign may need to assume – from agitation to collaboration

D. **Get the timing right** by capitalising on heightened awareness nationally and identifying opportunities within the Council tendering cycle

# Report Contents

# 1 Introduction

Between 2007 and 2011 School Food Matters (SFM), a charity based in Richmond, ran a campaign aimed at improving school meals provided by the Local Authority contract to primary schools across the London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames (LBRuT). This report, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and produced by Food Matters, presents the findings of an evaluation undertaken to assess the effectiveness and replicability of the campaign.

The evaluation focuses on 29 primary schools in Richmond which are receiving school meals via a central contract managed by the LBRuT and delivered currently by the contract caterer, ISS Facilities-Education.

The scope and aim of the evaluation is described in SFM's Invitation to Tender and identifies the audience as follows:

- Past funders who supported the SFM campaign
- Prospective funders of SFM future campaign work
- Stakeholders in Richmond including the Local Authority, Head Teachers, parents, and pupils
- Policy Makers
- School Food Matters

The key questions to be addressed by the evaluation are:

- Was the school meals improvement campaign effective?
- Were SFM's five campaign goals achieved?
- Does SFM have an effective track record in campaigning?
- Is this type of campaign linked to desirable outcomes?
- Has the school meal service demonstrably improved and become more appealing?
- Is this model of school meal provision financially viable and widely replicable?
- Can SFM perform better or differently next time?
- What are the key impacts/outcomes of the campaign?
- Could the campaign provide a practical model that can be implemented in other locations?

In early 2014 Food Matters successfully bid for the contract to evaluate the SFM campaign. The successful tender reflected Food Matters' track record in the food sector and in particular it's experience in the use of a wide range of consultation and participatory appraisal methods and tools.

The original timing of the evaluation was for an 8 month period between October 2013 and May 2014. The evaluation timetable was revised to allow for funding to be confirmed and ultimately the evaluation started in February 2014 with a completion date 5 months later in mid-June.

# 2 Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation aimed to understand the impact of the SFM campaign using a combination of different approaches. This reflects the historical dimension of the evaluation, focused as it is on the period between 2007 and 2011, representing the period between the establishment of SFM as an organisation and the award of the new local authority catering contract to the current provider, ISS Facilities – Education (ISS).

The framework for the evaluation identified key outcomes and a range of measures and indicators against which the delivery of the outcomes could be assessed. The outcomes reflect SFM's campaign goals: well equipped kitchens, trained staff, pleasant dining room environment, high specification school meal contract, farm links and cooking/growing programmes. The framework also determined potential sources of the information which would be required to make the assessment.
See **Appendix A**.

The evaluation employs a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools aimed at the collection and analysis of data and documentation covering the evaluation period as well as a retrospective appraisal of the perspective and attitudes of key stakeholders on the journey that was undertaken.

Key to Food Matters' evaluation is an approach based on participant engagement and a two-way exchange of information and learning so that everybody gets something out of the process.

Initial data analysis and preliminary interviews helped FM to identify two primary schools with which to do more in-depth qualitative research. The chosen schools – St.Osmund's and The Russell – were of a similar size, intake and % eligibility for free school meals yet they exhibited differences in the increase in school meals uptake over the evaluation period. The data analysis and rationale is described in **Appendix B**. A third school – Lowther – was also visited to provide a further comparative case study.

The evaluation included:

- Key stakeholders were identified and contacted prior to undertaking telephone interviews
- Baseline and comparative data was collected
- Questionnaires were circulated via online survey monkey to stakeholders. See **Appendix E**
- Interviews with key stakeholders including procurement officers from LBRuT, Catering manager(s) from ISS Education, cooks, consultants and Head teachers. See **Appendix C**
- Informal conversations and e mail enquiries with other relevant people. See **Appendix C**
- Participatory workshops with pupils in 2 primary schools. The workshops are described in detail in **Appendix D**.

It was suggested that workshops would be run in two schools bringing together a mixed group of participants including: school teaching staff, kitchen staff, governors and parents. During preliminary consultation with the schools it became clear that many staff and governors from the 2007 to 2011 evaluation period were no longer involved with the schools. Specific advice from the two schools chosen for more detailed research suggested that for this reason and because of the demands placed on schools during the summer term such workshops would be very difficult to organise. Therefore it was decided to focus instead on participatory workshops with groups of pupils.

# 3 Context

## 3.1 The SFM campaign time-line

The following time-line illustrates the progress of the SFM campaign, identifying some of its most significant developments and achievements and placing these within the context of other policy developments and influences both locally and nationally.

The evaluation acknowledged the importance of placing the SFM campaign in the context of what was happening nationally in order to draw conclusions about the campaign's effectiveness and help to answer the question: would the improvements to school meals in Richmond have happened anyway?

**Before 2007**

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames – **Liberal Democrat led Council**
**Susan Kramer** (Lib Dem) – MP for Richmond Park

**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames** (**LBRuT**) manages a frozen school meal distribution system for its schools.

**2001**
**Compass – Scolarest** receives a 10 year contract to provide school meals in Richmond from **2001 to 2011**

**2005** Jamie Oliver initiates the 'Feed Me Better' school meals campaign – particularly critical of providing frozen meals reheated at schools.

**2005** UK Government commits to £280 million spending over 3 years to improve school meals.

**2005** £60 million initiative to establish the School Food Trust to advise the Government on School Meals.

**2006** Food for Life Partnership established.

**2006** Government sets new food based standards for school meals

**2007**

Average school meals uptake in Richmond's primary schools falls to **22%** (from 30% in 2001)

**Scolarest** request a subsidy of £900,000 and additional £200,000 investment in equipment from LBRuT but are turned down.

**Scolarest** pull out of the contract after 6 years claiming that lack of investment, increasing regulation and heightened public expectation made the contract commercially unviable.

**Sodexo** receive the school meals contract from **2007** to **2011.** Contract includes Capital Fund Grant and Targeted School Meals grant from LBRuT to invest in the school meals contract.
**Sodexo** offer a two-tier system of fresh and frozen meals – a so-called 'kitchenless' offer providing frozen meals from Welsh supplier, Tillery Valley, along with fresh vegetables and salad at a cost of £2.25 per head. The few schools cooking from fresh ingredients charged £2.45 per head

7 schools opt out of the Council contract – 33 remain

**School Food Matters (SFM)** is founded by Stephanie Wood with inspiration and seed funding from Zac Goldsmith (prospective Conservative Party candidate for Richmond Park).

**SFM** initiates an in-depth audit of Richmond's school meals and a survey of Primary School Head Teachers and parents beginning with a telephone survey of 17 primary schools.

## 2008

**February**
**SFM** sends its report to heads and governors along with a questionnaire.

**16th May**
**Official SFM campaign launch** and Report launch at the '**Why School Food Matters**' event. Chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby and attended by Head teachers, Governors, parents, caterers and campaigners – 200 people.

**October**
Letter to all head teachers asking them to support campaign goals – 65% support.

**SFM** "bringing the voice of parents to the table" at the Working Party, invite SUSTAIN and the Food for Life Partnership (Soil Association Catering Mark) to present at the Working Party and lobby local Councillors on campaign goals.

## 2009

**January**
**SFM** launches online petition – over 500 parents sign in support of campaign goals.

**July**
**SFM** allays LBRuT fears that the campaign is party-political

**December**
Richmond School Meals Working Party established bringing together the local authority, primary school Head Teachers, parents of primary school children, council consultants and **SFM.**

**2010**

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames – **Conservative led Council**
**Zac Goldsmith** (Con) – elected MP for Richmond Park

Nationally the uptake of school meals (primary and secondary) increases for the first time since the 1970s.

**February**
**SFM registered as a Charity**
Online parent survey launched – over 700 responses
SFM invites Sustain and Food for Life Catering Mark to present to the Working Party

**June**
**SFM** appointed to London Food Board

**SFM** focused on challenging belief that "poor kitchen facilities are an immovable barrier to change".

**2011**

**January**
**LBRuT** produces new contract specifications in advance of the new tendering process for the school meals contract for Richmond.

New contract awarded to **ISS Education** for an initial 3 years reflecting their tender proposals and level of investment in upgrading kitchen facilities and aim for Silver Food for Life award.
5 schools opt out of the school meals contract

Meal price drops by up to 18p per head to £2.07 (a 38p drop on the cooked from fresh price)

**May**
Richmond primary schools caterer ISS Education awarded Silver Food for Life Catering Mark

School meals uptake rises to an average of 3535/day compared to 2008/day in 2008. Average take-up in 2007 was 22%. By December 2011 take-up had doubled to 44%.

**2012 to present**

**February 2014**
**ISS Education** achieves Gold Food for Life award for the Richmond school meals.

Richmond primary school meal take-up reaches 52%.

## 3.2 A time for change

With the new millennium came a renewed focus on the importance of good nutrition and healthy food for children and young people as a result of rising levels of obesity and diet related disease. There was also an increasing concern that the impact of poor diet and subsequent health issues was having a detrimental effect on the educational achievement and development of Britain's school children.

### 3.2.1 Zeitgeist

In the early 2000s the state of school meals provision was coming under increasing scrutiny and heavy criticism from education and food campaigners as well as many parents unhappy at what they perceived to be the poor quality of their children's school meal offer. These were the days of the infamous 'Turkey Twizzler' – a highly processed, formed-meat product that was very effectively exposed by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver in his TV programmes – and a style of school meal catering based on a so-called 'Kitchenless' offer. This was the legacy of government policies which favoured centralised food preparation and distribution rather than food prepared fresh on school premises. Primary school kitchens around the UK were either removed completely or downscaled to the point where it became impossible to cook a meal from fresh ingredients in many schools. Kitchen staff required little cooking skills or training as their role largely involved re-heating and serving processed and frozen meals.

In Richmond, school meals were supplied by Tillery Valley Foods based near Newport in South Wales via a central depot in Twickenham before being distributed to individual schools to be reheated, often in a micro-wave ovens, and served to children on moulded plastic trays often referred to as 'prison trays'.

In 2005 the 'Feed Me Better' school meals campaign was initiated by Jamie Oliver on the back of his awareness-raising TV series 'Jamie's School Dinners' which worked on improving meals at a Greenwich primary school. The campaign manifesto called for:

1. Guarantees that children receive a proper, nutritionally balanced meal on their plates
2. Introduction of nutritional standards and the banning of junk food from school meals
3. Investment in dinner ladies: give them better kitchens, more hours and support and training to get them cooking again
4. Teach kids about food and get cookery back on the curriculum
5. Commit long-term funding to improve school food.

In 2005 the campaign was regarded as instrumental in bringing about a Government commitment to invest £280 million over 3 years to improve school meals and an additional sum of £60 million to establish the School Food Trust to advise the Government and local authorities on School Meals.

In response to these concerns and changing attitudes to food, nutrition and school meal provision the Food for Life Partnership was established by the Soil Association and other partners in 2006 with the aim of 'helping schools across England to transform their food culture' with a focus on access to seasonal, local and organic food and the development of growing and cooking skills.

### 3.2.2 Sleeping Giant

The Richmond upon Thames Council's school meals procurement officer at the time, Matthew Paul, also highlighted the 'sleeping giant' potential value of the school meals contract. He suggested that the contract was a potential goldmine for any contractor willing to invest in infrastructure and training to improve the quality of school meals in Richmond and increase meals uptake. The focus on 'best value' as a key consideration in the existing school meals contract resulted in providers seeking to

deliver the meal service at low cost. This in turn led to poor meal quality, a low level of meal uptake and ultimately a service that was not viable in the long term. Unlocking the potential of the school meals contract required a refocusing of the contract specifications and a potential provider with enough confidence, vision and energy to invest in improving the service to increase uptake and make the service profitable.

### 3.2.3 Tendering cycle

The timing of the SFM campaign was also right in terms of where the council was in its tendering cycle for the school meals contract. In 2007 Sodexo took on the school meals provision contract from Scolarest for four years. The contract would be retendered in 2011 allowing a window of opportunity for the contract to be improved with much more stringent specifications focused on a quality school meals provision rather than 'best value'.

## 3.3 The right place

### 3.3.1 The 'Richmond effect'

Not only was the timing right for a campaign to improve school meals but also perhaps Richmond was the right place for it to work. A number of people who were interviewed for this evaluation suggested that the 'Richmond effect' had an important impact on the campaign from its initiation. It was a good place, according to some, because many of the primary school parents were well-informed about the debate on children's nutrition in schools and the various campaigns to raise awareness of the issues and possible ways to address them. The fact that many parents in Richmond agreed with what they were hearing and wanted a change made Richmond's school communities ripe for the school meals improvement campaign. It was regarded as a very important way to address the national concerns through local actions.

Richmond is not known for its high levels of deprivation. The 2012 Borough profile describes Richmond as:

> *'A fairly affluent Borough without pockets of serious deprivation compared to other areas in England'.*
>
> *'A generally prosperous area'*

In fact Richmond has the highest average annual income of any London Borough outside The City of London with average annual earnings 30% higher than the London average. According to the 2010 index of multiple deprivation (an index no longer reported in Government statistics) Richmond is one of the least deprived areas in the country[1]. The number of pupils in Richmond's primary schools eligible for free school meals in 2013 was 8% compared to the national average of 19% and according to the available figures primary school standards achieved are above the national averages.

It is important to recognise that even though the Borough as a whole can be described as 'fairly affluent' or 'generally prosperous' there are pockets of deprivation, particularly in the ward of Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside as well as Hampton North.

Richmond's relative affluence probably contributes to the higher level of interest amongst parents in the food eaten by Richmond's primary school children – the campaign grew on fertile ground. This probably meant that initial awareness-raising built on an existing relatively high level of awareness and

[1] London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Census Borough Profile 2013. Analysts group of the LBRuT

the campaign focused on an already well-motivated and concerned group of parents, Head Teachers and school governors.

As one Head Teacher put it:

> *'Richmond parents were well-informed and had high expectations'*

## 3.4 SFM campaign motivation

It was within this context that SFM was established. National campaigns were helping to raise awareness of how bad things had become, and the importance of getting school meals right. The potential for taking significant steps towards improving the food provided in schools was being demonstrated around the country and in small pockets in and around Richmond.

One such example was Merton Parents for Improved Food in Schools, inspired by Jamie Oliver's School Meals programme, an organisation established in 2005 by parents in the London Borough of Merton. Their aim was to ensure that pupils were 'offered only good quality, healthy, tasty food, prepared and cooked from fresh ingredients on site in all Merton schools, served in a pleasant atmosphere'. Their approach included awareness raising, the development of clear standards for high quality meal provision and the need for a working kitchen in every school.

In Richmond itself there were examples of schools that had opted out of the council contract to provide school meals and had greatly improved not only the quality of the meals being provided but also had increased the number of pupils opting to take meals provided by the school. These successes provided the motivation and inspiration for SFM and a model for the campaign and its approach.

## 3.5 The importance of getting school meals right

The SFM website sets out the reasons why campaigning to improve school meals is important. This reflects much of the discourse on the subject and is confirmed by evidence emerging from a range of recent projects proving that such campaigns lead to desirable outcomes.

> 'A 2009 study confirmed the significant benefits the [Feed me Better] campaign had on educational attainment. The research showed that healthy school meals significantly improved educational outcomes, in particular in English and Science, and led to a 15% reduction in absenteeism due to sickness. A Children's Food Trust study has shown that children in primary schools are 3 times more likely to concentrate in the classroom following improvements to the food and dining room.'
>
> SFM website

Dietary deficiency and poor nutritional status in children can have detrimental effects on cognitive development, behaviour, concentration and school performance[2]. Children in low income households are less likely to learn to cook at home as families for whom every penny counts can't afford the luxury of letting their children experiment with cooking at home where food might go to waste. Children living in poorer households are more likely to come to school hungry. A recent survey by the London Assembly[3] found that 95% of teachers asked reported seeing increasing numbers of children arriving at school hungry. Missing breakfast will increase a child's chances of showing impaired memory and

[2] Dowler, E, Turner, S & Dobson, B (2001). *Poverty Bites*. Child Poverty Action Group

[3] Health and Environment Committee London Assembly (2013) *A Zero Hunger City: Tackling food poverty in London.* Greater London Authority

attention span, and reduced efficiency of learning[4]. The lunch time meal provided by the school may possibly be the only hot meal of the day for some and children who are hungry are less likely to behave well and to be able to concentrate for any period of time[5]. Food in school is important for immediate learning and for long term health, wellbeing and life chances and children from poorer families are disproportionately affected by food in school that is of low or no nutritional value or that is high is fats, salt and sugar; and is unhealthy and unappetising.

In Michele Belot and Jonathan James report on the effects of the "Feed me Better" campaign *Healthy School Meals and Educational Outcomes* they report that

> *The effects [of the feed me better campaign] are quite substantial: Our estimates show that the campaign increased the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 by 3 to 6 percentage points in English, and the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 by 3 to 8 percentage points in Science. Moreover, we find that a substantial decrease in absenteeism in Greenwich schools after the campaign, in particular in "authorised absences", which are more likely to be due to sickness (and therefore health). The rate of absenteeism falls by about .80 percentage points, which is about 15% of the average absenteeism rate in our sample, thus a notable effect.* [6]

Similarly evidence from the Food for Life Partnership[7] evaluation report 2011 mirrors these findings:

> *FFLP schools saw a greater increase in pupil attainment compared to the national average. Pre-FFLP, the flagship secondary schools had a below average attainment figure (-3.3% , but managed to close the gap to –o.6%*
>
> *"Interviewees consistently reported that FFLP had contributed to their school improvement agendas, helping improve attainment, behaviour and school environments." (Teeman et al, 2011, p45.)*[8]
>
> But perhaps more importantly it also documents that free school meal uptake increased by an average of 13% points in Food for Life schools.
>
> "*Evidence points towards the FFLPs potential to contribute to…. helping 'close the gap' for disadvantaged children in terms of their health and academic attainment." (Teeman et al, 2011, p52)*[9]

From the evidence on how poor nutrition affects children's health, wellbeing and education potential it seems obvious that investing public funds in school food is the correct approach and in the long term will be a cost saving for the public purse.

## 4. Evaluation findings

[4] DT Simeon and S Grantham-McGregor, 'Effect of missing breakfast on the cognitive functions of school children of different nutritional status', *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 49, 1989, pp646-652 cited in Dowler, E, Turner, S & Dobson, B (2001). *Poverty Bites*. Child Poverty Action Group

[5] C Ani and S Grantham-McGregor, 'The effects of breakfast on educational performance, attendance and classroom behaviour', in N Donovan and c Street (des), *Fit for School: how breakfast clubs meet health, education and childcare needs*, New Policy Institute, 1999 cited in Dowler, E, Turner, S & Dobson, B (2001). *Poverty Bites*. Child Poverty Action Group.

[6] M Belot &J James *Healthy School Meals and Educational Outcomes* No. 2009-01, January 2009 Institute for Social and Economic Research, Working Paper Series

[7] The Food for Life partnership is a school meals programme aiming to improve the food culture in schools across the UK. The programme includes improvements to school meals, food education and food growing in schools.

[8] Teeman, D., Featherstone, D., Sims, D., Sharp. C. (2011). *Qualitative Impact Evaluation of the Food for Life Partnership Programme*. Slough: NFER

[9] Op cit

The evaluation explores the journey undertaken in Richmond that has resulted in the transformation of primary school meals. It focuses on the role of SFM in this journey, assesses the effectiveness and impact of the campaign and considers if there are lessons that can be learned for other areas wanting to improve their school meals.

The evaluation addresses the key questions asked by SFM.

- **Was the campaign effective?**
- **Did SFM achieve its campaign goals?**
- **Does SFM have an effective track record in campaigning?**

## 4.1 Was the school meals improvement campaign effective?

To answer this question the evaluation needed to assess whether or not the school meals had improved. This was achieved by comparing meal quality before and after the campaign from the perspective of key stakeholders and, where possible, from first-hand experience.

The evaluation also considered an alternative indicator of meal quality by comparing available statistics on school meals uptake over the evaluation period.

### 4.1.1 First impressions

On first impressions, school meals provided in the primary schools under the local authority contract have been completely transformed since 2007. Today, if a pupil in one of the schools receiving council contract meals was given a meal from pre-2007 they could be forgiven for thinking it was served as some form of punishment.

The four photographs below provide a clear illustration of the transformation:

2009 school meal at a Richmond primary school provided by the council contract caterer – Sodexo. (from SFM blog)

2011 school meal at a Richmond primary school provided by the council contract caterer – ISS Facilities-Education. (from SFM blog)

2014 school meal at a Richmond primary school provided by the council contract caterer – ISS Facilities-Education.

The Friday fish meal served at The Russell primary school, July 2014, provided by ISS Facilities-Education.

It is difficult to identify the food served in the 2009 photograph, particularly the dessert in the left side tray compartment. Shockingly the kitchen staff serving the food were unable to identify it either! It is also clear that most of the food on the tray is not freshly cooked. In the 2011 photograph the components of the meal are more easily recognised, partly because it is a 'roast dinner' – comprising roast chicken, roast parsnips, savoy cabbage and roast potatoes – but also because the food has been cooked from fresh ingredients and is served on a plate rather than a plastic 'prison' style tray. The photograph from Lowther School shows a very appealing noodle dish with freshly cooked vegetables and a dessert accompanied by fresh fruit (this is the same meal served to the evaluator during a visit to the school in June 2014). The Russell's fish and chips, though not the best example of a freshly cooked meal, still shows an appealing meal which the children were obviously enjoying. The kitchen also provides salad and a chocolate shortbread dessert.

As the more recent photographs show today's pupils in Richmond's primary schools will see recognisable vegetables, meat and fish that is freshly cooked in the school kitchen and whole fresh fruit. Today they can choose between different options each day, including a vegetarian meal. Parents can rest assured that their children's meals are cooked from fresh ingredients by trained kitchen staff –

cooks who actually cook – in a kitchen that in most cases has been improved or even completely rebuilt in recent years.

In some cases they will be eating food they may even have seen growing and met the people involved in producing it – and in a few cases they may have grown it themselves in a school allotment!

### 4.1.2 The schools' perspective

Through interviews with Head Teachers at St.Osmund's, The Russell and Lowther schools, a survey of Head Teachers, school governors and parents sent out to all schools as well as the workshops with pupils at St.Osmund's and The Russell the evaluation has built a picture of a school-level perspective on the change in school meals. For details on the surveys see **Appendix E**.

There is a strong consensus that the quality of school meals has improved massively. Meals provided before 2011, comprising frozen meals re-heated at the school – "including even frozen mashed potato" – were described in one interview with a Head Teacher as "appalling". The same teacher directly linked a lack of concentration and poor learning after the lunch break with the poor quality and small portions that were served.

Immediately after introduction of the new meals in 2011 comments from children at Richmond's primary schools were reported on SFM's blog. Commenting about a 'roast dinner' meal in September 2011 (the same meal shown in the earlier photograph) one pupil said simply:

> *'It just tastes nicer!'*

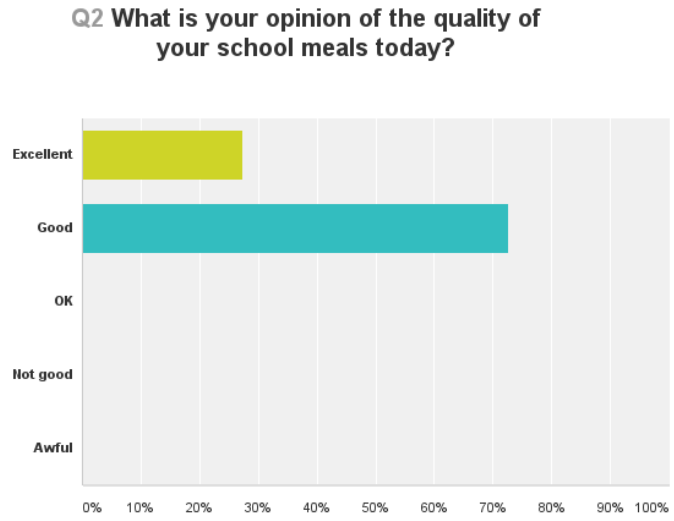
Whilst another commented that they enjoyed the cabbage.

SFM's website also reports comments from parents and Head Teachers following introduction of the new meals:

> *'The food seems to have lived up to its promise and it's great that they now use proper cutlery, proper plates and drink from proper glasses.'*
>
> *'Lunches at Clarendon have been totally transformed! Pupils are loving the improved choices and quality and staff uptake has increased dramatically.'*
>
> *'The food is outstanding and has been received really positively by the children and staff. The food is the best school food I can remember!'*

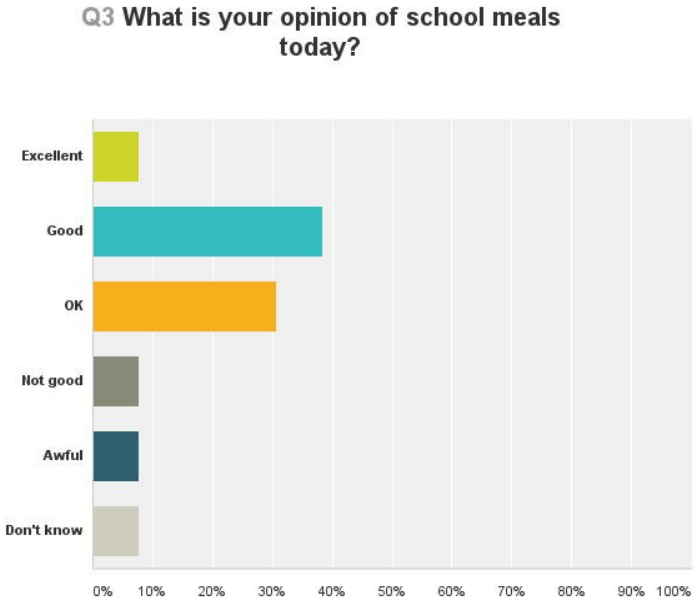
This evaluation included informal interviews with kitchen staff which provide an indication of how bad the meals service had been. One cook said that she felt embarrassed to be serving what she referred to as 'slop'. In one serious indictment it was reported that a school cook refused to serve the food to her own grand-daughter at one Richmond primary school because she felt it was so bad.

The evaluation carried out an online survey of Head Teachers, School Governors and parents of year 6 pupils (see **Appendix D**). The analysis below of responses from surveyed Head Teachers shows that meals today are rated as either good (72%) or excellent (28%).




**2014 Head Teachers survey response on the quality of school meals.**

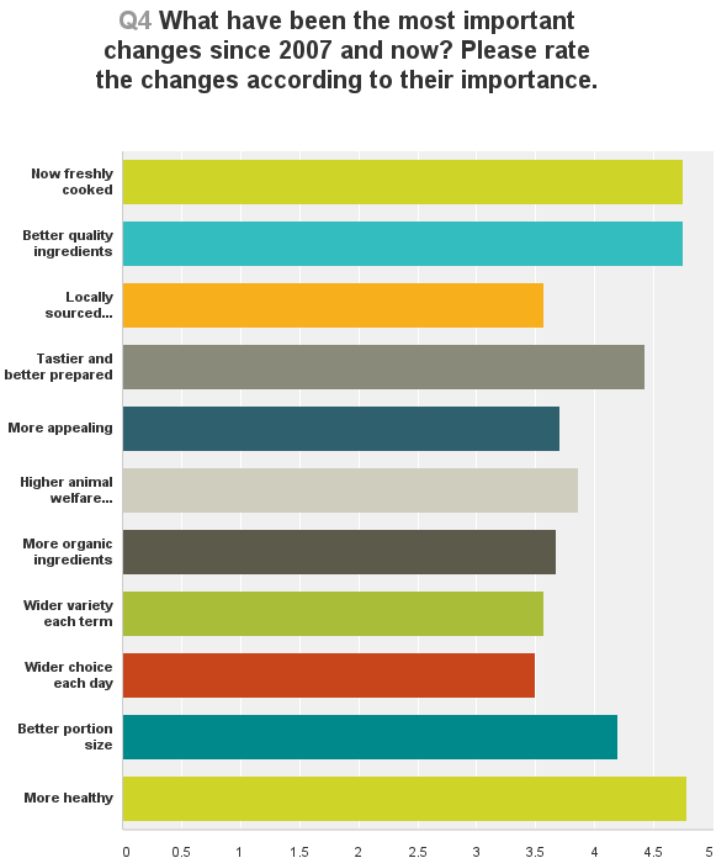
The response from parents, probably based more on the opinions of their children, don't rate the meals as highly with only around 8% responding 'excellent', 69% 'good' or 'OK' and nearly 16% 'not good' or 'awful'.




This can be compared with SFM's original parent survey in 2009 which asked what the reason was for their child not taking school meals. 44% of respondents said it was because the 'food is poor quality' with another 37% said 'my child doesn't like the food'.

The 2014 surveys also asked respondents to say what they felt were the most important changes in the meals. The responses showed the importance placed on the shift from reheated frozen meals to freshly prepared and tasty food using good quality ingredients and meals that are regarded as being healthy and of a high standard nutritionally.

The chart below shows the analysis from the survey of parents where each change was rated from 1-5 according to their importance (5 being the most important).




**2014 Parents survey response on the changes to school meals.**

Pupil workshops conducted as part of the evaluation have confirmed the findings of surveys and interviews whilst also identifying other aspects of school lunches that are important. For details on the workshops and their findings see **Appendix C**.

The change to tastier freshly cooked meals was clearly important for children who had experienced school meals since 2007:

> *'It used to be just warmed up in an oven – not cooked from fresh – sometimes it wasn't even hot'*

> *'(the meals are) much better (now) because before they were not homemade and only just frozen'*

The importance of a variety of different types of meals was highlighted by one pupil:

> *'They've improved by having more of an option'*

> *'You can get introduced to new food. You have different meals every day'*

However, many others felt that the quality of the meals varied, possibly a reflection that children's meal preferences can fall within quite a narrow range:

> *'I think school meals are quite nice on some days and extremely horrible on other days'*

When discussing what was most important to get right about school lunches pupils focused on aspects of the meal time itself and not just the food. They suggested that it was important that the food was tasty, freshly cooked and healthy however they also acknowledged the importance of the social and emotional aspects of lunch time and the atmosphere and space in the dining hall. Being able to sit with friends in a comfortable place and being served by friendly and helpful staff was identified as important.

*'It's easier to eat when you're in a happy place'*

*'When we were in the infants the kitchen staff were sometimes really nice and sometimes quite rude'*

*'The tables have improved with space because in the infants you were really cramped'*

### 4.1.3 School meals uptake

According to the adage 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating'. Another indication of whether or not school meals have improved is the increased uptake of school meals in the Borough's primary schools.

An excellent demonstration of this is provided by East Sheen Primary School in Richmond. In 2007 East Sheen primary school decided to opt out of the council contract to provide school meals. At that time only 40 out of 400 pupils received meals provided by the school. This is significant because 60 pupils were eligible for free school meals. Following the change in provider (to Pride Catering of Surrey) the number of pupils taking school meals changed dramatically and in 2008 there was a 70% uptake. Currently the uptake is 320 pupils out of the total 400 or 80% uptake. (Getting the contract right – School Food Plan website).

The change in uptake of school meals in Richmond's primary schools receiving meals provided by the council contract is not quite so dramatic, however broad averages indicate a gradual increase in uptake:

| Date | Caterer | Average % uptake LBRuT |
|---|---|---|
| 2005 | Scolarest | 22% |
| 2007 | Scolarest | 26% |
| 2007 to 2011 | Sodexo | 28% - 32% |
| 2011 | ISS Education | 52% |

AVL consultants – personal communication

Since the 1970's school meals uptake in the UK had been decreasing and by 2007 national average uptake was at just over 41% and the average for Outer London was just under 43%[10]. Richmond's uptake was well below this level at 26% but already on the increase from 22%. In 2008 the national uptake increased for the first time since the 1970s and by 2011 the national average was just over 44% (outer London 42%) compared to the uptake of 52% in Richmond (see table below).

The lag in increase in uptake nationally at a time of massive investment and increased awareness was blamed partly on increased costs per meal and a failure to articulate the healthy eating message clearly enough. Richmond's increased uptake could be accounted for by the Borough's above average affluence (average annual earnings in Richmond are 30% higher than the London average) i.e. families were more able to afford the more expensive meals, and perhaps due to a greater local awareness of

[10] School Food Trust – annual survey of take up of school lunches in England. Jo Nicholas, Lesley Wood, and Michael Nelson. Reports for 2005 - 2011

the issues. It is tempting to attribute this increased awareness to the SFM school meals campaign, but this is hard to prove. It is also possible that parents in Richmond are more aware and more concerned about the standard of meals provided by schools locally.

| Date | England average % uptake (primary schools, council contract) | Outer London % uptake (primary schools, council contract) | London Borough Richmond upon Thames (incomplete data) | Average meal cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2005 | 44.9 | 47.4 | | £1.48/meal |
| 2006 | 42.3 | 42.6 | | £1.56/meal |
| 2007 | 41.3 | 42.9 | 26% | £1.63/meal |
| 2008 | 43.0 | 40.9 | 28-32% | £1.67/meal |
| 2009 | 43.9 | 40.7 | | £1.77/meal |
| 2010 | 42.1 | 40.4 | | £1.83/meal |
| 2011 | 44.1 | 41.9 | 52% | £1.88/meal |

The increased uptake in Richmond since 2011 is even more dramatic.
As reported by SFM:

> *Within the first half term of the new service (September 2011), Richmond schools saw an average increase in school meal uptake of 22%. By December numbers had risen by 39%. In some schools the number of children taking a school meal has doubled. Across the borough the average number of school meals enjoyed each day is now 3,535 (compared with just 2,008 in 2010)*
>
> School Food Matters – The Richmond Story, 2012

The evaluation has shown that school meals in Richmond's primary schools provided under the council contract have improved greatly since 2007 and more specifically since the change in provider to ISS Education in 2011 at the culmination of the SFM campaign. It is difficult to attribute the improvement to the SFM campaign as the improvement reflects national changes in attitude and policy supporting improved school meals. However it is fair to assume that the campaign had a significant part to play in their transformation.

Key to SFM's role was a strong and eloquent challenge to the assumption that the lack of adequate kitchen facilities and equipment was an insurmountable obstacle to the provision of meals cooked from fresh ingredients on the school premises. Through the weight of opinion collected from parents and Head Teachers and a conviction that meals had to be freshly prepared SFM encouraged a turnaround in the Council's attitude. The campaign influenced the change in attitude and encouraged the Council to explore ways in which investment could be secured to increase the capacity of primary school kitchens to cook fresh meals on site.

**Conclusions**

- School meals in Richmond's council provided primary schools have been transformed since 2007.
- The uptake of school meals in Richmond has increased dramatically
- The increase coincides with but greatly exceeds the national increase in uptake
- This is likely to be linked to an improvement in the meals
- It could also reflect the impact of the local SFM campaign
- Increased uptake in Richmond also reflects the national trend towards an increase in uptake resulting from increased awareness on food and nutrition in schools and funding to improve school meals nationally.

## 4.2 Did SFM achieve its campaign goals?

At the campaign launch event 'Why School Food Matters' held in May 2008 SFM laid out its campaign aims.

Every school should have:

- kitchens capable of preparing fresh and healthy food
- a commitment from school meal providers to supply food from local and sustainable sources
- cooking and growing programmes to enable children to build a positive relationship with food, as a core life skill
- a link with a local farm
- lunchtime in a pleasant, fully equipped environment – rather than noisy and unsettled environments with extensive queuing and food served on plastic prison trays
- a designated champion from staff or governors and from the school council

Following the event these aims were refined into 5 campaign goals. These goals were used to lobby local councillors and were the basis for a petition set up in January 2008.

1. Investment in school kitchens to enable fresh food to be cooked on site
2. Investment in catering staff with training and enough paid hours to enable them to cook fresh on site
3. Investment in dining areas so that schools can serve lunch in a pleasant, fully equipped environment
4. Stringent school meal contract specifications, committing to fresh produce from sustainable sources
5. Links with local farms and support for cooking and growing programmes in schools

### 4.2.1 Getting the contract right

The campaign goals set out above represent the focus of SFM's initial approach – encouraging investment in the key aspects of school meal provision that would impact most on the improvement of the meals. Over the course of the SFM campaign the attention increasingly focused on engagement and influence over decisions regarding the creation of an improved school meals contract. SFM's focus on tightening the contract specifications (goal 4) has probably contributed most to the success of the SFM campaign.

As already discussed the SFM campaign was greatly influenced by the experience of local schools that had opted out of the council contract to provide school meals. SFM Director Stephanie Wood experienced this in the school attended by her own children and a number of other examples in Richmond illustrated the dramatic improvements in the meal quality and consequent uptake of meals that could be achieved through opting out.

One notable example is East Sheen Primary School – a Richmond School that decided to opt out of the council contract in 2005. From a meal uptake of around 40 meals per day East Sheen now has the highest school meal uptake of any primary school in the UK – 320 out of 400 pupils now have a meal provided by the school. As the Head Teacher and a Governor at East Sheen school explain in the short film of their experience (School Food Plan website: what works well) getting the contract right is the way to improve school meals. East Sheen chose to opt out and take on a new contract specific to them with a separate catering firm. The alternative to opting out is to get the council contract right.

At its inception SFM took inspiration from achievements in schools such as East Sheen and the early encouragement of a key supporter, Zac Goldsmith (then Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Richmond), to apply the lessons from the opt out schools to the 30 or so schools provided under the council contract. Instead of a piecemeal focus on schools with the capacity, energy and funding to pull out of the council contract SFM was encouraged to set its targets on the council contract itself. This was a bigger challenge but ultimately it has had a greater impact on food served in Richmond's primary schools than otherwise would have occurred and has proved to be SFM's most significant achievement.

### 4.2.2 Stringent school meal contract specifications, committing to fresh produce from sustainable sources

In order to evaluate the changes that have been made to the school meals contract the relevant sections of the 2007 contract (delivered to Richmond's primary schools by the contract caterer Sodexo) have been compared to those in the 2011 contract (ultimately delivered by ISS Education).

Simply by holding the two documents it is possible to gauge the marked difference between the two contracts, in particular with regard to the detail and precision of the specifications around the quality of the food that is provided – the 2011 contract weighs considerably more than the 2007 contract!

**The 2007 contract**

The 2007 contract is 29 pages long in total with approximately one and a half pages, incorporating 16 separate specifications, providing guidance on the menus, menu content and quality of ingredients. In contrast the 35 page 2011 contract documents the same range of specifications in a detailed 9 page section incorporating standards on quality, nutritional value and sourcing of ingredients.

The stated aim of the 2007 contract is:

> *'to provide 'a high quality, nutritious catering service to schools that meets the local needs of schools and pupils'.*
>
> LBRuT provision of a lunchtime catering service for primary and special schools. Part 3. Specification of services. March 2007

It sets out minimum acceptable standards and calls for a 'best value approach'. The contract is notable in its lack of precision and the scope for interpretation that it allows, in particular with regard to the quality of the ingredients used. Significantly there is no specific requirement for the meals to be produced from fresh materials – in fact there is no guidance at all on where and how the food should be prepared.

> *'All meals should be adequate in quantity and quality so as to be suitable as the main meal of the day and reflect the new National Nutritional Standards (2008).'*
>
> *'Menus should be developed that are appetising and appealing to young people.'*
>
> Op cit

The local sourcing of produce is mentioned but only as an aspiration rather than a detailed specification.

> *'The Contractor shall be encouraged to source produce locally wherever possible. As a minimum, produce should, as far as possible meet the agreed standards of good agricultural practice or UK Husbandry schemes'.* Op cit

The specifications are open to interpretation and allow a great deal of flexibility on the part of the contractor. This not only allows for the possibility of the bare minimum standard of meal being served in the quest for 'best value' but it also makes it very difficult for any baseline standards to be set against which the quality of the service can be monitored and evaluated. Little wonder then that standards slipped and school meals uptake fell to around 22% in Richmond's primary schools.

**The 2011 contract**

The new contract provides a much clearer statement of what the school meals service aims to achieve:

- Provide high quality, healthy and sustainable food
- Increase school meal uptake
- Adopt a whole school approach to healthy eating
- Ensure a motivated and valued workforce
- Ensure good communication

There has been a sea-change in the focus and approach of the contract and its specifications. This mirrors the changing UK policy on school meals and their focus of healthy eating but also reflects the importance of integrating the school meals service and motivating the people who deliver it.

Overall the contract provides a clearer framework for delivery of the school meal service allowing much less freedom for the contractor to interpret the guidance in ways that might suit their agenda better.

Whilst requiring meals to adhere to statutory food-based and nutrient-based standards the contract specifies how the food should be produced:

> *'LBRuT has a commitment to a high-quality service based on fresh food, healthy choices and high nutritional standards. Where possible and facilities exist, LBRuT would expect fresh food to be cooked from scratch using high quality raw ingredients that are unprocessed and where applicable, seasonal and ethically sourced with minimal negative environmental impact.'*
>
> LBRuT provision of a lunchtime catering service for primary and special schools. Section 5. Service specification. January 2011

The contract encourages an increase in school meal uptake not only by improving food quality but also through menu planning, food presentation and improving the environment where the food is eaten.

This theme of an integrated school meals service is expanded in sections setting out the specifications for 'a whole school approach to healthy eating' where the meals are regarded as:

> *'an integral part of the school day representing an educational and social occasion providing opportunities for learning experiences that reinforce messages about food and healthy eating.'*
>
> Op cit

The integrated approach includes the people who prepare the meals through requirements for the contract to ensure a motivated and valued workforce through training, conditions and the expectation that:

*'Catering staff … play a reasonable part in promoting the educational and social ethos of the school … working closely and productively with the school.'*

Op cit

In terms of food quality the contract is particularly stringent, in stark contrast to the meagre specifications laid out in the 2007 contract. The specifications cover statutory food and nutrient based standards but also objectives for: sustainable food (seasonally and ethically sourced, climate change impact, waste reduction; menu planning; and the adoption of a whole school approach to healthy eating (consistent messages, school activities, growing and cooking schemes, pupil participation in decisions).

To avoid any lack of clarity and provide specific guidance the contract describes specific food standards for different food types (bread/flour, chicken/turkey, eggs, fish, fruit and vegetables meat, milk etc.)

SFM is quick to acknowledge the contribution made by both Sustain and the Food for Life Partnership in developing and wording the new contract. The timing of the SFM campaign coincided with a campaign run by Sustain called: Good Food on the Public Plate and SFM have highlighted the contribution of Sustain's Jon Walker and Rosie Blackburn to the development of the new contract saying:

*'they were instrumental in helping (SFM) shape the contract. Rosie went through the draft contract line by line and Jon went through each of the four bids with me to advise prior to awarding the contracts.'*

Stephanie Wood,
personal communication

SFM also acknowledge that the new food specifications were largely based on the contract created for the London Borough of Camden – also put together with the help of Sustain.

**Conclusions**

- The school meals contract has been transformed.
- The 2011 specifications bear little resemblance to the preceding 2007 contract
- The 2011 contract is thorough, precise and specific leaving little room for interpretation by the contractor.
- The scope of the specifications has been greatly expanded to encompass not only food quality but a range of requirements aimed at encouraging sustainable sourcing and preparation, an integrated whole school food ethos and an increased uptake of school meals.

The broader scope and detail of the contract reflects paradigm shift in attitudes to school meals. For the aspirations of a Borough Council such as Richmond to be realised a significant investment needed to be made into primary school kitchen facilities and the organisation and management of the school meals service. Having got the contract right the Borough Council needed to demonstrate its commitment to financial support for the necessary improvements to the school meal service so that the contractor could fulfil its obligations. The contract laid the groundwork so that the improvements could be implemented.

### 4.2.3 Investment in school kitchens

When ISS Facilities – Education started providing school meals to the 29 schools then covered by the Council's contract in 2011 all were able to prepare meals from fresh ingredients on the school premises. This is particularly significant given that as recently as 2007 all meals were being sent frozen from South Wales.

This major achievement was made possible through funding made available as part of the then Government's commitment to improving school meals, informally referred to as 'Jamie's money' (at least partly in response to Jamie Oliver's school meals campaign). Funding included support for school meals improvement via the School Lunch Grant (formerly the targeted School Meals Grant) and the Dedicated Schools Grant as well as funding to support school expansion. Funding from the LBRuT Council included the 'central pool' for school improvements and funding from the Department for Education for specific projects (personal communication with Vic Laws, AVL Consultancy). Investment was made available through the school budgets with a degree of control from the school on how the funding was dispersed. In addition to this ISS Facilities - Education invested a further £80,000 towards upgrading school kitchen facilities, a commitment made in their successful tender bid for the contract. In some specific instances schools carried out their own fund-raising for improvements to kitchens and dining rooms to augment investment from the above sources.

Kitchen facilities improvements in the schools have varied from redecoration and refurbishment with improved equipment to complete rebuilding of kitchens as part of concurrent school expansion programmes in the borough. Despite repeated requests it has not been possible to provide accurate and complete detailed information on the timing and scale of the investment, school by school, beyond the table provided below by AVL Consultants, appointed by Richmond Council to advise and monitor the school meals contract. This data describes kitchen improvements and proposed improvements in 26 of the schools under the ISS/Council contract – see **Appendix F**.

The schools where more detailed interviews and visits were carried out as part of the evaluation provide useful case studies illustrating the varying scope of improvements in kitchen facilities.

## Case study A.
## St. Osmund's Primary

At St.Osmund's school in Barnes the investment made in 2010 to increase the size of the kitchen involved removing a toilet that had been located within the original kitchen, redecoration and reorganisation of the relatively small space available. In addition to this and as part of the kitchen upgrade a new oven was installed. A donation of about £4,000 from a parent of a pupil at the school allowed the purchase of an oven with a much higher specification than would otherwise have been the installed.

The following before-and-after photographs illustrate some of the changes that were made.


St.Osmund's kitchen serving area in 2010.

The whole kitchen on the day before it was reorganised in 2011.

The room to the left housing a toilet and sink was demolished allowing expansion of the cooking area.

The new food preparation area and serving counter in 2014.

The new oven.

## Case study B.
## Lowther Primary School

In 2011 Lowther School in Castlenau underwent a major new building programme as part of major school redevelopment required to accommodate the expansion of the school from a single form entry to a two form entry. As part of this programme a new wing was added to the original 1929 school building housing a completely new purpose-built kitchen and dining/assembly hall (completed in 2012).

According to the current Head Teacher, Mark Tuffney, (who was previously the Deputy Head Teacher) the school already had a very strong healthy eating and integrated school food ethos incorporating food growing, cooking and an awareness of the importance of school meals. This ethos is reflected in the attention given to the kitchen and dining facilities that have been built. Mark Tuffney also described how important the kitchen and cookery teaching area was to the school and how funding for this facility took precedence over other potential expenditure including spending on IT equipment.

The main school meal preparation area following lunch service, with Head Cook Supervisor Sinead Issit by the window.

The pupil teaching kitchen area at one end of the kitchen.

The pupil teaching kitchen area with Head Teacher Mark Tuffney and year 6 pupil Dylan decorating their World Cup themed cakes in preparation for a 'bake-off' competition (Dylan won!)

Close up of the cookery teaching area.

A cooking session in the teaching area.

These two examples illustrate the scope of investment and physical upgrade of kitchen facilities at Richmond's Primary schools. As school expansion continues in many of the schools kitchen facilities are improved and in many cases completely rebuilt as part of the programme (as in the Lowther School example). In others the existing kitchen is upgraded and some new equipment installed enabling the kitchen to deliver on the contractual obligation to cook food on the school premises using fresh ingredients (as in the St.Osmund's example).

As discussed, although SFM has not been directly responsible for securing the funding and delivering this goal its campaign was extremely influential in encouraging the development of stringent specifications within the school meals contract that ISS Education now conforms to. This built upon the lessons learned from experience in other Richmond schools that opted out of the council contract – if you get the contract specifications right you can transform the school meals service.

**Conclusions**

- Significant investment has been made into kitchen facilities at the schools allowing all of them to prepare meals on site from fresh ingredients.
- The investment varies from school to school and is determined by their specific requirements and concurrent expansion programmes.

### 4.2.4 Investment in catering staff

> *'School meals are only ever as good as the cooks who prepare it – and the current contract with ISS helps to ensure that the cooks are of a higher calibre'*
>
> Jan King, AVL Consultancy

The shift from a 'reheat from frozen' service as supplied previously by Sodexo to the 'cook from fresh on site' as stipulated in the contract required contractors to make significant investment in training staff. The 2011 contract specifications also ensured that the catering staff preparing the food are not only motivated through training and conditions of employment but also valued and respected as an integral part of the school community. The specifications required the contractor to invest in training and support to provide catering staff capable of delivering the improved meal service. Again, by getting the contract right the investment in staff training and conditions by the successful caterer is assured.

The successful bid from ISS in 2011 included the following:

> *'because staff have been regenerating frozen pre-prepared entrees we will need to review the levels of food preparation training staff may have received prior to that and ensure a thorough refresher takes place for the menus at the start of the contract.'*
>
> Provision of a Lunchtime Catering Service for Primary and Special Schools Response Document, January 2011 ISS Facilities - Education

ISS also responded thoroughly to the contract specifications on career development and investment in the catering staff with a broad range of training opportunities. Their bid included the following statements:

> *'We strive to 'add value' to every member of our staff that joins our team, by increasing the knowledge and skills they arrive with, through induction, craft training, experience and ultimately promotion.'*
>
> *'We understand that pay alone will not motivate an individual to remain with an employer. We use a combination of one-to-one meetings, annual performance appraisals and personal development plans to maintain staff motivation and morale. This also gives staff a clear career path and the opportunity to progress within ISS.'*
>
> *'We believe people, as well as food, are at the heart of our service provision. This is apparent with regard to the services we provide but also through the people we employ to provide them.'*
>
> Op cit

This commitment is borne out in the experience of staff in school kitchens. Observations indicate that the degree to which the school meals service is integrated within the school varies depending on a number of factors including the layout of the kitchen and dining space within the school, whether or not the school has undergone a relatively simple kitchen upgrade (such as St.Osmund's) or a complete rebuild (Lowther) and the attitude of Head Teachers (in particular) and other staff at the school towards the catering staff. The Head Teacher at Lowther recognised the importance of an integrated approach saying:

> *'It is important that the cooks feel as if they are part of the school team'*

At Lowther School there is no sense of a 'them and us' attitude towards the kitchen staff according to the Head Teacher and Head Cook. The kitchen facilities, incorporating a pupil's teaching kitchen,

enable full integration of the kitchen and its staff with the school. This is less evident and not so easy in a small refurbished kitchen such as that at St.Osmund's where the potential for pupils to use the kitchen regularly is impractical because of lack of space.

One example of career progression is Sinead Issit, the Cook Supervisor at Lowther, previously at St.Osmund's when Sodexo provided the meals. Sinead had no formal kitchen training when she first entered the school kitchen at St.Osmund's. Sinead is now winning cooking awards in national ISS competitions, she is studying for an NVQ2 professional cooking qualification and in the near future will be mentoring other primary school cooks in Richmond supporting kitchen staff to adopt similar approaches to the meal service as that developed at Lowther.

**Conclusions**

- Specifications in the school meals contract require a commitment from the contractor to invest in kitchen staff
- The commitment includes training, terms and conditions and an assurance that kitchen staff are motivated, valued and have opportunities for career progression

### 4.2.5 Investment in dining areas

The 2011 contract specifications require that:

> *The dining room environment should be conducive to the enjoyment of food and provide facilities which encourage children and young people to appreciate the social role food plays in society.*

The increasing population of Richmond and the need for additional school places have required the LBRuT to budget for major school expansion projects in Richmond's Primary schools. This means that some schools have undergone major building projects including the provision of new assembly halls which double up as dining rooms. The school meals contract encourages focus on the importance of the dining environment, however, it is unclear how the Council's commitment to this aspect of the school meals service is put into practice. A strong school food ethos and an awareness and commitment on the part of the Head Teacher and other decision makers at the school of the importance of the dining environment will influence the amount of investment in dining areas. The dispersal of the school budget is largely under the control of the school itself and so the attitude of the decision-makers within the school (Head Teacher, Governors etc.) will influence investment in dining areas. A strong school food ethos will therefore put investment in dining areas higher on the agenda.

At Lowther School a brand new building – incorporating classrooms, the kitchen and a new assembly/dining hall – has been added to the original 1929 school building. The beautifully designed hall can accommodate the whole school for assemblies and provides an airy, spacious and flexible dining environment. On warm days the sliding glass windows along the front of the hall can be opened onto the play space outside. Children and teachers eat together around circular tables and are served from a counter linking the hall directly to the kitchen where children can see the food being prepared. The dining environment is extremely pleasant and encourages a calm and sociable lunch-time experience. The fact that the Head Teacher and many of his staff take school meals every day is testament both to the quality of the meals but also the atmosphere of the dining room. By eating with the children the teaching and administrative staff model good mealtime behaviour and encourage a strong sense of school lunch being an integral part of the school day for the whole school, not just the children. It is also important that at Lowther children taking school meals eat together with those eating a packed lunch from home.

The new building at Lowther School.

The wood-framed sliding front window along the ground floor opens onto the play area.

The original 1929 school building is shown to the right.

The lunch service at Lowther School

Note that children eating school meals and packed lunches sit together.

The rolling primary school expansion programme in Richmond is ongoing and whilst some schools have been expanded and in some cases completely rebuilt others are yet to receive such major investment. Consequently not all Richmond's Primary schools have been able to develop their dining environment in the way that Lowther School has. However, even without a major rebuild steps can be taken.

At St.Osmund's School fundraising and a parental donation helped to buy new dining furniture including circular tables and new chairs for the dining room. The assembly hall/dining area is small, relatively cramped and not as well designed as at Lowther. However, the circular tables create a feeling of a 'family meal' – a feature of lunch that the school considers to be important even though there is a trade-off because the new tables are more difficult to store than the stackable rectangular tables they used to use.

An additional source of funding for improvements to dining areas in some of Richmond's schools was made available by a small increase in the price per meal being offered. The schools decided to increase the price from £2.07 per meal to £2.10 and the 3p extra per meal was used to fund dining room improvements including furniture.

**Conclusions**

- Specifications in the school meals contract identify the quality of the dining environment as an important aspect of the school meals service
- Investment in dining areas is determined by the Council's rolling programme of school expansion and improvement
- The commitment and interest of individual schools to an integrated school food ethos influences investment in the school dining environment

### 4.2.6 Links with local farms and support for cooking and growing programmes in schools

At SFM's inaugural meeting the campaign called for every school to have cooking and growing programmes to enable children to build a positive relationship with food, and a link with a local farm.

This is reflected in the contract specifications as an aspect of the development of a whole school approach to healthy eating. Guidance in the contract aims to ensure that:

> *'Consistent messages about healthy and sustainable eating and dining are being communicated throughout the school through all channels'*
>
> Op cit

The manner in which this is put into practice is open to interpretation. The successful tender bid from ISS included a strong commitment and willingness to engage in school food activities well beyond the provision of meals.

> *'Our proposal does not just focus on implementing and delivering a cooked from fresh menu but also details how we will engage with all parties within each school. It is through our commitment to the Food For Life Partnership that we seek to add additional value to everything we do in order to become more than just a meal provider.'*
>
> *'we are totally committed to help pupils and parents within Richmond grow their own ingredients'.*
>
> *'In order to allow all schools to actively participate in producing home grown items and get pupils really excited about fresh food ISS will provide a gardening kit to each school … we will also provide each school with a spring and autumn plant box.'*

*'By having a school garden which is looked after by pupils and parents everyone is encouraged to understand more about where food comes from and the benefits of using fresh fruit and vegetables.'*

Op cit

Other specific activities that ISS were willing to offer included:

> ***Farm visits*** *... we can arrange farm trips for pupils to gain a better understanding of issues concerning the countryside, agriculture, rural affairs, the environment, where their food comes from and food production.*
>
> ***Cooking Clubs***
> *We are able to provide Cooking Clubs spanning a 6 week period involving 6 pupils at a time.*
> *The class takes one and half hours. The course programme includes the safe preparation of fruit kebabs, wraps, scones and pizza as well as simple nutritional information.*

In this instance the contract specifications in the new contract were less stringent but were interpreted in a very thorough manner by the successful contractor.

It is important to acknowledge that the delivery of this particular campaign goal, though reflected in the improved contract, became a much higher priority for SFM following the evaluation period. It's inclusion in the contract specifications was significant in that it laid the groundwork for the work of SFM following 2011 and once the new contractor, ISS, had been appointed.

During the evaluation period SFM focused more on delivering the goals most relevant to improvement of the school meals. The campaign involved the establishment of strong relationships with Richmond's primary schools and with particular individuals within those schools.

**So ... did SFM deliver its campaign goals?**

**Conclusions**

- A new stringent set of specifications for the school meals contract have been established
- The contract guarantees a commitment to fresh cooked meals from sustainable sources
- It also requires that the contractor and the Council commit to investment in kitchen facilities and staff training to build capacity to achieve this.
- Whilst the contract acknowledges the importance of the dining environment it is the rolling primary school expansion programme in Richmond and the school food ethos of individual schools that determines investment in dining areas.
- The contract encourages a whole school approach to healthy eating and provides guidance on farm visits, and growing and cooking activities.
- Whilst not delivered during SFM's initial campaign this set the scene for SFM's on-going work in Richmond's primary schools.

## 4.3 Does SFM have an effective track record in campaigning?

School meals in primary schools in Richmond provided by the Council contract have improved and SFM's campaign goals have been delivered. However, how much of this was the result of SFM's campaign and what did SFM actually do to influence the decisions that were made and the improvements that have occurred?

### 4.3.1 Campaign strategy

SFM has evolved since it was establishment in 2007 – and it is still evolving.

As documented in the section on campaign context the inspiration for the campaign to improve school meals came from the personal conviction of SFM's Founder and Director Stephanie Wood. Stephanie, like many other Richmond parents, was concerned that school meals were not good enough and that something needed to be done. Inspiration for what could potentially be achieved was provided by local success stories in Merton and in a number of Richmond primary schools that had opted out of the council contract to provide meals as well as wider national campaigns such as Jamie Oliver's 'Feed me Better' campaign.

### 4.3.2 Activism

The SFM campaign initially built an argument for change by gathering evidence to back up its claims that many people regarded the existing school meal service as unacceptable. The campaign focused on all primary schools receiving meals provided under the Council contract. The focus of initial fact-finding was the parents of children at these schools and the Head Teachers of primary schools in Richmond, and at that time Kingston. The aim was to influence decision-makers within LBRuT Council and improve primary school meals. The campaign was adopting an activist strategy, gathering evidence and different perspectives on the issues and agitating for change.

The campaign was well-informed, following the lead of Merton Parents and the opt-out schools and based on SFM's research. It was also very energetic. By the time SFM was formally launched in May 2008 it had already collected an online petition of over 500 signatures supporting the 5 campaign aims and surveyed all Council provided primary schools in Richmond and had received support for its aims from 65% of the Richmond Primary School Head Teachers.

Not only had the campaign started to build a strong argument but it was also gaining high profile support. The prospective parliamentary candidate for Richmond, Zac Goldsmith, inspired SFM to aim big by targeting all of the council provided schools rather than adopting a piecemeal school-by-school strategy. He also provided seed funding for SFM to get up and running. The inaugural event was chaired by Jonathan Dimbleby – not only a writer and broadcaster but also a former President of the Soil Association. Speakers at the event included Prue Leith from the School Food Trust, Jeanette Orrey – the 'Dinner Lady' and School Meals Advisor to Food for Life Partnership, Chris Collins from the Campaign for School Gardening (and Blue Peter Gardener) and Jackie Schneider from Merton Parents for Better Food in Schools.

SFM was proving itself to be extremely effective at raising the campaign profile, gathering information and evidence and garnering high profile support.

In October 2008 SFM wrote letters to all Richmond Councillors calling for them to support the campaign goals. The letter also drew attention to the fact that the timing was good as there was

time to bring about change before the contract came up for renewal in 2011. Significantly the letter linked the SFM campaign goals to existing Council policies – a very effective campaign strategy.

> *'With the current contract ending in July 2011, this gives Richmond an ideal opportunity, and the lead-time required, to achieve these goals by September 2011.*
>
> *'Our goals reflect the Council's own Primary Strategy for Change (June 2008) that talks of the ambition 'to enable meals to be fully prepared, using locally-sourced ingredients where possible, within schools'. Likewise, DCFS recommends that 'all schools be model suppliers of healthy, local and sustainable food and drink … maximizing their use of local suppliers' (Sustainable Schools – Food and Drink Gateway).'*
>
> Letter to councilors provided by SFM

SFM targeted specific Council officers to ensure that the message – that parents and Head Teachers in Richmond wanted change – was getting through to the right place. SFM met with relevant Council officers to discuss what could be achieved and to initiate a school food working party. By June 2009 the volume of email lobbying received by two Councillors in particular resulted in a request for the 'bombardment' to end. The campaign was clearly having an effect – but was SFM capable of becoming more than just a thorn in the side of Richmond Council on the issue of school meals.

SFM's call for the Council and other stakeholders to initiate a school meals working party focused on redeveloping the contract specifications heralded a change in SFM's strategy. Whether it was by design or not SFM's highly effective agitation and awareness raising opened the door for a more collaborative engagement with the council. The early campaign was influential, effective and proactive in that it pushed for a positive change by highlighting the issues and setting clear and coherent goals. It gave local parents and Head Teachers a voice by presenting consistent campaign messages and creating opportunities for supporters to engage with the campaign through petitions and surveys. SFM's communications were also evolving through the use of blogs and a strong online presence (through Facebook for example).

Comments from Head Teachers acknowledge the important role played by SFM:

> *'SFM campaigned on behalf of Head Teachers and brought the voice of parents to the debate'*
>
> *'The campaign worked because SFM harnessed 'parent power''*
>
> *'SFM gave school's a strong voice based on coherent messages'*
>
> *'SFM were very important – they took Jamie Oliver's message to a local level. SFM knew what parents wanted and the benefits to children's learning that could be achieved. Without SFM it would have fallen flat on its face.'*
>
> *'SFM had credibility based on research and analysis of information. They could not be dismissed as 'just a group of mums' '*

SFM's highly effective agitation and representation of parents and Head Teachers resulted in a place at the table in discussions on the future of school meals in Richmond.

### 4.3.3 Collaboration

In March 2009 SFM met with Councillor Malcolm Eady (Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education), Michael Doust (Sustainability Manager) and Matthew Paul (Children's Services) to discuss the formation of a school meals working party for Richmond.

As the SFM campaign update reported:

> *'it was agreed that the LA would form a working party of parents, head teachers and school governors to look at the current meal service and look ahead to the next contract in 2011.'*

The update also documented the Councillor's support for the initiative:

> *'I am very glad to have met with Stephanie Wood and I and colleagues look forward to working further with her to realise our joint aspirations of raising the standards of school food, and of increasing pupil awareness about food production and sustainability.'*

In the working party Terms of Reference produced in December 2009 core membership consisted of 11 representatives:

- 4 Head Teachers of schools whose school lunch service is currently provided under the Council's contract through the caterer Sodexo
- Relevant LBRuT Council officers: Fiona McCarthy (Pupil and Student Services) and procurement officer Matthew Paul (Deputy Head of Commissioning, Delivery & Service Improvement)
- Contract monitoring support consultants: Jan King and Vic Laws of AVL Consultancy
- School Food Matters representative – Stephanie Wood
- Parents of children at different Richmond primary schools

LBRuT School Meals Working Party –
Membership and Terms of Reference.
December 2009

SFM had a place at the table but it had to fight for it. At the SFM campaign launch event in May 2008 it was suggested by a Richmond Councillor that SFM was politically motivated. SFM emerged in the build up to Parliamentary Elections in 2010 and by receiving early support from prospective Conservative candidate Zac Goldsmith the campaign had created a perception of party political allegiance. Although this 'tiresome' suggestion was unfounded it nevertheless had an impact, leading to an initial unwillingness on the part of the then Liberal Democrat Council to engage with SFM because of its requirement to 'safeguard the Council's political neutrality' (from SFM petition updates. June 2009). Ultimately SFM needed to make clear to the Council that it was independently funded and that although Zac Goldsmith would remain a supporter he would have no role in running or funding SFM. This commitment lifted the barrier to SFM's participation in the school food working party.

From interviews with members of the working party and other stakeholders it is clear that SFM played a vitally important role in not only initiating the group but also influencing decisions that were made.

> *'SFM were a very valuable part of the working group'*
>
> Matthew Paul, ex-LBRuT procurement

Jan King and Vic Laws of AVL Consultancy suggest that SFM were instrumental in bringing the group together and in particular pushing for the representation of Head Teachers and parents of children attending Richmond primary schools. SFM provided a strong external push for local action and got the relevant people together around the same table.

> *'It needed someone to say that school meals were awful – that the issues had been raised nationally by Jamie Oliver but that nothing was happening locally in Richmond.'*
>
> Jan King, AVL Consultancy

Matthew Paul, chair of the working party and the council officer in charge of the school meals contract at the time, has suggested that the improvements to the contract specifications 'would have been difficult to achieve without SFM's involvement'. His opinion is that even though the Council was able to consult with and respond to the interests of Head Teachers it was very difficult for them to hear and reflect the interest of parents. SFM's diligence and energy in engaging parents through petitions, surveys and campaign communications brought the parent's voice into the negotiations and ultimately their direct involvement in the working party. SFM's survey of schools and the opinions of Head Teachers and facilitation of their engagement with the process also gave weight to the argument for change.

The Council acknowledge that whilst committed to improving the school meals service the relevant officers had little time or energy to take on the necessary work. The existence of an energetic and well-informed external campaign organisation such as SFM, representing the voice of parents and Head Teachers, was seen as an extremely important asset in the process. The personal eloquence, credibility, passion and 'ability to bend ears' attributed to Stephanie Woods should also be fully recognised.

However it is the vision of the working party as a whole and the collaboration between the different stakeholders that ultimately succeeded in transforming the school meals contract. Vic Laws of AVL Consultancy – an 18 year veteran of school meals provision in Richmond – says that in his opinion no-one else would have been as determined as SFM (and Stephanie in particular) in bringing about the changes. He puts SFM's influence in context by categorising different stakeholder inputs as follows:

> *'The idea came from SFM – the drive came from Matthew Paul (LBRuT procurement officer) – the improvements were implemented by Jan King (AVL Consultancy) – and it was delivered by ISS (the caterers)'*
>
> Vic Laws, AVL. Personal communication

SFM encouraged the working party to consult parents before making decisions about the new contract and initiated an online survey that received a remarkable 650 responses. This strengthened the voice of parents in the group's deliberations and established a foundation for drawing up the new specifications. Of paramount importance was the need for a change to meals cooked from fresh ingredients – mirroring SFM's first campaign goal.

SFM had the time and energy to explore best practice and successful models for school meals contracts elsewhere, including opt-out schools in Richmond and the contract in neighbouring Merton. They also opened dialogue with organisations providing important advice and guidance on getting the contract right. These included Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming (advocating food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals) and the Soil Associations Food for Life Partnership.

**The Food for Life Catering Mark**

A key element of SFM's contribution the working party was strong support for the Soil Association's Food for Life standards for caterers, the Catering Mark. The Food for Life Partnership website says the following:

> *'If you are a caterer interested in demonstrating to parents and schools that you can deliver menus that use fresh, seasonal, local and organic ingredients, high welfare meat and sustainable fish, the Food for Life Catering Mark is for you.'*

SFM not only invited representatives of the Food for Life Partnership to present their scheme to the working party but also arranged for visits to schools where the standards were being applied.

> *'SFM suggested incorporation of the Food for Life Standards.*
> *No-one else on the working group would have been as determined to include the Food for Life standards if SFM hadn't strongly pushed for them.'*
>
> Vic Laws, AVL Consultancy

SFM particularly acknowledges the expert advice and support provided by Jo Lewis at the Food for Life Catering Mark who played a vital role in the process of getting the wording right in relation to the minimum Bronze standard.

The Catering Mark bronze, silver and gold standard menu requirements are:

**Bronze**

- Meals contain no undesirable food additives or hydrogenated fats
- 75% of dishes are freshly prepared
- Meat is from farms which satisfy UK welfare standards
- Eggs are from cage-free hens
- Menus are seasonal
- Training is provided for all catering staff
- No GM ingredients are used

**Silver (in addition to Bronze criteria)**

- A range of local, organic and fair trade produce is served
- Chicken, eggs and pork products are from sources which meet high welfare standards or 10% of food is organic
- No fish is served from the Marine Conservation Society 'fish to avoid' list
- Information about where the food has come from is on display

**Gold (in addition to Bronze and Silver criteria)**

- At least 30% of ingredients are organic or Marine Stewardship Council certified
- At least 50% of ingredients are locally sourced
- Organic meat, dairy products or eggs are served as the highest welfare standard
- Non-meat dishes are being promoted as part of a balanced, climate-friendly diet

Food for Life Partnership website

When the new contract specifications were published they included a commitment to achieve Bronze standard with an aspiration to reach Silver standard within 3 years. When ISS took on the contract in 2011 they immediately introduced Silver standard meals. One result of this was that Richmond Council was able to assure its primary school pupils that, whilst eating school meals at least, they were unaffected by the 'Horse meat' scandal of 2013 (where foods advertised as containing beef were found to contain undeclared or improperly declared horse meat). By 2014 the meals provided to primary schools in Richmond under the contract delivered by ISS was raised to Food for Life Gold standard.

**Conclusions**

- SFM has proved itself to be a highly effective campaign organisation
- As an 'activist' campaign organisation SFM exerted influence on decision-makers in LBRuT through thorough information gathering, consultation and clear and consistent communication of its vision and goals
- As a 'collaborative' campaign organisation SFM was accepted as an equal partner in deliberations over the new school meals contract specification
- SFM strongly represented the voice of parents in discussions and was instrumental in establishing links to the Food for Life Catering Mark award scheme

# 5. Summary of lessons and recommendations

The evaluation has assessed the effectiveness of the SFM primary school meals improvement campaign that ran between 2007 and 2011. It has evaluated the key aim of improving school meals in Richmond's primary schools, the delivery of SFM's goals and the SFM's effectiveness.

This final section of the evaluation presents: a summary of the **lessons** learned**;** key campaign **outcomes**; considerations for **replication** elsewhere; and additional **recommendations**.

## 5.1 Lessons

A number of factors contributed to the success of the SFM campaign:

- **The timing of the campaign was good**
  SFM was established at a time when the debate on school meals was at its height following high profile national media campaigns.

- **The campaign had a clear focus**
  SFM sought to respond to the concerns and issues raised at a national level by taking action at a local level in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

- **The campaign was built on strong communication**
  From its inception SFM proved itself to be extremely effective at communicating the issues, gathering information and gaining support for its goals

- **The 'Richmond effect' was important**
  Many parents of primary school pupils in Richmond were well-informed and concerned about the meals their children were eating at school. This may not always be the case in other parts of London or elsewhere in the UK

- **Getting the timing and place right helped**
  The timing and location of the campaign were conducive to the achievement of its aims.

- **The campaign didn't try to re-invent the wheel**
  The SFM campaign was modelled on the success of other campaigns – including the Merton Parents for better food in schools and examples of opt-out schools in Richmond

- **The campaign was energetically led**
  As it grew SFM successfully lobbied for change by a consistent approach and the energy and passion of its Director, Stephanie Wood

- **There was a window of opportunity**
  The tendering cycle provided SFM with a window of opportunity to influence the school meals contract in the four years up to putting the schools contract out to tender in 2011

- **SFM pushed hard for change**
  SFM presented clear arguments and a consistent vision for school meals to be cooked from fresh on school premises. This went against the prevailing attitude within the council that the lack of adequate kitchen facilities in most schools was an insurmountable obstacle.

- **The campaign evolved**

The campaign developed its approach from activism to a more collaborative engagement and refined its focus to target the new contract and ensure that campaign goals were delivered through more stringent specifications.

- **Meet the experts**
  SFM acknowledged the importance of work to improve school meals being carried out by others. Sustain provided important expert advice on developing the new contract which was based on their work in Camden. SFM invited Sustain and the Food for Life Catering Mark to make presentations to the school meals working group.

- **Gaining a place at the table**
  SFM was instrumental in the formation and direction of the school meals working party comprising key stakeholders and chaired by the council's procurement officer. This was the result of its strong evidence-based lobbying and support for change around school meals provision

- **Providing a voice for parents**
  SFM was particularly important in representing the concerns and interests of parents and Head Teachers through its consultation, survey and research work

## 5.2 Outcomes

The main outcomes of the campaign are:

- **The key aim was achieved**
  Between 2007 and 2011 SFM played an important part in the achievement of its overarching aim: to improve school meals in primary schools provided through the Council contract.

- **The aim was achieved through a combined effort**
  SFM didn't do this on its own but its contribution, according to many of those who were involved at the time, was extremely important.

- **A model contract was produced**
  The contract, developed as a direct result of the SFM campaign, for the delivery of school meals to primary schools in Richmond should be regarded as a model and a template for other local authority contracts elsewhere.

- **Campaign goals were delivered**
  SFM's campaign goals were either achieved during the evaluation period or have become a key aspect of SFM's current activities (particularly the growing and cooking initiatives and farm visits).

- **The campaign left a legacy for on-going work**
  Since the end of the campaign SFM has built on its strong local reputation and the relationships established with Richmond primary schools by offering a range of food-related services and project initiatives

## 5.3 Replication

The SFM campaign provides an excellent model for similar campaigns elsewhere whether they are led by SFM or another organisation. The campaign illustrates the vital role played by community initiated campaign organisations in instigating, driving, supporting and in some cases leading major change. To replicate this campaign's achievements elsewhere – in another London Borough or elsewhere in the UK – there are four key recommendations.

### A. Provide an independent voice

The change that took place in Richmond was dependent upon the time, energy and commitment shown by SFM in providing an external and independent voice. Observations and interviews have indicated that whilst other stakeholders aspired to make the changes to school meals provision it was through the efforts of an external campaign organisation that the ball was set rolling and the potential was realised.

It is important to recognise that SFM initially suffered from a perceived political affiliation and this almost resulted in their exclusion from the discussions on the school meals working party. A campaign organisation will need financial support but must ensure that the source of funding is not perceived as a political or commercial or any other bias.

### B. Represent the school community

To repeat SFM's success in Richmond a campaign needs to recognise the vital role played in representing the voice of schools. Councils engage with Head Teachers as much as they can but this is often fairly superficial. A campaign organisation rooted in the community is well-placed to gather opinion, survey different perspectives and represent the different points of view of school staff, the parents of pupils and of pupils themselves. This takes time and patience but without this the campaign has no real mandate to influence decisions that are made. Evidence from fact-finding and surveys is the key that opens the door for participation in decision-making.

It is particularly important to explore ways to include the voice of school pupils and ensure that it is incorporated into the process of improving the school meals service. It must not be assumed that their opinions, interests and concerns are always represented fully or correctly by either their parents or the school staff.

### C. Be flexible and evolve

SFM has shown how important it is for a campaign to evolve and for its approach to develop according to the stage in the process. Initially a campaign will need to agitate for change by proving that change is wanted through the evidence it has gathered. The campaign will need to represent different voices, as described above, but also lobby the relevant stakeholders – particularly decision-makers within the local authority.

Once the door has been opened the campaign needs to adopt a more collaborative approach, engaging in the decision-making process whilst still representing the voice of supporters and the communities they represent.

In order to perpetuate itself the campaign organisation will need to explore developing further the relationships built during the campaign. If the campaign has succeeded the reputation and credibility gained will help the move towards becoming a more developmental service providing organisation.

### D. Get the timing right

SFM had a clear window of opportunity to influence the tendering process and develop a new contract for primary school meal provision because of where the council was in its tendering time-line. A four year period was required to achieve the campaign's aims and from the evidence it is clear that all of this time was needed to build evidence, develop relationships, lobby stakeholders, negotiate the improvements and bring the new contract into being.

A campaign such as that led by SFM requires patience, commitment, good timing and an eye on the long game. Without a window of opportunity and enough time it is unlikely SFM would have achieved what it did.

## 5.4 Recommendations

The evaluation has also identified the following additional recommendations for successful replication of the SFM campaign. These recommendations are a distillation of the observations made during the evaluation and they provide an indication of how to apply the lessons of the SFM campaign to similar campaigns elsewhere:

**Learn from others experience**

- → There is no need to re-invent the wheel.
- → If you are aware of successful campaigns aimed at achieving similar outcomes, learn from what they did – imitation is the highest compliment.
- → Investigate what works and why, build relationships with others who have experience elsewhere, and develop your own strategy based on this and the particulars of your local situation

**Build strong evidence**

- → Build an argument based on strong evidence – particularly from those who are most affected, often most difficult to engage with or not considered important.
- → Council's are able to engage more easily with some stakeholders than with others – particularly if the consultation is time-consuming and complicated. This is particularly true of school parents.
- → An external campaign organisation can play a vitally important role in bringing the voice of parents into the debate and ensuring that decisions affecting school meals are rooted in the wider school community and not just within the realm of the local authority and contractors.

**Raise awareness of the issues**

- → SFM proved itself to be a highly influential communicator raising awareness of the issues amongst parents and Head Teachers – an extremely important aspect of the process to improve school meals in Richmond.
- → The timing and the 'Richmond effect' made this easier for SFM as a more affluent, aspirational and concerned community were ready for the change that SFM was campaigning for. Elsewhere this may not be the case and much more visible, vocal and powerful awareness-raising may be needed.
- → If there isn't such a strong awareness of the issues it may be important for a campaign to adopt a stronger informal educative role and invest time and energy on informing parents about the issues and why they are important.

**Push hard for change but avoid being too antagonistic**

- → Many of the stakeholders involved in school meals provision through Council contracts are reluctant to be led by admittedly well-meaning but often critical external campaign groups.
- → Council officers, consultants and contractors are often entrenched due to historical inertia and may be unwilling, at least initially, to take suggestions from others.
- → Tread carefully around those you are trying to influence and be aware of their sensitivities. There may be a need to rock the boat to initiate change and open doors but ultimately collaborative engagement is likely to be more effective.

**Be positive and proactive**

- → Whilst acknowledging and highlighting the issues and concerns regarding school meals it is important to focus on promoting the positive alternatives.
- → Highlight the potential opportunities rather than the obstacles and barriers to change.
- → Remember that it may be easier for an external campaign organisation to see opportunities and ways to embrace them – other stakeholders may be unable or reluctant to do so.

**Communicate a consistent vision and clear goals**

- → Try to be as consistent as possible in the messages that are communicated to your supporters and to those who you are trying to influence.
- → Establish clear goals and maintain a clear focus on them.
- → Whilst the key aim of the campaign is to improve school meals there may be an eye to the future and broader aims – such as SFM's goal of linking schools with food producers, growing projects and cookery projects.
- → It is important that the future opportunities don't detract from achieving the main aim.

**Focus on where the greatest impact can be achieved**

- → A key lesson from the campaign is that if you want to change school meals focus on getting the contract right.
- → Target the inclusion of stringent specifications in the contract that deliver your campaign goals.

**Get a place at the table**

- → Use the credibility of your awareness raising and lobbying to gain a place in the decision-making discussion regarding the meals contract.
- → If there is no table (discussion forum) make one. Push for the establishment of a working group and ensure that you have a role representing the interests of your supporters.

# APPENDIX A

## SFM Potential Evaluation Framework – produced by Food Matters in preparation for the evaluation

| Outcome | Measure/indicator | Source of info |
|---|---|---|
| **1. Well equipped kitchens suitable for fresh food preparation** | • Financial investment from LBR or other sources<br>• Compare and contrast kitchens 2007-2014 | • Interview with LBR contract officer; SFM Director<br>• Questionnaire: schools, caterer<br>• Photographs? |
| **2. Trained staff with skills and capacity to prepare fresh food** | • Financial investment from LBR<br>• External training (FFLP, School food Trust, SFM?)<br>• Contract specification for training<br>• Training provision by caterer | • Interview with LBR contract officer; SFM Director; caterer<br>• Compare and contrast contract spec 2007-2011<br>• Questionnaire: schools, kitchen staff |
| **3. Pleasant well equipped dining room environment** | • Financial investment from LBR or other sources<br>• Action taken by schools<br>• School community, particularly pupil, satisfaction | • Interview with LBR contract officer; SFM Director;<br>• Questionnaire: schools; kitchen staff<br>• Stakeholder workshop<br>• Pupils workshop<br>• Photographs? |
| **4. School meal contract with high spec for fresh food and sustainability** | • Contract specification<br>• How well is contract spec delivering in reality | • Compare and contrast contract 2007-2011<br>• Interview with LBR contract officer; SFM Director; caterer<br>• Questionnaire: kitchen staff, schools |
| **5. Schools linking with farms** | • Schools engaging in programme now and then | • Questionnaire: schools<br>• Interview with SFM Director |
| **6. Cookery and growing programmes in schools** | • Cookery and growing programmes delivered now and then | • Questionnaire: schools<br>• Interview with SFM Director |

# APPENDIX B

## Data analysis and identification of focus schools

- The data analysis focused on the only available comparative data for the schools in Richmond receiving meals provided under the Borough-wide contract.

- The data covered three sample days when a roast dinner was provided in the spring term.

- The three days for which data is available were in 2009, 2013 and 2014.

- The period for the evaluation of the SFM campaign is between 2007 and 2011 and so the most relevant data – providing an indication of the possible impact of the campaign – is the change in uptake between 2009 and 2013 i.e. following introduction of the new contract and the change in provider from Sodexo to ISS Education in 2011.

- Analysis of the data identified schools where the shift in uptake is of interest (either because it is small or moderate to big during the period between 2009 and 2013).

- For the purpose of the evaluation it was decided that it was most useful to compare schools with a similar profile:
    - → primary schools (consequently special schools, Junior schools and Infant schools were excluded)
    - → schools of an equivalent size
    - → schools with a similar Free School Meals provision (indicating a similar pupil intake)

- On the data table (above) the schools of interest are indicated using shading.

- Importantly schools with the highest school meals uptake haven't necessarily shown a big shift in uptake as a result of the campaign – they therefore represent a less significant journey. They will be included in the evaluation but not in the focus schools comparison.

- For the focus schools comparison the above criteria were used to identify schools where the shift in uptake differs i.e. comparing otherwise similar schools where in one school the uptake has increased significantly whilst in another it hasn't.

- Interesting schools:

**St.Osmund's School** – started in 2009 with a low % uptake of 23% but shifted significantly to 54% uptake in 2013 (a shift of **31 % points** or more than three times the number of pupils taking meals)

**The Russell School** – otherwise similar the St.Osmund's with a similar Free School Meals eligibility (St. Osmund's 5.17%, The Russell 6.2%) but where the shift in uptake has been relatively small (from 22% in 2009 to 39% in 2013 or a shift of **17 % points**)

**St Mary's Primary School** – although there has been a big shift in uptake between 2009 and 2013 the school is unusual as it was originally three separate schools that were amalgamated into one Primary School with 3 sites during the campaign.

**Orleans School** – was an infant school only until 2012 (after the campaign was completed) and so although there has been a huge shift in uptake (21% to 69%) it is not included in the focus school comparison.

**Holy Trinity School** – This school has a very high school meals uptake (68%). However in 2007 the school was much smaller (with 130 pupils) and increased massively in size to 398 pupils in 2014. The change in school meals uptake as a proportion of the school roll has not shifted greatly (it started relatively high with 49% in 2009 to 65% in 2013 or a shift of 16 % points). The increase in number of meals provided was largely due to increase in the size of the school.

Other schools of interest were not considered suitable for comparison either because they differed greatly in size from each other or had significantly different Free School Meals provision.

As a result of the analysis it was decided that the two schools to focus on were:

- **The Russell Primary School**
- **St.Osmund's Primary School**

**THE RUSSELL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

| | **2007** | **2009** | **2013** | **2014** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roll** | 240 | 240 | 210 | 292 |
| **No. uptake** | 45 | 52 | 82 | 101 |
| **% uptake** | **19%** | **22%** | **39%** | **35%** |
| **Shift in uptake** | | 3% | 17% | -4% |
| **No.FSM** | 22 | | | 18 |
| **% FSM** | 9% | | | 6% |
| | | | | |
| **£/head** | £2.00 | | | £2.10 |

**ST.OSMUND'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

| | **2007** | **2009** | **2013** | **2014** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Roll** | 189 | 191 | 248 | 217 |
| **No. uptake** | 37 | 43 | 135 | 125 |
| **% uptake** | **20%** | **23%** | **54%** | **57%** |
| **Shift in uptake** | | 3% | 31% | 3% |
| **No.FSM** | 13 | | | 11 |
| **% FSM** | 7% | | | 5% |
| | | | | |
| **£/head** | £1.85 | | | £2.10 |

## Richmond Primary school meals data

| | SCHOOL | (2007 size) | 2007 | | 2009 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2009-13 SHIFT in % | 2009-14 SHIFT in % | SHIFT COMMENT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2014 SIZE | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | | | |
| | Bishop Perrin | 206 | | | 40 | 20 | 84 | 40 | 101 | 49 | 20 | 29 | |
| | Buckingham | 474 | | | 94 | 25 | 187 | 39 | 195 | 41 | 14 | 16 | SMALL |
| INF | Carlisle Infant | 263 | | | 63 | 23 | 99 | 37 | 165 | 63 | 14 | 40 | BIG |
| | Chase Bridge | 541 | | | 63 | 15 | 178 | 33 | 227 | 42 | 18 | 27 | |
| | Darell | (270) 286 | 71 | 26 | 80 | 30 | 113 | 42 | 119 | 42 | 12 | 12 | SMALL |
| JUN | Hampton Hill | 366 | | | 89 | 26 | 152 | 42 | 170 | 47 | 16 | 21 | |
| INF | Hampton Infants | 299 | | | 70 | 26 | 93 | 31 | 143 | 48 | 5 | 22 | |
| JUN | Hampton Juniors | 322 | | | 125 | 35 | 137 | 43 | 139 | 43 | 8 | 8 | SMALL |
| INF | Hampton Wick | 232 | | | 42 | 18 | 97 | 37 | 191 | 82 | 19 | 64 | BIG |
| | Holy Trinity | (130) 398 | 45 | 35 | 64 | 49 | 259 | 65 | 270 | 68 | 16 | 19 | |
| | Lowther | (180) 308 | 80 | 45 | 59 | 33 | 183 | 59 | 184 | 60 | 26 | 27 | |
| | Meadlands | (200) 226 | 50 | 25 | 65 | 33 | 83 | 42 | 102 | 45 | 9 | 12 | SMALL |
| | Nelson | 470 | | | 70 | 18 | 167 | 35 | 194 | 41 | 17 | 23 | |
| | Orleans | 373 | | | 66 | 21 | 241 | 69 | 226 | 61 | 48 | 40 | BIG |
| | Queen | (420) 400 | 100 | 24 | 113 | 27 | 235 | 58 | 225 | 56 | 31 | 29 | MODERATE |
| | **Russell** | (240) 292 | 45 | 19 | 52 | 22 | 82 | 39 | 101 | 35 | 17 | 13 | SMALL |
| | Sacred Heart | 196 | | | 40 | 20 | 74 | 32 | 67 | 34 | 12 | 14 | SMALL |
| | St Edmunds | 417 | | | 101 | 25 | 143 | 34 | 189 | 45 | 9 | 20 | |
| | St Elizabeth's | (216) 265 | 45 | 21 | 46 | 22 | 148 | 56 | 161 | 61 | 34 | 39 | MODERATE |
| | St James's | 562 | | | 63 | 10 | 252 | 40 | 253 | 45 | 30 | 35 | |
| | St Mary Magdalene | (197) 236 | 86 | 44 | 74 | 41 | 139 | 59 | 150 | 64 | 18 | 23 | |
| | St Marys | 584 | | | 90 | 24 | 400 | 74 | 404 | 69 | 50 | 45 | BIG |
| | **St Osmund's** | (189) 217 | 37 | 20 | 43 | 23 | 135 | 54 | 125 | 57 | 31 | 34 | MODERATE |
| | St Richard's CE Primary | (100) 159 | 32 | 32 | 40 | 40 | 73 | 41 | 95 | 60 | 1 | 20 | |
| | Stanley Primary School | 743 | | | 117 | 18 | 271 | 37 | 354 | 48 | 19 | 30 | |
| INF | Trafalgar Infant (recptn.) | 90 | | | 44 | 17 | | | 59 | 66 | | 49 | |
| JUN | Trafalgar Junior School | 421 | | | 53 | 18 | | | 241 | 57 | | 39 | |

# APPENDIX C

## List of interviewees.

- **Clare Bowe-Smith** — **Cookery Teacher, Lowther Primary School**
- **Sarah Brecher** — **Cookery teacher, Lowther Primary School**
- **Eamonn Gilbert** — **Partnership Manager & Lead Commissioner, London Borough of Kingston**
- **Jeff Hoffman** — **Operations Manager, ISS Facility Services, Education**
- **Sinead Issit** — **Catering Manager - ISS Facility Services, Education, Lowther Primary School (previously St.Osmund's Primary School)**
- **Fiona Lambe** — **Head Teacher, St.Osmund's Primary School**
- **Vic Laws** — **Director, AVL Consultancy Ltd.**
- **Samantha Leir** — **Head Teacher, The Russell Primary School**
- **Jan King** — **Quality Assurance Manager, AVL Consultancy Ltd.**
- **Matthew Paul** — **Head of school place commissioning, London Borough of Kingston and Richmond, Previously Head of Procurement LBRuT**
- **Charles Roscorla** — **Policy, performance and communications, LBRuT**
- **Karen Russell** — **Head Cook, The Russell Primary School**
- **Mark Tuffney** — **Head Teacher, Lowther Primary School**
- **Stephanie Wood** — **Founder Director, School Food Matters**
- **Wendy Wriglesworth** — **Deputy Head Teacher, Lowther Primary School**

# APPENDIX D

## School meals workshop for year 6 pupils

**Purpose**

- to provide a pupil's perspective on the School Food Matters school meals campaign
- to understand attitudes to school meals, how they have changed and food in schools
- to demonstrate and support participating pupils in the use of participatory consultation tools and their facilitation – including having a go if possible

**Evaluating school meals now and identifying actions**

**How do you feel about your school meals?**
**Why do you feel that way about them?**
**What would improve school meals for you?**

**Evaluating school meals as they were in the past and identifying changes**

**How did you feel about school meals when you first started at this school?**
**Why did you feel that way about them?**
**What do you think has changed?**

**Identifying what changes have occurred in different aspects of school meals**

**What do you think is different about**:

- **the food** – the meals that are served
- **the dining room** – the place where you eat
- **the kitchen** – the people and place where the food is cooked
- **the lunch break** – the time away from class, have a break & eat lunch

**Prioritising factors that influence attitudes to school meals**

**For you what are the most important things to get right about school meals?**

**Identifying what makes you have school meals/stop having school meals**

**Questionnaire**

**Facilitation skills**

**How could you use the tools?**
**What questions could you ask?**
**What projects could they help you with?**
**What research could you do for the school council?**

## Images illustrating the workshops at The Russell and St.Osmund's schools

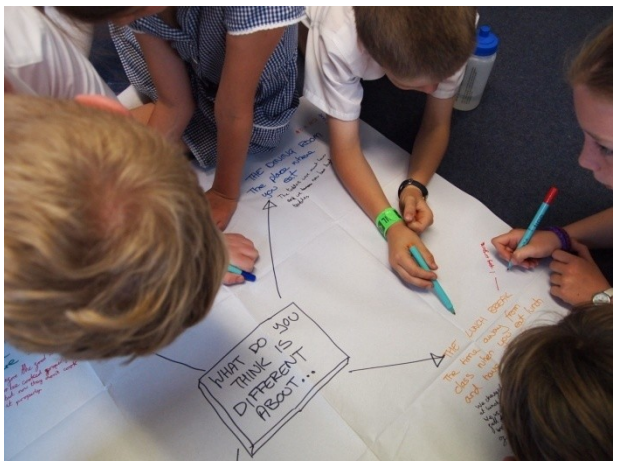
The two workshops were designed to provide a relaxed atmosphere encouraging the children who were participating to be open in their responses and honest about how they felt about school meals.

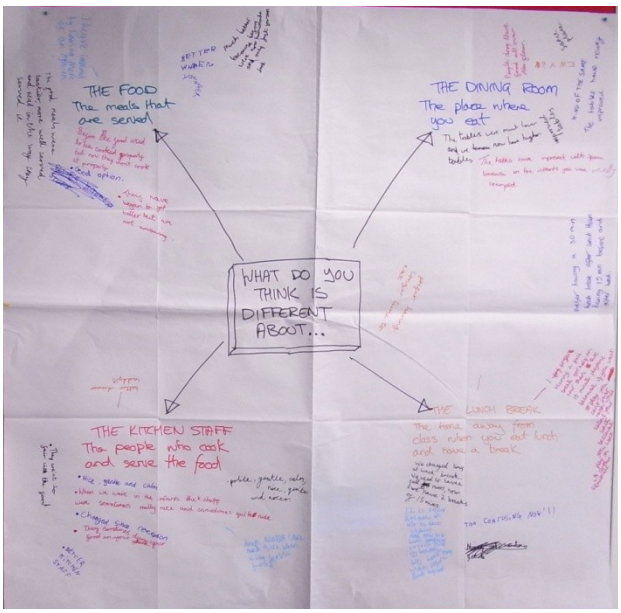
Each workshop lasted 1½ hours involving 8 children at the Russell school and 10 at St.Osmund's. The workshops used an approach based on Participatory Appraisal where drawings, dynamic tools and the use of different recording methods helped to surface the children's perspective on the issues being discussed. The tools used included a continuum and recording comments on paper plates, a spider chart recording on a paper table cloth, a bubble chart and dot voting, and a simple questionnaire.

At St.Osmund's it was possible to quickly prepare a continuum chart for four of the workshop participants to facilitate in the playground at the end of the school day.


Standing on a continuum to evaluate school meals at The Russell School (left).

(Right) Writing comments on why they feel the way they do about school meals and identifying actions, writing on paper plates – St.Osmund's.




Identifying changes in school meals at The Russell school (above) and the completed chart with comments written on a paper table cloth (right).


Dot voting on what are the most important things to get right about school meals (above) – at The Russell School and (right) the completed chart.

Facilitating a line chart at St.Osmund's: Clockwise from right: the chart being used, the completed chart and the team.



## Summary of findings from the workshops

An example of a comment from one child at The Russell School:

> **Why:** (why do you feel this way about school meals?)
>
> 'I really like school dinners. I am close to (the) EXCELLENT (end of the line) because I love the taste of the food. But I think the food is too small. I need more food. And it is unfair that packed lunch is outside and we are in a hot room. Also it is quite messy after infants leaving food everywhere.'
>
> **Actions:** (what would help you to feel more positive about school meals?)
> - Bigger portions
> - Different food, not all the same
> - More sauces

**Key issues and comments from the workshops:**

- **Good quality meals**
  'It used to be just warmed up in the oven – not cooked from fresh.
  Sometimes it wasn't even warm.'
  'Much better (now) because before were not homemade and only just frozen food'
  'It's not amazing but good enough to eat'
  'It's important that (the meals) are tasty and healthy'
  'I have similar looking meals at home but they taste better'
  'Good opportunities to try out new meals and flavours'
  'They've improved by having more of an option'
  'Good to have a hot meal in the winter'
  'The non-vegetarian option doesn't have to have meat every day'

- **Small or inconsistent portion size and no second helpings**
  'Really good (meals) but too small (portions)'
  'The favourite options run out'

- **The dining room**
  'The tables have improved with space because in the infants you were really cramped'
  (St.Osmund's)
  'It's easier to eat when you're in a happy place'
  'The floor and tables are not cleaned between sittings'
  'Hygiene!'

- **Packed lunches**
  'Separation of those having school meals from those having packed lunch is not good'
  'Very few kids have school meals because they want to sit outside with their mates who have packed lunches'
  'In the summer having to sit in a hot room, packed lunches eat outside'
  'The rules about food in packed lunches aren't applied to the school meals'

- **Kitchen staff**
  'Kitchen staff should be more polite'
  'The attitude of kitchen staff to us is important'
  'They sometimes dump food on your plate'

'They don't always listen to what you do or don't want'
'They keep on changing cooks (The Russell)'
'(Before) they weren't so fair with the food'
'The substitute kitchen staff are rude to you'

- **Lunch break**
  'Better to have a 30 minute play session after lunch rather than 15 minutes before and 15 minutes after'

- **New meal trials**
  'There should be more tasting sessions to try out new meals'

- **Competitions**
  'Competitions to increase meals uptake raise expectations but no prizes are given out'
  'They lie about competitions'

Key findings from the dot vote on what are the most important things to get right about school meals:

**The Russell School**

| Issue | Absolute most important | Very important | Quite important | Not important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Friendly and helpful kitchen staff | 4 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Big portions/filling food | 3 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| Tasty food | 1 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Varied menu through the term | | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| Healthy food | | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| A nice place to eat | | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Being able to sit with friends incl. packed lunches | | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Price per meal (added by child) | | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Lots of choice every day | | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| Hygiene (added by child) | | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Food cooked from organic ingredients | | 2 | 5 | 0 |
| Food cooked from scratch at school | | 1 | 5 | 2 |

Interestingly the attitude of kitchen staff is seen as most important and freshly cooked food least. This may indicate issues concerning staff turn-over and the atmosphere in the dining room.

**St. Osmund's School**

| Issue | Absolute most important | Very important | Quite important | Not important |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tasty food | 5 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Healthy food | | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Big portions/filling food | | 8 | 2 | 0 |
| Food cooked from scratch at school | | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| Food cooked from organic ingredients | | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| Being able to sit with friends incl. packed lunches | 3 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| A nice place to eat | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Friendly and helpful kitchen staff | 1 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Lots of choice every day | | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Varied menu through the term | | 3 | 4 | 3 |

Food quality issues appear to be more important at St.Osmund's.

With thanks to the following participants:

**St.Osmund's School**
Martha, Jack, Alice, Saoirse, Beth, Max, Josh, Patricia, Francesca, Johnjo.

**The Russell School**
Alice, Tilly, Sean, Peter, Nell, Tiana, Sophie, Alaina.

# APPENDIX E

## On-line surveys:
## Head Teachers, School Governors, parents of year 6 pupils

Three on-line surveys were developed and disseminated in late May using 'Survey Monkey'. Where possible introductory e mails, with links to the relevant surveys, were sent to the personal e mail of recipients. This was only possible with a small number of the Head Teachers. Remaining Head Teachers' surveys, the school governors surveys and parent surveys were sent to each school's *admin@* or *info@* contact e mail address with an explanatory introduction and a request for the message to be forwarded to either the Head Teacher, the chair of the board of governors or to parents using 'parent mail' (a contact system set up though not widely used in the primary schools). Consequently dissemination of the survey was at the discretion of the school administration staff. Though not ideal it was hoped that enough people would reply to make the survey findings useful to the evaluation.

In practice the response to the Head Teachers survey was adequate: out of the 27 schools contacted 12 Head Teachers completed the survey. The school governors' survey was completed by only 5 respondents and the parent survey by 14. Though disappointing it is worth acknowledging that any response at all is laudable given the evaluation's timing and the lack of personal connection between the schools and the evaluators. As one school administration office put it: 'We don't do surveys'.

At Lowther school it was suggested that paper versions of the survey for parents should be left on the front counter of the school reception for parents to take, complete and return. Though unsuccessful this version of the parent survey is included below as an example of the 10 questions that were asked.

In the Head Teachers' version of the survey questions 2, 3 and 5 were omitted and replaced by the following questions:

1. How long have you been a Head Teacher at this school?
2. What is your opinion of the quality of school meals today?
3. How have the kitchens changed since 2007?
4. How has the dining room changed?

# WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT SCHOOL MEALS?

food matters
creating sustainable and fair food systems

We are interested in knowing what you think about the changes to school meals **at this school** – changes that have occurred since 2007.

Please tick the box that represents your answer to these 10 questions and add any other information that you think might be useful. Thank you.

**1. What is your opinion of school meals now?**

| **Excellent** | **Good** | **OK** | **Not good** | **Awful** | **Don't know** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Say why:

**2. How many school meals does your child? (lunches cooked and served by the school kitchen)**

| **None** | **Rarely** 1 per month | **Occasionally** 1 per week | **Often** 2-4 per week | **Always** 5 per week |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**3. What influences your decision about whether or not your child has a lunch provided by the school?**

| **Cost** of the meals | My child/children are eligible for **free school meals** | **Quality** of the meals | **Nutritional value** (healthy, well-balanced) | **Packed lunches** are better value/quality |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other reasons:

**4. What have been the most important changes since 2007 and now? Please rate each of the changes according to their importance – scoring 1 (least important) to 5 (most important).**

| Freshly cooked meals | Better quality ingredients | Tastier meals | Locally sourced ingredients | Healthier meals | Meals look more appealing | Higher animal welfare | More organic ingredients | More variety/ choice | Better portion size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other:

**5. What do you think are the most important features of lunch break for your child?**

| **The food** Good quality, tasty and healthy meals | **The dining room** A relaxed, clean, well-organised space | **The staff** Committed, friendly and helpful kitchen staff | **The break** itself Time to eat as well as relax, play and let off steam |
|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other:

**6. What other changes are you aware of with regard to food at your child's school?**

| **Growing** food at school | **Visiting** farms and food producers | **Cooking** classes for pupils | **Projects** focused on food | Creation of a **Whole School Food Policy** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other:

**7. What influence do you think the following factors have had on the changes to school meals and other food related activities at the school? Score from 1 (no influence) to 5 (massive influence)**

| Head Teacher's interest | Interest of others at school | Parents' interest | Campaign led by the school | Campaign led by others | The Council's interest | New caterer | Better contract | Increased awareness nationally |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

Other:

**8. How important was the involvement of School Food Matters in bringing about the changes to school meals at this school?**

| Never heard of School Food Matters | Heard of them but don't know what they did | They made it more difficult (say how) | They played an important role in making the changes | Without them nothing would have changed | Don't know |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

What do you see as School Food Matters' **KEY IMPACT** on improvements in your school's meals?

**9. Is there anything that you think School Food Matters could have done differently?**

| More information for parents | Less information for parents | Listening more to parents | Listening more to pupils | Listening more to Head Teachers | More visits to the schools |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

What else School Food Matters could have done?

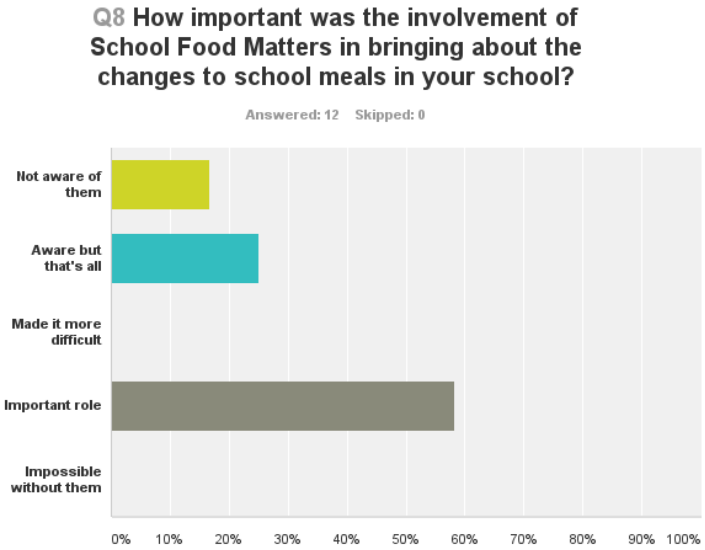
**10. Are you aware of any current activities School Food Matters are involved with at the school?**

**Many thanks for taking the time to complete this survey.**
**Your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence. However, if you would like to tell us more about your opinion of the school meals campaign and would be happy for us to contact you please add your e mail address below or e mail us: ben@foodmatters.org**

Headlines from the surveys' findings have been used in the report.

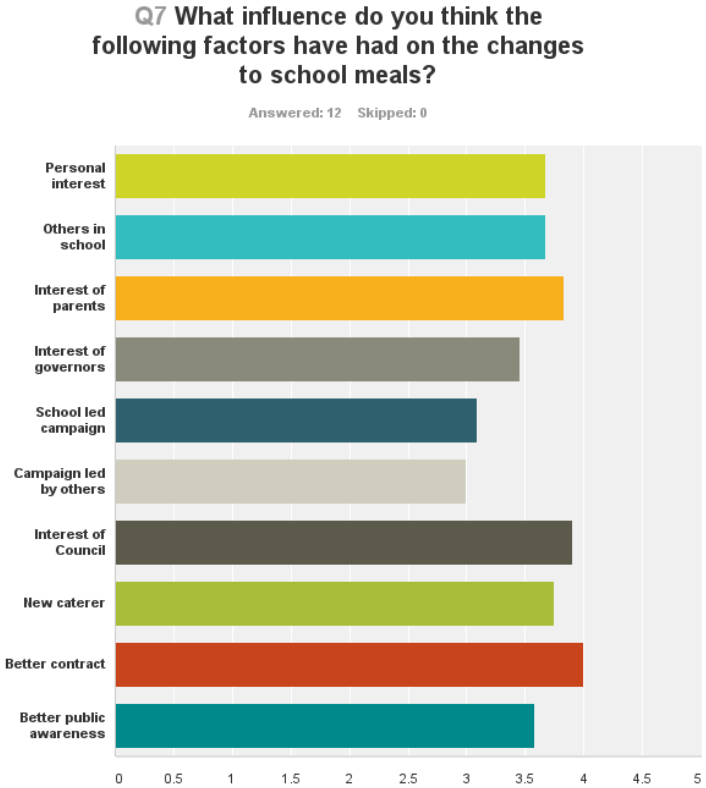
**Additional findings:**

One interesting indication from the surveys is the need for SFM to ensure that their role in the campaign and later work in the schools is recognised. Whilst Head Teachers are aware of SFM's impact it appears that parents are less so.




This chart shows that Head Teachers recognised the important impact of SFM.

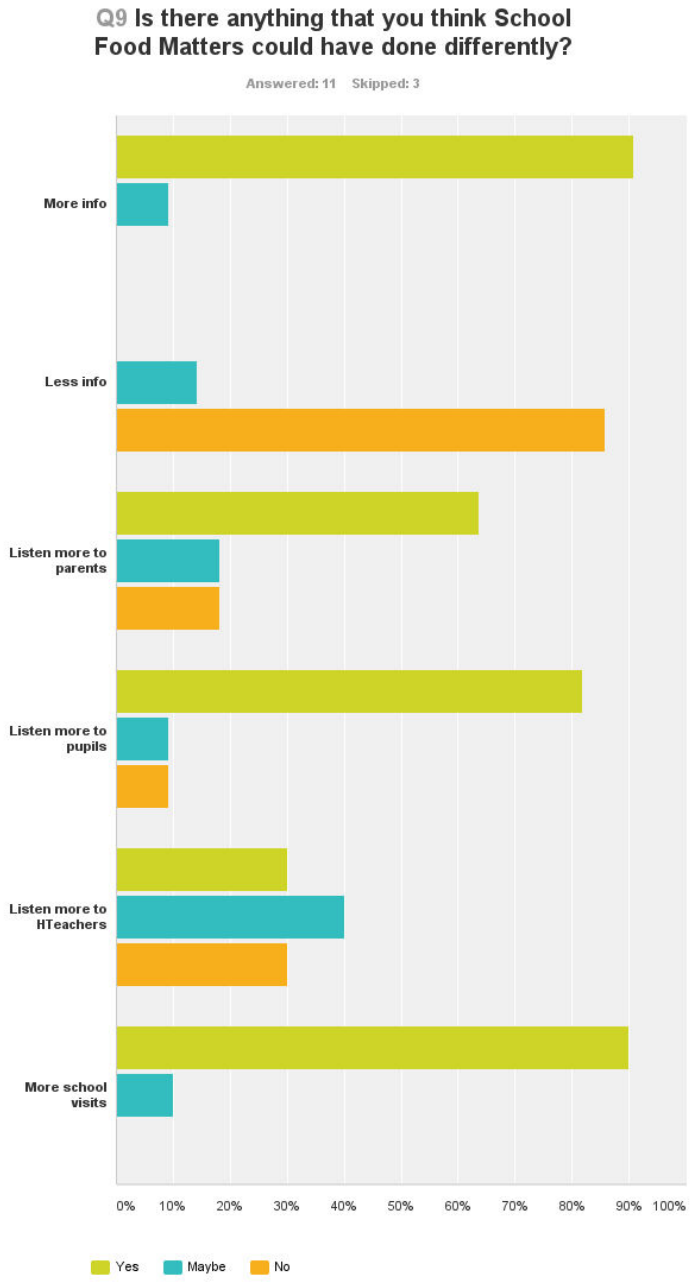
However, the parent survey indicated that 82% of replies knew about SFM but didn't know what their involvement had been in the changes that had occurred and that the remaining 18% had never heard of SFM




The Head Teachers considered that the development of a new catering contract, appointing a new caterer and the role of the Council in achieving this were the most important influencing factors. Parent support for the changes was also considered important. However, the role of outside campaign organisations, including SFM, was regarded as less influential.

These findings mirrored the parent's survey response to the same question.

The surveys also suggest that SFM should consider ways to engage more with pupils and parents.




This chart from the survey of parents indicates that in future SFM should consider developing ways to engage more with members of the school community other than Head Teachers.

This was backed up by responses to the same question in the Head Teachers' survey and in the school governors' survey 50% of responses suggested the need to listen more to pupils.

# APPENDIX F

## Record of kitchen investment and improvement

| School name | Kitchen improvement |
|---|---|
| Bishop Perrin CE Primary School | Investment will be made during 2015 to relocate the kitchen to a bigger space |
| Darrell Primary School | Kitchen investment 2014/2015 |
| Hampton Infant School | Kitchen investment 2014/2015 |
| Sacred Heart RC Primary School | |
| Trafalgar Infant (reception 1&2) | Kitchen invested in upgrading the kitchen |
| Carlisle Infant School | Kitchen investment 2014/2015 |
| Hampton Wick Infant & Nursery | Kitchen investment 2014/2015 |
| Meadlands Primary School | School invested in a new kitchen |
| The Queens CE Primary School | Investment will be made during 2015 to increase the size of the kitchen |
| The Russell Primary School | School invested in a new kitchen 2007 |
| St Edmund's Catholic Primary Sch | Investment will be made during 2015 to relocate the kitchen to a bigger space |
| St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary Sch | Investment made during 2007 to upgrade facilities |
| St James's Catholic Primary Sch(PFI) | |
| St Osmund's Catholic Primary School | Investment made during 2010 to increase size of the kitchen |
| St Richard's CE | Investment in heavy equipment |
| Buckingham Primary School | Brand new school & kitchen |
| Chase Bridge Primary School | Brand new school & kitchen |
| Holy Trinity CE Primary School | New kitchen installed at the commencement of the contract |
| Lowther Primary School | New school plan & kitchen |
| Nelson Primary School | New school plan & kitchen |
| Orleans Primary | New school plan & kitchen |
| St Mary Magdalene's Catholic Primary | New Kitchen installed during 2008 |
| St Marys (Middle) School | Brand new school & kitchen |
| St Mary's Infant | |
| Stanley Primary School | New school and kitchen |
| Trafalgar Reception (Meadway) | School invested in a brand new kitchen |

Source: Jan King, AVL Consultancy