

Ladock Church of England School

Healthy Eating – Criterion 6.

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Healthy School Validation 2003

School details and context

Ladock school is in a rural village setting, 8 miles north east of Truro. The number on roll is 56 pupils and we are a 3 teacher school. We have a pro active full governing body and parents. The school has a mixture of pupils with varying needs to meet the increasing challenges for village families, rural farming community, isolated homes for some, but also we draw from a wider area. The school has already accessed lunchtime equipment through Health Action Zone priorities.

How the Need was identified.

The school, under the direction of the head teacher who was new to the school in January 1999 wished to become part of the Cornwall Healthy Schools Initiative to help address the health related issues of a rural geographically isolated community. The upper Junior Pupils completed the John Balding Director School Health Education unit, Exeter, survey that highlighted the issues pertaining to Criterion 6 questions based upon diet, and especially only 18% of those surveyed eating fruit. Criterion Six food and eating became our third focus.

Chosen Criteria.

During my 18 month absence staff took on board the issues of fruit and healthy eating, especially foundation years and infant setting to target them early. The promotion of the initiative was partly less-profile than my intention due to Ofsted, but still it has been implemented and sustained.

Ladock Church of England School

Continued...2

Steps taken to meet the criteria.

- Gave a high profile to healthy eating within and across the curriculum using integrated and subject based themes; e.g. Food Technology, Science, Literacy and numeracy.
- Informed parents and discussed with children.
- Initially parental voluntary contribution to provide fruit at break time was requested – this after a period of time was financially not economic. The approach was revisited with a teacher covering maternity leave.
- Introduce a fruit break as part of the foundation years/key stage 1 routine.

Who was involved in the process?

Teaching staff; pupils Y5, Y6; PTA; governors (appointed governor for health and safety resigned during the period), head teacher, support staff infant/early years pupils; Parents across the school but more significantly those in key Stage 1; school cook and contractors, health promotion service. The infant teacher has been requested to submit a written report as the process. The early years governor has been invited to attend the validation meeting.

Outcomes/Impact on pupils and the wider community.

- The parents now bring in an item of fruit daily for the children to sample and enjoy with no additional costs incurred, an excellent range is provided.
- Increased social skills within the infant/key stage 1 setting.
- Fruit displayed; new boxes purchased.
- P.T.A film night and disco – pupils had access to fruit; and a range of vegetables dip's to promote healthy eating in addition to organic fruit juices.
- Pupils were invited to select their 3 favourite party foods to prevent wastage.
- School cook – food technology; Christmas party food included Satsuma's, donated by the head rather than "party" food.
- To ascertain the viewpoints of other children across the school through reasoned argument (literacy) and handling. Collecting and interpretation of data to include "beverages".
- We now have a further impetus to move forward to our next selected Criterion 5.

Ladock Church of England School

Infant Class Fruit Break.

As part of the healthy Schools Scheme a daily fruit and water break was introduced within the infant class during the Summer Term 2001. This consisted of each child having a whole (or half if required) piece of fruit every day. There was a charge of 50p per week. This initiative was met with enthusiasm by both parents and children. Initially, it must be noted, that there was a major waste of unwanted or half eaten pieces of fruit, and some children would refuse to eat the fruit if it was not cut up into at least quarters. This soon changed as children became familiar with the routine. To overcome the issue of some children refusing to eat a whole piece of fruit, the adults encouraged them by sitting and eating as well. Towards the end of the term parents were commenting on the positive impact this had on their children, stating that the children would not, without asking for help, pick a piece of fruit from the bowl as a snack when hungry and eat it whole, with little waste.

Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day and have access to their own mugs and a water jug. This, in conjunction with the fruit break, has led to better concentration and the children are still focused by lunchtime. This is especially important for those children who do not have breakfast and those who become tired very quickly.

During the Autumn Term 2001, the class set up a role play fruit shop as part of the topic on 'Ourselves'. We were investigating healthy eating and the children were involved in the planning of, set up and management of the shop. The children responded well to the challenges arising from this role play and as a class decided to open the shop up to the whole school, to use at break time. The infants thought this would promote healthy eating and encourage other children to eat fruit instead of having a less healthy snack. We made posters to advertise and the children put them up around the school grounds.

The results of this were astonishing! A majority of children throughout the school changed from having their usual snack of crisps to eating one, or more, pieces of fruit. The fruit shop was in business for two terms. Unfortunately, the deficit for these two initiatives was immense and we could no longer keep stocking the fruit shop's. The fruit and water break (Infant classroom) was discussed in detail as a staff and we decided to keep this system in place as the children were responding well to it and seemed to demonstrate better concentration and energy levels than in previous terms. However, the system needed modifying. We introduced a new scheme whereby children bring in a piece of fruit throughout the week and these are cut into small pieces and shared. This encouraged the children to try different types of fruit and gives them more variety.

The Infant class will soon be introduced to a new way of drinking water throughout the day, which will involve each child having a drinking bottle (bottle flask) on their tables. It is being proposed that, as a school, we should encourage this in each class. The school could in addition, have drinking bottles on sale for those children who do not already own one.

Discussions have taken place with the head teacher regarding the possibility of incorporating a fruit and water break into the daily timetable of each class but at present this is still being discussed.

