

Pendeen School

Name of Criterion and number

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Healthy School Validation 2004

The impact of breakfast club, fruit break, streaming and the 3 part morning session.

Survey and report April 2004

September 2003

In September 2003 several new initiatives were introduced with the aim of raising pupil achievement. As Healthy School's Co-ordinator I am interested in our successes but also areas for further development and planning the way forwards.

Two initiatives altered the timetable and teaching for pupils:

- The 2 keystage classes were streamed, by ability, for literacy and numeracy lessons.
- The timetable for all classes was changed to allow for 3 sessions during the morning rather than 2 sessions as before. This 3 part morning allows for literacy and numeracy to be taught during sessions 1 and 2. The keystage 2 classes spend the third session and afternoon as an aged based class with their class teacher.

Two initiatives were introduced to promote healthy eating, as part of our healthy schools action plan. Researches shows that food, water and rest all impact on pupil learning and achievement.

- The 3 part morning gave time for 2 breaks during the morning. The first break is a fruit break. The pupils remain in the classrooms and have fruit or a cereal bar and a drink of water.
- The second break is for outside ply. The pupils can use all of the time for play and exercise rather then having to use some of it to eat their tuck as previously happened.
- Two early morning clubs were started. Breakfast Club and Exercise Club were set up to run 8.15am to 8.45am each day.

In September the various initiatives met with varying degrees of verbal approval. Feedback from pupils and parents centred mainly on fruit break, as crisps and chocolate biscuits were no longer acceptable. After a vocal fortnight the more negative comments ceased and fruit break became the norm.

Any change seems to bring with it an unsettled period of adjustment. As a school we believed in the change, presented a united front and stood firm in our beliefs, promoting the positive message and answering any questions that parents and pupils had.

Pupils Questionnaires (April 2004)

Questionnaires were given out when the above initiatives had had 2 terms to run. Any initial set up difficulties have been resolved and the initial uncertainty associated with any change has gone. After 2 terms pupils can genuinely reflect on how the initiatives are working or not for them.

The questionnaires were given out to the pupils in classes 2,3 and 4. Class 1 were not included because they do not know how the morning was organised the previous year and cannot realistically make comparisons. Some of the questionnaires were completed in school and others were completed at home. 57 questionnaires were returned.

Breakfast Club

Although only 42% of children attend breakfast club, the majority (88%) of the responses were positive about breakfast club. Pupil comments fell into 3 areas: healthy eating, working parents and friendships.

Healthy eating comments included:

"Helps children, gives them energy."

It provides children with a "substantial healthy meal."

"It's a healthy start to the day"

"Wakes you up and helps learning."

Working Parents Comments included:

"If a child's parents have to go to work without having to give their child breakfast, they can have it at school."

"It saves a lot of time if you are in a rush"

"If they don't have breakfast in the morning they can go

One pupil also thought that breakfast club helps people's manners "to say please and thank you."

One comment seemed to sum it all up:

"Because you get to talk to your friends and you get more energy for lessons (cheap)."

Fruit Break:

81% of pupils usually have fruit break and of these 51% have fruit, 33% have a cereal bar and 11% have something else (possibly misinterpreted the question and answered this for fried fruit or carrot sticks).

95% of surveyed pupils made positive comments about fruit break. Most pupils linked fruit break to healthy eating which is encouraging as healthy eating is one of the targets in our new healthy Schools action plan.

Healthy Eating Comments included:

"I think it helps because it's healthier than eating crisps and chocolate."

"It helps people keep healthy."

"Healthy snacks are good for you."

Healthy Eating and learning comments:

Some pupils had made the links between diet, energy levels, concentrating and learning.

"It helps us to think and listen more."

"Helps them to concentrate in class."

"It gets your brain going."

Timetable Changes and Streaming

Pupils have a more evenly split perspective on the timetable changes introduced in September. 60 % are in favour of streaming 37% were not in favour of streaming. However 72% of the pupils made positive comments about streaming.

Positive Comments About Streaming

"It helps people work better."

"By learning different things."

"Helps people's SATs papers and it builds their confidence."

"Because people get split from their friends so they can't talk to each other."

Some pupils related streaming to the experience at Key Stage 3.

"I think it helps because when you go up to secondary school they have different lessons and it helps individual people learn."

Playtime

Responses here were all positive except for one, which had a positive and negative comment - "Play with my friends or not have anything to do with it."

Views on the 3 part session and impact on learning

82% of pupils view the 3 part morning positively, with 68% making positive comments about it. 70% made positive comments about the impact of the 3 part morning. Pupils seemed to find it difficult to articulate why they view the 3 part morning positively.

"I like having the shorter sessions in the morning and learning different things in each."

"I enjoy it more."

"it has made me more keen to learn because the morning doesn't drag."

"I find it is fun having two breaks."

"it breaks the morning up."

Conclusions

All aspects covered in the survey had more positive responses and comments than negative ones. After 2 terms the different initiatives to support healthy eating are working well and the pupils appear to understand how breakfast club and fruit break impact on their diet and more importantly how diet impacts on learning.

The majority of pupils view the changes in September to encourage healthy eating, which in turn supports pupil learning and achievement positively. In fact the breakfast club has been so successful that the exercise club folded because Pendeen pupils prefer breakfast to exercising. Arguably if pupils do not have breakfast at

home then food at breakfast club is a more important start to the day than exercise at exercise club.

The exercise club stopped running and the school has been increasing opportunities for children to exercise at different times of the day. All pupils now have the opportunity to go swimming with the school on a rolling programme. In addition to the keystage 2 games afternoon we now run a keystage 1 games afternoon where tennis, towerball, football, hockey, bikes and scooters are often on offer to the children. The number and range of equipment for huff and puff at lunchtimes has been increased. The school has had fun fit training and some aspects of this have already been taken on board.

Pupils do not view streaming for literacy and numeracy so positively. Marginally more pupils are in favour (60%) than against streaming. Although only 60% of pupils like streaming, 72% of pupils responses were positive about how streaming can help pupils.

The majority of pupils like the 3 part morning and made positive comments about it. The comments suggest that pupils like the breaks between sessions. They feel they have gained something and that they can concentrate better.