

j0232431

**Eating well and exercising**

**to be healthy,happy and look good!**

**Harewood Primary School**

We carried out a lunchbox audit and asked children and their parents to fill out a questionnaire. From this we were able to identify that whilst there was a good understanding about which foods they should be eating, that knowledge wasn’t always translating to good eating habits.

The questions were focussed on how many portions of fruit and vegetables they had a day, whether they packed their own lunch and how they felt about their body image.

**Rationale**

Healthy weight was a priority for the local area and one which we as a school needed to address. We wanted to encourage our children to become more physically active and to raise their awareness about healthy foods and the benefits of a balanced diet.

**Methodology**

We carried out a lunchbox audit and asked children and their parents to fill out a questionnaire. The questions were focused on how many portions of fruit and vegetables they had a day, whether they packed their own lunch and how they felt about their body image. From this we were able to identify that whilst there was a good understanding about which foods they should be eating, that knowledge wasn’t always translating to good eating habits.

With information obtained from the initial questionnaires we established two intervention programmes.

* The first was tailored towards 25 children and looked at food, emotional health and well-being and perceptions of body image.
* The second programme, which also involved 25 pupils, made links with parents to take part in physical activities with their child outside the school setting such as rock climbing and cheerleading activities.

Our baseline data showed us that at the start of the six week intervention programme only 65% of participants ate breakfast and that none of them were getting their recommended 5 fruit and vegetables a day. Armed with this information, we established a series of targets aimed to raise awareness towards healthy food options and challenge their attitudes. We wanted them to go beyond the 5-a-day approach and help them to understand that what they put in their mouths has an impact on the way they behave and the way they look.

We also partnered with external groups, for example, Gloucestershire Rugby team, who explained to the children how important it is to fuel the body with the right foods. We also worked with a well-known local chef who introduced participants to new and different foods.

**Results**

At the end of the 6 week programme, we carried out another questionnaire to measure impact. The results showed that from an initial 65% of children eating breakfast at the beginning of the programme, 96% children now enjoyed a healthy breakfast every day.

Also, our initial baseline data showed that none of the group were eating five fruit and vegetables per day but by the end of the intervention, 40% were getting the recommended amount.

85% of parents reported that they had noticed a change in their child’s attitude towards healthy food and exercise as a result of the interventions.

Many parents also made comments that their child was now more willing to ‘try new foods’ as they were aware of their benefits. One parent in particular noted that their child “no longer eats chips” and “checks his packed lunch to ensure it contains healthy foods.”