

food in schools

within the West Midlands

Food In Schools
Survey 2007



▶▶ **Herefordshire**

Obesity and Children ▶▶

Obesity among children is spiralling and tackling obesity is a national priority. In July 2004 a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target was set to 'halt the year on year rise in obesity among children under 11 by 2010 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole'. This target has been superseded by a broader long-term ambition with an initial focus on children: 'By 2020, we aim to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels'.

The Foresight report (2007) – 'Tackling Obesities: future choices' has taken a strategic overview of the issue of obesity. By 2050 the Foresight modelling indicates about 25% of children under 16 could be obese (www.foresight.gov.uk)

As part of a multi-faceted approach to tackling obesity school food has undergone huge change in the last three years:

Transforming School Food

New standards for school food have been introduced covering food not only served at lunch times but across the whole school day. This work is being led by the School Food Trust www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

Healthy Schools

The Healthy Schools Programme has been transformed with a target for all schools to be on the programme by December 2009 and 75% of schools to have achieved new healthy school status. The new status involves schools having completed the Healthy Eating Theme which covers a whole range of issues including having a whole school food policy, and pupil and parent involvement in all aspects of the development and implementation of healthy food throughout the school day. www.healthyschools.org.uk

Food in Schools Programme

In 2005 the Department of Health introduced the Food in Schools Programme which looks at food across the school day. A toolkit for schools is available online to support developing food in schools activities in line with healthy eating criteria for national healthy schools status. www.foodinschools.org

Food in Schools Audit ▶▶

In order to assess how effectively national priorities on obesity and school food are influencing practice in schools the Department of Health West Midlands undertook a baseline survey of Food in Schools Activity in 2005. This survey focussed particularly on food school activity in primary schools across the West Midlands. This audit was repeated during the spring term 2007 to measure changes over the past 2 years. Additional questions were added to the 2007 survey to look at changes as a result of introduction of new standards for school food, and the new Healthy Schools Programme criteria. The 2007 survey also included secondary, middle, and special schools and PRUs.

The survey provides a snapshot in time of food in schools activity. The response rate varied between stages of education with a much higher response rate from primary schools than from secondary and special schools. We have therefore reported on these sectors separately. There has also been a reduction in the response rate for primary since 2005 although still relatively high. The results say nothing about the representativeness of the sample and this needs to be taken into consideration when looking at the data. However, the results suggest a very positive change in schools and an increase in good practice across the West Midlands. The category other covers middle schools, PRUs and those schools which did not specify which group they fell into.

Headlines ▶▶

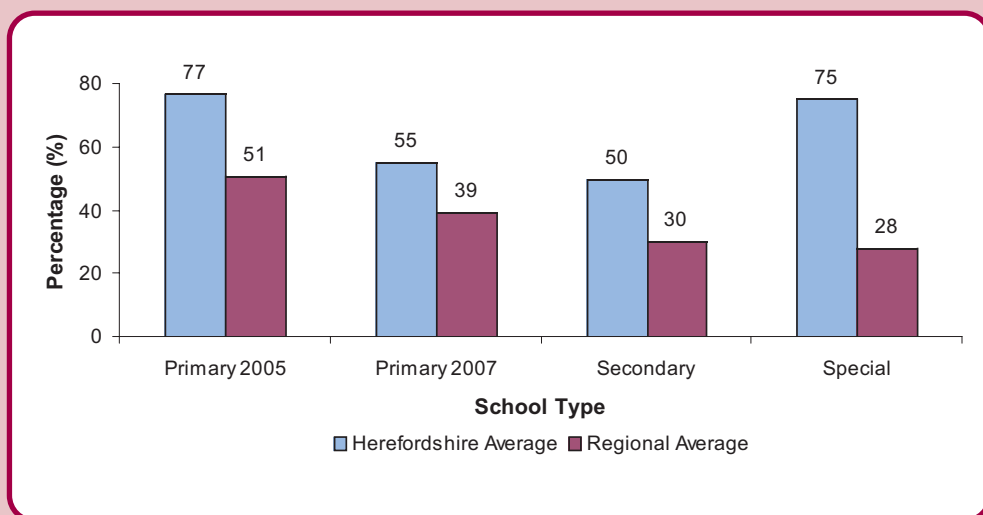
- Since 2005 Herefordshire primary schools have seen a 46% increase in the number of schools reporting that they have a whole school food policy (WSFP)
- 93% of responding primary schools in Herefordshire promote healthier lunchboxes to pupils and parents
- 55% of Herefordshire primary schools responded to the survey
- 94.1% of schools in Herefordshire are participating in the Healthy Schools Programme
- Free school meal uptake in Herefordshire is above average- primary schools 85.6% (average 82.5%) but below average for secondary schools 61.7% (average 73.5%) (School Food Trust 2007)
- 15.5% of Year 6 pupils within Herefordshire are obese which is below the national average of 17.3% (NCMP2006/7)

Table 1: Response Rate

Herefordshire Schools	Number of Schools	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)	Range across LEA's (%)
Primary 2005	86	66	77%	38-77%
Primary 2007	83	46	55%	20-58%
Secondary	14	7	50%	11-50%
Special	4	3	75%	0-75%
Other	3	2	-	
2007 Total	104	58	56%	21-56%

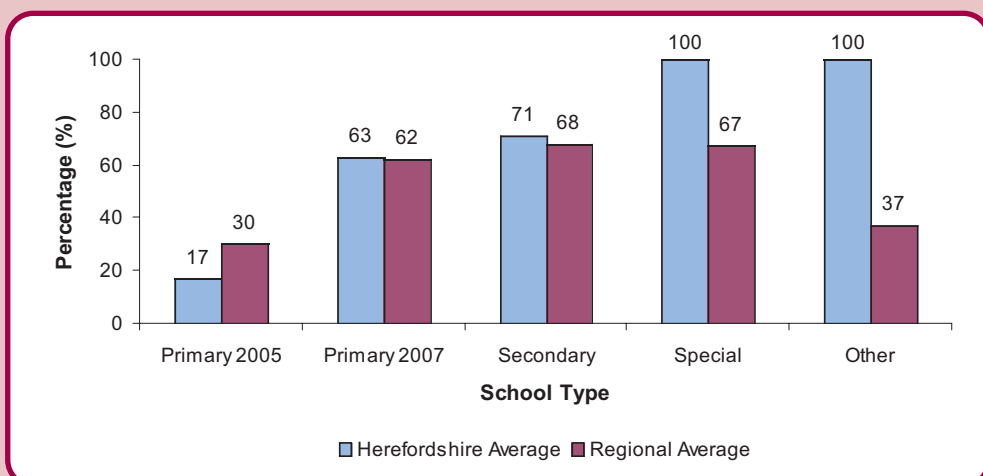
1: Response Rate

The regional response rate for primary schools was higher than that for special and secondary schools so we are reporting on the findings for each of these areas separately. The other section includes schools which either did not specify which category they fall into, PRU's and through schools. Within Herefordshire this section is made up entirely of PRU's (2).



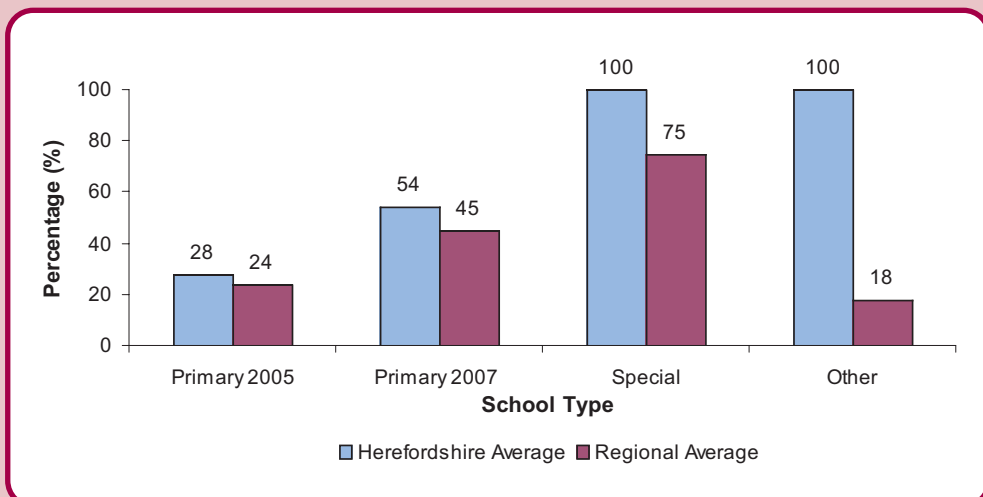
2: Does your school have a whole school food policy

Since 2005 more than three times as many primary schools are reporting having a whole school food policy in place (an increase of 46%).



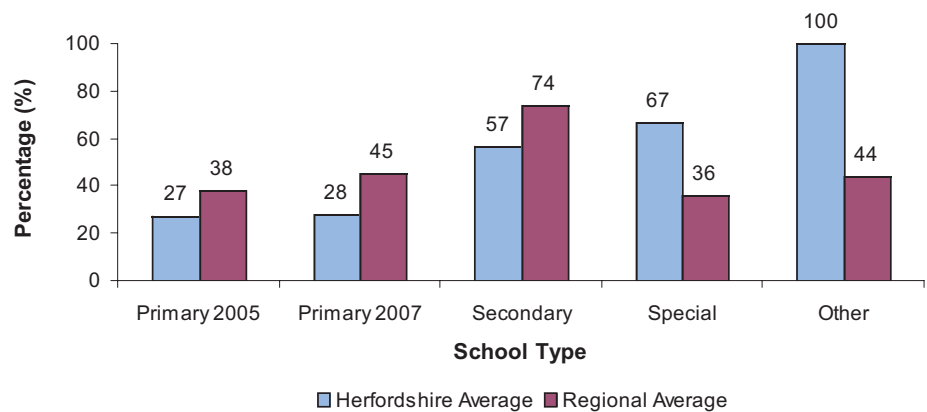
3: Does your school provide fruit at Key Stage 2?

Since 2005 there has been a 26% increase the number of primary schools reporting that they provide fruit at KS2. Furthermore, primary, special and other schools were all above the regional average.



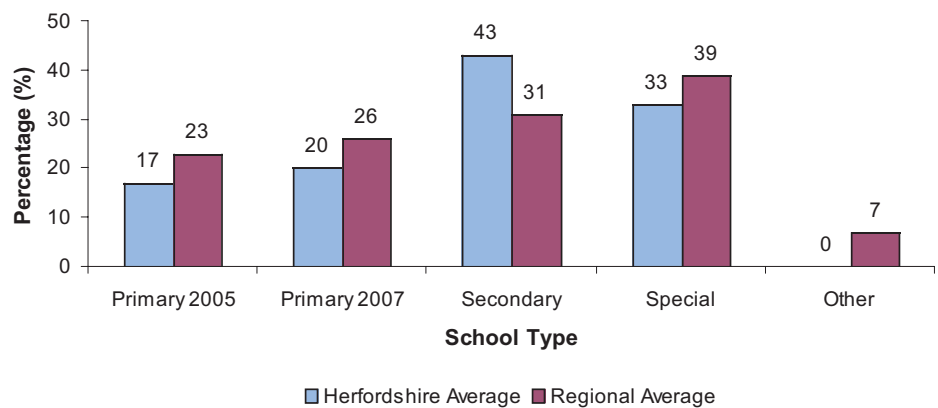
4: Does your school have a breakfast club?

Both primary and secondary schools were below the regional average for reporting that they provided a breakfast club. On the other hand, special and other schools were well above the regional average.



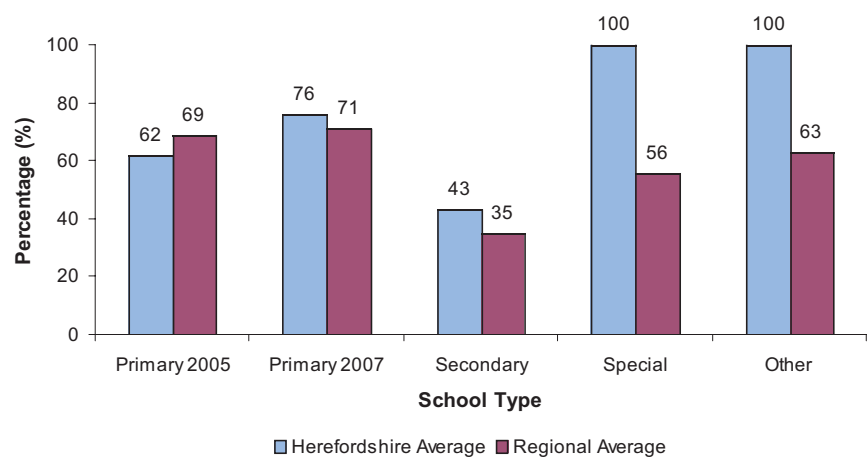
5: Does your school have a tuckshop?

Primary, special and other schools were all below the regional average for providing a tuckshop for pupils. In contrast secondary schools were above the regional average.



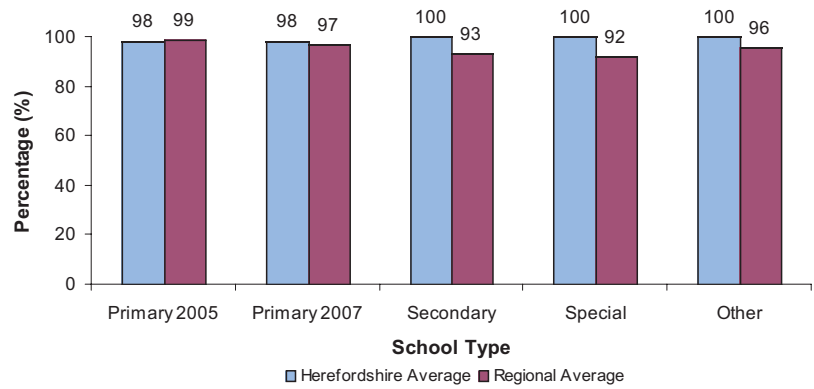
6: Does your school have a healthy snacking policy?

Since 2005 Herefordshire has seen a 16% increase in the number of primary schools with healthy snacking policies. Furthermore, primary, secondary, special and other schools were all above the regional average. When considering the data it needs be noted that these may not be mutually exclusive, in many cases healthy snacking policies are part of the whole school food policy or a school may have a healthy snacking policy but not a policy covering the wider aspects of school food.



7: Does your school provide access to free drinking water?

A high proportion of schools are providing access to free drinking facilities with a regional average of 96%, Herefordshire were just above this at 98%.

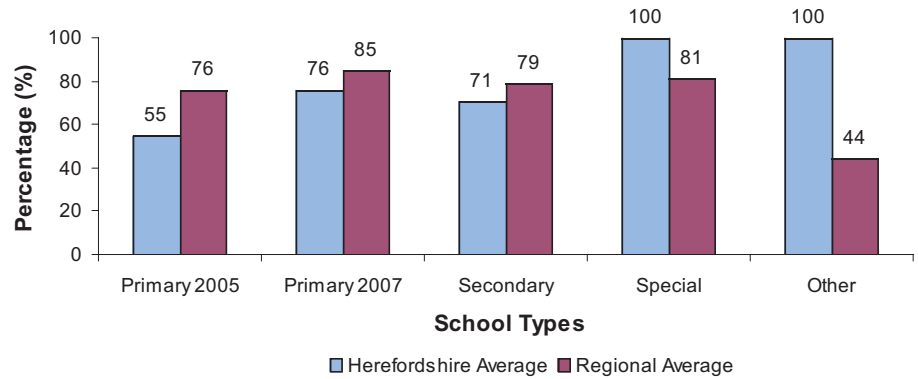


8: Does your school have a dining room that is an attractive and sociable place to eat?

Since 2005 Herefordshire has seen a 23% increase in the number of primary schools reporting have a dining room that is an attractive and sociable place to eat.

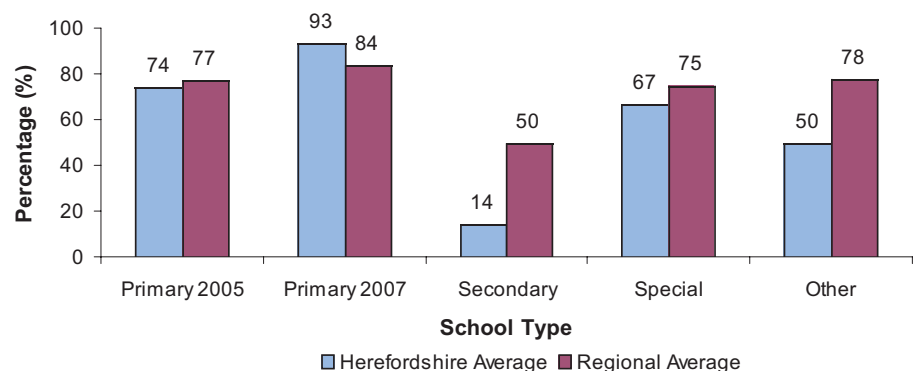
Some of the key themes related to the dining environment include:

- 1. Improvements** - A number of primary schools said they were in the process of developing their dining environments.
- 2. Lack of facilities** - Many primary schools only have the option to eat in their classrooms
- 3. School Hall** - Multipurpose halls are often the only available place for children to eat.
- 4. Difficulties** - The main complaints regarding dining environment was the area in which the children eat in is too small, and the school hall can be difficult to make attractive due to its multipurpose use.
- 5. Examples of good practice** - Golden table, Flower Cloth and occasional music played.



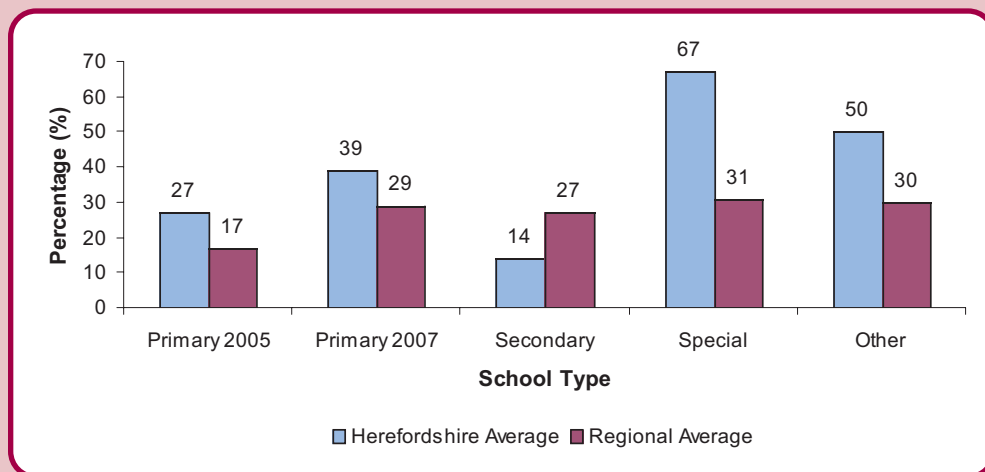
9: Does your school promote healthy lunchboxes?

93% of primary schools in Herefordshire report that they promote healthier lunchboxes to pupils and parents. Herefordshire primary schools were above the regional average, in contrast Secondary, special and other schools were all below the regional average.



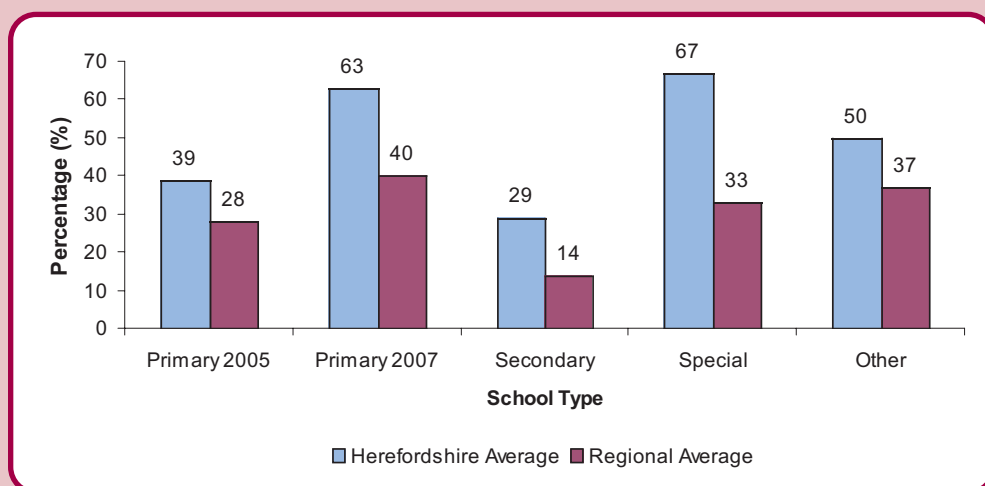
10: Does your school have a cooking club?

Since 2005 Herefordshire has seen a 12% increase in the number of primary schools with cooking clubs. Primary, special and 'other' schools were all above the regional average. However, secondary schools were below the average.



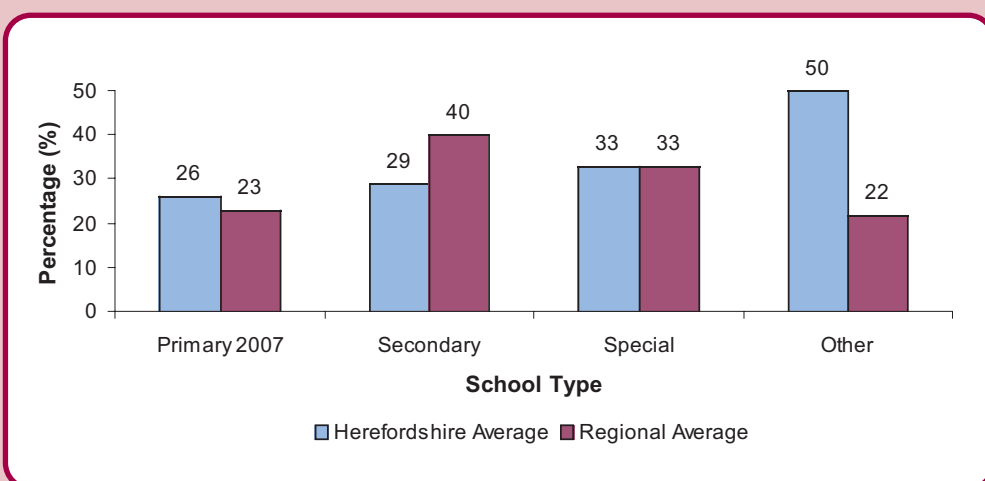
11: Does your school have a growing club?

The number of primary schools reporting that they had a growing club has increased by 24% since 2005. Furthermore, all schools were above the regional average.



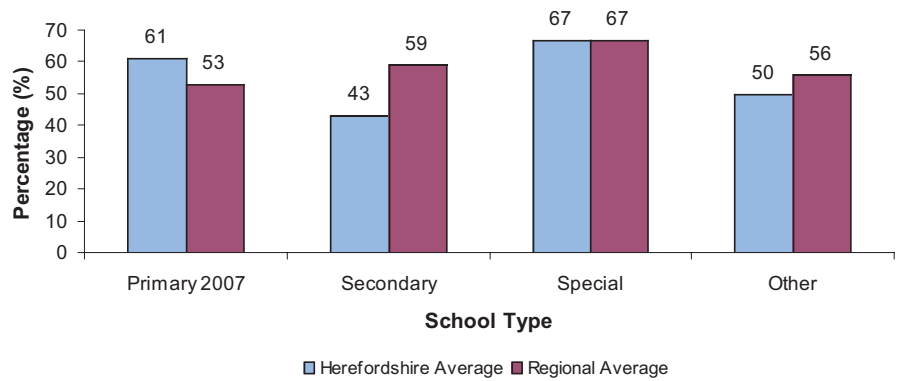
12: Does your school have any extended school activities around food in schools?

Herefordshire has a higher than average number of primary and other schools reporting that they provide extended school activities. Special schools were in line with the regional average, however, secondary schools were below the regional average.



13: Does your school provide opportunities within the school CPD plan for staff training on food related areas in school?

Primary schools were above the regional average for providing opportunities within the school CPD plan for training on food related areas. Special schools were in line with the regional average. However, secondary schools were below the regional average. The majority of personal development noted was in food safety and hygiene.

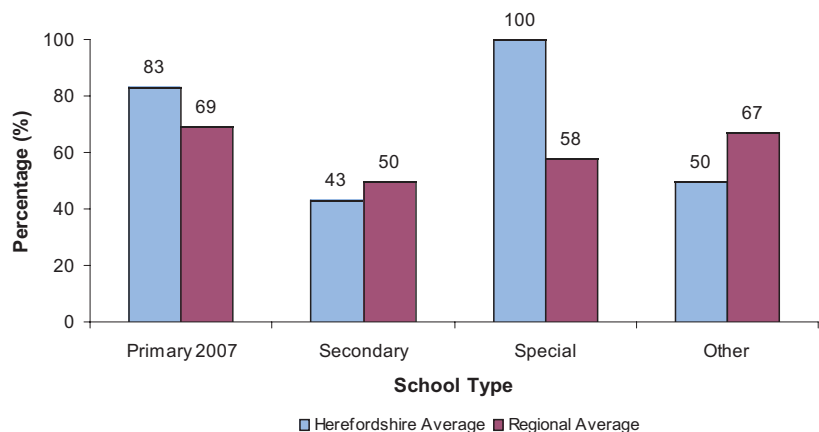


14: Does your school involve parents in school food activities?

Primary and special schools were above the regional average for reporting that they involved parents in schools food activities. In contrast both Secondary and 'other' schools were below the regional average. The data suggests two main themes in the way parents are involved in school food activities:

1. **Participation in activities** - Healthy activity week, breakfast and gardening clubs, cooking days and tasting sessions.

2. **Information** - Newsletters and questionnaires.



Changes ▶▶

Can you identify any changes children and young people are making to food choices across the school day as a result of new school food guidelines? If yes, what are the changes?



A high proportion of schools identified changes that children were making to food choices as a result of the new school food guidelines. Within Herefordshire 34 primary schools, 4 secondary schools, 1 special school and 2 'other' schools had noted changes. On further analysis four broad themes emerged, including:

Making healthier choices ▶

Such as eating more fruit and vegetables, healthier lunchboxes, increased school meal uptake and increased water consumption.

"The children are choosing healthier snacks and asking parents for healthier food in their lunchboxes"

Attitudes ▶

Many schools noted general changes in children's attitude to healthy food stating they were more health conscious and willing to try new foods.

"Listening to our pupils comments regarding healthier eating shows their attitude has changed"

Knowledge/Awareness and Eating Behaviour ▶

Schools noted children's raised awareness of 'healthy' and 'unhealthy' foods as well as a change in eating behaviour as a result of this.

"Children talk about food more and what we should eat lots or little of. During Christmas dinner and often throughout the week children will come up for seconds even when it is a tray of vegetables and gravy"

Behaviour ▶

One Primary school in Herefordshire also commented on the change in the children's behaviour.

"We feel as staff that healthier food is making a real difference to behaviour around the school playground"

General Comments: ▶▶

Some schools added additional comments to the questionnaire. Two key themes emerged from these around examples of good practice and difficulties encountered.

Examples of Good Practice – Parental involvement in food policy, healthy eating assembly for children and parents, healthy lifestyle days and annual gardening projects.

Difficulties – Many schools reported that although consistent messages around food were being given at school these were often undermined in the home environment. One school also felt outside influences were difficult to deal with.

“It is difficult to isolate school influence from the wider society /peer pressure”

Recommendations ▶▶

Overall many of the schools in Herefordshire had above average results, areas to consider include:

Breakfast Clubs - Herefordshire has a lower than average number of primary and secondary schools providing children with a breakfast club

Dining Room Environments was a particular issue for primary and secondary schools. We would recommend looking at the school food trust resource – ‘A fresh look at the school meal experience’ for advice on support in this area. The report looks at how schools can make improvements to the look and feel of their dining hall, manage lunch times effectively, reduce queuing and to improve behaviour. The report is available at www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

Healthy Lunchboxes - Herefordshire has a lower than average number of secondary schools promoting healthier lunchboxes to parents and pupils. Information is available on the School Food Trust website.

Cooking Clubs - Secondary schools within Herefordshire were below the regional average for providing cooking clubs. This year the School Food Trust has been awarded funding to develop ‘Lets Get Cooking’ Programmes in primary schools. For more information visit www.letsgetcooking.org.uk

Useful websites

www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk

www.foodinschools.org.uk

www.healthyschools.org.uk

www.5aday.nhs.uk

www.letsgetcooking.org.uk

www.foodafactoflife.org.uk



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