

food in schools

within the West Midlands

Food in Schools
Survey 2007



Wolverhampton

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 This target has been superseded by a broader long-term ambition with an initial focus on children: 'By 2020, we aim to reduce the proportion of overweight and obese children to 2000 levels'.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.

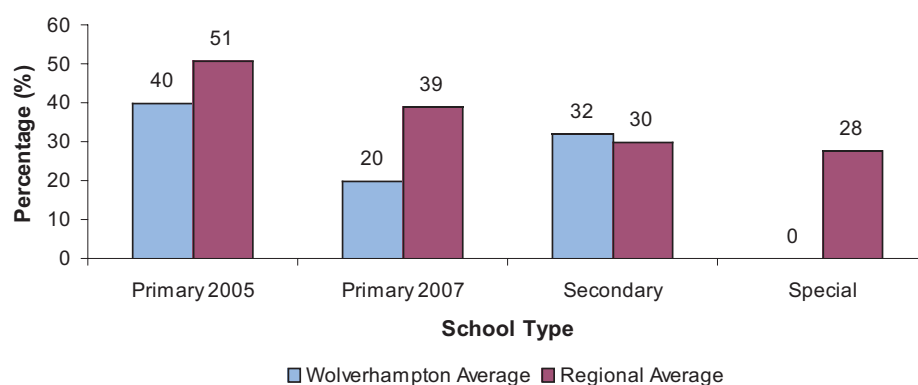
Headlines ▶▶

- Only 20% of Wolverhampton primary schools responded to the survey which is the lowest in the region.
- 78% of responding primary schools in Wolverhampton have a whole school food policy.
- Over three quarters of responding primary schools promote healthier lunchboxes to pupils and parents.
- 80% of primary schools in Wolverhampton provide fruit and vegetables at key stage 2.
- Free school meal uptake in Wolverhampton is below average –primary schools 81.8% (average 82.5%): secondary schools 66.2% (average 73.5%) (School Food Trust 2007).
- 94.3% of schools in Wolverhampton are participating in the healthy schools programme.

Wolverhampton Schools	Number of Schools	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)	Range across LEA's (%)
Primary 2005	82	33	40%	38-77%
Primary 2007	89	18	20%	20-58%
Secondary	19	6	32%	11-50%
Special	7	0	0%	0-75%
2007 Total	115	24	21%	21-56%

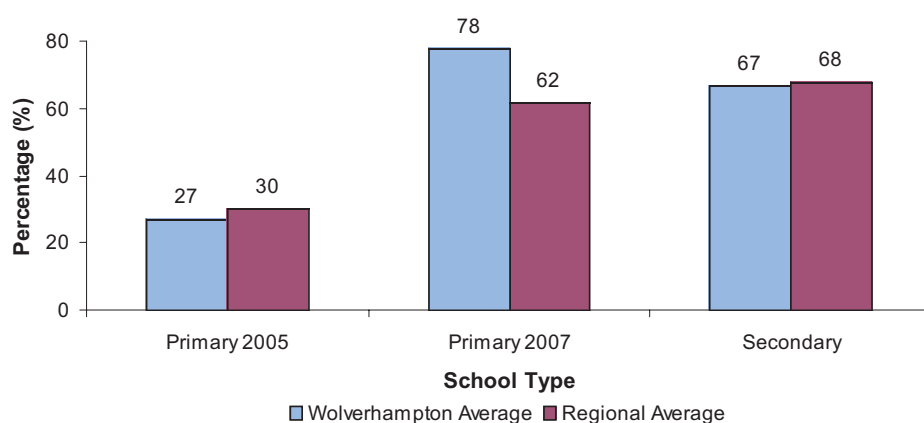
1: Response Rate

The regional response rate for primary schools was significantly higher than that for special and secondary schools in most local authority areas so we are reporting on the findings for each of these areas separately. It needs to be noted that the response rate for primary schools in Wolverhampton was very low and needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting the data



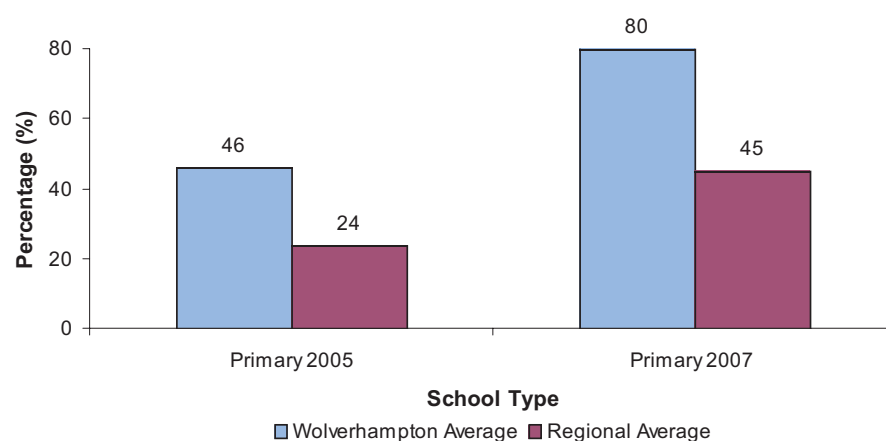
2: Does your school have a whole school food policy

Since 2005 Wolverhampton has seen a 51% increase in the number of primary schools with a WSFP. Hence, primary schools were above the regional average, secondary schools however, were just below the regional average.



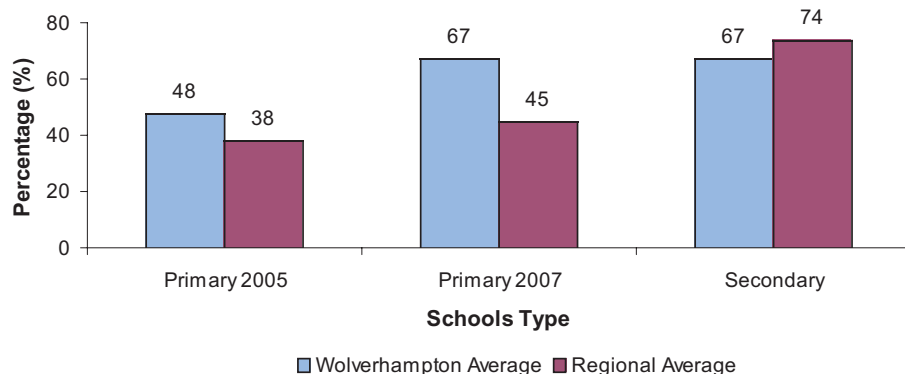
3: Does your school provide fruit at Key Stage 2?

Primary schools were well above the regional average for providing fruit and vegetables at key stage 2, and there has been a 34% increase since 2005.



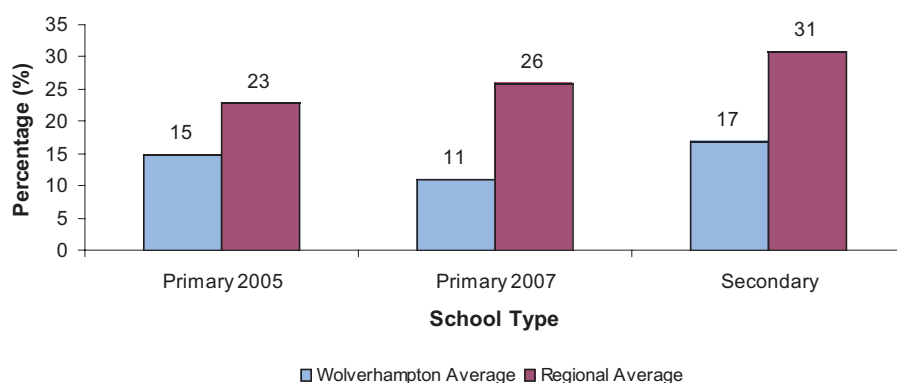
4: Does your school have a breakfast club?

Wolverhampton primary schools were above the regional average for providing pupils with a breakfast club. There has been a 19% increase in the number of primary schools with a breakfast clubs. Secondary schools on the other hand were below the regional average.



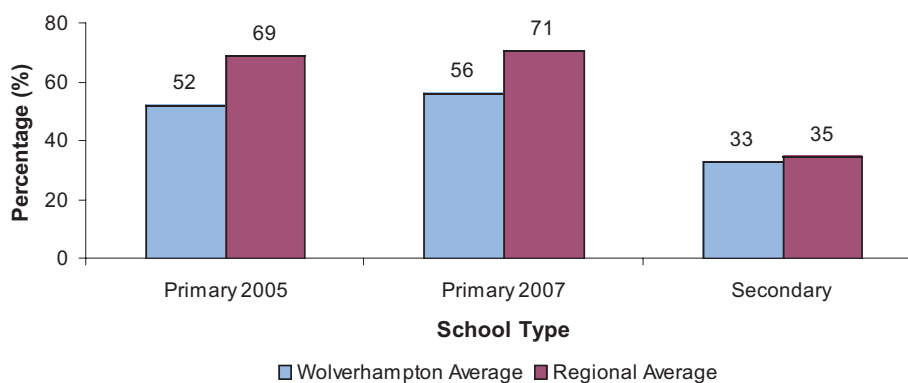
5: Does your school have a tuckshop?

Both primary and secondary school were below the regional average for providing a tuckshop for pupils.



6: Does your school have a healthy snacking policy?

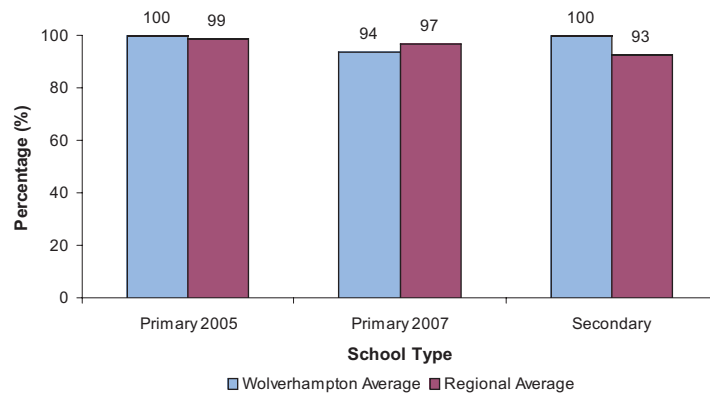
Primary and secondary schools in Wolverhampton were below the regional average for having a healthy snacking policy. When considering the data it needs be noted that these may not be mutually exclusive, in many cases healthy snacking policies are part of the whole school food policy or a school may have 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 water with a regional average of 96%.

Wolverhampton were in line with the region with 96% of responding schools providing free drinking water to pupils.

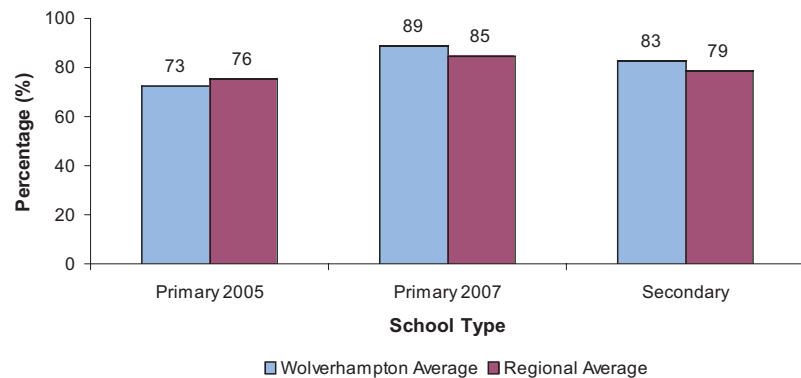


8: Does your school have a dining room that is an attractive and sociable place to eat?

Since 2005 Wolverhampton has seen a 16% increase in the number of primary schools reporting that they have an attractive and sociable dining environment. Both primary and secondary schools were above the regional average.

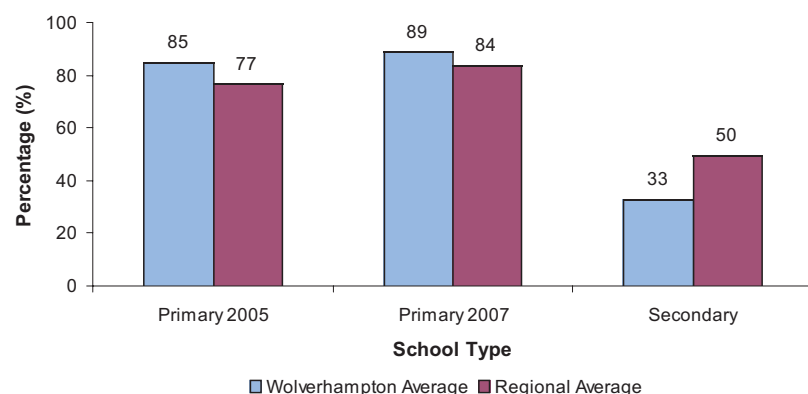
Some of the key themes related to the dining environment include:

- 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** - Multi-purpose halls are often the only available place for children to eat.
- 4. Difficulties** - The main complaints regarding dining environments were that dining areas were too small, and the school hall can be difficult to make attractive due to its multi-purpose use.
- 5. Examples of good practice** - Themed tables.



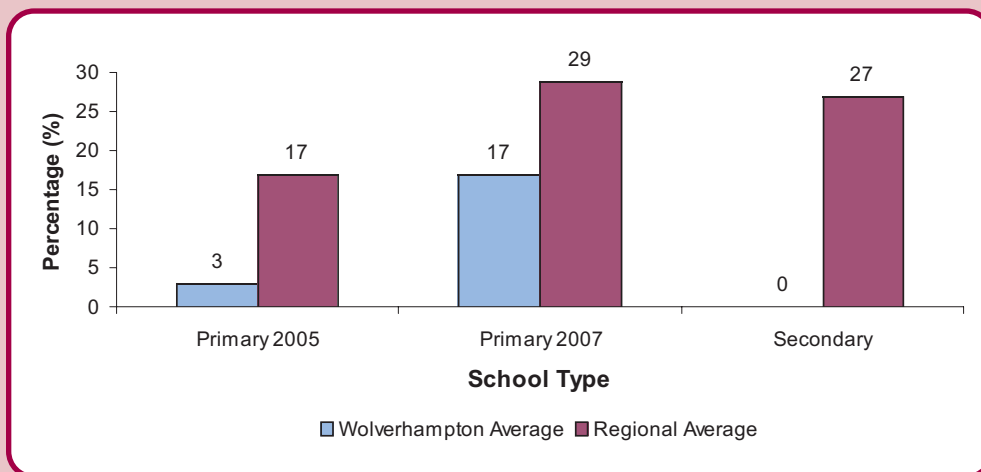
9: Does your school promote healthy lunchboxes?

A high proportion of primary schools are promoting healthier lunchboxes in school – nearly 90% which is above the regional average.



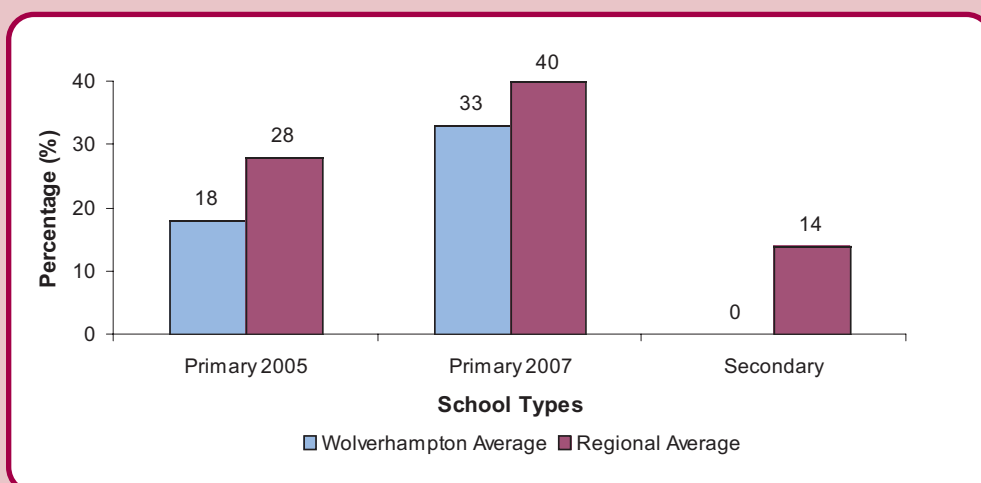
10: Does your school have a cooking club?

There has been a 14% increase in the number of primary schools reporting having a cooking club but this is still well below the regional average. None of the responding secondary schools provided a cooking club.



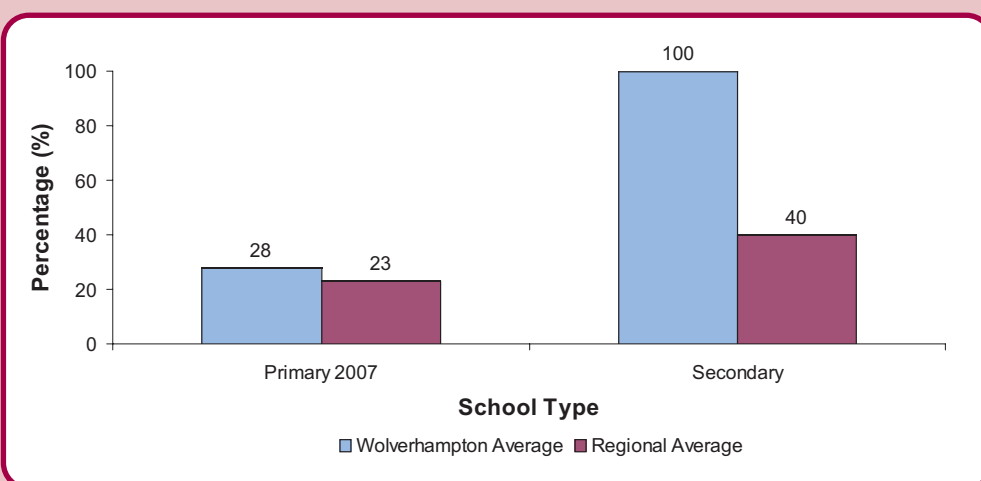
11: Does your school have a growing club?

Since 2005 Wolverhampton has seen a 15% increase in the number of primary schools with growing clubs. However, both primary and secondary schools were below the regional average.



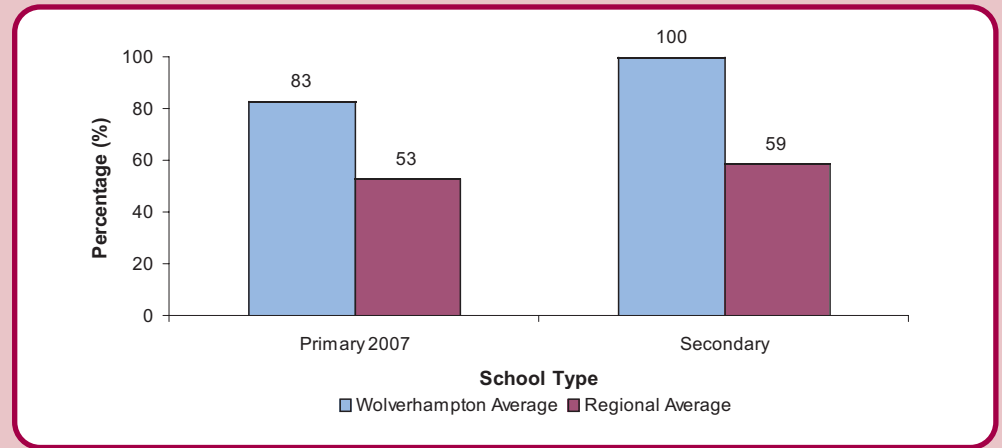
12: Does your school have any extended school activities around food in schools?

Wolverhampton has a higher than average number of schools providing extended school activities with both primary and secondary schools above the regional average.



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

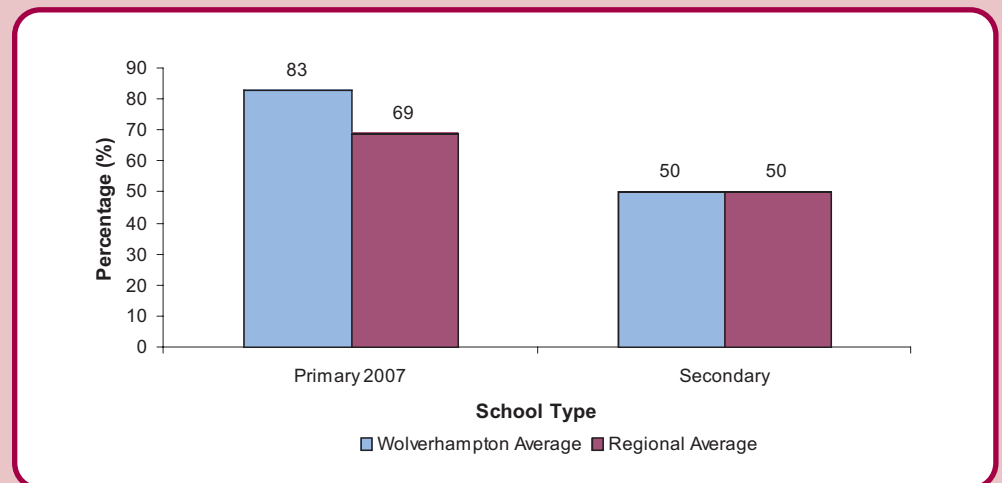
Primary and secondary schools were above the regional average for providing opportunities within the school CPD plan for training on food related areas. The majority of personal development noted was in basic food hygiene.



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

Primary schools were above the regional average and secondary schools were in line with the average for involving parents in schools food activities. The data suggests two main themes in which parents are involved in school food activities

1. **Participation in activities** - Parent workshops, tasting sessions and healthy lunchbox training.
2. **Information** - Providing information to parents through 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 positive changes children were making to food choices as a result of the introduction of new school food standards. Within Wolverhampton 15 primary schools and 6 secondary schools had noted changes. On further analysis three broad themes emerged, including:

Making healthier choices ▶

These included, eating more fruit and vegetables, healthier lunchboxes, increased school meal uptake and increased water consumption.

“There is a greater uptake of fruit and vegetables from the canteen at dinner time and only fruit is eaten during breaktime”

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.

“Most children now enjoy the new school dinner and look forward to their fruit at breaktime”

Knowledge/Awareness and Eating Behaviour ▶

Schools noted a greater awareness of ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’ foods as well as changes in eating behaviour as a result of changes to school food.

“Children know what a healthy lunchbox consists of and can talk about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle”

Although not specifically reported on within Wolverhampton some schools within the region noted changes in children’s behaviour such as being more attentive.

General Comments: ▶▶

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

Examples of Good Practice – Many schools reported on their involvement with the national healthy schools programme as well as the development of parent workshops and healthy lunchbox sessions.

Difficulties – Many schools reported that although consistent messages around food were being given at school these were often undermined in the home environment.

Recommendations ▶▶

Overall Wolverhampton had above average results, however, some areas of note include:

Healthy Lunchboxes – Wolverhampton secondary schools have a lower than average number of schools promoting healthier lunchboxes to pupils and parents. The excellent work in primary schools needs to be replicated across secondary schools. The www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk website provides information on healthy packed lunches.

Cooking and growing clubs – Wolverhampton has a lower than average number of schools providing cooking and growing clubs for children. 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

2007 is the Year of Farming and Food. The aim of the year is to engage pupils in an understanding of where food comes from – field to fork and a key objective is to ensure that all children participate in a growing activity. Many programmes are in place to support this. Visit www.yearoffarmingandfood.org.uk for more information.

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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