
Media release

28 November 2007

GOOD FOOD SNAPPED UP AT AWARD WINNING SCHOOL

Woodkirk High has won the ultimate school catering accolade of producing the best school dinners in England, and pupils are snapping up the delicious meals.

In the past year the school dinner uptake at Woodkirk has more than doubled, with fresh and locally produced food being used wherever possible and all meals being prepared on site. Menus change regularly, with plenty of choice, and include recipes such as duck in blackbean sauce, fresh tuna, and lots of salads.

Now Woodkirk has won the 2007 School Catering Award at the national Education Business Awards 2007 in London. But their greatest success is with the schoolchildren, who are choosing to eat the meals in ever greater numbers.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITY

When? 1pm Thursday 29 November

Where? Woodkirk High School, Rein Road, Tingley, Wakefield, England, WF3 1JQ

What? Children will be sampling the school's award-winning meals. If you wish to attend please call the council press office on 0113 395 1578.

Corporate Communications, Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR

Phone: 0113 247 4328 Fax: 0113 247 4436



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Switchboard: 0113 234 8080

Cllr Richard Harker, executive board member with responsibility for schools, said:

“This is the top school catering award in England, and shows that Leeds takes school meals very seriously.

“Healthy food is crucially important to the children’s wellbeing – ‘a healthy mind in a healthy body’ has always been true, and now Woodkirk are successfully taking up the challenge of giving children an affordable and nutritious meal every school day.”

The main reason for the prestigious award is the school’s new chef, Chris Hulme, previously at Leeds’ Queens Hotel and a local lad very keen to use local produce for the healthiest meals possible. He was chosen through a very rigorous process involving the schoolchildren, and has boosted the confidence and job satisfaction of his staff, partly through training schemes at Leeds’ Thomas Danby College, funded by Education Leeds.

Chris Edwards, chief executive of Education Leeds, said:

“A healthy diet and an active lifestyle are crucial in helping children achieve their potential.

“Our school meals strategy means that school food is a top priority, and schools across Leeds are now delivering brilliant lunches with more and more children and young people eating them.

“Woodkirk is a wonderful example of this at its best.”

Virginia Stokeley, Director of Specialist School at Woodkirk High, said:

“Employing our own chef has made an enormous difference to school dinners here – there’s a real demand for our meals because of the exceptional food on offer and Chris Hulme has proved that healthy food can be appetising.

“Gallons of fresh fruit salad are being eaten every day at Woodkirk, and more of the children who are entitled to free school meals are taking up the service.”

New pupils are invited to a fun day with a free dinner before they join, and when they taste the food and see the wide range available many of those who took packed lunches at primary school choose to eat Woodkirk’s school dinners.

The award follows the launch of the Leeds School Meals Strategy earlier this year, giving all of Leeds 1,500 school cooks the chance to go back to college to enhance their skills and help ensure that all Leeds schools serve nutritious, affordable and tasty meals.

The strategy is a commitment to improve child health, reduce obesity, encourage fresh and locally grown foods, and engage entire school communities in transforming school meals.

ENDS

For media enquiries, please contact

Gareth Wilce, Leeds City Council press office (0113) 395 1578
Email: gareth.wilce@leeds.gov.uk