

# St Matthews Church of England Primary School

## Case Study: Happier Lunchtimes



### Healthy Schools Theme:

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Pupils and Staff

### School Context:

**Location:** Redhill, Surrey

**Number of pupils** 437

**% SEND** 76 / 437 = 17%

**%FSM/ Disadvantaged pupils** 130 / 437 = 30%

#### SAT's Performance

Level 4 or above

Maths 77%

Reading 89%

SPaG 70%

Writing 72%

Level 5 or above

Maths 26%

Reading 30%

SPaG 38%

### Identified Priority

**1) To improve lunchtime. Making sure there are clear behavioural strategies and good communication between staff.**

Discussions and questionnaires from both teachers and midday supervisors highlighted significant areas for improvement. As with the previous priority a lack of consistent behaviour management during lunchtime with staff adopting their own method of behaviour management leading to children being unsettled during the transition from the playground to the classroom. Communication between teachers and midday supervisors was another key area identified. Teachers were not always made aware of incidents happening during lunchtimes which often lead to parents raising concerns and teachers then having to find out what had happened.

Too many staff having radios during lunchtime and radio communication between midday supervisors was often unprofessional and inappropriate.

The atmosphere in the hall needed improvement; the hall was very noisy and hectic, children were eating with their coats on (often damp from break time) creating health and safety hazards and adding to a

general negative ambience.

**2) To create a better lunchtime structure and routine through the organisation of staffing, activities and resources including chill zone.**

Through observations, questionnaires and discussions with SLT and the lead midday supervisor the lunchtime structure, organisation of staffing and utilization of resources became a key priority. Despite there being positive changes in the previous year to timings and use of TA's (change to half hour duty and set times for lunch) there was no up to date, clear rota. No clear stations of where staff needed to be, lots of staff playing games but inconsistently. First aid manned by all staff as opposed to a set person and a complicated recording system which lead to poor communication of injuries to class teachers.

No agreement regarding the purpose of chill zone- chill zone was often being used inappropriately, as a consequence of poor behaviour or a place to finish uncompleted work. Staff unaware of the purpose of chill zone- for children with medical issues and/or for those that find it too overwhelming or difficult on the playground. Lack of equipment and no whistle and lining up system also highlighted.

**3) To revise the current behaviour policy 'Good to be green' and implement new behaviour strategies across the school.**

Through discussions and questionnaires with class teachers it became apparent that most teachers were not using the 'Good to be Green' behaviour strategy stated in the behaviour policy for the school. There were inconsistencies in behaviour management across the school with teachers using their own strategies to manage behaviour. Children's behaviour was dealt with in different ways by various members of staff meaning children didn't have a clear understanding of rules, expectations and consequences.

**Outcomes:**

**1) To improve lunchtime. Making sure there are clear behavioural strategies and good communication between staff**

In order to achieve this priority we would like to see an increase in positive behaviour during the transition time from lunchtime to learning time. We would like to see children finishing lunchtime in a calm manner entering the building with their class teachers and being ready for their afternoon learning. During lunchtime we would like all staff to consistently deal with incidents of poor behaviour confidently and in line with the revised behaviour policy. Communication between teachers and midday supervisors to be an open dialogue occurring at the end of lunchtimes as the children line up. Incidents to be communicated and recorded accurately and fed back to the class teacher of the child. The ambience in the dining hall needed to be more positive with less noise during the period of time in which children eat their lunch. A decrease of 50% in the number of staff using radios and an increase in effective use of radios.

**2) To create a better lunchtime structure and routine through the organisation of staffing, activities and resources including chill zone.**

To make lunchtime calmer outside children should be engaged in fun and exciting activities which are run by members of staff. It is important that children are selected appropriately for the games and activities highlighting those children that find socialising difficult or overwhelming. To ensure this outcome is met inside children will be moving around in a sensible manner using 'indoor' voices.

Both staff and children need to be clear with communicating instructions and activities so that the children understand the expectations of the activity or game. Staffs needs to be aware of their role in promoting positive social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

And an increase in new outdoor equipment which children are able to use correctly.

**3) To revise the current behaviour policy 'Good to be green' and implement new behaviour strategies across the school.**

At the beginning of the academic year 'Good to be Green' policy to be reviewed by all staff. Staff to create

their own behaviour strategy appropriate for the age of the children in their class. These new behavioural strategies need to be included in the new behavioural policy. Once these strategies are in place all staff are to follow them consistently. For teacher to report an increase in positive attitudes towards learning which allows children to be more engaged and enables them to make better progress.

### **Activities / Interventions:**

#### **1) To improve lunchtime. Making sure there are clear behavioural strategies and good communication between staff**

- Questionnaire for teachers and midday supervisors regarding children's behaviour during lunchtime completed.
- Discussions about creating positive transitions- All staff
- Monitored transitions and behaviours- Healthy Schools Team
- Positive touch training- All new staff
- Monitored children's attitudes and engagement in learning after lunchtime- SLT
- Reflected on the impact of new transitions- Teachers
- Met with lead supervisor to discuss communication and how we record incidents and injuries
- Met with all midday supervisors to discuss changes and ways to improve communication
- Radio's assigned to holders- Healthy Schools Team
- School council met to discuss ways to improve lunchtime in the hall
- SLT observed behaviour in the hall over time

#### **2) To create a better lunchtime structure and routine through the organisation of staffing, activities and resources including chill zone.**

- Questionnaires completed by School Council regarding lunchtimes
- Pupil voice- discussions with a selection of children about lunchtimes
- Implemented new activities
- Assigned activity leaders
- Observed activities taking place at lunchtime
- Met with midday supervisors to clarify their roles and responsibilities during lunchtime
- Met with lead supervisor to discuss routines and structure of lunchtime
- Met with SLT regarding staffing and role allocation
- Designed new rota's
- Outlined chill zones purposes to all staff

#### **3) To revise the current behaviour policy 'Good to be green' and implement new behaviour strategies across the school.**

- Reviewed 'Good to be green' policy with teaching staff
- Teachers created and implemented their own behaviour strategies appropriate for the children in their class
- Learning walks completed by SLT focussing on new behaviour strategies being implemented
- EASEL project reviews and completed
- Teachers completed questionnaires regarding the impact of lunchtime changes

### **Impact:**

- **Questionnaire for teachers and midday supervisors regarding children's behaviour during lunchtime completed.**- highlighted areas for development and gave an insight into lunchtime behaviour
- **Discussions about creating positive transitions- All staff-** enabled us to create positive changes for transition times- new lining up system

**-Monitored transitions and behaviours- Healthy Schools Team-** enabled us to measure the effectiveness of changes made

- **Positive touch training- All new staff-** gave staff more confidence when dealing with difficult behaviour
- **Monitored children's attitudes and engagement in learning after lunchtime- SLT-** enabled us to see the impact of changes on the children's learning
- **Reflected on the impact of new transitions-** Teachers- children were more engaged in learning after lunch as less time was spent on dealing with issues from outside
- **Met with lead supervisor to discuss communication and how we record incidents and injuries-** new carbon copy book put in place to record accidents, copies then given to class teachers. Teachers collecting from the playground enabled lunch staff to communicate with teachers about any issues that has arisen during lunchtime
- **Met with all midday supervisors to discuss changes and way to improve communication-** Midday supervisors felt included in the changes made and feel more valued in their opinions which had positive impact in how they perceived their role as a midday supervisor.
- **Radio's assigned to holders- Healthy Schools Team-** created less chatter and allowed them to be used to communicate important information quickly and effectively
- **School council met to discuss ways to improve lunchtime in the hall-** Tablecloths are now provided on all tables which has improved the experience of lunchtime making it more like a restaurant instead of a dining hall
- **SLT observed behaviour in the hall over time-** Allows SLT to have an overview of behaviour during lunchtime

## **2) To create a better lunchtime structure and routine through the organisation of staffing, activities and resources including chill zone.**

- **Questionnaires completed by School Council regarding lunchtimes-** pupils felt valued and included in the decisions made about lunchtime
- **Pupil voice- discussions with a selection of children about lunchtimes-** pupils felt valued and included in the decisions made about lunchtime
- **Implemented new activities-** Children had a variety of activities to choose from which made lunchtime more fun
- **Assigned activity leaders-** activities where more directed enabling staff to teach the children about team work and sharing
- **Observed activities taking place at lunchtime-** enables us to provide feedback to staff and support development of next steps
- **Met with midday supervisors to clarify their roles and responsibilities during lunchtime-** Staff had clear expectations of their job and knew their responsibilities and stations
- **Met with lead supervisor to discuss routines and structure of lunchtime-** provided the information needed to create a clear structure and a well-organised rota
- **Met with SLT regarding staffing and role allocation-** 2 new appointments of deputy supervisors
- **Outlined chill zones purposes to all staff-** Chill zone being used appropriately

## **3) To revise the current behaviour policy 'Good to be green' and implement new behaviour strategies across the school.**

- **Reviewed 'Good to be green' policy with teaching staff-** good to be green strategy was discontinued
- **Teachers created and implemented their own behaviour strategies appropriate for the children in their class-** more effective ways of managing behaviour as it was personalised for the children in the class. Consequential elements were consistent across the school
- **Learning walks completed by SLT focussing on new behaviour strategies being implemented-** behaviour strategies were being used correctly, children have a clear understanding of expectations and consequences
- **EASEL project reviewed and completed-** supported the Healthy Schools project in further supporting

children with their emotional wellbeing to enable them to effectively access the curriculum  
- **Teachers completed questionnaires regarding the impact of lunchtime changes-** enables us to monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes so we can measure its success.

### **Next Steps:**

To continue to embed the changes we have made to lunchtime provision  
To monitor the impact the changes have made to the health and wellbeing of the school community  
To further support activity leaders in creating new games and activities for the children

### **Senior Leader Quote:**

“This project has really benefited our children and the quality of provision at St Matthew's School. Lunchtimes at St Matthew's were always "OK" but we knew there were aspects which could provide even better experiences for children and adults alike.  
Schools are always busy places and we we're conscious that communication between staff with their different responsibilities could sometimes slip. Clear opportunities for open communication including questionnaires, face to face conversations and discussions provided all stakeholders, adults and children, with a "voice" and a helpful forum to share ideas. As a result of this positive dialogue the structure of lunchtime and activities provided for children are significantly better with expectations, procedures and behaviour management strategies more consistent and, as a result, more effective.  
Enjoying a healthy lunch, sitting with friends from across the school at a table with brightly coloured tablecloths in a pleasant dining hall, sets a positive ambience, developing the children's social awareness, including table manners and polite conversation and social interaction.  
Outside, on the playground and field the children are able to enjoy a range of games and activities to expend their energy and develop their skills and co-ordination.  
The changes have not only benefited the children during lunchtime, but also impacted on their attitudes and behaviour for learning in the classroom. The children are more focused during afternoon lessons, having benefited from a healthy meal and reduced antagonism, frustration and squabbles during play activities. Little time is now demanded of staff to mediate and solve disputes between children (usually football!)  
Lunchtimes can now be enjoyed by all rather than endured by some!”