

**Food and Drink purchased 'Through the School Gate'**

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# Transcript

School 4 Catering Manager, Deputy Head and Finance  
Resources Manager Interview 23.4.18

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Interviewer: And so we're very interested in actually...one of the key projects is this project which is about what students in Year 8 and Year 9 in London and Essex, we've been talking to schools in those areas to get a sense of what those students, what they eat when they're at school, but also what they eat beyond the school gate. What they actually are able to buy, whether they do buy. What kinds of choices do they make and what affects those choices? Things like body image or gender or socioeconomic position or friends and peer pressure.

There's so many things, it's not just about what children choose it's about why they choose it and we can't make assumptions about that, so we wanted to ask those questions, but we also recognise that schools are community hubs and you probably see students more than their families, in some respect. So, we really need to get some perspectives from you as well about the various things that you think are going on here. So, if I can ask you again to just say your names and your positions and to say that you consent to the interview for the recording. Is that alright? I know it's very formal but it's [inaudible 00:01:24].

F3: I don't really know why I'm here, if I'm honest, before we kind of...the purpose.

F2: I chose us three because, to be honest, I don't quite know where the questions are going but, also, I didn't know whether Sharon could make it so from a canteen and a Wade's perspective I needed one or other of you.

Interviewer: I sent some questions to Kim to give a sense about what we'd be talking about, so what we're really talking about...

F3: I haven't seen those.

Interviewer: What are the school policies on food? Whether the students can leave or come. What your thoughts are about maybe the demographics of the school. What you've noticed about what children eat. Whether they eat coming into school.

F2: Okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, so it's more about your observations but also about your observations versus or complemented and supported by the school policies. So, the questions will include things like school menus, who sets the policies, what you notice in terms of student behaviour. Do they sneak out and buy food? Do they bring food in? And questions maybe about family and peer influence.

F2: Yeah, so I'm interested in you being here from how we appoint Wades, if that comes up, that sort of thing.

F3: Okay, because one thing I know Wades have been really wanting us to do is a survey and we haven't been able to do that. I don't know if there's any way we can share any information because Wades, we have...

F2: I'm not sure. Is this what Wades want to know?

F3: They want to know all sorts. We had this survey which we weren't actually able to distribute.

F2: No, because this is anonymous.

F1: Yeah. Oh, it's anonymous.

F3: And so was that, yeah.

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:03:17].

F3: No, I was just wondering if there was any sharing we could do.

Interviewer: Let's see where we go and see if it's suitable.

F1: Yeah. I'll answer what I think I can answer.

Interviewer: This research project is separate from that.

F3: Yeah, I know it is separate.

Interviewer: Let's not get into that now.

F3: Okay.

Interviewer: Alright. So, sorry, could I just ask you all to say your names, your positions and that you consent to the interview before we start? Is that alright?

F1: Sure, yeah. Shall I start?

F2: Yeah.

F1: My name's Mrs Johnson. I'm Catering Manager for Wade Catering and I consent for the interview, it's fine.

F2: I'm Judy Waters and I'm the Deputy Head Teacher and the Pastoral Manager and I consent for the interview.

F3: Sandy Chisholm, Finance Resources Manager and I consent for the interview to take place.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, I appreciate that. Sorry, it all sounds a bit stiff and forced but at least we all know where we are. So, perhaps we could start by talking about maybe the macro levels or the structural stuff before we funnel down to what you've seen of the students. So,

maybe we could start by talking about school policies and your different perspectives on those policies. So, if you could talk maybe a little bit about the way that food service operates within the school and what students are and aren't allowed to bring in.

F2: Can you say how we get our food providers?

F3: Yeah. We outsource our catering. We use a catering consultant to assist us with letting, well, awarding the contract to a caterer and then monitoring the contracts thereafter and therefore we have regular meetings with the consultant, with Wade and the school and I think it all works very well. We also commission as part of the consultant, they do a spot check audit on compliance with the contract twice a year and that's looking at the contract, things like are we sticking to the various standards that we are adhering to and we're aiming for the silver.

F1: Yeah, we've got silver.

F3: Silver, what's it called? Plan?

F1: It's gone out of my mind. I've gone blank. That's good, isn't it?

F3: The food, it's done by the national standards.

F1: It's like the government, the government recently changed all the food standards and there's bronze, silver and gold award and we've got

silver which means that we have to have organic products such as flour. We have to have Red Tractor bacon. We have to have organic milk to keep our silver award.

Interviewer: Right, okay.

F1: So, all those different government rules.

F3: At the outset we decided with our consultant what we wanted to put into the specific for the contract and it was deemed at that time that we would go for the silver. I think the gold was probably not achievable, realistically. So, that went in specification and so therefore we tender for a contract, have quite a lot of interest. Wades retain the contract. I've been here 10 years and Wades have been successful each time in the awarding of the contracts.

F2: And prior to the government becoming quite stringent in their expectations, we were also Healthy Schools and we had Healthy School status, which again impacted on what you could provide, what you should provide and what you could provide.

F1: Yeah, exactly.

F2: So, it's been fascinating over the years to see the government's influence but also us going with Healthy Schools, so our governing bodies drive towards Healthy Schools determining what the children can eat. The cakes have disappeared and diminished, sadly. Chips

has gone down to Friday only. So, yes, it's become far more healthy, hasn't it? And the growth of the salads has been phenomenal.

F1: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: So, you are still part of the Healthy Schools programme?

F2: In practice, yes, in theory, no because we have nobody currently driving the Healthy Schools programme just literally because the member of staff who was driving it isn't here, but the principle is still in place. When we have somebody else it will be picked up.

F3: Would you say that's also picked up probably through School Council?

F2: Yes.

F3: Because quite an active School Council that Sharon will work with.

F1: Yeah, I went Friday. We had a meeting on Friday.

F2: Yeah, they meet, it's very regularly, isn't it?

F1: I haven't been given the timetable, but I did attend one Friday just gone.



F2: Yeah, so the students have a say. I mean their standards are very high, aren't they?

F1: Oh yeah, yeah. I mean I've been doing my job for 13 years and I've seen it change dramatically, especially when the government rules and Jamie Oliver and all that came in, you see, especially Year 7s now, the new Year 7s have come up, they want vegetables, they want salads. It never used to be like that, so it really has had an impact.

F2: Because you tried a salad bar a few years ago and it failed miserably.

F1: Yeah and now it's really popular. Really popular.

Interviewer: It's so interesting.

F1: The fruit pots and different...all the healthy stuff they want. Vegetables like cabbages and peas. Even like Christmas, Brussels, you know, kids used to hate things like that, now they love them. So, you can see the change over the years. It's quite interesting.

Interviewer: It's so interesting.

F1: Yeah, it is.

Interviewer: I mean 13 years too, that's quite...

F1: Exactly, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, that's interesting to know all that scaffolding in terms of the logistics and nuts and bolts of it. Are students allowed to bring food into school?

F2: Yes.

Interviewer: Or do they have to purchase it?

F2: No.

Interviewer: How does it work? Are they allowed to go out of the school?

F2: Right, so 7 to 11, Year 7 to 11 can bring a packed lunch or they can have school lunch. They cannot go outside the school building. That doesn't mean that certain things don't happen but in the rules they stay on site and they have breakfast club.

F1: Yeah.

F2: They have break time and they have lunch time where they can purchase food. They also have a vending machine. What's in the vending machine, Sharon?

F1: It's just drinks, so it's just drinks.

F2: It's just drinks. Then the Sixth Form have a, this year for the first time, they have a café within the Sixth Form block. What does that provide, Sharon?

F1: It's a bit like a Costa. They've got a proper coffee shop. We do paninis, we do sandwiches, rolls, baguettes, fruit pots, drinks. So, it is basically like a little Costa.

F2: So, they can stay in. They can come to the main hall, the main canteen for hot dinner or they are allowed out for their lunch time break. So, they predominately go down the road to Finches Lane, but we can expand on that later on if you ask us that question.

Interviewer: Oh, we will.

F2: I'm sure you will. I'm sure you will. And there is no restrictions as to what they can bring in their packed lunch. It's not like a primary school that is prescriptive as to you must have, so they can bring whatever.

Interviewer: How well used is the breakfast club?

F1: It's quite popular. For some reason on a Monday it's not quite as popular. I don't know why.

F2: Getting out of bed.

F1: Yeah, exactly. Getting out of bed after the weekend it's not as popular, but yeah, it is quite popular. We serve about 100 to 120 students breakfast time.

F2: As well as staff.

F1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow.

F3: And does that include the Sixth Form? They're kind of buying their breakfast, I think, even if it's...

F1: Yeah, we serve in the kitchen alone about 100, 120 and then we've got also the additional...

F3: The café.

F1: Yeah, the Sixth Form.

Interviewer: In terms of the policies that we've spoken about and you were saying that the Student Council, that the council are a part of that, obviously, but who ultimately sets the policies and how often are they reviewed?

F3: I suppose the policy would be set in the contract.

F2: Yes.

F3: Because the contract we've set we would like... Food for Life.

F1: Yeah, that's it. Good thinking, it went out my head.

F3: Silver Food for Life standards.

F2: How often is that reviewed, Sandy?

F3: Well, the contract is set for three years.

F1: Three years, every three years.

F3: But then often we will roll over the contract up to five years in total, so I guess probably in reality every five years.

F2: And the governing body would be involved in commissioning that.

Interviewer: So, that's obviously to maintain this standard, this silver standard. In terms of actually the work that goes into that, is there a consultative process with parents, with students in terms of what food is available?

F3: I would say that probably about seven or eight years ago when we had a contract change, Wade retained the contract, but the idea was that included a complete different menu, which our students didn't like, did they, at that time?

F1: No.

F3: So, therefore, it had been a very innovative new kind of food as part of the contract, but Sharon suggested, and it eventually happened, that we kind of reverted to the School 4 menu because that's what our students like.

F1: Yeah.

F2: When that contract is commissioned or it's being investigated, you have all contractors arrive with their sample products and the governors, student representatives and parent representatives are

involved, I think that's what you're after, in that process. So, during those seasons of change everybody's involved. On an ongoing basis there is a governor at these meetings that Sharon attends with the Student Council, so you've got the governing body interest. That governor is also a parent, so you've got everybody around that review table, probably half termly, termly, around that sort of...so it's on a regular basis. The students will bring complaints to the Student Council and they can come through every Student Council meeting. There's somebody having a council meeting fortnightly or so and they come through to the management and then the management pass any concerns onto Sharon.

Interviewer: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit more, maybe, about the school menus and what you think of the menus, what you've observed students think of the menus?

F1: Oh, they're great.

Interviewer: I didn't really expect you to say anything else.

F1: No, everything's made from scratch. Like I said, we use organic products, down to we're not even allowed to buy packet ham, we have to cook our own gammon and slice it ourselves. Yeah, it's quite strict, but obviously we have to because the government rules that changed last January are so, so strict. You can only have sausages twice a week. You can't have bacon every day really. You can only have chips once a week. It's just changed dramatically but for the better because, like I said, everything is made from scratch, so we have your

basic things that kids love, spaghetti Bolognese, your chicken curries.  
We do a roast once a week.

F2: Jerk chicken. Please say the jerk chicken.

F1: I was just going to say, jerk chicken, rice and peas. It's a varied menu  
and we also have a vegetarian option every day.

Interviewer: Right.

F1: One thing I'm getting asked for a lot is to put sushi on the menu,  
believe it or not.

Interviewer: Very popular [inaudible 00:15:46].

F1: Yeah, and vegan, vegan menus which Wade's are in the process of  
putting together a vegan menu, so that is something that we're looking  
at doing as well. But, yeah, I mean the menus are on the website if  
you want to have a look, so they are available.

F3: And we're two weekly.

F1: We're two weekly, yeah.



F3: We used to have three week.

F1: We used to be three, yeah.

F3: But because we have a two week timetable students said...

F1: It was a bit confusing.

F3: ...they needed to have the timetable and the menu...

Interviewer: Linked up.

F3: Linked up, yeah.

F1: Yeah.

F3: So, that was a concession to the contract really because the contract says you need a three week menu for variety.

F1: Yeah, that's right.

F2: But children are creatures of habit.

F3: Yeah.

F1: Yeah, exactly.

F2: They like the same thing at the same time on the same day.

F3: So, we worked and that's why, yeah.

F1: We changed it, yeah.

F2: Standing in the dinner queue and staff do the dinner queue, you're very conscious that some students come in for specific days, so they come in. So, some families will have part packed lunch, part canteen. Now, whether that's related to the parental calendar, so when they're working or not working, I don't know, but it is funny to see the kids come in and if for some reason you've had to change it because you couldn't get the supply, oh it's...they're up in arms over it.

F1: Yeah.

F2: But I think the staff would say there's been a huge change and I'm not saying this because Sharon's sitting next to me. I've eaten from the canteen for my whole 13, 14 years that I've been here and it has become much more healthy. It's become more varied. Initially it was very repetitive, even from day to day it was repetitive.

F1: Yeah.

F2: That's changed and I think the amount of staff you have buying from you now, I think has increased.

F1: Oh yeah, it's increased, definitely.

F2: So, we're paying for it and having it and choosing to. There's a number of staff who live on their own who will eat in school and then snack at home and I think that's quite a key selling point, but we feel it's important because our kids aren't allowed out, they can't choose something else, so we've got to provide and you've got to make it interesting to attract them.

F1: Exactly, yeah. We try.

Interviewer: What proportion would you say actually have, like you said that a lot bring packed lunches, how many do you think, not every day necessarily you've said, but how many would you be looking at? What proportion of the school population would you be looking at?

F2: Proportionality, I would say 10%. 10%, 15% have packed lunch.

Interviewer: Right, okay, so the majority is still eating in school.

F2: Oh, vast majority. Vast majority.

F1: Definitely.

Interviewer: In terms of free school meals, I know that we spoke briefly about this programme in the meeting, but could you talk to me a little bit about how that operates at School 4 and what proportion of kids? I think it's quite small here.

F1: It's very small.

F2: I'll find out the figures for you, but we have about 150 free school meals and 1200 school, so that's not many. So, the students are identified by their local authority. So, we have four or four local authorities that feed this school, so we're told who they are and that comes in on a list. Sometimes that's a bit difficult during transition when families don't realise they need to reapply and make sure we've been told. Also, sometimes they fall off the list because they get to the end of however long that process that allocates them free school meals for.

So, that's interesting, where you have children who are in transition around that process, however, we're fairly lenient on that until we've had it confirmed or otherwise. We are a biometric school, so they don't have money on them so there's no bullying, so it's their finger that they use to identify them. The money is automatically put on to that figure so that there is no stigma or anything attached to that. Not that there is these days. I think when they had the old-fashioned tickets that you used to have, you were a ticket kid. I think that was a different situation altogether. The biometric system anonymises that. I think the only difficulty we get is when they want more food than their allocation will

allow them and sometimes that gets them into arrears and into difficulties.

F1: Yeah, exactly.

F2: But that's how we would operate and if those children are going on a school trip, there are means, they don't tend to use this but there are means and ways of them having a packed lunch provided for them through the school.

F3: Do they just use it for, this is click in time, isn't there?

F1: They get their allowance from 11:30am and they're allowed a main meal and a dessert.

F3: So they can't use it for break.

F1: It doesn't include a drink but we provide free water anyway so that's what their allowance is, but they get an allowance after 11:30am every day ready for lunch.

Interviewer: Right, so it doesn't cover the break or breakfast club.

F1: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Alright. Okay, so let's maybe venture outside of the school gates slightly.

F2: Okay.

Interviewer: So, we know that students aren't allowed out, but they've got to come into the school and they've got to leave the school. Is there a food purchasing, a food retail hangout, food bringing in culture that you have observed?

F2: Yes. So, coming to school a lot of our students come via tube and bus, so those routes both include Sainsbury's. So, we have a lot of students who will come on the buses and the tubes, visit Sainsbury's on the way to school. Come in eating goodness knows what that they've picked up on the way, but also, we have, I'm not going to say an illegal, that's a bit of a strong word, but breaking school rules. We have students who will sell, so they'll stop at Sainsbury's, buy the multipacks of drinks, biscuits, whatever are on offer and then sell at exorbitant prices within the school grounds.

Interviewer: Very entrepreneurial, isn't it?

F2: If I could get a cut I'd allow them to do it, but no. [laughing]. So, they do that. If we just remain, for a second, talking about the students that are kept, so 7 to 11 who are kept within the school grounds during the school day. They will also maybe go past Finches Lane, which is the nearest set of shops and there is a Nisa, a fish and chip shop. That's it, isn't it, food wise?

F1: I think that's it, yeah.

F3: And a newsagents.

F1: Oh, there's a newsagents, yeah.

F3: So, they will pick up. We used to have an ice cream van that would park just on the limit and I don't know what's happened to him. He disappeared.

F1: I know, I was going to ask you about that.

F3: I only noticed that probably years after he'd stopped and realised he's not there anymore.

F2: That was our major source of concern.

F1: Oh God, he was a nightmare.

F2: Because a lot of students with ADHD would come and buy goodness knows what.

F1: Lucozade.

F2: Lucozade, E-numbers, sweets, you've got it and they would come in with mounds of sweets, so that was a major concern and we did try and get him removed for those reasons, plus some other illicit reasons. We failed, but for some reason he disappeared. His trade was phenomenal, both first thing in the morning and after school.

F3: I suppose, actually, the other thing is though because we've got the biometric and it's parent pay, the students are not bringing in cash from home for their lunches, generally.

F2: So that has reduced...

F3: So, they haven't got that money.

Interviewer: They can't spend their lunch money [inaudible 00:24:31].

F1: No, that's right, at the ice cream van.

F2: Now, we also have the High Road and this provides alternative routes through school and also routes very often on the way home, especially, say, on what we call our shortened Tuesday where we finish early. A number of student groups have an agreement that on that Tuesday they will have pizza on the way home or they will all go to, well, we did have Kentucky Fried Chicken and we did have a Bakers and Shakers, but there's various different eateries all the way down the High Road. It's interesting to see, particularly the Year 9s onwards have an



agreement that that shortened Tuesday or our half days where we've got meetings in school and the students are allowed home, they actually congregate and socialise around food. It is Pizza Express, it is Nando's, it is those sorts of places that they will go and socialise.

If we move away from that then and we look at the Sixth Form, the Sixth Form, because they're allowed out, I think now it would be interesting to compare now that we've got the café, but prior to that they would drive as far as Waltham Abbey which is miles for a McDonald's. They would go to Café Alban which is slightly further than Finches Lane, fish and chips and the baps in Nisa were often favourites and a lot of money would be spent, but they have to walk quite a decent way. So, a lot of the Year 12s are waiting until they've got access to cars, so a lot of them pile into the cars as soon as they pass their tests and then the Year 13s continue that on.

So, 12 and 13 fairly quickly in the first term get enough drivers to get them out and off, so they do a lot of travelling to get that. I mean the other thing that amazes me are the number of parents, and I was telling you when you came in for the pre-meeting, we have soft parents, we have some soft, indulgent parents who because the children like only certain food will deliver through the fence McDonald's, you name it, whatever the order today is.

Now, that is very, very strictly monitored and the food is confiscated, but we have a percentage of our students who have a lot of money and therefore will order pizza in and meet them. The pizza delivery companies will meet them at various different agree points around the school grounds to deliver the pizzas. Now, if we get them we confiscate them and everything else, but there is a little bit of a determined group who will get what they want if they want it.

F1: Speechless.

Interviewer: Yes, pretty different from [inaudible 00:27:57].

F2: So were we when we found out.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's well financed as well, it's not cheap.

Interviewer: It just sounds so organised as well.

F2: Oh, it is.

F1: Oh yeah.

F2: The other interesting observation I think we've made, the government insisted on, a few years ago, salt and pepper not being available and ketchup being stopped, condiments for want of a better word. So, the children now bring in their own.

F1: Oh yeah.

F2: So, they will carry tomato sauce bottles, mayonnaise bottles, pepper and salt.

Interviewer: It's good to have the essentials, isn't it?

F2: Absolutely.

F1: Well, they'll just open their blazer and they've got [inaudible 00:28:32].

Interviewer: Do they sell that too to others who want a serving?

F2: So, yes. I mean there was quite a big impact for us on the fizzy drinks and the types of drinks they could drink as well.

F1: Yeah, well, it's quite strict. We had to stop the flavoured waters because there's a saccharin that's in it that can make kids hyper so we've had to stop all the flavoured...obviously, we do sparkling water and normal water and all our drinks are school compliant, so most of our drinks are one of your five a day as well, but yeah, we had to stop quite a lot.

Interviewer: Wow. Well, I wonder if you could tell me, in terms of you were saying that it has changed, you have noticed particularly over 13 years of changing the tastes and the trends and that's interesting, I think, in terms of what do you think drives that in terms of, like, a social environment, family environment but also what things are popular? What things do they like? What things don't they like? What feedback have you got about school food?

F1: Basically, what I said earlier, that they like vegetables whereas when I first started they were like, "Oh, vegetables, no, get it away from me,"

but they like that now. I think especially with this school, because there is a lot of money about, they get taken to nice restaurants and this is why I have kids coming in and saying, "I had sushi on Saturday, can you please get sushi in?" You know, you wouldn't dream that kids would come and ask you for something like that but that's how it's changed. Same with the fruit and the salad bar is so popular now, so much we've had to extend it a little bit. Years ago, that would never have happened.

F2: And in that salad bar you've got olives, you know.

F1: Yeah, exactly. Avocados, you know, all different sort of things. Feta cheese. We do like a watermelon feta cheese and black olives and they love it. You wouldn't think that...

Interviewer: Kids, yeah, [inaudible 00:30:37].

F1: Yeah and we do a carrot, coriander and orange salad and they love it.

F2: Yeah, don't like coriander so I don't have that.

Interviewer: What do you think is driving that shift?

F3: I was going to say, start at primary school because you're saying it's happened, they're eating differently at primary school now so therefore

their expectations of what a school meal will be, it's different, I would say, when they arrive.

F1: It is, definitely.

F3: Would be one aspect.

F1: Yeah. I went and worked at a primary school a little while ago and they weren't really given a choice. They had their little trays and they were like, "You will have a bit of veg and you will have some salad and you will have this." They didn't get a choice, they had to have what was on their tray and most of them actually ate it, so it has stemmed from that, definitely.

F3: So that's kind of what they're expecting for lunchtime is changing.

F1: Exactly, yeah.

F2: That's not so bad if you've got away from the school pudding, rice pudding, lumpy, that I had when I was in primary school. I do think the quality of food in primary and secondary has changed and so they are more interested. I can't say our demographic has changed particularly from a student body, so the travelling abroad, the going to restaurants has always been part of this school's culture. I do think the interest in seeing the food programmes, a lot of children will discuss MasterChef, you know, those programmes with you during a lesson. So, I just think

their awareness is out there and I think the rise in restaurant chains, so the Pizza Express, so the Nando's.

So, whilst it's not high level good it's still good quality food and they are more used to doing that. Children having more money, so on the way home and back and forth to school having money to spend on food. I think it's just encouraged them to explore and expand. I'd like to think that the Healthy Schools element of our curriculum, our food education and it is part and parcel of food education is that they get taught about the different food groups, that's regularly done. Health is part of their PE curriculum.

So, I think it's taken years, but I can't underestimate that influence as well on children just knowing more about what they're eating and just being a little bit more mindful. I can't correlate that with what I see, and I've got no statistics for this, but increasing numbers of obese children. I would say our cohort is bigger proportionately than I've ever seen it, which doesn't correlate with what we're talking about, so I don't know whether they're just eating more. That's where I would say it lies.

Interviewer: Clearly their choices are limited to a certain array of foods within the school and then clearly for those of the students who buys food on the way to school and on the way home they buy a different kind of food because that's what's available. What do you think drives the disparity in those choices? So, it just seems interesting to me. Do you think there's...what's going on there? Do you think this is a family, social, education...what do you think is going on in terms of driving choices? Sorry, that was a very leading question. Is there anything that you think drives it?

F2: Two things I would say there. One, their parents can monitor what they have in school. So, they are able to access what they've eaten.

F1: They can go online.

F2: Not many of our parents are that attentive but that does exist, but peer pressure.

F1: Yeah.

F2: I've just described on shortened Tuesdays, I've just described the half day closures. It's the socialising that drives and therefore it's what's available outside and that is your standard stores and chains that I've just listed. To be honest, in this area, I think the two ladies would agree with me, there aren't many non-chain food outlets. It's very hard to find an independent outlet in this area, so they are somewhat limited as to where they can go. As we've said, they don't have a huge amount of cash on them unless they've deliberately brought some money with them, they don't need it for their school day. So, they are limited, so the cheaper outlets will be the choice.

Interviewer: Just a broader question to conclude I guess is what would you say about the diversity of the school, the demographics of the school, the family involvement with the school and the students here? If you could just give us a profile, I guess.

F2: We have very, very high levels of parental engagement, so every parents' evening we have over 95% of parents turn up. They've had to attend church and I say that in that broadest possible way for seven years to get their children in. So, there is a level of commitment to

education even before we begin. That tend to reflect the commitment to the child full stop. So, there is a focus on the child's education therefore I believe there's a focus on what they eat, it's a focus on extra-curricular things that they do, the whole package.

We have 32%, I believe, black and ethnic minority, predominately black African in the school, particularly driven by the Christian ethos so therefore that is our main demographic of our main school. Sixth Form is a much more open entry requirement and therefore we become a little bit more varied in Sixth Form, but again, because our students are the main stay of that Sixth Form that demographic tends to follow through.

Financially we do not, I don't know if you've got any of those statistics off the top of your head, we have a small proportion that come in from the postcodes that would indicate free school meals likelihood and that sort of thing, the deprivation, but not many at all.

F3: Yeah, our level of deprivation funding is quite low.

F2: It's very, very low. So, the demographic is relatively well off. It's not that hard for us to single out who hasn't got rather than who has, but it's vast. It goes from very incredibly wealthy and I stress incredibly wealthy, to hardly a penny to rub together and we're providing school trips and food and everything for them. So, we've got a breadth. It's probably skewed to above average earnings I would guess.

Interviewer: I think you mentioned that the salad bar in particular is more and more popular now. Is there anything in particular that is, I mean what are the favourites and are there any meals that are particularly unpopular, do you think, or less popular?



F1: We do a vegetable wellington on the vegetarian counter that's not as popular but what we tend to do, if we find that we've put that on and we've done it for a couple of months or a couple of terms then we'll change it. We'll take it off and put something that we think might be popular, but we do listen to, like, the school councillors, we do take on board the kid's comments. We do have a suggestion box as well, so although most of it says chips, chips, chips, we do take on board their comments and their suggestions and, like I said in the meeting Friday, "If you've got any suggestions come and see me. If we can put it on the menu we will."

F2: So, what would be the favourites then?

F1: So, the favourites are probably the basics like your spaghetti Bolognese. They love a curry, they love a roast dinner. Surprisingly, we do, on the vegetarian counter, mushroom risotto, they love that. Just your normal sort of what you'd have at home really but, again, it is all home cooked, made from scratch.

F3: Is chip Friday the busiest day though?

F1: Yeah, yeah.

F2: That's just the staff.

F1: Yeah.

Interviewer: What a shame we couldn't schedule this for a Friday. Never mind.

F1: Yeah, like we do fish and chips on a Friday and sausage chips and we do like the jerk chicken and chips, but that is once a week they're only allowed that. It's varied.

Interviewer: Okay, cool. I think the only other thing I'd like to picture a bit better in my own mind is how the lunchtimes actually work, so do you have like shifts or does everybody kind of descend at one time?

F2: Right. Because we are in the school hall which is used for lessons and everything else, it's a military operation. So, we have Monday, Wednesday and Friday we have the older students first and Tuesday and Thursday the little ones get to be first. Sixth Form have immediate access because very often they're working during lunch hour, so they can come straight in and purchase, but, also, they've got the café now which has made a world of difference.

F1: And there is all day. That's all day over there.

F2: That's all day. Recently, because we do so many clubs during the lunch hour, anybody with a club ticket gets in prior to everybody else so we've now asked that no non-clubbers come, that sounds a bit dodgy, didn't it? Prior to 12:40pm. So, we start at 12:20pm. You can see how many clubbers we have and then our lunch time finishes, we start clearing up at about 1:10pm.

F1: 1:10pm, yeah. We stop serving hot food at 1:10pm and then they've got till 1:15pm if they want to grab a sandwich or a water and then we shut the tills usually just for 1:20pm.

F2: So, Sharon's team who are counting inside. We have three midday assistants who clear, wipe tables, sort that out and then we have staff who are on duty.

Interviewer: Can I just ask as an ignorant question? Clubs, does that refer to just like chess, like all those...?

F2: Yes, chess club, revision lessons, sports.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so I'm on the right...I just thought I might be totally out of it in an Australian way, so I'm glad I understood.

F2: Yes.

Interviewer: You mentioned that the money goes onto the cards at 11:00am, so is that daily then at 11:00am and is there a reason why?

F3: That's only for the free school meals.

F2: For the free school meals.

Interviewer: Has it always been that way or did you change it to be that way because you noticed that children were just spending everything?

F1: Yeah, we changed it because what was happening was they were using their allowance at breakfast time and morning break and that's obviously not what their free school meal is for. So now they've really not got an option, they have to have a meal. They haven't necessarily got to have a dessert, they can have some fruit, they can have jelly, whatever they want. So, we had to change it.

F2: Yes. If you think of the lunchtimers being the compliant proper food...

F1: Yeah. Exactly, yeah.

F2: ...then we had to because that's what the money was for. we had to steer them, shall we say, in that direction.

Interviewer: So, they get a main and a dessert and a drink?

F1: They don't get a drink but there is free water available or they bring in their own drinks.

Interviewer: Main and a dessert.

F1: Yeah, so they get their food.

Interviewer: Did you notice any resistance or was there any feedback when you changed the system to being daily at 11:00am?

F1: Not really, no. I mean, obviously, you're going to get a couple that are going to moan but they really didn't have a choice. It wasn't too bad actually, no.

Interviewer: Can I ask a question about that too? From what you were saying it sounded like they had their allowance all day and then they just spent it all in the beginning. Do you think there is a correlation? Was it just that they had it burning a hole in their pocket and they just wanted to spend it or do you think it was an issue of hunger?

F2: Both.

F1: Yeah, I was just going to say that.

Interviewer: And it's very hard because what do you do because you've only got limited funds.

F2: Very few hungry students come to this school.

F1: Yeah.

F2: We do or we have done with one or two that we supply ourselves and I mean ourselves, the heads of year will pay for it themselves, will have breakfast waiting in school for some children. So, you do have a little bit of that but I think, if I'm really honest, it's two reasons why they want to buy at breakfast and break time, partly because the food is more stodgy, or whatever you want to say, more what they want, but also a number of them want to go to clubs and not...but we've worked that so they can now take their food with them as long as they've got their ticket. But that's another problem we have is all the rubbish and the packaging that Sharon has to put on the food for health and safety but then we've got problems within the school.

F3: Because break time is popular amongst all students so it's a bit of a social thing to go and queue to get...

F1: Yeah, it is, definitely.

F2: Ans that's outside. We have...

F3: Like a hatch.

F2: We split the year groups at breaktimes so the Key Stage 4, so that's Year 10 and 11 come into the hall with some Sixth formers and then the 7, 8s and 9s queue outside, at the hatch outside. What's the provision at break time?

F1: Obviously we provide fruit. We provide very popular spicy chicken rolls, so it's like chicken breast that's diced up and it's got like a spicy seasoning on it in a tortilla wrap, so that is really, really popular. Egg and bacon muffins we do, bacon rolls, paninis. Yeah, very varied. We try and change it. I mean we had pancakes and berries for breakfast the other morning. All different.

F3: Would I be right in saying though that some free school meal entitlement children also put money on to buy at break and breakfast?

F1: Yeah.

F3: So they can also top up.

F2: Oh yes, yes.

Interviewer: So it becomes like a supplement.

F2: Yes.

F1: Yeah, of course, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

F2: But what we were finding was there was no money left for dinner and of course the families were reliant on them having a dinner and that caused us some problems.

F1: Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer: Can I just one last question? In terms of the hot meals that are offered and then things like the sandwiches, the salads, just the fresh stuff, is it skewed one direction or another? Are the hot meals more popular or are the sandwiches and wraps and rolls, those salad things, are they more popular or is it seasonal?

F1: To be honest, it's probably half and half because we make about 120 paninis a day. Like six loaves of bread and we cook trays and trays of baguettes. So, I would say it's probably half and half.

Interviewer: Any other...?

Interviewer: I think that's everything.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

F2: Would you like to see break time?

Interviewer: Yes.

END OF AUDIO



