

York Hungry Minds

Qualitative Evaluation Findings

City of York Council
Children, Culture and Communities Scrutiny Committee
3rd December 2025
People Scrutiny Committee



Methodological approach

- ❖ Westfield Primary Community School and Burton Green Primary School
- ❖ Qualitative focus
- ❖ Interviews (n=34)
- ❖ Staff including catering staff, pastoral staff, class teachers and school leadership at both schools were interviewed (n=21)
- ❖ Parents of pupils (n=13)
- ❖ Fieldwork dates: June - August 2024

Previous key findings

Reaching children in poverty

- Awareness of the cost of living pressures
- UFSM helped ease financial pressures
- Added reach of the universal model

“there is a lot of children here as well [and] that it's possibly their only meal a day”
(Westfield School Staff)

Reducing stigma

- Universalism was felt to reduce or eliminate stigma
- Pupils comfortable to sit with their food
- Concerns that two schools were put under ‘the spotlight’

Tackling educational inequalities

- Improved attendance and attainment
- Greater pupil readiness to learn
- Positive impact on pupil behaviour
- Improved health and wellbeing

“It's had an enormous positive effect on attendance ... families that ... struggle to get the children in on time or in regularly enough. It's had a massive impact.”
(Burton Green School Staff)

Practical implementation

- Rapid implementation led to challenges in comms and expectations

“At first I kind of thought it was only for people who were on free school meals. I didn't realise it was for everybody.”
(Burton Green School Parent)

Further methodological approach

- ❖ Creative research methods with pupils from Burton Green Primary School and Westfield Community Primary School
- ❖ 19 creative workshops with over 100 children aged 4-11 (Year groups reception to Year 6)
- ❖ Activities included:
 - ❖ Brainstorming
 - ❖ Drawing
 - ❖ Writing activities
 - ❖ Collaging
 - ❖ Zine-making
 - ❖ Rainbow and cloud activities
- ❖ Fieldwork dates: January – March 2025



Ready for the day

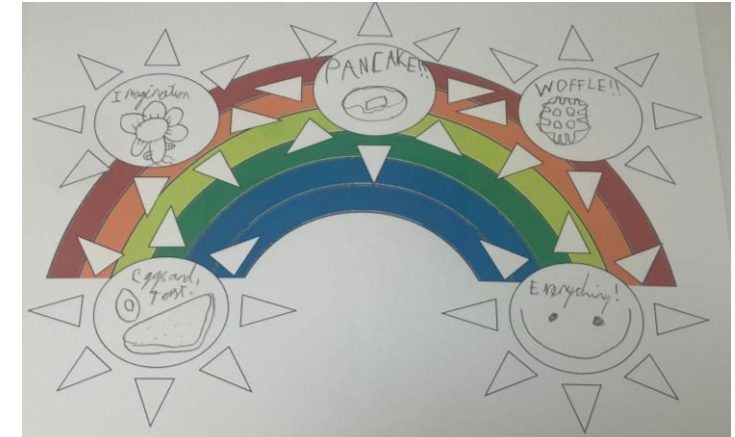
- Previous analysis found that breakfast provision reduced morning stress and improved punctuality for parents and pupils.
- This is reflected in pupils' artwork, with one noting that breakfast club helps when mornings are busy: *"I love this because it's very busy in the morning and I can come here for breakfast"*
- Other pupils shared that they look forward to school and enjoy the breakfast meals.



Work by pupil at Burton Green Breakfast club



A Year 4 pupil at Burton Green outlines what he likes about breakfast club



A collage by a Year 6 pupil at Burton Green School

Children's perception of cost

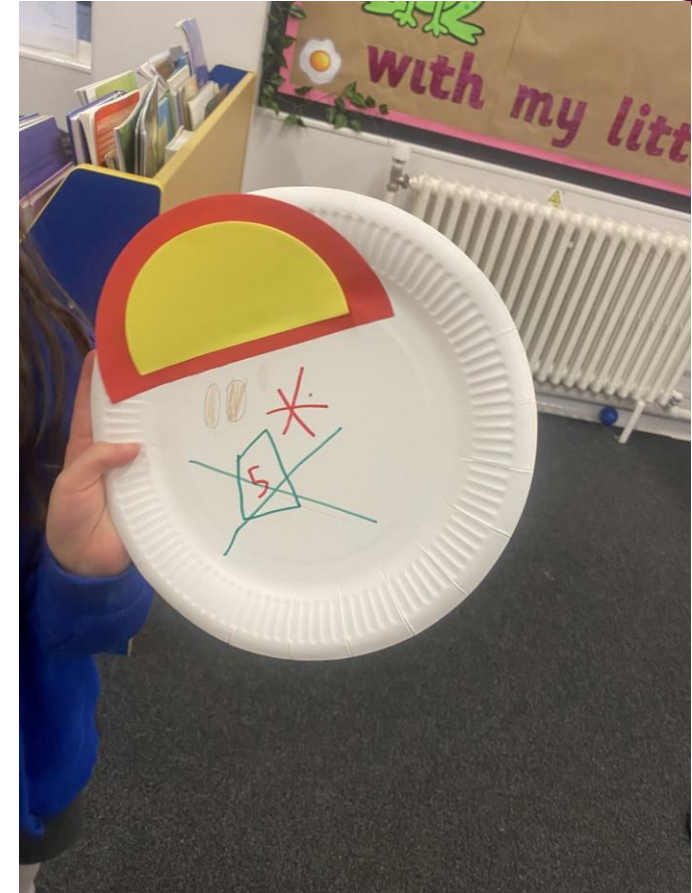
- Pupils show awareness of the value of money, noting that running out of money might make you feel sad
- One pupil mentions enjoying breakfast club because it is free
- Pupils note that they do not need to pay for their food

If you don't have much money, and you run out of pennies you might feel sad.

A researcher writes down something spoken by a pupil at Westfield (Year 1/Year 2 session)



A collage by a Year 6 pupil at Burton Green highlighting that the breakfast club is free

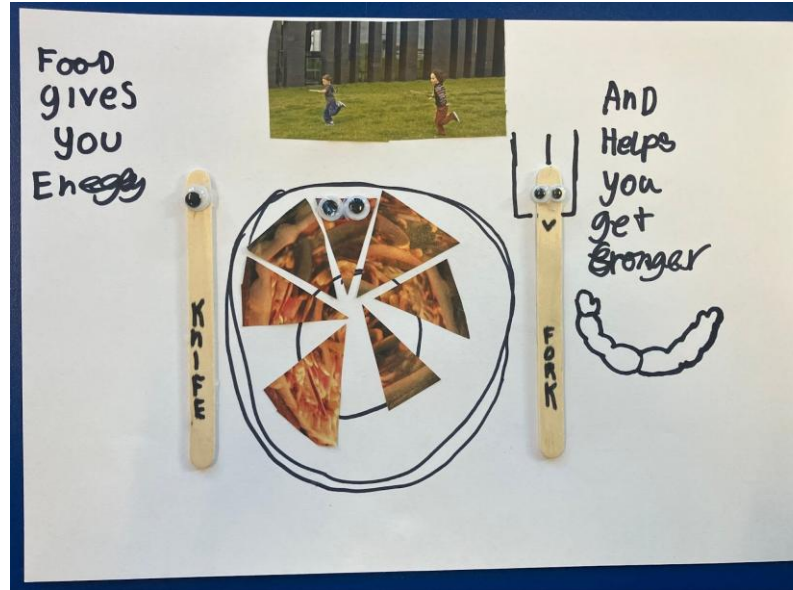


A drawing by a pupil at Westfield Primary School, with the crossed-out £5 note indicating that "you don't have to pay"

Good learning

- Pupils reflect that the food gives them energy and supports good learning.
- This demonstrates their awareness of the importance of healthy eating.
- These views align with feedback from parents and staff, who note that pupils experience fewer energy dips and are fully ready to start their day.

“their behaviours are starting to do the peaks and troughs. We don't see an awful lot of that anymore, which is really nice. And the kids are coming out, you know, after eating, you can tell.”
(Westfield School Staff)



A collage by a Westfield pupil (Year 5/Year 6 session)

“Instead of rocking up late for school because, X, Y, and Z's happened, or they haven't had a good breakfast, they are actually, they're 100 percent ready to face the day alongside their peers.”
(Burton Green School Parent)



Drawing by a child from Westfield (Year 5/Year 6 session)

Friends and food

- Pupils' creative work indirectly reflects the value of universalism, showing them sitting with friends while eating.
- This supports staff observations that pupils enjoy sharing mealtimes with their peers.
- Pupils mention liking to try different foods, echoing staff and parent feedback that they're more open to new foods when friends are eating them too.
- There were also increased opportunities for social interaction between children and staff.

"He won't really like trying them, but he seems to be at school ... Maybe they see other children having it. That might encourage them a bit."

(Westfield School Parent)

"I've spoken to some parents, they're like, my child would never eat it, they're such a fussy eater, but they see their friends eating it, they are going to eat it."

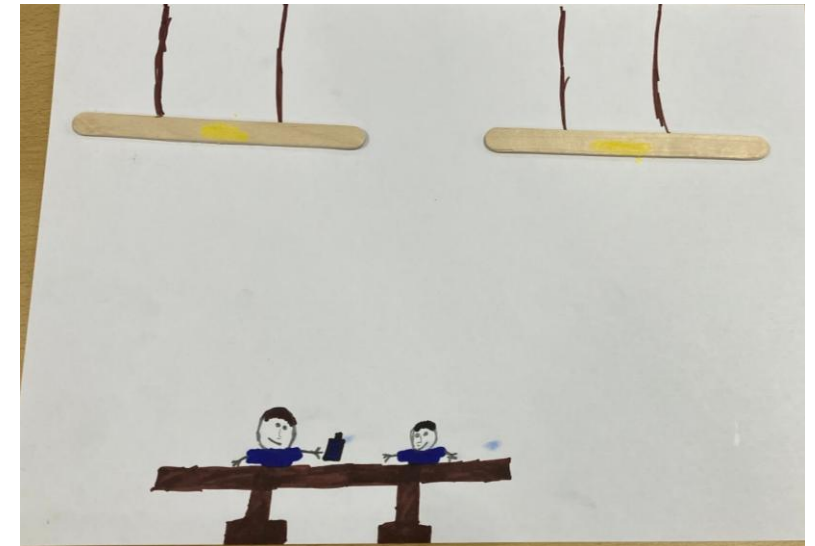
(Westfield School Staff)



A drawing by a child at Westfield (Year 3/Year 4 session)
"I like eating lunch with my friends"



A page of a 'zine' made by a Year 5 pupil at Burton Green School



A drawing of the dining hall by a Westfield pupil (Year 3/Year 4 session)
"Me eating lunch with my friend, the shapes above are the dinner hall lights"



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