



You are what you eat!

Taylor Shaw
Seeing food differently



At Victoria Lane Academy, we want all our children to be the best that they can be and this involves learning about a healthy lifestyle. We understand the importance of a healthy diet and how this can have both a short and longer term impact on the health and education outcomes of our children. This is why we have an outstanding and dedicated kitchen team, who won the national LACA Primary School Catering Team of the Year Award 2016. Our small but close-knit team is led by Marie Wall, our Chef Manager since 2009, who was joined by Jennifer Wilson in 2010 and finally, Debbie Appleby, who joined us in 2017. Despite the recent additional staff member to the team, our catering team has continued to excel in all aspects of primary catering. We work closely with the school lunch provider, Taylor Shaw to develop effective partnerships with all stakeholders and local community members, increasing parental and community engagement to provide excellent outcomes for all.



Engaging School and Local Community

Successful initiatives include:

- Popular menu choice days
- Introducing Nursery dinners - Hungry Little Caterpillar Club
- Fun themed school lunch days for all e.g. Mother's Day, Chinese New Year etc.
- Attending parent meetings/buffet to showcase our quality food
- Embracing global diversity for local community/international visitors - Jamaican lunch pictured below was featured in the local press.



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Our most innovative, successful project - the introduction of a KS2 Healthy Sandwich Bar- proved the team at Victoria Lane Academy is at the cutting edge of food business and curriculum development. In conjunction with KS2 Leader, Mr Blake, our team supported a curriculum project involving pupil surveys, data handling and presentations to persuade older children to have school lunches. According to Mr Blake, "The children were totally engaged and enthusiastic because they had a real life context for applying their mathematical skills on the school lunch project." After working with pupils on fillings and bread products, pupils sampled and chose Deli menu winners. As the school trial was such a resounding success, dramatically reducing the number of unhealthy packed lunches



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and increasing the uptake of school lunches by older pupils, this model was successfully replicated in many county schools.

Our School Chaplain, Father Gary, enjoys a weekly delicious school lunch, commenting, "I cannot speak highly enough of Marie, Jennifer and Emma and their obvious abilities regarding every aspect - including nutritionally and culturally - in managing the whole experience of mealtimes, making them an opportunity to ensure the children (and adults who regularly join them) to grow and bond healthily around the most important part of a day - dinner time around the table. I have attended many of the varied specialised food events on international themes/seasonal events (too numerous to recount) and have found not only the food fantastic but also the overall ambience and experience in the food hall - making meal times more than just good varied and healthy food; but also a social and cultural experience which bonds us together."

By educating children about food, our team make a real difference to many young lives. Some children are anxious around foods, leading to refusal to eat, behaviour problems and loss of academic attainment. One boy, pictured below, only ate chips so he worked individually with Marie, looking closely at foods so that he understood that one type of food can have various different appearances e.g. chips are potatoes. This enabled him to gain a better understanding to reduce his anxieties around food and he now eats a much wider range of foods.

Gayle Hodgkinson, our Family and Support worker, explained, "Marie and the team have worked extremely successfully with children to ensure their complex and additional needs are met. Practices introduced include: menus sent home, monitoring during lunchtime, child cooking sessions, attendance at meetings with professionals including dieticians, and contacting suppliers to request separate halal meat, so individual needs are met leading to successful outcomes".





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“Fun to Cook” Pilot Programme successfully involved 25% of KS2 children!

Both parents and children at Victoria Lane Academy have had opportunities to learn how to cook. The Catering Team successfully trialled a highly effective 4 week food programme, developed by Taylor Shaw, that encompasses healthy eating, food hygiene, as well as cooking to produce a range of delicious meals that the children produced and then took home to enjoy with their families. The second cohort of pupils have just successfully completed this programme that is going to become an annual event and has been rolled out across County Durham.

Supporting Schools, Charities and Communities

In addition to numerous charitable, fundraising events Marie and her team regularly organise, the team are supporting our FAST (Families and Schools Together) programme, sponsored by Save the Children, where whole families from tots to teens eat together. Over eight weeks, Marie and the girls support families to produce a budgeted meal for up to thirty people. Jennifer is renowned for her legendary cakes, tirelessly producing outstanding cakes for raffles, coffee afternoons, Christmas Fairs and a wide range of fundraising and charitable events.



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Annual inspections have continually warranted a 100% success rate for Marie's team over a five year period. Consequently, Marie successfully coaches and mentors other school cooks and teaches apprentices, who work alongside her in school kitchens, to develop their knowledge, skills and



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expertise. The rest of the team successfully step up in Marie's absence to ensure that the service and quality of food at Victoria Lane Academy are always outstanding!

Passion, integrity and teamwork underpins everything that Taylor Shaw undertakes and our exceptional catering team embodies all of these qualities. A truly outstanding and inspirational team of professionals, it is an honour for our school community to work alongside them at Victoria Lane Academy.

The menus show the wide range of quality food on offer for your child to enjoy as well as a packed lunch option. Children are able to have a combination, whereby they stay for school lunches on a Wednesday and Friday and have a packed lunch on other days.

Remember school lunches are free for all 4-7 year olds!