

The Spire Federation – Governor Visit – School Mealtime

18th November – North Cockerington

19th November – East Wold

For my first visit I visited both schools to see the meal time provision and how this has been impacted by the Universal Free School Meals. During both visits I was given a tour by Mrs Thornes, which was very useful for myself having only visited North Cockerington once previously.

The ‘pre’ meal time activity to prepare the halls were well planned and organised, NC had 2/3 helpers to set out tables whilst EW has 1 helper (and more from within the school) and the older children set out tables.* *having had time to reflect on children handling the tables it may need further consideration given the closing mechanism for the legs.*

The meal time was well run by all those involved, with the older children providing a ‘waiter/waitress’ service to the younger children. I felt this was particularly well co-ordinated and gave the older children further experiences which can only add to their learning/growth. The use of separate dinner plates and bowls rather than combined trays adds to the meal experience as having the desserts issued at the same time as the meal would enable some just to eat the dessert without having any of the main meal.

The meals were of high quality and appeared to be enjoyed by those I saw on both days and there was minimal waste from the childrens plates.

During the meal I sat with the lower age end of the children. We discussed their favourite meals, what they liked/disliked about school meals and what they wanted for their favourite meal, which surprisingly wasn’t all junk food. ‘Fish Friday’ appears to be a particular favourite at both schools.

Without the provision of the helpers/dinner ladies none of the mealtime would run so successfully and, I feel, would significantly negatively impact on other areas if Teaching Assistants had to provide this cover without having their own meal break – the investment in this provision is worth continuing.

Many thanks to Mrs Thornes for facilitating these visits and acting as tour guide and also thanks to those who assist at meal times at both schools.

Throughout my visit all the children were engaging, polite, helpful and respectful – certainly a credit to both schools and I look forward to many more visits.

Duncan Langley