

In 2015, Leasowes Primary School, Stafford, took their catering service in house with the assistance of CMC. The then Headteacher, Fergus Rule, wanted a catering service that matched the school's ethos of treating every child as individual and raising standards. The school felt that their catering provision was inflexible and that there was no consultation with them when setting the menus. The quality of food on offer was also poor and morale amongst the catering staff was very low.

Mr Rule decided it was time for change and after viewing the CMC website and consulting with a neighbouring school that had taken their meal provision in-house with support from CMC, he decided to contact us for help as he felt that we shared the same ethos of treating schools as individuals. This ethos was also adopted by the new Headteacher in September 2016, Mrs Gemma Bettany.



## CMC'S SOLUTION

When our CMC consultant, Janette Butcher, visited Leasowes Primary, she found that not only was there inflexibility with the lunch menu but there was also lack of choice, that the meals did not provide value for money and that the lunchtime service was quite slow. The lack of staff development was also of concern to CMC. Janette liaised with the original Catering Manager, Sue Wills, the school's management and pupils, and together they devised two launch-day menus and a new 3-week menu cycle. Once everyone involved was happy with the menus they were implemented in April 2015, with great success.

To reduce the queue congestion at service, the dessert choice was served from a remote trolley which speeded up the service and reduced spillages. Both the children and staff find the new system beneficial as the children now have more time to play and the staff feel that the lunch service is less rushed. This has now developed into a self-serve system which ensures children have some responsibility during service.

New suppliers were also sought to ensure better quality produce at best value. The new Catering Manager, Nicola Todd, now has more freedom of product choice and an increased food budget, all ensuring that the best possible standards of meals are served.

Regular Personal Development meetings were also implemented for the catering staff to ensure that their skills are addressed and improved on a regular basis. This, together with their increased involvement in the decision making process, has led to greater job satisfaction within the catering team.

## THE RESULT

When Leasowes went in house with CMC in April 2015, a small budget profit was predicted. However, with greater autonomy over the menu and the ability to change it to suit their needs, and the improved quality of food, paid meal uptake has increased which has ensured that the budget profit has also increased. This has enabled the school to reinvest back into the catering service. A new dishwasher has been purchased as well as new shelving for the stock room and Headteacher, Mrs Bettany, is now considering bringing the Nursery children on board as from September 2018.

Within two years, with the assistance of CMC, Leasowes Primary School has achieved its aim for the catering service; that of raising standards and allowing its individuality.