

CASE STUDY

Altrincham Preparatory School, Cheshire

Altrincham Prep School is an Independent school in Cheshire providing education for boys aged 3 -11 years. The school is based over 2 sites with meals prepared at one site and delivered to the other.

A contract caterer formerly delivered the catering with little attention paid to the nutritional value and quality of the food. The procurement ethos of the contract caterer was to maximise profit margins, ensuring that the catering manager could only purchase from a limited source of suppliers, this led to restricted menu choices for pupils and staff. The catering team felt undervalued and unmotivated, often having to work at other schools to cover staff shortages.

The school bursar Andrew Jones determined that they could improve the catering provision and make significant savings; following recommendations from another school they contacted CMC for assistance. Under the guidance of catering consultants Gary Stewart and Drew Sinclair, the catering staff and the control of the catering provision was brought in-house. The catering team are now directly employed by the school and assist with planning new healthier menus that meet both the needs of the school and despite being an independent school, the governments' healthy eating guidelines.

The school now use new suppliers through CMC; this has allowed a wider range of food products to be purchased and therefore a broader menu choice. CMC have a simple approach to food procurement, quality at a fair price and the food has to be healthy and nutritious. Where possible local produce and sustainability are key.

After 8 years with the previous catering providers, the Catering Manager Rose Bolton says she and her team have felt significant improvements since going in-house. With the help of CMC they took on and met the challenge that the school

presented them and through this they have improved staff morale resulting in greater job satisfaction. Rose feels that her job focus is now back to where it should be, cooking in the kitchen.

Benefits haven't only been felt in the kitchen; significant savings have been made in the cost of catering. Originally CMC estimated an annual saving in year one of £17,000; however through excellent sourcing of suppliers via CMC's procurement guidelines the actual saving was a phenomenal £27,000. Through CMC's purchasing power the non-food budget also decreased by over 55% in the first year, CMC's transparent procurement policy ensures that the school directly benefits from any savings made when negotiating prices. In years two and three the meal cost has remained the same despite increasing the portion size, nutritional value and choice of food. Taking into account inflation of 3% on raw materials, over a two-year period CMC have managed to save Altrincham Preparatory School a further 6% on budget costs.