



Sanctuary Buildings Great Smith Street Westminster London SW1P 3BT
tel: 0870 0012345 dfes.ministers@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP

His Royal Highness, Prince of Wales

7 September 2004

SCW

Thank you for your letter of 2 August, describing your visit to schools in South Gloucestershire. I apologise for the delay in responding. One of my officials attended at the invitation of the Soil Association and they have provided me with a note outlining the main points that emerged from this stimulating and well organised event.

I too have heard anecdotal evidence that children's behaviour improves when they eat a healthy diet. There are of course other benefits too, as children who eat well are less likely to become obese, or suffer from problems with their health and development.

Like you, I am very pleased that South Gloucestershire Council has taken the time and effort to improve the quality of food in its schools. My officials have had a number of productive discussions with

I understand that the council has decided to promote the use of sustainable produce, not only in school meals, but throughout all of their food services countywide, and I hope that other LEAs will look carefully at what they have achieved. I was pleased to hear that a number of local authority leaders accompanied you on your visit, as they are crucial to influencing change at local level.

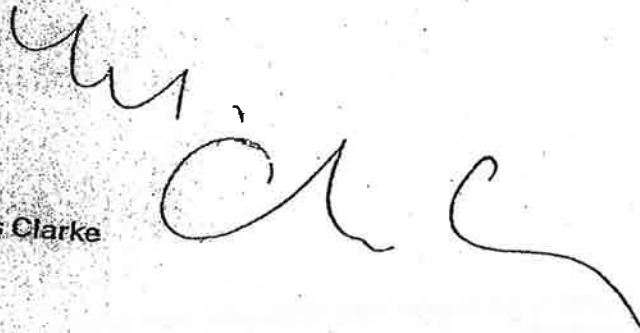
I have read the recent Local Authority Caterers Association report on school meals, which reported that profits from school meals were being used to supplement other education budgets. While it is important that we give schools the autonomy to manage their own budgets, we also recognise that there is a real need to help them improve their approach to food and drink. My officials are working closely with other government departments on ways to increase awareness of the benefits of good food and drink provision in schools. In addition, we have been working with the larger catering suppliers to help identify ways in which we can improve the relationship between schools and providers.



All of this work will be brought together with the publication, in early September, of a Healthy Living Action Plan. It will bring together cross government advice and include examples of best practice about healthy eating and drinking in schools. It will set out what schools can do to improve children's attitudes to food, drink and exercise, and show how developing a 'whole school' approach to food can bring significant improvements to the health of our children. I will make sure that you receive a copy and would be grateful for any further reflections you may have.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your Royal Highness's most humble and obedient servant.

Charles Clarke

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Clarke', written in a cursive style.