

April 2015

At the beginning of March a teacher came to speak to me about concerns he had for one of the pupils in his class who had recently been very tired and lethargic in school and was refusing to eat at lunchtimes. Later that day I met with the boy's father who told me about the numerous doctors and specialist appointments they had attended, of how his child had been admitted to hospital on one occasion due to choking and then refusing to eat solid food.

His mother and father were liquidising all his meals and wanted him to start having a packed lunch instead of school lunch. I persuaded the parents to give me the opportunity of sitting with him the following day to see if I could have any impact, they agreed.

The following day was vegetable pasta and salad. I sat with the boy and his seven peers at the lunch table and started to talk about how delicious the food was, we then played a game of guessing the ingredients. The child in question became very animated when he guessed 3 correct ingredients, and went on to talk about his father who was a chef and how he enjoyed helping him to cook at home. 10 minutes later his plate of food was empty.

The following day we ate lunch together again, sausage and mash. The table talked about their favourite dishes at home as well as at school and described the textures and colours of the food. Again the pupil ate most of his lunch. The next day the pupil came into school having had a bad morning. Roast chicken, roast potatoes and broccoli were on the menu, he refused to eat it. We decided to leave the lunch hall and go to my office for a bit of quiet time. While I was eating my lunch we started to read A Cookbook for Schools by Junior Lopes, the pupil became very excited when he came across the recipe for the vegetable 'booster' pasta sauce and challenged me to guess all of the ingredients. I then challenged him to eat some of his broccoli which he told me he 'hated', he took the challenge and ate three 'trees' of broccoli!

The following day while in the lunch hall the pupil met the Chef, Junior, who he had been so inspired by and was given a copy of his book.

Later that day his parents came to see me, they were both crying with gratitude, not only was the child eating at school but he was also eating solid food again in the home environment.

Kate Wright

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