



One school which has seen the benefits that a home cooked lunch time meal for children can bring in advance of the introduction of Universal School Meals and invested in the infrastructure to deliver the meals, is Bentley High Street Primary School near Doncaster.

Situated in former mining village, Bentley High Street Primary School had no school Kitchens and the meals were transported in from a neighbouring school. The school now has a brand new PKL KitchenPod, a school cook and assistant plus a five lunchtime supervisors and is delivering 230 home cooked meals a day, with this expected to rise to 330 in September with the introduction of Universal Free School Meals.

Head Teacher Janis James has campaigned for the last four years for the school to have its own catering facilities to promote healthy eating and for the school to act as a community hub that supports the whole family as she explains:

"I have long been a champion of the importance of a fresh home-cooked meal for children at school - evidence shows that it helps them to concentrate better at their lessons and can help with behaviour. This can only be a good thing for teachers, parents and the children alike and is very important in a community such as ours. We took the initiative to push for school meals to be cooked on-site in our own kitchen. I am delighted that not only are we offering lovely cooked meals now but that we are also in a great position to be able to deliver the free school meal programme from September."

The new kitchen at Bentley High Street Primary School was as a result of collaboration between the Head Teacher, Doncaster Schools Catering Manager Janet Sylvester and Doncaster Education Construction Services. The team worked together to consider the best option for the school and how it could make the most of the Capital Investment that Doncaster Council was prepared to offer and deliver the Head Teacher's vision for school meals on-site.

The KitchenPod was specified after a wide ranging feasibility study, which also considered a new build and extending the existing scullery. The team chose the KitchenPod solution because of convenience, the time constraints they were faced with to be ready for UFISM and budget. Lead by Janet Sylvester, the team worked with PKL Group to come up with the most appropriate design to ensure that the needs of the school, catering and construction services were met and that a kitchen was delivered that had the capacity to expand as school meal uptake at the school increased.

The PKL KitchenPod at Bentley High Street Primary School is a modern, hygienic and permanent modular kitchen building, which was supplied complete with all the catering equipment that the school needs to deliver the guideline menus in the School Food Plan. Delivered onsite, fully equipped and ready to connect to services, the KitchenPod was designed specifically for schools like Bentley High Street Primary

School which have no kitchen facilities on-site and do not want to give up valuable teaching space to create new or additional catering facilities.

The Pod at Bentley High Street Primary School is a two unit open plan production kitchen, with the capacity to feed up to 450 pupils with the added benefit of being able to expand this by 20% should meal uptake increase as is expected. Prior to the new KitchenPod being installed take up was around 49% for school meals, against a Doncaster Borough average of 59%. Within four weeks, parents were already seeing the quality of the food on offer and this was up by 52% and continues to grow. Staff too now eat lunch with the children, adding to the numbers and the importance of eating together at lunch time.

Jim Hopper, Education Build Project Manager at Construction Services, Doncaster Council said:

"The project was conceived before the UIFSM was launched, and it was the collaboration of all the services within the council and the school that helped lay the foundations for the work that then evolved when the UIFSM was finally announced.

"Information gained from the feasibility study as this project evolved meant that we had a head start in identifying capacity throughout the Borough too. Across the Doncaster area we now have a planned programme of three new kitchens, extensions at a further two schools and over 50 schools benefiting from new and improved equipment. The final collaboration to deliver the UIFSM also saw us partner with the LCVAP schools to ensure a consistent delivery across Doncaster and meet demand for September 2014."