

Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF

To pupils, parents and carers
Heathcote School

Contact: Gerry Kemble
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Date: 5 November 2018

Dear pupils, parents and carers

Catering service and Environmental Health inspection

I am writing this letter to the pupils, parents and carers at Heathcote School to apologise for the lack of openness around the inspection of catering facilities at the school at the start of this term. It is a matter of fact that on 10 September 2018 the Council's environmental health service inspected the catering provision at the school and identified a number of failings on that day resulting in the facilities being graded at level 1. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors were not informed of this inspection or the outcome.

This inspection took place within 72 hours of the Council's catering service starting the provision of the catering facilities at the school but it was nonetheless unacceptable that these failings were identified.

I would further like to apologise to the Headteacher and Governing Board at Heathcote School that we didn't make them fully aware of the issues that had arisen. The Headteacher and Chair of Governors contacted me on Friday as soon as members of the school community had brought this to their attention. If the school had been aware I know that they would have shared this information in an appropriate way with the wider school community.

Whilst the actions of the Council's catering service in September were simply not good enough, I can confirm that all corrective actions were taken within 24 hours of the inspection to ensure compliance and to immediately address the failings that had been highlighted.

Following the immediate actions to address the concerns highlighted Waltham Forest Traded Services then commissioned an independent auditor who works with the Royal Society of Health to review the initial report and our immediate corrective actions. I can confirm that they reported within days that the catering provision at Heathcote School was then consistent with the service we provide elsewhere.

By way of context pupils, parents and carers should be reassured that the norm for our provision in other educational establishments is a rating at level 4 or 5.

As a service we immediately requested a re-inspection and therefore hope it will take place imminently. Clearly as this is an entirely independent process we are not able to confirm a date of re-inspection.

In the meantime the catering service would welcome the wider school community seeing for themselves the quality of provision at the school. The catering facilities will therefore be available for parents, carers and governors to view on Friday 9 November between 8 am and 11am and then between 1.15 pm and 3.15pm. Please contact the school office if you wish to take up this opportunity. In addition pupils will be offered a time of their own.

Finally, and as a demonstration of our determination to rebuild your confidence in the catering services we will provide the Christmas meal at the school free of charge to pupils.

If any pupils, parents or carers have specific queries or wish to discuss this further they should call me on 07817 431464. Whilst I can't guarantee to answer immediately I will get back to you and I would be happy to meet you face to face if that will assist.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Kemble', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Gerry Kemble
Head of Waltham Forest Traded Services