

## Don't say yuk say yum

**Young people are fed up with greasy, over cooked school dinners and some are taking action to improve the quality of food they are given.**

### Don't say yuk, say yum

*The new Jamie Oliver television series starting next week will highlight just how unhealthy* Sometimes the food they give us at school is greasy and overcooked school meals are.

But it's not just celebrity chefs who can raise awareness, young people in London are also taking action, as reporters from Children's Express found out:

2004 saw healthy eating grab headlines across the media. The words "children" and "obesity" were mentioned together in articles an astonishing 1,764 times.

What's more it was announced that almost 17 percent of children under the age of 15 in the UK were obese.

But how much of this is down to young people themselves? After all, primary age children can't choose what they get to eat at school and often have to eat unhealthy food that they don't like:

"Sometimes the food they give us at school is greasy and overcooked," says 10-year-old Cerise, from Brent in North London.

Dmitri, also 10 and from Brent, adds: "School dinners are OK sometimes, like the dessert, but the meals are not very nice, they are all soggy."

While David, 10, holds no punches: "The food is disgusting!"

These young people are not alone in disliking school meals. Recently pupils, parents and governors at Brookfield School in Camden, were so worried about the increasingly unacceptable state of the school meals that they did their own survey looking at what was being served, whether it looked appetising and whether the portions were filling.

The results of the survey confirmed their concerns and the school has now opted out of the Local Education Authority meals, which are provided across Camden by major corporation Scolarest, who provides school dinners for many schools across Camden and Islington and also runs Burger King.

When Brookfield School changed the catering provider in January, they started serving twice the amount of meals. The new school motto is "Don't say 'yuk', say 'yum!' " and everyone is encouraged to have a portion of vegetables or salad with their lunch. Even the baked beans are made on site.

If young people feel school meals aren't nutritious or appetising, they can take action like they have in Camden. They can write a letter to the head teacher, or draw up a petition. They can tell parents, or phone the council. After all, they are the customers, and at the end of the day, they should be able to say: "Yum".

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### About the team

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