

Magic Breakfast Charity welcomes the School Food Plan

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£3.15 million pledged to give breakfasts to pupils too hungry to learn

Leading food charity, Magic Breakfast, welcomes the recommendations set out in the School Food Plan, published by the Department for Education today. The Plan is designed to increase the quality and take up of school meals and inspire a love of good food in children, helping them to boost their academic performance and lead healthy lives.

Magic Breakfast's founder, Carmel McConnell, has been a member of the independent panel of experts working with Henry Dimbleby and John Vincent, who have led the school food review at the request of the Secretary of State.

Carmel McConnell: "Henry and John have created a plan which represents a wide body of school food expertise and it has been a pleasure to work with them to support the development of this plan. It is an important and radical set of actions, which could upgrade the food experience of a whole generation of school children. I have personally committed to help John and Henry achieve all the areas identified as priorities in the coming year".

"For the past 10 years, including three years as Board Member of the School Food Trust, I've campaigned for more breakfast support for hungry children as well as improved lunches, aware that good school food drives child educational access and attainment. At Magic Breakfast, we know from our own research that a hungry or malnourished child cannot concentrate and will fall behind in lessons. We can't emphasize enough how important it is for children to be given nutritious food at school because, sadly, all too often there are empty cupboards at home".

"As well as welcoming the Government's pledge of cash to increase the uptake of school meals, we are particularly pleased to see that they have committed £3.15 million over the next two years to ensure healthy breakfasts are available to those pupils in greatest need".

Contact:

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Notes to editors:

Magic Breakfast provides free, healthy breakfasts of porridge, cereals, bagels and orange juice, to over 7,500 pupils in 229 primary schools in areas of high social deprivation across the UK. Food brands Quaker Oats and Tropicana Orange Juice donate their products free of charge and subsidise logistics cost for the

charity.

Staff at the Magic Breakfast's partner schools have reported significant improvements in the behaviour and academic performance of pupils regularly attending a Magic Breakfast club:

- 93% of staff surveyed noticed an increase in concentration and energy among their pupils
- 74% noted an improvement in their pupils' behaviour
- 94% of their pupils had healthier eating habits as a result of regularly eating a Magic Breakfast.

For more information, please see: www.magicbreakfast.com

Quotes from teachers at Magic Breakfast schools:

"I've seen a child slip under his desk, faint with hunger. I've taken him out, given him a drink and one of your bagels and he sprang back into life. He'd probably not eaten anything since school dinner the day before. That's why we rely on Magic Breakfast. With breakfast, children are ready and able to learn."

"Some of our children come to school with the remains of yesterday's take away in their lunch box – some cold fried chicken (mostly bones) and a few cold chips."

"At about 11.30 children start going to the classroom door because they can smell the school lunch and are hungry. They can't wait to get into the main hall to eat. We have to ask them to sit down and wait. It's heartbreaking."

"These kids only have one chance at childhood, and one chance at education. Education is going to be their best way out of poverty. By feeding and valuing them, Magic Breakfast makes a practical difference to these children every single day".

The School Food Plan was published at 9.30am on 12 July 2013, and is available by visiting www.education.gov.uk or www.schoolfoodplan.com.