



Taunton School

Taunton School is a co-educational independent school in Somerset, serving boarding and day school pupils from nursery age through to 18. Its goal is to challenge, nurture and inspire its pupils. The school also runs an International School for overseas students.

This project saw Litmus review the in-house catering operation at the school and produce an evidence-based report to outline how service innovations and financial savings could be made.

Background

The school's new management team wanted to carry out a fresh review of the catering services provided, to identify how efficiently the service was operating against industry best practice and financial benchmarks, and whether there were opportunities for improvement.

Brief

The seven objectives Litmus was briefed on were:

- ▶ To qualitatively review the operational performance of the service in the context of the resources deployed to deliver it;
- ▶ To provide clarity on where the school's resources were being applied and what value was being derived from that spend against sector benchmarks;
- ▶ To evaluate the effectiveness of the management and staffing structures and processes in delivering the services;
- ▶ To use the review findings to make an assessment of overall value for money;
- ▶ To conduct an evaluation of the school's options for maintaining or improving quality and a value for money service;
- ▶ To provide a better means of controlling budget expenditure; and
- ▶ To evaluate the process for registering meal attendances.

Approach

Joe Parfitt, the Litmus Partnership, said: "It's always important to us to understand how the environment is currently operating so we spent two days at the school engaging with a range of stakeholders including the catering staff themselves, the Senior Leadership Team, heads of boarding and finance officers. We also reviewed student feedback as well as observing meal services, preparation, catering space and menu planning.

"The information we obtained during these two days provided context for the desk-based benchmarking we carried out on the cost of the services. This included an independent benchmarking of food commodity spend across a month."

Outcomes

Litmus produced an in-depth report for the school's management team, which outlined the current performance of the department against industry best-in-class practice. It also detailed how food and labour spend was apportioned across the services, with recommendations for how budgeting and spend-tracking could be improved.

Furthermore, Litmus provided the school with resource recommendations and revised practices that were likely to deliver a better service, as well as a roadmap for implementation of the school's preferred options/recommendations.

▶▶ *This was an interesting project as it gave us the opportunity to really get under the skin of the school resulting in an evidence-based report that will enable them to not only improve services but to get better value, making a genuine impact on the bottom line.* ◀◀

Joe Parfitt, the Litmus Partnership



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