



MARLBOROUGH COLLEGE

Marlborough College, Wiltshire

Marlborough College is a full boarding school for pupils aged 13 to 18 with aspiration and a contemporary vision. It offers outstanding facilities and opportunities academically, in sport and in the arts, in an incomparable historic market town setting.

Background

Catering is delivered by a committed in-house team, achieving a high standard of provision. However, the College's management team was keenly aware that the dining room experience for pupils and staff could be improved. The Norwood Hall dining space is significant in terms of both footprint and height, but it can be intimidating particularly for the younger students. Whilst service flows are efficient due to its generous mirrored design, counterpane is dated, and the bench style of seating adds to its institutional feel.

Brief

The time had come to re-design the space to provide a more contemporary and welcoming dining experience. However, the College did not wish to second-guess what needs to happen. This was a once in a generation opportunity and the views of all stakeholders were considered vital, not least those of pupils whose early lives are shaped by their College experience. Litmus was therefore asked to conduct a Consumer Insight programme to capture these views to determine what matters most to the community so that the development has the best chance of transforming the space to meet the needs of the majority.

Approach

We conducted pupil focus group sessions, during which all aspects of the catering service were discussed, but with a focus on what mattered most to them about catering and how they would like to see the services develop around these issues. We wrote statements of importance on a flip chart during each session, and then pupils ranked how important each issue was to them as individuals.

We also conducted interviews with key staff and potential benefactors for the refurbishment.

From these findings we created survey questions in a digital format that all pupils and staff had the chance to respond to. The survey generated satisfaction gaps between customer expectations and actual experience. It also provided specific data on aspects of design that needed to be considered as part of the future refurbishment.

Outcomes

Two-thirds of pupils and a third of staff responded to the survey, with even representation across different College demographics. This gave us confidence that the views expressed were truly representative of opinions. "Quick wins" have been actioned and the foundations laid for the next stage of the design process.

►► *Litmus guided us through a Consumer Insight process which has generated an excellent dataset, and which will help us design the future catering operation within our dining hall. The results of the survey are very powerful, and we have been impressed with the granularity that the Litmus team were able to generate from the whole process. It is perhaps the greatest testament that the pupils and staff all found the process enjoyable, and our response rate (to the online survey) was excellent. Going forward, the data we now have will be pivotal in guiding our investment decisions and we plan to repeat the survey on a regular basis.* ◄◄

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