

IMPROVING BREAKFAST CLUBS

Lessons From The Best



Andrew Harrop and Guy Palmer

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This research report is the latest product of a long-standing collaboration between the New Policy Institute, Kellogg's and Education Extra. The three organisations have previously worked together to produce *Breakfast Clubs: A 'How To' Guide* and the Breakfast Clubs website, www.breakfast-club.co.uk, as well as launching the National Breakfast Club Awards Scheme. This year-long appraisal of the winners of the 2000 Awards Scheme could not have happened without the support of Kellogg's and Education Extra. In particular, we are grateful to acknowledge Kellogg's' generous funding of the project.

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Responsibility for the content and any errors rests with the authors alone.

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FOREWORD

This is the fourth New Policy Institute report about breakfast clubs. As with our previous publications, it is aimed at a variety of audiences. The most important group are the people involved in running clubs. What follows is not meant to be simply an assessment of a handful of clubs, but a source of ideas, advice and inspiration for everyone involved with breakfast clubs. This is reflected in the whole approach of the report, and in particular in the attention that we pay to the goals that clubs set themselves, to participants' own perceptions of their clubs' impacts, and to the pitfalls and new ideas encountered along the way.

The report is also targeted at policy makers, researchers and commentators. Since we started working on this subject, breakfast clubs have come a long way. The breakfast club 'movement' stands at the intersection of several key developments in public policy, not least the 'childcare revolution', the rise of out of school hours learning, and the government's ambitious agenda for social inclusion. But still, the status of breakfast clubs seems a little ambiguous and insecure. Our suspicion is that breakfast clubs are catching only the slipstream of the energy and resources being devoted to childcare, study support, and school standards.

Our report highlights the contribution breakfast clubs are making to these social policy agendas, but it also paints a picture of clubs' wider work, and the problems they face. We hope this fuller picture will assist those considering what role breakfast clubs should play in the future.

Finally, congratulations to all Breakfast Club Award Winners, past, present and to come.

Andrew Harrop
Guy Palmer

1. SUMMARY

This report sets out the results of a year-long study of the 58 breakfast clubs that won awards in the 2000 UK-wide Breakfast Clubs Award scheme. The study comprised two surveys of the winning clubs, undertaken at the start and end of the 2000/01 school year respectively, plus more in-depth case studies during the year in 10 selected clubs. The case study research involved visits to see the clubs in action, and the collection of information and opinion from club co-ordinators, children and parents.

The report has two main purposes:

- To understand the aims of these clubs and the extent to which these aims are being met.
- To identify those issues with which the clubs have been grappling, including examples of good practice.

This report is not designed to be an objective assessment of breakfast clubs on average – after all, the study is exclusively of clubs which have won awards. Rather, it is designed to investigate what is possible, in terms of both benefits and good practice.

AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The breakfast clubs generally aimed to achieve a range of objectives, rather than strive toward a single goal. All of the clubs surveyed had more than one major aim and many were reluctant to prioritise one objective over others. Furthermore, some of their aims were clearly complementary. For example, while providing for children's social needs or improving nutrition are viewed as important objectives in their own right, most clubs also value them as ways to help improve children's educational performance.

In this context, the clubs aimed to meet four main areas of need:

- **Health and nutrition:** an aim of all of the clubs in the study, and the primary aim for two fifths (although most clubs did not see themselves as simply there for children who would not otherwise have a good breakfast).
- **Improving children's education:** an aim of all of the clubs in the study, and the primary aim for two fifths. The clubs aimed to improve education both directly by providing learning opportunities at the club and indirectly by providing a good start to the educational experience throughout the day.
- **Children's social needs:** all of the clubs aimed to meet social needs, through improving the social experience of the school day and equipping children with enhanced social and personal skills.
- **Parents and family life:** in three quarters of the primary schools, but only one third of the secondary schools, one of the stated aims of the club was to improve the school's relations with parents. Around half of the primary schools also intended to provide childcare, although very few regarded this as their main aim.

Health And Nutrition

Parents were asked for their views at six of the case study clubs. Most who expressed an opinion felt that their children were substantially benefiting from the provision of breakfast. More than half said that they sometimes or always struggled to get their child to eat breakfast before leaving home, while many parents commented that children were happier eating at the club than at home. Children were asked for their views at eight of the case study clubs. Those who responded were almost always happy with the food on offer, many of them admitted not eating breakfast other than at the club and more than half reported that, without the club, they went hungry before lunch.

Although popular, it was clear that the breakfasts at the clubs were not always nutritious and well-balanced. Rather, most of the clubs seem to have adopted a ‘give them what they want’ philosophy, usually to ensure good take up of breakfast, and sometimes to restrict costs to available budgets. In the survey, two thirds of clubs reported offering healthy options but the case studies also revealed clubs attempting to promote more nutritious food but giving up because of low take up. Whilst this is understandable, it is also unfortunate.

A key issue for clubs is therefore whether they can do anything to improve the nutrition level of their breakfasts. From the case studies, the strategies which appeared to be most successful were:

- A ‘softly, softly’ approach, offering options rather than trying imposition.
- A pragmatic approach, offering (for example) beans on toast rather than fruit.
- Engaging the children’s interest, for example ‘special days’ with different food.

All the clubs emphasised the importance of providing for children where food is not on offer at home, although none saw themselves as *exclusively* there for deprived children who would otherwise not eat in the morning. Encouragingly, most of the clubs were succeeding in attracting disproportionate numbers of children claiming free school meals, a group which is less likely to eat breakfast at home.

Nevertheless clubs also reported that it was not always straightforward to persuade particular children to attend. Suspicion and stigma from children or parents, or an inability to pay charges or arrive early, meant that some of those who would most benefit were not necessarily taking advantage of clubs. There was general agreement that any proactive efforts to attract particular children had to be handled sensitively to avoid stigmatisation. To get round the payment issue, one club was successfully operating an informal free-breakfast policy for targeted children, without making this explicit or widely known, and another planned to introduce payment by swipe card for all food in the school, with automatic credits to the cards of children entitled to free school meals.

Education

All of the clubs believed that attendance at the breakfast club provided a good start to the day, leaving the children more settled, attentive and motivated to learn. Specific objectives ranged from aiming to improve children's punctuality and attendance to raising standards of concentration and behaviour by preventing children going hungry in the mornings. In the survey of all clubs, co-ordinators were asked to give their impressions of the educational impact of the club over the school year:

- **Attendance at school:** three quarters felt that the club had helped to improve attendance at the school and one in five said that the club had contributed to significant improvements.
- **Punctuality:** three quarters felt that the club had helped improve punctuality and a quarter thought that the club had contributed to significant improvements.
- **Concentration during the morning:** four in five schools felt that the club had helped improve concentration in morning lessons, although few reported significant improvements.
- **Academic performance during the morning:** half felt that the club had helped improve academic performance in morning lessons. However, few reported significant improvements and one third said they were unable to give an opinion.

Six of the case study clubs completed child monitoring forms which asked for impressions of the club's impact on individual children. The results again pointed to improved concentration and academic performance. The equivalent information for attendance, however, was not sufficiently complete to draw any conclusions. Finally, most parents at the six case study clubs who were asked also believed that the clubs were providing educational benefits, in terms of providing a good start to the day and improved attitudes to school.

Given their short duration, most of the clubs felt that there was little time for activities other than breakfast and informal social interaction. On the other hand, some believed that, with a bit of imagination, it is possible to encourage some study support activity. The most popular approach was to foster an environment where children can choose to read, play games or finish off homework, without these activities being forced on them.

Only a minority of any year cohort might be expected to attend a breakfast club on a regular basis, so one would not necessarily expect improvements in these children to have a noticeable impact on the school's overall academic performance, particularly in a single year. Nevertheless, it is interesting that an analysis of academic results in 2001 compared to 2000 shows that, whereas some of the surveyed schools showed some improvements in 2001, roughly the same number showed worsening results. Furthermore, the results of the surveyed schools were not noticeably different than those of other schools with apparently similar levels of disadvantage.

Social Needs

The survey revealed a series of inter-locking goals related to children's social lives and social development. At the most basic level, clubs provide a warm, dry place for children to spend time with friends before school. But they also usually enable children to engage in sorts of social interactions that they might not otherwise experience – with adults, with children in other years, and with their friends in a reasonably quiet, calm way. The case studies also suggested that there are particular benefits for specific groups of children, including those who were bullied, lacked confidence or had learning or behavioural difficulties.

Club co-ordinators often suggested that the friendly and calm atmosphere of the breakfast club set the tone for the rest of the day and that this benefited children's social development. But the survey evidence on the impact on children's behaviour was mixed: while more than half of the clubs reported some overall improvements in behaviour, only a few had noticed significant improvements. In addition, at the six clubs where child monitoring forms were completed, staff did not identify significant improvements in most children's behaviour.

In several of the clubs, children are heavily involved in the running of the club, to the perceived benefit of both the club and the children. Examples include involvement in decision-making about future menus and activities, taking responsibility for preparing and clearing away the food, and acting as a volunteer worker for the club.

Parents and Family Life

While providing childcare was not the most important objective for the clubs themselves, it was clearly viewed as a key benefit by many parents. At three of the six case studies where parents filled in questionnaires, one third of parents said that childcare provision was the most important benefit of their child's club, usually citing their need to leave early for work as the main reason for this. In contrast, at the other three clubs, few parents reported being in full time work and needing early morning childcare.

OTHER ISSUES FOR THE CLUBS

Increasing Adult Participation

The study revealed that different breakfast clubs use a wide range of people to staff the clubs. The clubs frequently made use of the increasing number of members of staff in school who are not teachers, in particular, learning mentors and classroom assistants.

<i>Evidence from the survey of all clubs: people involved in staffing the clubs (29 responses)</i>	
<i>Teachers, heads and deputy heads</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Classroom assistants and learning mentors</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Catering staff</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Lunchtime supervisors</i>	one fifth of the clubs
<i>Parents</i>	one fifth of the clubs
<i>Older children</i>	one third of the clubs

There was general agreement that increasing the involvement of all of these groups was desirable, if possible. But, within this, experiences varied. Many of the clubs found it difficult to involve either parents - usually because they are not involved in the school more generally - or teachers - mainly because teachers had so many other time commitments and did not want to take on more responsibility.

In contrast, the increasing use of non-teaching staff in schools was widely viewed as one of the major factors in helping both the setting-up and on-going operation of breakfast clubs. Some of the clubs had been established initially because a non-teaching member of staff, such as a development worker, had the time and energy to push the process through. Learning mentors and classroom assistants made a big contribution to the day-to-day operation of clubs, particularly because they tended to have good inter-personal and practical skills.

Similarly, changes in the delivery of lunchtime catering also appeared to have had a big impact on the possibilities for breakfast clubs. Many of the schools in the study had opted-out of LEA catering and started to deliver catering either in-house or through a private sector contractor, on the grounds that this gave them more control and flexibility.

Ensuring Financial Sustainability

The reported costs of running the clubs varied considerably, mainly depending on whether staff costs were included or were treated as part of the school's mainstream budgets. These differences are significant because staff, rather than food and equipment, are the major costs of running a breakfast club.

Around two thirds of the clubs charged the children for food and one third did not. Among those which did charge, the rate is typically between 30p and 60p a day. Those clubs that did charge were typically aiming to recover the costs of the food, rather than making any significant contribution to staff costs. Deciding whether or not to charge is a key issue for clubs, and the survey and interviews were not conclusive on which was the right approach. On the one hand, charging may be essential for the financial viability of the club and may mean that the children and parents value the service. On the other hand, charging can have an impact on take-up and may affect clubs' ability to attract more disadvantaged children (although this is not always the case).

The importance of external funding varies hugely from club to club. Where on-going funding requirements are virtually nil (with charges to the children paying for the food and staff time provided from within existing school budgets) external funding is mainly needed for one-off purchases, such as fridges, magazine racks and games. At the other extreme, the requirement may be several thousand pounds per year if resources are needed to cover both food and staff costs. In such situations, securing funding is a major issue. The survey suggested that, apart from the school itself, there is no obvious dominant source for funding and support, with a variety of potential sources in both public and private sectors. Moreover, much of the funding clubs initially hoped to receive had not materialised by the end of the year. This evidence of the precarious nature of external funding suggests that internal school funding, or secure multi-year external grants, could play a key role in ensuring the sustainability of clubs.

In summary, Breakfast clubs need to address the following key financial questions:

- **Charging:** should there be a charge to the children for breakfast or should it be provided free? If charged for, should the 'most needy' children also have to pay or should they receive free breakfasts? If they are to receive free breakfasts, how can this be done without any potential stigma?
- **Budgeting practice:** what items of expenditure should be considered as costs of the breakfast club? If staff costs are included, how can these costs be funded and how can the club remain viable? If staff costs are excluded, is the school incurring new 'hidden' costs?

- **Funding sources:** is the club clear about the scale of its funding requirement, given its charging policies and the budgeting practices of the school? Has it approached the major public sector sources, including the New Opportunities Fund and geographically targeted initiatives such as Health and Education Action Zones and SRB partnerships? Is any private sector support a possibility?

Other Interesting Ideas

The list below summarises some of interesting ideas that some clubs had found beneficial:

- ‘Special days’ to encourage experimentation in food and/or activities.
- Teeth brushing at the club.
- Involving the children in the decision-making about the club.
- Children helping out as volunteers (or paid a small amount) with responsibilities.
- Expecting children to prepare/clear up for themselves.
- Putting classroom assistants in charge of the club.
- Involving catering staff in non-food related activities.
- Teachers ‘around but not in charge’.
- A free breakfast in exchange for 15 minutes of supported reading/numeracy work.
- Inviting children/parents to contribute food once in a while.
- Experiment sessions to give children a chance to decide what they want to do.
- Get children to devise and implement fundraising schemes, with adult support.
- Ask social services to pay for some children – e.g. those on the at risk register
- Setting up an after-school café alongside the club.
- Encourage children who do not want to eat to come in with their friends to talk or participate in activities.
- Promoting a secondary school breakfast club by inviting primary school leavers who already attend a breakfast club.

2. INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT

This report sets out the results of a year-long study of the 58 breakfast clubs that won awards in the 2000 UK National Breakfast Clubs Awards scheme.¹ The study comprised two surveys of the winning clubs, undertaken at the start and end of the 2000/01 school year respectively, plus more in-depth case studies during the year in 10 selected clubs.

The report has two main purposes:

- To understand the aims of these clubs and the extent to which these aims are being met.
- To identify those issues with which the clubs have been grappling, including examples of good practice.

The structure of the report follows these two purposes:

- Chapter 3 has four sections which discuss the extent to which the clubs are achieving their objectives, in turn covering health and nutrition, educational improvement, social needs and family life. Each section commences with the school's perspective, before moving on to the perspectives of the children and their parents.
- Chapters 4 and 5 discuss some of the main issues with which the clubs have been grappling, first non-financial and then financial.

Appendix A provides a summary of the Breakfast Clubs Award Scheme. Appendix B provides a copy of the questionnaires sent to the 58 clubs that won awards in 2000 plus copies of the questionnaires completed by the club organisers, the children and their parents at selected case study clubs.

The report is not designed to be an objective assessment of breakfast clubs on average – after all, the study is exclusively of clubs which have won awards. Rather, it is designed to investigate what is possible, in terms of both benefits and good practice. Those interested in further discussion of breakfast clubs should refer to our previous reports:

- *Fit For School: How Breakfast Clubs Meet Health, Education and Childcare Needs* is a selection of papers which set out the potential benefits of breakfast clubs.
- *Food For Thought: Breakfast Clubs and Their Challenges* is a wide-ranging survey of breakfast clubs throughout the country, highlighting the issues that clubs themselves and policy makers need to address to ensure their successful development.
- *Breakfast Clubs - A 'How To' Guide* provides advice to schools and others wishing to set up breakfast clubs and to those running existing clubs who wish to improve them.²

¹ The Breakfast Clubs Awards scheme is an annual award sponsored by Kellogg's in association with Education Extra. It is open to all breakfast clubs and gives out awards for both new and established clubs (as discussed in Appendix A).

² All of these reports are available on request. The 'How To' guide is available free of charge from the Breakfast Clubs web site (www.breakfast-club.co.uk). *Fit for School* and *Food for Thought* are available from the New Policy Institute for a combined price of £15.

WHAT ARE BREAKFAST CLUBS?

A breakfast club is an example of before-school provision, typically open for between thirty and sixty minutes before the start of lessons. Some are school-based whilst others use community resources. All offer food in some form or another. Some also have a remit to provide study support or promote healthy eating, while others focus primarily on providing childcare and social opportunities for children.

In providing such services, breakfast clubs aim to help children and families in a number of ways, including:

- Improving health and nutrition.
- Supporting education.
- Offering social opportunities.
- Providing childcare facilities.

These aims often overlap. For example, as well as improving health and nutrition, the provision of breakfast also aims to make an educational contribution by improving the concentration of children in the morning session.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CLUBS SURVEYED

The Schools

All 58 winning clubs were invited to take part in the research. Of these, 33 agreed to take part. Among these clubs, 19 were based in primary schools, 10 in secondary schools and 3 in special schools. One of the clubs was based at a charity educating children who had dropped out of the school system. 14 of the clubs were being established in 2000/01, and 19 were already up and running.

Most of the 33 schools had a high number of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This was because, in making their decisions, the awards' judging panel took account of the numbers of children at each school who were from low-income families. On average, the primary schools involved in the study had around 40% of children on free school meals, the secondary schools around 20% and the special schools more than half.

Many of the schools had low levels of academic achievement, even compared to schools with apparently similar levels of disadvantage. In most, the levels of absenteeism was above the national average of 6%.

By chance, except for the special schools, most of the schools had relatively few children from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Children Attending the Clubs

The clubs tended to have a higher share of children on free school meals than the schools in which they were based, by a factor of around one and a half. This is a sign that clubs disproportionately attract children who are particularly likely to benefit.

In terms of both gender and ethnic background, club members tended to reflect the make-up of children attending the schools from which the children are drawn. The clubs were most popular among children in years 4, 5 and 6 at primary schools, and years 7, 8 and 9 at secondary schools.

Location and Facilities

The clubs typically operated in a lunchtime dining area, or in an alternative space with cooking facilities. In discussion, some club co-ordinators mentioned how much they valued a small friendly environment away from a large dining hall. Schools using dining halls, however, still tended to create a relatively intimate atmosphere, either as a result of the design of the room, or through the use of partitions.

Hours

More than two thirds of the clubs operated five days a week, with the others operating on two or three days. On average, the clubs ran for around forty minutes, typically starting at 8am or 8.10am. Many of the clubs, especially those for older children, were ‘drop-in’ with children arriving and leaving as they chose.

Numbers Attending

There was considerable variation in the number of children attending different breakfast clubs: the average was 32, with a range from 10 to 90.

There is some evidence that the clubs struggled to maintain attendance over the course of the year. Between the two surveys, 13 clubs lost members while 7 gained. Of those losing members, 5 lost more than a third of the children attending earlier in the year. It is worth noting, however, that the second survey took place in the summer term, when participation in all sorts of school activities tends to decline.

Food

Most of the clubs offered a range of different types of food and drink. Almost all offered cereals, toast with spreads and cold drinks. Two thirds offered fruit or yoghurt, another two thirds offered cooked food, and another two thirds provided hot drinks. There was little evidence of clubs limiting the amount of food children could eat, with seconds often permitted.

Activities

In almost all of the clubs, the main activities were breakfast and informal social interaction. Given their short duration, most of the clubs felt there was little time for other things. In many clubs, however, other activities did take place, at least to a limited extent. These included unsupervised reading, homework, and games.

Finances

There is great diversity in the scale of clubs’ declared running costs. This is mainly due to differing treatment of staff costs; while some reported significant staff costs, most recorded little or none.

The sources of financing were also diverse.

Evidence from the survey of all clubs: sources of funding (29 responses)

<i>Charging children</i>	two thirds of clubs
<i>Mainstream school budget allocation</i>	one quarter of clubs (including half of secondary schools)
<i>Health Authority funding</i>	one fifth of clubs
<i>Education Action Zone funding</i>	one quarter of primary school clubs
<i>Private sector support</i>	one fifth of clubs

Despite other funding, three fifths of new clubs felt that their launch had only been possible because of the Breakfast Club Award grant.

One of the clearest demarcations that emerged was between the two thirds of clubs which charged children for food and the one third which did not. Among those clubs which did charge, most asked for less than 60p per day.

Adult Participation

The study revealed that different breakfast clubs use a wide range of people to staff the clubs. Clubs frequently made use of the increasing number of members of staff in school who are not teachers, in particular, learning mentors and classroom assistants.

Evidence from the survey of all clubs: people involved in staffing the clubs

<i>Teachers, heads and deputy heads</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Classroom assistants and learning mentors</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Catering staff</i>	half of the clubs
<i>Lunchtime supervisors</i>	one fifth of the clubs
<i>Parents</i>	one fifth of the clubs
<i>Older children</i>	one third of the clubs

Often adults who are not involved in running the club attended as ‘customers’. Three quarters of clubs reported that teachers and other adults eat breakfast with the children.

3. AIMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Breakfast clubs generally aim to achieve a range of objectives, rather than strive toward a single goal. All of the clubs surveyed had more than one major aim and most were reluctant to prioritise one objective over others.

Broadly speaking, the clubs aimed to meet four main areas of need:

- **Health needs:** all the clubs aimed to contribute to children's nutritional requirements for a balanced diet by providing a meal at the beginning of the day, while some also focused on dental health or health education.
- **Education needs:** while only some clubs explicitly delivered educational activities, all aspired to assist children learn throughout the day by providing a structured but informal atmosphere to help children start the school day on-time, calm, and undistracted by hunger.
- **Social needs:** all of the clubs hoped to extend children's social opportunities and to enhance their confidence, maturity and social skills. They encouraged children to interact with adults on a social basis, and they tried to create opportunities for conversation, for sharing responsibilities, and for learning from the positive role models provided by those running the clubs.
- **Childcare and family needs:** many of the clubs aimed to provide adult-supervised care for approximately three quarters of an hour before school starts – the time when many parents need to travel to work, seek work, or undertake other caring responsibilities.

Some of these objectives are clearly complementary or even inter-dependent. For example, whilst providing for children's social needs or improving nutrition are viewed as important objectives in their own right, most clubs also value them as ways to help improve children's educational performance.

The following four sections of this chapter in turn consider these four key objectives and assess how far the surveyed clubs have been succeeding in achieving them. Each is divided into three parts, to represent the perspectives of three key stakeholder groups: children, parents and schools. This approach is adopted so that different 'voices' are heard. It also reflects the subjective nature of much of the evidence.

Information about schools' perspectives was gathered through questionnaires filled in by club co-ordinators from each club participating in the study, plus a more detailed study of ten case-study clubs, involving visits to the clubs, in-depth interviews and a child monitoring exercise.

Information about parents' and children's perspectives was gathered at some of the case study clubs through the distribution of questionnaires for children and parents.

3A. HEALTH AND NUTRITION

THE SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVE

Improving nutrition and health was a prime concern for the clubs in the study, all of which aimed to provide a nutritious breakfast to children. In the survey of all clubs, two fifths of co-ordinators said that improving nutrition was the primary objective of their club. That said, the case-study interviews suggested that clubs did not see themselves as simply there for children who would not otherwise have a good breakfast, and that clubs generally aim to provide other benefits beyond improved health and nutrition.

Discussions with club co-ordinators suggests that the children who would otherwise not eat a good breakfast can be divided into four broad groups:

1. Children living in households where no food is available in the mornings (reasons for this include households where parents cannot afford enough basic food and families where parents neglect their children).
2. Children who are not offered breakfast, even though food is available (reasons for this include chaotic, rushed mornings and early starts because of lengthy journeys).
3. Children who are offered breakfast, but who decline to eat it (reasons for this include nausea or lack of hunger in the early morning and social or psychological influences).
4. Children who eat poorly in the mornings, particularly those who buy high-sugar snacks on the way to school.

All the interviewees emphasised the importance of providing for children where food is not on offer at home (the first two categories above). In many of the schools, it had already been common practice to try and identify particularly deprived children and staff at some of the clubs had informally fed hungry children before school prior to the launch of the clubs. Even though most clubs attracted a disproportionate number of children from low-income families, many clubs reported that it was not always straightforward to persuade particular targeted children to attend. Suspicion and stigma from children or parents, or an inability to pay charges or arrive early, meant that some of those who would most benefit were not necessarily taking advantage of clubs.

Evidence from the case studies - Examples of clubs' nutritional benefits for particular groups of children

An eleven-year old boy with severe learning difficulties and mild autism needs medication with food at start of the day. He was refusing to eat at home but is now eating at the club. His interactions with the other children have also improved and he is now more accepted than in the playground where he is hyperactive.

A six year-old girl had difficulties eating at home. After seeing a hospital nutritionist, she started attending the club. Following the example of the other children, she is now eating much better.

Many children at one school arrive in buses after travelling substantial distances. Some of them are sick on the way if they have eaten. These problems went away when they starting eating the breakfast at the school.

Co-ordinators' attitudes to children who declined breakfast through choice (the last two categories above) were more mixed. Some secondary school clubs were reasonably unconcerned about children who chose not to eat, seeing their students as sufficiently mature to make decisions for themselves. For these children, they characterised the benefits of attending the club as social rather than nutritional. On the other hand, most of the case study club co-ordinators reported being extremely pleased that they were serving children who would otherwise decline breakfast or eat snacks on the way to school.

It was considered encouraging that clubs aimed to attract a mixed group of children, because this tended to have positive impacts for all children. As disadvantaged children were not in clubs ‘especially for them’ inclusion tends to be enhanced and stigmatisation reduced. In addition, clubs which encourage all-comers were able to help children with less visible needs who might have slipped through the net, if schools only used a targeted approach. Many club coordinators took pride in providing food to a large number of less visibly disadvantaged children whose needs had previously gone unrecognised. One co-ordinator commented that the act of setting up the club had exposed a vast level of need which had previously not been identified. Her perception was that the club was helping children with ‘mid-level’ needs, even though it was failing to reach some of the most disadvantaged children.

Clubs’ ambitions for enhancing health and nutrition often stretched beyond simply providing food of any sort. One third of the clubs surveyed explicitly aimed to improve children’s understanding of nutrition. There were examples of clubs providing fruit and other particularly nutritious food. For example the survey of all clubs showed that fruit or yoghurt was sometimes available in two thirds of the clubs. But, while most clubs clearly aspired to provide food of high nutritional standards, the case studies revealed that the clubs generally attached less importance to the nutritional quality of breakfasts than they did to simply providing popular food that children would eat. This was largely on practical grounds. Clubs found that many children would not eat nutritious food, and their obvious priority was for the children to eat something. In addition, clubs needed to keep costs low and were reluctant to purchase healthy but expensive food, particularly when it would not be eaten.

THE CHILDREN’S PERSPECTIVE

The survey of children in the case studies showed that a large number who ate breakfast at clubs would not otherwise eat before school. Among all children, whether or not they ate before school, more than half reported that without the club they went hungry before lunch.

Evidence from eight case studies - Children’s responses: clubs’ health and nutrition benefits

Going without breakfast: In four of the eight clubs where children filled in questionnaires, between a quarter and a third of children who responded said that they did not eat breakfast on days they did not attend the club. These clubs included all three secondary schools.

Reducing hunger impacting on learning: Children were asked whether they got hungry before lunch without the club. In all eight schools, a large majority of the children said they did get hungry.

A variety of comments were made by children about not eating breakfast at home.

Evidence from eight case studies - Children’s comments: not eating at home

- “When I don’t have breakfast I come here.”
- “My brother won’t let me eat breakfast at home.”
- “Don’t want breakfast at home.”
- “I come because I don’t like to have it [breakfast] at home.”
- “I wanted to eat breakfast with my friends.”
- “I never had time to eat breakfast before.”

Other comments pointed to some of the food-related attractions children see in eating at their breakfast club.

Evidence from eight case studies - Children's comments: the food on offer

"You get a good breakfast."
"It has nice food."
"It fills me up."
"You get loads of stuff."
"I think that what we eat and drink is very healthy."
"It wakes me up."

THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Evidence from parents at six of the case studies suggested that clubs help children eat breakfast in the morning, and are seen to contribute more widely to children's health.

Most parents who expressed an opinion felt that their children were substantially benefiting from the provision of breakfast at the club. More than half said that they sometimes or always struggled to get their child to eat breakfast before leaving home. Substantial numbers commented that their children were reluctant to eat breakfast at home but were happy to eat at the club.

Evidence from six case studies - Parents' comments: improved eating habits

"It makes sure my child has breakfast, she won't have any at home."
"She was never interested in breakfast before, but now enjoys it at school."
"When he's at home eating breakfast, he doesn't eat it."
"He is a poor eater and eating with others encourages him, so I was happy to give him the money to go."
"Most kids don't eat at home, but will when in company."
"My child likes to sit down with her friends to eat."
"The club encourages children to enjoy eating breakfast."
"Breakfast is the most important meal of the day - but also the most difficult one to get children to eat."
"The bus leaves early and quite often my daughter leaves without eating."
"My son has difficulty eating in the morning. He needs a good breakfast as he takes medication."

The survey of parents also indicated that they perceived several other health or nutritional benefits, related to the provision of food in clubs.

Evidence from six case studies - Parents' responses: clubs' health and nutritional benefits

Health improvement: in four of the six clubs, more than half of parents selected 'health improvement' as the main benefit of the club.

A good breakfast: At each of the six clubs, the vast majority of parents said that their child had a 'good breakfast' at the club. All parents who expressed an opinion said that their child liked the food at their club.

More adventurous tastes: At five of the six clubs, more than half of parents said that their child had tried different food at the club.

Understanding of nutrition: In four of the six clubs, more than half of parents said that the club had improved their child's understanding of the need for a good breakfast.

Evidence from six case studies - Parents' comments: health and nutrition benefits of the clubs

A healthy breakfast

"The children have a good variety of food."
"There is a well balanced menu."
"The child gets a nutritional breakfast which is a very good start to the day."
"It gives my child a healthy breakfast he enjoys."
"My child eats things he would not eat at home."
"My child has always been underweight for her age – but since joining the club she is gaining weight well."

Understanding of health and nutrition

"It encourages the children to have a balanced breakfast in the company of their friends."
"It shows the importance of eating a good breakfast, which in turn helps a child to learn better and make friends."
"It is excellent that the children can brush their teeth after having breakfast."

3B. EDUCATION

THE SCHOOLS' PERSPECTIVE

Improving children's education was the most important objective for two fifths of clubs. Among secondary schools and the four special schools in the study, this figure rose to half of clubs.

The clubs aimed to improve education in two distinct ways:

- Some clubs aimed to provide learning opportunities while the club was running, partly through formal activities (e.g. supported reading) but more often through providing the time and facilities for unsupervised or informal learning. Almost a third of schools, including two thirds of secondary school clubs, aimed for homework to take place in their club. Moreover, between the two surveys, the number of schools aiming to provide opportunities for homework increased by 50%. In addition, some clubs aimed for children to read without supervision and several aimed to open up access to school facilities, such as computers or the school library.
- All clubs aimed to improve the educational experience during the rest of the day, believing that attending the club would improve children's feelings about school, and leave them settled, attentive and motivated to learn. Specific objectives here ranged from aiming to improve children's punctuality and attendance to raising standards of concentration and behaviour by preventing children going hungry in the mornings.

In the survey, club co-ordinators were asked to give their impressions of the educational impact of the club over the school year. All reported that there were perceived benefits.

Evidence from the survey of all clubs: clubs' educational benefits (29 responses)

Attendance at school: three quarters felt that the club had helped to improve attendance at the school. One in five said that the club had contributed to significant improvements.

Punctuality: three quarters also felt that the club had helped improve punctuality. A quarter thought that the club had contributed to significant improvements.

Concentration during the morning: four in five schools felt that the club had helped improve concentration in morning lessons, although few reported significant improvements.

Academic performance during the morning: half felt that the club had helped improve academic performance in morning lessons. However, few reported significant improvements and one third said they were unable to give an opinion.

Six of the clubs also completed child monitoring forms which asked about impressions of the club's impact on individual children. The results again point to perceived educational benefits.

Evidence from six case studies – child monitoring Exercise: clubs' educational benefits

Concentration during the morning: At five of the six clubs, schools felt that children's concentration during the morning had recently improved in over three out of every five cases.

Academic performance during the morning: In four of the six clubs, schools felt that children's performance during the morning had recently improved in half of cases.

The club's contribution: Staff were asked whether it was their impression that the club itself has made a significant contribution to any recent improvements they had reported. At two of the clubs, staff were unable to link any improvements to the club. But at the other four clubs, staff felt that the club had contributed to improvements in at least two out of every three cases.

3b. Education

In conversation, club co-ordinators reported several interesting examples of improved educational prospects, in particular related to improved punctuality.

Evidence from the case studies: examples of improved punctuality

In one primary school, the literacy hour was the first lesson of the day. The school had a problem with punctuality, meaning that many children were regularly missing a large part of the hour. The breakfast club has led to significant improvements.

At another school, the Educational Welfare Officer said that there had been a serious punctuality problem, affecting around half of all the pupils. Since establishing the club, this problem has been virtually eliminated.

One boy missed 70% of school days and, when he did come in, he was often sleepy and not fit to learn. Social services had become involved and he was on the at-risk register. Since starting to attend the club, his attendance has risen from 30% and 75% and his learning and literacy has progressed substantially. The school attributes the change entirely to the breakfast club.

Co-ordinators also frequently discussed the role of the club in contributing to the wider school ethos. They felt that clubs helped schools feel welcoming. They often mentioned how their clubs had a calming influence on the start of the school day – for the whole school not just for children at the club. Over time, co-ordinators hoped that such improvements in the atmosphere and ethos of schools would contribute to improved educational outcomes.

Only a minority of an year cohort might be expected to attend a breakfast club on a regular basis, so one would not necessarily expect improvements in these children to have a noticeable impact on the school's overall academic performance, particularly over a single year. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see if there was any noticeable effect and, in this context, we undertook an analysis of academic results in 2001 compared to 2000.

In 14 of the English primary schools surveyed, Key Stage Two English results were poor for 7 schools compared to schools with similar levels of disadvantage, while Maths results were poor for 6 schools. In the year of the study, results worsened for 7 of the schools and improved for only 4.

Information about 14 English primary schools in the study

	<i>Results relative to schools of apparently comparable levels of disadvantage</i>		<i>2000-2001 KS2: change in numbers reaching Level 4 (English, Maths and Science combined)</i>
	<i>2001 KS2 – English: 11 year olds reaching Level 4</i>	<i>2001 KS2 – Maths: 11 year olds reaching Level 4</i>	
1	very good	average	improved
2	average	bad	worsened
3	good	good	steady
4	bad	average	worsened
5	bad	average	worsened
6	bad	very bad	worsened
7	bad	good	worsened
8	good	very good	Improved
9	good	good	steady
10	bad	bad	steady
11	very bad	bad	worsened
12	bad	bad	improved
13	average	very bad	improved
14	good	average	worsened

Source: DfES Primary School Performance Tables; DfES Autumn Package

Meanwhile, among the 8 English secondary schools surveyed, there was much more considerable diversity in levels of performance. Compared to schools with similar numbers of disadvantaged students, 4 had average GCSE results, with 2 performing poorly and 2 performing well. Over the year of the study, there were noticeable changes in the results of 2 schools (with one improving and the other worsening).

Information about 8 English secondary schools in the study

	<i>Results relative to schools of apparently comparable levels of disadvantage</i>		<i>2000-2001 GCSEs: Change in number of 16 year olds gaining 5 A*-Cs</i>
	<i>2001 GCSEs: 16 year olds gaining no passes</i>	<i>2001 GCSEs: 16 year olds gaining 5 A*-Cs</i>	
1	very bad	very bad	steady
2	average	bad	steady
3	bad	good	steady
4	good	good	improved
5	average	average	steady
6	average	average	worsened
7	average	average	steady
8	average	average	steady

Source: DfES Secondary School Performance Tables; DfES Autumn Package

THE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

The evidence from children suggests that clubs can help improve children's punctuality, attitudes to school and academic performance.

Children did not, of course, directly comment on the educational impact of their breakfast club. In filling in questionnaires they did, however, give responses that pointed to educational benefits from clubs.

Evidence from eight case studies – Children's responses: clubs' educational benefits

Improved attitudes to school: At four of the clubs, including two special schools, three quarters of the children said that they liked school more because of the club. In the other four schools, at least two in five agreed.

A good start to the day: In all eight clubs, the vast majority said that they thought the club was a good way to start the day.

Help with school work: At six of the clubs, at least half the children said that the club helped them with school work.

Evidence from eight case studies – Children's comments: how clubs assist children learn

"When I used to eat breakfast at home I would be late, so the club is good because I eat when I get to the club."

"Going to the club means it is so easy not to be late. Without the club, I usually come late."

"The club is somewhere where I can get my homework done."

In addition, the fact of having breakfast clearly has a potential knock-on impact on learning, with many children saying that, without the club, they went hungry before lunch.

THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

In the questionnaires, parents identified a series of educational benefits from attending the clubs.

Evidence from six case studies – Parents' responses: clubs' educational benefits

A good start to the day: As with the children's survey, the vast majority of parents at all six clubs considered that the club was a good way to start the school day.

Improved attitudes to school: At four of the six clubs, half or more of parents said that their child wanted to go to school more since attending the club.

Attending helps school work: At five of the six clubs, between one third and one half of parents said that their children's school work had improved since they started attending the club.

Learning new things at the club: Parents of children attending different clubs varied in whether they thought their child was learning new things in the club itself - at three of the six clubs, two thirds of parents thought that their children were learning new things in the club, while at one very few did.

In addition, several parents made comments on the educational impacts of their children's attendance at the club.

Evidence from six case studies – Parents' comments: clubs' educational benefits

Improvements in punctuality

"It gets the children to school on time."

Improved attitude to school

"His general attitude to school has improved."

"Psychologically I believe it's correct as it helps the children accept the discipline structure of the school day."

Improved concentration

"After a good breakfast you can concentrate more."

Educational activities

"It gives the opportunity to complete his homework."

"He enjoys reading the newspapers."

Improvements for children with learning difficulties

"My daughter has a statement of special education needs – I think mixing with others at the club has vastly improved her speech and communication skills."

Taking responsibility

"My son started going to help out with the younger children."

3c. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL NEEDS

THE SCHOOLS' PERSPECTIVE

All of the clubs aimed to meet short or long term social needs. While many placed a priority on improving the social experience of the school day, it was also common for clubs to focus on equipping children with enhanced social and personal skills.

The survey of all clubs revealed a series of related goals related to social development:

- More than half of clubs stated that one of their aims was to provide children with facilities to use before school started. At a minimum, this represented a desire to provide a warm, dry place for children to spend time before school starts.
- In addition to providing time and space for socialising, around half aimed to provide children with specific social activities.
- Among the case studies, almost all the clubs commented that they aimed to improve children's social interaction with one another. Many picked out groups of children whose socialising they particularly wanted to assist, including children who were lonely or bullied, and children with learning or behavioural difficulties.
- One third of the clubs aimed to improve relationships between children and adults.
- The number of clubs who stated that their main objective was to enhance social opportunities doubled between the two surveys. By the end of the year, one quarter of clubs saw meeting social needs as their number one priority.

In discussion, co-ordinators made a wide range of comments about the social benefits clubs were bringing to clubs. One recurring theme was that the clubs allowed children to engage in social interaction of a sort that would otherwise be unavailable to them. A second was that there were benefits to particular groups of children, including those who were bullied or lacking in confidence.

Evidence from the ten case studies – Schools' comments: clubs' social benefits

Bullying

"Those at risk or victims of bullying in particular have found that attendance at the club has been of great help - which has led to psychological and social change through these pupils increased confidence."

"The club is a safe haven from bullying."

Less confident children

"Those who were less popular in the school have found a friendship network."

Integrating children with special needs or behavioural problems

"Children with special educational needs are integrated and take on roles in the club."

"The club provides a chance for children from the [behavioural difficulties] 'nurture unit' to mix with everyone else."

Mixing among year groups

"There is some interaction among year groups."

"The interaction between the year groups has broken down some barriers and led to a more inclusive and supportive school ethos."

"The club is open to Juniors at the neighbouring school, who value returning to infant school to be with friends, brothers and sisters."

Relations with adults

"The interaction between staff and pupils has become less formal."

"The good mood created in the club spills over into the rest of the school. This even benefits those children who never attend the club."

In the interviews, several club co-ordinators also flagged up how they aimed to help children develop specific social and personal skills, including opportunities for:

- Choosing and taking responsibility for decisions.
- Social interaction in small groups, particularly listening to other children.
- Learning to eat together in a group.
- Preparation of food by children.
- Clearing up by children.

They often suggested that the friendly and calm atmosphere of the breakfast club set the tone for the rest of the day and that this benefited children's social development. But the survey evidence on the impact on children's behaviour was mixed: while more than half of the clubs reported some overall improvements in behaviour, only a few had noticed significant improvements. In addition, at those clubs where child monitoring forms were completed, staff did not identify significant improvements in most children's behaviour.

THE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

The answers children gave indicate that the breakfast clubs had helped enhance their social lives in a number of ways.

Evidence from eight case studies – Children's responses: clubs' social benefits

Having fun: In each of the eight clubs, the vast majority of the children said that they enjoyed their club.

Making new friends: At six of the eight clubs, more than half of the children said that they had made new friends at the club. For the other two clubs, the figure was two in five children.

Staying out of trouble: At four of the eight clubs, more than one in four children said that they thought the club helped them stay out of trouble during the school day.

One common theme of the children's comments was that the club provided a warm, dry place to spend their time before school. In some of these cases, the children had to arrive early because of bus schedules or parents' commitments. In others, the children were choosing to arrive early. For younger children who would not otherwise be allowed to arrive at school early, clubs were providing new opportunities for socialising by creating additional free time.

Evidence from eight case studies – Children's views: clubs' social benefits

"It gives you a good way to make and be friends."

"I wanted to go and make friends."

"In the winter it was much warmer in the club."

"It's somewhere warm to sit and something to do."

"It is somewhere warm and dry to go before school starts."

THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

The evidence from parents at six of the case study clubs suggests that, in terms of acting as social venues, clubs are partly responding to demand and partly creating it. Around half of parents completing questionnaires said that their children needed to leave home early; for these children, the clubs are providing facilities for children who anyway need to spend time on or near school premises. The other half of parents reported that their children were arriving early for the purpose of attending the club.

The evidence from those parents who completed questionnaires suggests that they believe that there are significant social benefits from their children attending breakfast clubs.

Evidence from six case studies – Parents responses: clubs' social benefits

Enjoyment of the club: At all six clubs, virtually all parents thought that their child enjoyed going to the club.

Friends at the club: At four of the clubs more than half the parents said that their child had made new friends at the club, with many citing this as the single most important benefit of the club.

Staying out of trouble: At four of the clubs, between a quarter and a third of parents felt that their children were getting into trouble less often because they were attending the club.

Impacts of attending the club on children's development: At all the clubs, a large majority of parents said that the club was helping their child's development in one way or another.

Relations with other children: At three of the clubs, more than half of the parents said that attending the club was helping their child improve his or her relationships with other children.

Relations with teachers and other adults: At four of the clubs, more than half of the parents said that attending the club was helping their child improve his or her relationships with adults.

Individual comments from parents supported these findings.

Evidence from six case studies – Parents comments: clubs' social benefits

It's fun!

"He loves going and has never missed a day."

Clubs help with friendships

"It helps my daughter make friends"

"My children have a chance to mix before school."

"The lads meet their friends and relax before school."

Clubs promote friendships across classes and years

"The children get to meet and become friends with children of different ages."

"My son is in the Juniors and he likes to see his friends who are at the Infants."

There are particular benefits for some children

"The club helps shy children to mix with others more."

"My child finds it hard to mix and this club is doing her the world of good."

"My younger child was finding it difficult to leave me at the start of school. The club has given him a gentler start to the day."

The atmosphere of the club is friendly

"It is a friendly and happy place for children to go."

"It is friendly and relaxed."

The club provides facilities before school starts

"It gives them something to do in the morning, especially in winter time."

"It gets him in out of the cold."

"It is somewhere safe and dry to wait when the bus has dropped him off."

Children have initiated attendance

"He wanted to go as his friends were there."

"He asked me if he could go."

3D. PARENTS AND FAMILY LIFE

THE SCHOOLS' PERSPECTIVE

In the survey of all clubs, three quarters of the primary schools said that one of the stated aims of the club was to improve the school's relations with both parents and with the wider community. Clubs were often viewed as one of a variety of ways of drawing parents further into school life. In discussion the deprived case study primary schools emphasised that parents often tended to be reluctant to get involved in the life of the school and that the breakfast club was one way of trying to address this problem.

Secondary and special schools tended not to see clubs as a means to bridge building, with only a third of survey respondents saying that it was an aim of their club. These schools, where many of the children had to travel a long way, typically viewed low levels of parent and community involvement as simply inevitable.

In addition to contributing to improved parent-school relations, half of primary schools stated that they intended that clubs should be there to provide childcare. These clubs did not, however, generally view themselves as 'childcare on the cheap' with almost all emphasising health, education and social needs above childcare - only two out of nineteen primary school clubs viewed childcare as their *principal* objective.

Between the two surveys (at the start and end of the school year), there was a noticeable reduction in the number of clubs aiming to improve relationships with parents. There was a similar reduction in the number aiming to provide childcare.

Club co-ordinators at the case studies also commented in discussion that they hoped to provide support to parents in several less tangible ways, including:

- Giving parents peace of mind about their children's well-being once they have reached school.
- Reducing the burden on parents by providing the breakfast for their children.
- Giving parents more flexibility in precisely when they deliver their children to school.

THE CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

Many of the children's comments concerned the benefits of their clubs relating to childcare, family life or a more convenient start to the day.

Evidence from eight case studies – Children's comments: childcare and family life

Children describing the childcare benefits of their club

"I started coming because my mum had to go to work early and when I started coming I didn't want to leave."

"I go because my mum and dad go to work."

"I started coming because my dad has to go to work, and I think it's fun."

"I started coming so my mum could go to work."

Children using club to make their own morning more convenient

"It is easy to have breakfast at school, as time runs out at home."

"Before coming to the club I didn't have time at home."

"I go to the club for breakfast, if I don't have time at home."

"I go to the club for a quiet breakfast."

Children using clubs to make their parents' morning more convenient

"I thought it would save my mum getting up early to give me breakfast."

"My mum got fed up making breakfast."

THE PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

While providing childcare was not the most important objective for the clubs themselves, it was clearly viewed as a key benefit by many parents. At three of the six case studies where parents filled in questionnaires, one in three parents said that childcare provision was the most important benefit of their child's club, usually citing their need to leave early for work as the main reason for this. In contrast, at the other three clubs, few parents reported being in full time work and needing early morning childcare.

A number of parents, particularly those with children at primary schools, also said that the clubs were providing other benefits related to improving the life of the family in the mornings.

Evidence from six case studies - Parents' responses: clubs' benefits for family life

Work: Parents were asked whether the club made it easier for them to get to work. Although at all clubs many parents did not work, at three of the six clubs a substantial proportion said that the club did help them get to work. At the two primary schools, half of the parents who expressed an opinion said that it helped; at a large comprehensive, one in three parents did.

Parents with more time with other children: Parents were asked whether the club meant that they had more time to spend with their other children in the mornings. At the two primary schools, nearly half said that they did. At the four other schools, however, almost all parents said they did not have more time as a result.

Parents with more time to themselves: Parents were asked whether the club meant that they had more time on their own, or with their partner, in the mornings. At five of the six schools, few parents said they had more time. At an infant school, however, three in five of parents responding said they did have more time for themselves.

Fewer difficulties with children in the morning: Parents were asked whether their child was less of a handful on days that she or he went to the club. At four of the six clubs, about one third of parents who commented said that with the club their child was less difficult to deal with before school.

Less worried about children: Parents were asked whether they worried less about their child getting into trouble when she or he was at the club. At four of the six clubs, between a third and half of parents said they worried less.

Evidence from six case studies – Parents' comments: clubs' benefits for family life

Childcare needs: work or family related

"The club helps parents who have to go to work or who have other children to see to."

"My child goes to the club because I start work at 8am every morning and the breakfast club is ideal to send my child without having to worry about babysitters."

"The club became important to us as I got a job where I start at 7am, so my husband takes our child to breakfast club."

"My daughter attends the club because I have to be in the house for my son to get his bus to school as he goes to a special needs school."

"The club offers reasonably priced early morning childcare which enables me to get to work on time."

"I begin work at 8.30 and like to feel that I can leave my children in a safe environment when I go to work."

"The club means that my child can have a breakfast when I have to leave for work early."

Fewer concerns about child

"You can leave the children at the breakfast club and know they are well looked after."

"The club provides a safe environment for my daughter after I've left for work."

"I feel less anxious about my child being at school before 8.35 as I know he has somewhere safe to go where he can learn and make friends."

Making the mornings easier

"As my son goes to school by bus which arrives early, he can have breakfast at school without rushing".

"We both get up early (6am) to feed the animals and we can get more done if he eats at school."

"My son has 25 minutes from getting off the bus until the start of school. So he uses this time for breakfast."

"It gives me peace of mind. Mornings in our house are very stressful. Time is one thing we seem to run out of. Knowing he eats a good breakfast at school eases the stress. The staff do a great job."

4. ISSUES FOR THE CLUBS: NON-FINANCIAL

This chapter discusses some of the issues with which the breakfast clubs have been grappling, with a particular focus on ideas that particular clubs have found to be beneficial. Issues related to five themes are discussed:

- **Health and nutrition:** how to encourage more nutritious eating?
- **Activities:** possible activities with educational value.
- **Targetting of children most in need:** whether to do it? How to do it?
- **Children's contribution to their club:** approaches to involving the children in the operation of the club, thus helping with their social development.
- **Adult participation:** the difficulties in involving parents and teachers and the benefits in involving non-teaching and catering staff.

The list below provides a checklist of some of interesting ideas that some clubs have found to be beneficial:

- 'Special days' to encourage experimentation in food and/or activities.
- Teeth brushing at the club.
- Involving the children in the decision-making about the club.
- Children helping out as volunteers (or paid a small amount) with responsibilities.
- Expecting children to prepare/clear up for themselves.
- Putting classroom assistants in charge of the club.
- Involving catering staff in non-food related activities.
- Teachers 'around but not in charge'.
- A free breakfast in exchange for 15 minutes of supported reading/numeracy work.
- Inviting children/parents to contribute food once in a while.
- Experiment sessions to give children a chance to decide what they want to do.
- Get children to devise and implement fundraising schemes, with adult support.
- Ask social services to pay for some children – e.g. those on the at risk register.
- Setting up an after-school café alongside the club.
- Encourage children who do not want to eat to come in with their friends to talk or participate in activities.
- Use of swipe cards, so that it is not obvious which children are paying, and/or to monitor eating habits.
- Promoting a secondary school breakfast club by inviting primary school leavers, who already attend a breakfast club.

IMPROVING HEALTH AND NUTRITION

It was clear from the case study visits that the breakfasts at the clubs were not always either well-balanced or nutritious. To a greater or lesser extent, most of the clubs seem to have adopted a ‘give them what they want’ philosophy, usually to ensure good take up of breakfast and sometimes to restrict costs to available budgets. Some reported offering fruit and other healthier options but giving up because of low take up; only one of the case study clubs had had any success in persuading children to eat fruit. Whilst this is understandable, it is unfortunate and a key issue for clubs is whether they can do anything to improve the nutrition level of their breakfasts.

From the case studies, the strategies which appeared to be most successful were:

- A ‘softly, softly’ approach, offering options rather than trying imposition.
- A pragmatic approach, offering (for example) beans on toast rather than fruit.
- Engaging the children’s interest, for example ‘special days’ with different food.

Examples of how some clubs encouraged more nutritious eating

- ‘Special days’ or ‘themed weeks’.
- Encouragement to the children to try different foods.
- Occasional discussions about food and nutrition.
- Hot food as well as cold food.
- Making sure that fruit is always available as an option.
- Fruit juice and milk as well as soft drinks; hot drinks as well as cold drinks.
- Being practical: providing hot food like beans on toast and porridge, rather than pushing fruit too much.
- Different cereals on different days.

Another problem that some clubs were struggling to address was over-eating among obese children. Clubs understandably did not want to impose portion control as this would change the culture of the club. But staff need to be aware that for some children the breakfast club is an opportunity for *another* breakfast.

In one case study club, based in a deprived primary school, serious attention has been paid to improving children’s dental health. The club had instigated teeth brushing at the end of each session, as an organised group activity. Each child had their own marked tooth brush, kept in its own holder. While this sort of compulsory approach does not always work, particularly with older children, clubs might consider whether they could try something similar.

ENCOURAGING STUDY SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

Given their short duration, many of the clubs felt that it was difficult to organise activities other than breakfast and informal social interaction. On the other hand, some believed that, with a bit of imagination, it is possible to encourage activities which had some educational value. The most popular approach was to foster an environment where children can choose to read, play games or finish off homework, without these activities being forced on them.

Examples of activities with educational value encouraged by some clubs

- Newspapers, magazines and books (available free or brought in by individual staff or children).
- Designated quiet spaces.
- A TV switched on to the news.
- Board games.
- Quizzes.
- Space for homework.
- Informal help with schoolwork.
- One-to-one literacy or numeracy support for selected children after breakfast (rewarded by free breakfast).
- PCs connected to the internet.
- Projects, such as developing fundraising schemes.

TARGETTING CHILDREN MOST IN NEED

Although the survey of all clubs revealed that in general clubs are successful at attracting children from low-income families, several of the case study clubs commented that some of the children most in need of breakfast were not attending the club. Two main reasons were given for this:

- **Payment:** where charges are levied, staff felt that some low-income families were unable or unwilling to pay. Most clubs were wary about exempting children with free school meal entitlement from charges, as this would create stigma.
- **Attitudes to school:** Some children and families who are most in need can be suspicious or intimidated by the education system. Not joining a breakfast club can be part of a wider pattern of reluctance to get involved in the life of the school. The most graphic example came from one school where a group of asylum seeker children were unable to integrate into the school community.

In around half of the ten case studies, particular children had been specifically encouraged to attend, for example by staff talking to the parents of children they considered most in need.

To get round the payment issue, one club was successfully operating an informal free-breakfast policy for targeted children, without making this explicit or widely known - essentially by institutionalising 'can I pay tomorrow?' among disadvantaged children. Another club planned to introduce payment by swipe card for all food in the school, with automatic credits to the cards of children entitled to free school meals.

In terms of encouraging more positive attitudes to clubs, several co-ordinators believed that the key issue was giving a club the time to bed in. One commented that once the club was well-established, then the harder-to-reach children began to drift in. Another argued that it is much easier to attract targeted children to something that is not perceived as new and 'especially for them'. This re-enforces the importance of schools encouraging children of all backgrounds to attend genuinely inclusive breakfast clubs.

CHILDREN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THEIR CLUB

In several of the clubs, children are heavily involved in ensuring the smooth running of the club, to the perceived benefit of both the club and the children.

Examples from the case studies - Ways in which children can participate and exercise choice

Involvement in decision making. Examples ranged from choosing music for the day to planning future menus and activities. Some of the clubs developed mechanisms for deciding between competing preferences including voting and establishing a rota of decision-making. Others felt that simply encouraging the children to think about their choice of food could be empowering, particularly if items were added to the menu at the request of children. At one club, the club co-ordinator reported that "the club has developed the assertiveness of pupils so that – as consumers – they have the right and ability to complain if something is not acceptable". Students either bring up issues as they arise or can discuss them at a termly meeting, to which all club staff and members are invited.

Taking responsibility for preparing and clearing away food. At one club, students are expected to take full responsibility for preparing and clearing away their own breakfast. A learning assistant is there to cajole students if necessary, but the club coordinator reported that children had quickly learnt to get on with everything for themselves.

Acting as a volunteer or paid worker for the club. At one club, senior students are responsible for running the club, including taking the money, monitoring attendance, and food consumption. The senior students draw up their own rota to allocate shifts. Children with special educational needs are responsible for collecting money, giving them a positive role and a chance to practice mental arithmetic. Students on duty get a free breakfast.

Several clubs also felt that there were strong advantages in children and staff eating breakfast and/or working alongside each other. These included: creating a somewhat calmer atmosphere in the club; fostering more equal, non-confrontational relationships between children and teachers; and giving the children a chance to meet teachers who they will be taught by in the future.

INCREASING ADULT PARTICIPATION

The study revealed that different breakfast clubs use a wide range of different people to staff the clubs, as illustrated in the table below.

Evidence from the survey of all clubs - People involved in staffing the clubs (29 responses)

Teachers, heads and deputy heads were involved in half of the clubs and acted as the co-ordinator in a third of clubs. They were, however, only involved in one third of the secondary school clubs. Clubs reported that recruiting teachers was a good way of getting them more involved in the life of the school in general and improving their relations with children. Perceived disadvantages included the dangers of over-burdening teachers and creating a confrontational environment within the club.

Classroom assistant and learning mentors were involved in half of clubs and acted as co-ordinators in two fifths of clubs. Many schools found that assistants and mentors were a flexible resource whose hours could be altered or extended to include supervising the club. It was sometimes felt that they fostered a welcoming atmosphere because they were not teachers but did have the skills to interact with the children.

Catering staff were involved in half of clubs and acted as the co-ordinator in one fifth. Their involvement typically came from linking the club to the school's lunchtime meal provision.

Lunchtime supervisors were involved in one fifth of clubs, including two fifths of primary school clubs. Lunchtime supervisors were popular choices because they are often happy working flexible hours and already have existing relationships with the school and children. As supervisors are already working for a few hours a day they tended to be less put off by the short hours associated with working in a breakfast club.

Parents were involved in one fifth of clubs, almost all of which serve primary schools. A recurring theme was that involving parents enhances their wider participation in school life, and provides flexible, rewarding part time work.

Older children were involved in one third of clubs, the argument being that this both gives them responsibility and reduces the workload for adults.

There was general agreement that increasing the involvement of all of these groups was desirable, if possible. But, within this, experiences varied.

Parents

Many of the clubs found it difficult to get parents to participate, usually because they are not involved in the school more generally. One club reported that it was extremely difficult to recruit reliable volunteers among parents and that, while there had been some initial enthusiasm, parents could not be relied on to stick to a rota. Among the 16 clubs surveyed which said that parents were involved in the autumn term, only 9 of these reported that parents were still involved by the summer.

On the other hand, there were several examples of parents successfully becoming paid employees. This often represented a parent's first contact with the labour market for some time. In one case, a co-ordinator reported that working in the club had given one mother a major confidence boost and led on to her working in the school as a lunchtime supervisor and administrator as well.

Teachers

Similarly, many of the clubs found it difficult to get teachers involved, except among those involved in the initial setting up of the club. This was mainly because teachers had so many other time commitments and did not want to take on more responsibility. On the other hand, in several clubs teachers enjoyed attending as clients, often providing informal support to club staff.

In one case study, the club was being run by a single teacher, with next to no support from colleagues. She felt that running the club meant she was missing out on too many other things, so had decided to stand down at the end of the year. Towards the end of the year, no other teachers had yet come forward to take over.

Non-Teaching Staff

The increasing use of non-teaching staff in schools was widely viewed as one of the major factors in helping both the setting-up and on-going operation of breakfast clubs.

Many of the clubs had been established initially because a non-teaching member of staff, such as a development worker, had the time and energy to push the process through. In other cases, the initial development was carried out by a head, deputy-head or teacher, but only because they were aware that the school had non-teaching staff available to run the club. Learning mentors and classroom assistants made a big contribution to the day-to-day operation of clubs, particularly because they tended to offer good inter-personal and practical skills.

Catering Staff

Changes in the delivery of lunchtime catering also appeared to have had a big impact on the possibilities for breakfast clubs. Many of the schools in the study had opted out of LEA catering and started to deliver catering either in-house or through a private sector contractor, on the grounds that this gave them more control and flexibility. In such cases, the prospects for the breakfast club were also increased.

Evidence from the case studies - The impact of changes in the arrangements for lunchtime catering

At one school, the catering contractor agreed to open at breakfast so that one dining area could operate as a club. Another school had just taken control of catering and intended to absorb the breakfast club's food budget into the much larger lunchtime catering budget. This 'mainstreaming' of the club's budget would ensure its sustainability. In a third school, savings made from the self-management of catering have been spent on employing breakfast club staff. The staff are permitted to use the canteen kitchens to prepare food for the club.

5. ISSUES FOR THE CLUBS: FINANCIAL

This chapter discusses the main financial issues arising in the surveyed clubs, namely:

- **Charging:** should there be a charge to the children for breakfast or should it be provided free? If charged for, should the ‘most needy’ children also have to pay or should they receive free breakfasts? If they are to receive free breakfasts, how can this be done without any potential stigma?
- **Budgeting practice:** what items of expenditure should be considered as costs of the breakfast club? If staff costs are included, how can these costs be funded and how can the club remain viable? If staff costs are excluded, is the school incurring new ‘hidden’ costs?
- **Funding sources:** is the club clear about the scale of its funding requirement, given its charging policies and the budgeting practices of the school? Has it approached the major public sector sources, including the New Opportunities Fund and geographically targeted initiatives such as Health Action Zones, Education Action Zones and SRB partnerships? Is private sector support a possibility?

These subjects are strongly inter-related. For example, assuming annual food costs of around £1,000, annual staff costs of around £2,000 and possible revenue from charges to children for breakfast of around £1,000, the table below summarises the approximate requirement for external funding in a variety of budgeting and charging scenarios.

Scenario	Total costs	Revenue from charges	Required additional funding
No staff costs; children charged for breakfast	£1,000	£1,000	£0
No staff costs; no charging	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Full staff costs; children charged for breakfast	£3,000	£1,000	£2,000
Full staff costs; no charging	£3,000	£0	£3,000

The financial sustainability of each club is dependent on the relationship between these three financial issues. Survival is not possible unless a club’s charging policy, the head’s decision about how core school resources are deployed, and the availability of external funding collectively result in the club being financially viable.

CHARGING

The survey of all clubs revealed that two thirds of the clubs charged the children for food and one third did not. Among those which did charge, the rate is typically between 30p and 60p a day, with very few asking for more than this. On the whole, those that did charge were essentially aiming to recover the costs of the food, rather than make a significant contribution to any staff costs. The one noticeable exception involved the supply of a breakfast service by a catering contractor, which understandably needed to cover its costs in full. Some of those who did charge still aimed to provide free breakfasts to the most disadvantaged children.

Many of those that did not charge argued that this was right in principle - if children needed breakfast, then nothing should be done to put them off, and charges could have a major adverse impact on attendance. They also argued that the absence of charges made it easier to provide breakfast for needy children without this creating stigma.

Obviously, budgetary considerations were often a factor in deciding to charge. Interestingly, however, many of those that did charge also argued that charging was right in principle, as otherwise neither the parents nor the children would value what they were getting from the breakfast club. Some also argued that there were ways round the stigma problem (see previous chapter).

At three of the four case study clubs where parents were asked to comment on the charges, the vast majority thought that the price of the club was acceptable. At the fourth, where charges were often £1 or more, two thirds were happy with the price and one third said they were too high.

Clearly, deciding whether or not to charge is a key issue for clubs, and the survey and interviews did not provide evidence that indicated that either approach is always right. It is, however, worth noting that while some of the charging clubs had difficulty maintaining attendance most did not. Our conclusion is that clubs need to make their own decisions based on local circumstances and priorities. In making a decision clubs need to consider the following issues.

Charging: the issues

Charging may be essential for the viability of the club: many clubs succeed in covering the costs of food through charging. This greatly enhances clubs' prospects for long term sustainability.

Charging may have an impact on take-up: one club reported abandoning charging because take-up was low. Some other clubs believed that attendance would drop if they started charging. But other clubs in deprived areas were charging children and still sustaining good attendance.

Charging may affect the ability of the clubs to target the most disadvantaged children: most of the clubs that did not charge worried that charging would result in a failure to serve those in most need. Some reported facing a choice between charging everyone or offering some children free breakfast and so creating social stigma.

Charging may mean that children and parents value the service: in one school, teachers had made a strong case for charging, eventually out-voting the head teacher, because they believed children needed to understand the worth of the breakfast they were being offered.

BUDGETING PRACTICE

The reported costs of running the clubs varied considerably. In large part, this was because of differences in the treatment of staff costs. At one extreme, a majority of the clubs reported little or no staff costs, with their operating budgets largely restricted to food costs. This was particularly the case when the staffing was provided by existing members of the school staff. At the other extreme, the full costs of the staff time are attributed to the club.

Examples of budgeting practice

At one school, the club's running costs were totally integrated into other budgets. Food and catering staff were provided by an external contractor, whose revenue came from food sales. Other staffing was made possible by re-scheduling the hours of existing members of staff. The only visible club expenses were the start-up costs (purchase of storage space and board games) and the regular provision of magazines.

At another school, two people were employed specifically to work in the club, at a costs of around £2,000 per year. The charges to the children were sufficient to cover food costs, so external funding is required to cover the staff costs.

These differences are significant because staff, rather than food and equipment, are the major costs of running a breakfast club. The table below provides an illustrative example, with the staff costs being around twice the food costs.

<i>Example calculation of the costs of running a breakfast club?</i>		
Assume the club runs for 1 hour each morning for 40 weeks of the year, two staff are paid at £5 per hour each, and there are an average of 15 children each day.		
Cost of providing:	Per child per day	Per 40 week year
Basic healthy meal (cereal, toast and spreads, hot drink, juice or milk)	£0.35	£1,050
Basic healthy meal plus share of direct staff time	£1.10	£3,300
Basic healthy meal plus share of direct staff time and direct administrative costs	£1.20	£3,600
Basic healthy meal plus share of direct staff time, direct administrative costs and rent	£1.50	£4,500
Possible supplement for cooked food/wider choice of food	£0.25	£750

One factor influencing the treatment of staff costs appears to be how the school perceives its club:

- **A ‘mainstream’ service?** The more that the school views its breakfast club as a mainstream, permanent service, the more likely it is to integrate staff costs with those of the rest of the school. In these cases, clubs are usually funded from the school’s mainstream budget, or sometimes from pools of money which are not rigidly tied to specific activities (e.g. Excellence in Cities; Standards Fund).
- **An ‘additional’ service?** Schools which view their clubs as additional services are more likely to separate out staff costs. Clubs may be viewed as non-mainstream because there is external funding available, which can be accessed by splitting the funding of the club from the rest of the school (e.g. New Opportunities Fund). Alternatively school heads may feel that they cannot justify transferring resources from other activities to support the club. Here the decision in part reflects the importance each head attaches to the breakfast club, relative to other priorities.

Among schools which integrate their club’s staff costs into mainstream budgets, it is worth distinguishing between situations where total costs remain unchanged and where they rise:

- **Re-deployment of resources:** in some cases, schools staff clubs by shifting the hours of employees, reducing the time they spend on other activities.
- **Deployment of new resources:** schools with increasing overall budgets may decide to use some of these funds to staff their breakfast club. These resources may be mainstream or earmarked for particular purposes. For example, some Excellence in Cities funding is allocated to funding learning mentors, and one school decided that part of the role of their mentor should be to work in the breakfast club.
- **Efficiency savings:** staff costs in one club were entirely paid for by funds freed up from efficiency savings arising from taking catering in-house.

Whatever budgeting practice individual clubs adopt, it is vital that schools recognise that staffing a breakfast club is never cost free. When these costs are invisible, decision makers need to reassure themselves that money and resources are being best spent by providing the club.

FUNDING SOURCES

The importance of external funding varies hugely from club to club. Where on-going funding requirements are virtually nil (with charges to the children paying for the food and staff time provided from within existing budgets) external funding is mainly needed for one-off purchases, such as fridges, board games, or magazine racks.

At the other extreme, the requirement may be several thousand pounds per year if resources are needed to cover both food and staff costs. In such situations, funding is clearly a major issue.

Sources of external funding are diverse. The survey of all clubs suggested that, apart from the school itself, there is no obvious dominant source for funding and support.

One fifth of the clubs had received support from their local health authority, while one quarter of the primary schools had received some funding from an Education Action Zone. None appeared to have had any support from the New Opportunities Fund, although this should be a possibility. In discussion, co-ordinators commented that LEAs or EYDCPs often insisted on making area-wide NOF consortium bids on behalf of schools, and that these applications had not included breakfast club provision.

Many clubs had approached the private sector, but with mixed results. Supermarkets had often turned down requests for support, although one club was receiving £20 per month from a local store. In another case, a parent employed by a supermarket was allowed to take food approaching its sell by date for the club. Some clubs had received free equipment from relevant companies, the most successful case being where a club was able to establish a long-term relationship with a large local company. In total, around a quarter of the clubs had received some private sector support.

In summary, therefore, the survey suggests that the best tactic for clubs is to approach all of the possible sources.

Checklist of possible funding sources

- Health authority, including health promotion funds
- Health Action Zone (if it exists in the area)
- Education Action Zone (if it exists in the area)
- Education Business Partnership Funding
- Other targeted regeneration programmes, such as SRB and European Social Fund.
- Various local authority budgets (possibilities include EYDCP/childcare, Play and Youth, Out of School Hours, Neighbourhood Renewal funding streams)
- New Opportunities Fund (probably via the EYDCP)
- Charitable grants
- Private business grants
- Supermarkets

The diversity of funding sources is perhaps not surprising considering that breakfast clubs are a relatively new, non-statutory phenomenon. If all clubs that need it are able to find funding from one source or another then this situation need not be cause for concern. However, external funding is not as secure as resourcing through schools' mainstream budgets, and the diversity of funders perhaps suggests that the sustainability of some clubs might be in doubt.

Some of the evidence from the surveys gives cause for worry about the sustainability of clubs which are reliant on external funding. In the first survey, the clubs were asked from where they hoped to receive funding for the next year; in the second survey they were asked about sources of confirmed funding for the next year. The box shows that a great many clubs were disappointed, particularly by external funders.

Evidence from the survey of all clubs: Sources of Funding - Expectations and Outcomes

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • School budget: | 11 hoped for and 7 received funding |
| • New Opportunities Fund: | 8 hoped for and 2 received funding |
| • Health authorities: | 8 hoped for and 3 received funding |
| • Private sector: | 10 hoped for and 5 received funding |

The disappointment that so many clubs faced indicates that, to ensure sustainability, clubs need to be cautious when planning future financing if they are going to remain sustainable.

The time-wasted, uncertainty and low ‘success-rate’ associated with external funding also suggests that, when money is made available, wherever possible it should be allocated on a multi-year basis. This is an important consideration for funders as well as clubs when they consider applications for funding.

APPENDIX A. THE BREAKFAST CLUBS AWARD SCHEME

The Breakfast Club Awards 2000 was sponsored by Kellogg's in association with Education Extra. The scheme granted awards totalling £55,000 to 58 Breakfast Clubs around the UK. 8 awards of £2,500 were given in recognition of 'excellence' for clubs demonstrating best practice, 20 'expansion' awards of £1,000 were given for schools looking to develop existing clubs and 30 awards of £500 were made to new clubs.

The scheme was launched by Jacqui Smith MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for School Standards. Over 800 applications were received for Breakfast Club Awards funding. The judging panel included representatives from:

- The Department for Education and Employment.
- Education Extra - the charity that supports Out of School Hours Learning.
- New Policy Institute.
- Kellogg's - The sponsors of the Breakfast Club Awards Scheme.

The National Breakfast Clubs Awards Week took place between the 19th and 23rd June 2000. The 58 winning schools celebrated their success during 'National Breakfast Club Awards Celebration Week' and each school held its own Award presentation ceremony.

The Breakfast Club Awards 2001 were similar in scope and scale. The 2002 awards scheme is launched alongside the publication of this report.

Further information is available at www.breakfast-club.co.uk.

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALL CLUBS – AUTUMN 2000

Section A: Profile of school

1. Age range of school
2. Percentage of girls; Percentage of boys
3. Percentage of pupils on free school meals
4. Percentage of children who are from an ethnic minority
5. Is your school within an Education Action Zone?
6. Percentage attendance for the school last year
7. Percentage late arrivals for the school last year
8. SATs and GCSE results (for English schools)

Key stage 1 English:	% achieving level 2 and above
Key stage 2 English:	% achieving level 4 and above
Key stage 3 English:	% achieving level 5 and above; % achieving level 6 and above
GCSE:	% grades A-C; % grades D or less; % no GCSE.

Section B: Profile of breakfast club

9. What is the main aim of your breakfast club?

To support children's education;	To provide social opportunities for children;
To improve children's nutrition;	To provide childcare to enable parents to work
10. Which of the following does your breakfast club aim to provide

Nutritional breakfast;	Education about nutrition;
Additional support for core subjects;	Subjects not taught in main curriculum;
Opportunity to do homework;	Increased motivation to learn;
Sports based/physical activity;	Social activities;
Improved relationships with teachers;	Facility for children who arrive at school early;
Improved relationship with peers;	Childcare for working parents;
Improved links with parents;	Improved links with community;
11. If you aim to educate children about nutrition, how do you do so? (please tick all that apply)

Learning sessions dedicated to nutrition;	Optional activities related to nutrition;
Using a system of rewards;	Using material from suppliers, e.g. Kellogg's;
Talking about food children are eating;	
12. How many days a week does the club run?
13. What time does the club open to children? What time does the club finish?
14. What is the age range of the club?
15. What is the total number of children in the school in that age range?
16. Are parents involved in the breakfast club?
17. If yes, how are they involved? (please tick all that apply)

Attend the club with their children;	Involved in setting up / running of the club;
Employed as paid workers;	Employed as volunteer workers;

Section C: Use of the club

18. What is the average attendance at the club each day?
19. Number of children in each school year attending the club (as a percentage of total club attendance)
20. Attendance at club by sex (as a percentage)
21. What percentage are from an ethnic minority?
22. What percentage of children attending the club are on free school meals?
23. Who is the club open to? (please tick all that apply)

Open access (given restrictions on total numbers)
Children considered to be in need for nutritional reasons are invited to attend
Children considered to be in need for educational reasons are invited to attend
Children considered to be in need of childcare are invited to attend
The club is for specific classes / years
The club is for those interested in specific subject(s)
24. Are the children using the club those it was intended for?

Section D: Impact of the breakfast club on children over the last school year

25. Please indicate what impact you, or other staff in the school, think the club had on children last year. We are interested in your *impression* and do not expect you to have supporting evidence.
26. How did attending the breakfast club impact on children's school attendance last year?
 Significant improvements; Some improvements; No change;
 Slightly worse; Significantly worse; Not known
27. How did attending the breakfast club impact on children's punctuality last year?
 Significant improvements; Some improvements; No change;
 Slightly worse; Significantly worse; Not known
28. How did attending the breakfast club impact on children's behaviour last year?
 Significant improvements; Some improvements; No change;
 Slightly worse; Significantly worse; Not known
29. How did attending the breakfast club impact on children's concentration during morning sessions?
 Significant improvements; Some improvements; No change;
 Slightly worse; Significantly worse; Not known
30. How did attending the breakfast club impact on children's educational performance last year?
 Significant improvements; Some improvements; No change;
 Slightly worse; Significantly worse; Not known

Section E: Funding

31. What has the Kellogg's Award enabled you to do this year? (Tick all that apply)
 Increase number of hours/days; Increase number of children attending;
 Target attendance; Provide free breakfasts/reduce charge;
 Increase range of food; Increase range of study support;
 Increase range of other activities; Other, please specify
32. What sources of funding does your club receive, other than the Kellogg's award? (Tick all that apply)
 School fund; DfEE Standards Fund Money;
 New Opportunities Fund; Local businesses/sponsorship;
 Charging children; Charitable grants;
 Education Action Zone (EAZ); Single Regeneration Budget (SRB);
 Health authority; Other
33. How do you intend to fund the club after this year? (Tick all that apply)
 School fund; DfEE Standards Fund Money;
 New Opportunities Fund; Local businesses/sponsorship;
 Apply for Kellogg's award again; Charging children;
 Charitable grants; EAZ;
 Health authority; Single Regeneration Budget;
34. What are the main barriers in relation to securing funding for the breakfast club?
 Not knowing about funding sources; Not having enough time;
 Low success rate of applications; Too time consuming for the amount of money; Other
 things take priority; Other, please specify
35. Please indicate what you believe is the best source of funding for breakfast clubs by ranking the options below in order of preference.
 School budget; Directly from DfEE;
 Charging children; Initiatives such as EAZ, SRB etc.;
 New Opportunities Fund; Voluntary grants;
 Business sponsorship, including Kellogg's
36. What do you think are the most important elements in setting up a breakfast club?
 Basic advice on setting up a breakfast club; Access to funding;
 Gifts in kind, e.g. subsidised food; Advice on study support;
 Advice on food to serve; Enthusiastic staff;
 Advice on how to target those in need; Parental support;
37. What can external agencies, such as Kellogg's and Education Extra, best do to support breakfast clubs. Please rate in terms of importance.
 Raise media awareness; Offer advice on study support;
 Lobby DfEE and other government depts.; Provide funding;
 Offer advice on running a club; Offer advice on nutrition;
 Provide gifts in kind; Other, please specify
38. What other organisations or individuals do you think should be involved in supporting clubs?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALL CLUBS – SUMMER 2001

Section A: Changes in the school

1. Attendance record for the school so far this year
2. Late arrivals record for the school so far this year

Section B: Changes in the Profile of the Breakfast Club

We want to know how the breakfast club has changed over the course of the year. Please answer these questions about the breakfast club now, so we can compare them to what you said as the beginning of the year – it doesn't matter if you're answers are not the same!

3. What is the main aim of your breakfast club?

To support children's education;	To improve children's nutrition;
To provide social opportunities for children;	Provide childcare to enable parents to work
4. Which of the following does your breakfast club now aim to provide

Nutritional breakfast;	Education about nutrition;
Additional support for core subjects;	Subjects not taught in main curriculum;
Opportunity to do homework;	Increased motivation to learn;
Sports based/physical activity;	Social activities;
Improved relationship between children and teachers;	
Facility for children who arrive at school early;	
Improved relationship with peers;	Childcare for working parents;
Improved links with parents;	Improved links with community;
5. If you aim to educate children about nutrition, how do you now do so?

Learning sessions dedicated to nutrition;	Optional activities related to nutrition;
Using a system of rewards;	Using material from suppliers, e.g. Kellogg's;
Talking about food children are eating;	Other please specify
6. How many days a week does the club now run?
7. What time does the club now open to children? What time does the club now finish?
8. What is now the age range of the club?
9. What is the total number of children in the school in that age range?
10. Are parents involved in the breakfast club?
11. If yes, how are they involved?

Attend the club with their children;	Involved in setting up / running of the club;
Employed as paid workers;	Employed as volunteer workers;

Section C: Additional Information about the Club

12. How would you describe the person who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the club?

Classroom assistant;	Lunchtime supervisor;	Teacher;
Member of catering staff;	Parent;	Development/health worker;
13. Who else is involved in helping run the club? (please tick all that apply)

Classroom assistants;	Lunchtime supervisors;	Teachers;
Members of catering staff;	Parents;	Older children;
14. Do any members of staff have breakfast at the club?

No;	Yes – teachers;	Yes – other adults
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15. Who sorts of food and drink do you serve? (please tick all that apply)

Cereals;	Toast and spreads;	Cold drinks;
Fruit/Yoghurt;	Cooked food;	Hot drinks;
16. On average, how much do you charge for breakfast? (please tick only one)

Free;	1-30p;	31-60p;
61-90p;	90-120p;	over 120p
17. What other activities take place at the club?

Unsupervised reading;	Socialising with friends;	Socialising with adults;
Supervised learning;	Homework Games, sport or physical activities	

Section D: Use of the club

18. What is the average attendance at the club each day?
19. Number of children who attend the club fairly regularly (please give the total figure and the number attending from each year group)
20. Attendance at club by sex (as a percentage)
21. What percentage are from an ethnic minority?
22. What percentage of children attending the club are on free school meals?
23. Has your policy on who the club is open to changed?
24. Have you targeted any children who you particularly want to attend?
25. Are the children using the club those it was intended for?

Section D: Impact of the breakfast club on children over the last school year

26. How has attending the breakfast club affected children's school attendance so far this year?

Significant improvements;	Some improvements;	No change;
Slightly worse;	Significantly worse;	Not known
27. How has attending the breakfast club affected children's punctuality so far this year?

Significant improvements;	Some improvements;	No change;
Slightly worse;	Significantly worse;	Not known
28. How has attending the breakfast club affected children's behaviour so far this year?

Significant improvements;	Some improvements;	No change;
Slightly worse;	Significantly worse;	Not known
29. How has attending the breakfast club affected children's concentration during morning sessions so far this year?

Significant improvements;	Some improvements;	No change;
Slightly worse;	Significantly worse;	Not known
30. How has attending the breakfast club affected children's educational performance so far this year?

Significant improvements;	Some improvements;	No change;
Slightly worse;	Significantly worse;	Not known

Section G: Funding

31. Apart from the Kellogg's award, what sources of funding supported the club this year?

The school's mainstream budget;	DfEE Standards Fund Money;
New Opportunities Fund;	Local businesses/sponsorship;
Payment from children or parents;	Charitable grants;
Education Action Zone (EAZ);	Single Regeneration Budget (SRB);
Health authority;	Other
32. What sources of funding are confirmed for next year?

The school's mainstream budget;	DfEE Standards Fund Money;
New Opportunities Fund;	Local businesses/sponsorship;
Payment from children or parents;	Charitable grants;
Education Action Zone (EAZ);	Single Regeneration Budget (SRB);
Health authority;	Another Kellogg's grant;
Other	
33. Are there any other sources of funding you are still hoping to obtain for next year?

The school's mainstream budget;	DfEE Standards Fund Money;
New Opportunities Fund;	Local businesses/sponsorship;
Payment from children or parents;	Charitable grants;
Education Action Zone (EAZ);	Single Regeneration Budget (SRB);
Health authority;	Another Kellogg's grant;
Other	

Section H: Supporting breakfast clubs

34. What do you think are the most important elements in developing the provision of an existing breakfast club? (Please rank the following: 1 – most important; 9 - least important)
- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Basic advice on developing the club; | Access to funding; |
| Gifts in kind, e.g. subsidised food; | Advice on study support; |
| Advice on food to serve; | Enthusiastic staff; |
| Advice on how to target those most in need; | Parental support; |
| Other, please specify | |
35. What can external agencies, such as Kellogg’s and Education Extra, best do to support breakfast clubs. Please rate in terms of importance (1 – most important; 8 – least important).
- | | |
|--|--|
| Raise media awareness about breakfast clubs; | Lobby DfEE and other government departments; |
| Offer advice on study support; | Offer advice on setting up and running a club; |
| Provide funding; | Provide gifts in kind; |
| Offer advice on nutrition; | |
| Other (please give details) | |
36. Who else can help? What other organisations or individuals do you think should be involved in supporting breakfast clubs?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Questions About the Breakfast Club

- What would you say is the main benefit of the breakfast club?

It improves children’s health;	It helps children make friends
It helps children with learning;	It helps parents and carers with childcare
- Do you pay for your child’s breakfast at the club?
- If you do pay, do you think the prices are: Too expensive; Just right; Too cheap
- What do you think is particularly good about the breakfast club?
- How do you think the breakfast club could be improved?

Questions About Your Child

- How old is your child?
- Is your child a boy or a girl?
- Why does your child arrive early at school?

He/she needs to leave home early;	To see friends
A long or awkward journey to school;	Just to go to the Breakfast Club
- Why did you start sending your child to the Breakfast Club?
- Here are some sentences. Please tick boxes if you agree or disagree with each one.
 - My child enjoys going to the breakfast club
 - My child needs to leaves home early
 - My child has a long and/or awkward journey to school
 - My child gets a good breakfast at the club
 - My child likes the breakfast they get at the club
 - My child’s friends go to the club
 - My child learns new things at the club
 - Going to the club helps my child with his/her school work
 - Going to the club is a good way for my child to start the day
 - My child’s gets into trouble less often since he/she started going to the club
 - My child wants to go to school more since he/she started at the Breakfast Club
 - My child’s school work has improved since he/she started going to the club
 - My child has tried different food at the breakfast club
 - My child has made new friends at the club
- In what ways has the club helped your child develop? It hasn’t helped;

Learning a new language;	Getting on better with other children;
Getting on better with teachers/other adults;	Computer skills are improving
Maths is improving;	Playing more sport;
Understands the need for a good breakfast;	English is improving;

12. Here are some sentences. Please tick boxes to show if you agree or disagree with each one.
- I need to leave home early to get to work
 - I take my child to school
 - I find it a struggle to get my child up and ready for school
 - I find it a struggle to get my child to have breakfast before leaving for school
 - I go to the Breakfast Club with my child
 - I help out at the Breakfast Club
13. Here are some sentences about how you may benefit from the Breakfast Club. Please tick boxes to show if you agree or disagree with each one.
- With my child at the club, I am able to get to work more easily
 - With my child at the club, I have more time on my own (and/or with my partner) in the mornings
 - With my child at the club, I have more time to spend on my other children in the mornings
 - On days when my child goes to the club he/she is less of a handful in the mornings
 - I worry less about my child getting into trouble when he or she is at the club
 - The Breakfast Club has got me more involved with school activities in general
 - At the club, I like talking to teachers and schools assistants
 - At the club, I like talking to other mums and dads
 - At the club, I like having breakfast
 - At the club, I like helping out
 - At the club, I like taking part in activities and learning things with my child

QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERS OF SCHOOL STAFF

1. Background information:
 - School Year; Sex; Ethnic Minority; On Free School Meals; SEN statement
 - Last Year: Attendance Record; Last Year: Punctuality Record;
 - Last Year: Un-authorized Absence Record
2. Did the child attend the club last school year?
3. So far this year, how regularly has the child attended the breakfast club?
 - Almost Every Day; Several Days A Week;
 - About Once A Week; Less Frequently
4. Did the school particularly encourage/target this child to attend the club?
5. Is the child involved in any other out of school hours activities?
6. How would you describe the child's behaviour compared to the average for the school?
 - Excellent; Good; Average;
 - Poor; Very Poor
7. Has the child's behaviour in the club changed in the last term or so?
 - Improved; Stayed The Same; Got Worse
8. Has the child's behaviour in school changed in the last term or so?
 - Improved; Stayed The Same; Got Worse
9. How would you describe the child's educational achievement compared to the average for the school?
 - Excellent; Good; Average;
 - Poor; Very Poor
10. Is the child's educational achievement progressing in line with expectations?
 - Above; In-line; Below
11. In morning sessions, has the child's concentration improved in the last term or so?
12. In morning sessions, has the child's performance improved in the last term or so?
13. Has the club itself has made a significant contribution to any progress the child has made?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILDREN

1. Here are some sentences. Please tick a box to show if you agree or disagree with each one.
 - I like coming to the breakfast club
 - Going to the club is a good way to start the day
 - I like the food we get at the club
 - The club helps me with my school work
 - I have made new friends at the club
 - Going to the club means I like school more
 - I need to arrive at school early
 - The club is somewhere to go before school starts
 - Without the club I get hungry before lunch
 - The things to do at the club are boring
 - Going to the club helps me stay out of trouble for the rest of the day
2. How do you go to school?

On your own;	With an adult;	With a friend, brother or sister
Walk	Train	School Bus
Car	Bicycle	Other Bus
3. At the club what do you eat?

Cereal	hot drink	fruit	bacon	toast	chocolate
Porridge	crisps	fizzy drink	juice	eggs	other things
4. On days you don't go to the club, what do you do for breakfast?
 - I don't eat breakfast
 - I eat breakfast - At home On the way to school In the playground
 - I usually have:

Cereal	hot drink	fruit	bacon	toast	chocolate
Porridge	crisps	fizzy drink	juice	eggs	other things
5. Do you pay for your breakfast at the club?
6. If you do pay for breakfast, do you think the prices are:

Too expensive	About right	Too cheap
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7. What do you do at the breakfast club?

Talk and play with friends	Homework
Play sports and games	Get extra help with difficult schoolwork
Talk to teachers	Read books, magazines or newspapers
Talk to other adults	Activities there aren't time for in class
Spend time on your own	
8. Why did you start coming to the club?
9. Tell us what you think would make the club even better?