

COUNCIL		
Report Title	Motion 2 in the name of Councillor Maines to be seconded by Councillor Fletcher	
Key Decision		Item No.
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
Class	Part 1	Date: November 27 2013

“This Council welcomes the introduction of free school meals for all infants as announced by the Deputy Prime Minister. All children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 will receive a free, healthy, hot school lunch and this will benefit 11,000 children across the borough of Lewisham.

This Council understands that good nutrition early in life is extremely important to ensure a child’s educational development and result in the best outcomes for them later in life. Universal free meals have improved both behaviour and concentration in areas where this has been trialled.

In pilot areas:

- Students were found to be on average two months ahead of their peers elsewhere;
- Between 3% and 5% more children reached target levels in maths and English at Key Stage 1, a bigger improvement than the 3.6% boost that followed the introduction of a compulsory literacy hour in 1998;
- Academic improvements were most marked among children from less affluent families;
- There was a 23% increase in the number of children eating vegetables at lunch and an 18% drop in those eating crisps.

This initiative will help families to balance their budgets while ensuring children continue to be well-fed, and will save families approximately £400 a year.

This Council also welcomes the extension of free school meals to disadvantaged students in further education and sixth form colleges.”