

News update: British school lunches

On page 57 of Green Line 3 you heard about Jamie Oliver and his ideas about making school food healthier. Find out here what has happened since then.



Two happy British girls with their fast-food lunches. But many British pupils are not so happy with their new healthy lunches at school.

- In 2005 the UK's most famous cook, Jamie Oliver, started to criticize¹ the food in the cafeterias of British schools. He said favourite foods like Turkey Twizzlers were not good for the pupils. He even had a TV show, "Jamie's School Dinners", that showed how to make healthy lunches that aren't expensive.
- In 2006 the government made new rules for school lunches: no more crisps, no more candy, no more sugary drinks; instead², more fruits, vegetables and fish. And you can't get a chip butty anymore, a north of England sandwich speciality with French fries and butter in vinegar – lots of fat and salt!
- But Jamie Oliver's plans haven't been such a big success. The number of children who eat a warm lunch in the school cafeteria has gone down. Some don't like how the new food tastes, some say prices have gone up, and others don't think that there's enough choice³.
- Many pupils are protesting the new school lunches. How? Many pupils just don't buy the school lunches any more; they bring their own from home. But two mothers from Rawmarsh School in Rotherham, England, went even further: At lunchtime, they brought fast-food lunches to the school – and sold them to pupils through the fence! They sometimes sold 50 lunches a day but stopped after heavy criticism in the national media.
- The government says that the new healthy lunch project will take a few years to become a real success. But some changes have already been made to the original plan: For example, schools may serve fried⁴ foods twice a week; and burgers, sausages or meat pies may be served once every two weeks.
- But the government also says it is their job to take care of the pupils' health. Studies show that Britons are not yet as fat as Americans, but they are the fattest people in Europe. By the year 2020, 30% of British boys and 40% of girls could be too fat if things don't change.

¹to criticize ['kɪtɪsaɪz] = kritisieren • ²instead [ɪn'sted] = stattdessen • ³choice [tʃɔɪs] = Auswahl • ⁴fried [fraɪd] = gebraten