

PRESS RELEASE

From Headmaster to Head Chef

5 February 2018

Pupils at Strathallan School were served up a surprise with their soup this week, as Headmaster Mark Lauder, surprised them by going 'back-to-the-floor' to work with the school's catering team.

Mr Lauder, who became headmaster of the school in September, spent the day supporting the team from caterer Independents by Sodexo by preparing and serving breakfast, lunch and dinner to the school's 530 day and boarding pupils.

Explaining his motivation for donning his chef's whites, Mr Lauder said; "Food is incredibly important at Strathallan. Getting the right balance of nutrition and hydration is vital to allow our pupils to achieve their full potential in the classroom, on the sports field and in all the extra-curricular activities they do. The catering team are an important part of our school community. The day will allow me to really get to know them, to see the interaction between them and the pupils, and to understand some of the pressures and challenges of the job."

Catering is only one in a series of 'back-to-the-floor' challenges Mr Lauder will undertake in order to get to know the teams who look after the various support services at the school.

He continued; "We are focused on continuous improvement in every aspect of school life at Strathallan and to do that effectively requires thorough knowledge. You get a much better understanding of how things work if you talk to teams and work alongside them."

Mr Lauder started prepping for breakfast at 7am, and continued to work with the team throughout the day, cooking up and serving fresh meals including vine pepper and roast tomato soup, chilli con carne with tacos, roasted vegetable lasagne and "Strath mess" – a twist on the Eton original! Importantly, he had to wear safety shoes and chef's whites.

No stranger to the kitchen, he likes to cook, and particularly enjoys making fresh bread and stews. He admits, however, that he doesn't get much opportunity to indulge in this during term time.

With a choice of three hot dishes and a choice of desserts for lunch and dinner, along with home made soup and a salad bar, some of the favourites on the school menu at Strathallan are fish and chips, green Thai noodles served with Asian greens and beef jalfrezi. The pupils also eat a lot of fruit, with melon being a particular favourite.

Catering manager Sandra McCaffrey who manages the Independents by Sodexo team at Strathallan commented; "Mark did a fantastic job and we would definitely consider him for a permanent position! The team here are really passionate about producing tasty, nutritious food for the pupils and staff so we were delighted to have the chance to showcase our work to Mark."

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