



"They're fed...and ready to learn"

These were the exact words of Ivy Road Primary School Head teacher Susan Watts when asked why she chose to set up a breakfast club for pupils at the Forest Hall school in Newcastle. Susan, who has been Head Teacher for six years, was concerned that many of her pupils were coming to school without eating breakfast. So, she approached a North Tyneside initiative for funding to help set up a breakfast club.

Now in its fourth year, the club runs every day from 8:15am to 8:55am and is attended by around 50 pupils. Ages range from 4 to 11, and students enjoy toast and cereal as well as some time to play with toys, or do something creative like drawing, before the school day starts. According to Susan;

"The most important thing is that they actually have something to eat in the morning. I couldn't stand the idea of the children coming to school and doing work on empty stomachs. What we've also found is that they're more ready to learn, because they concentrate better when they're not hungry and they've had a chance to play, talk and get any issues off their chest before starting their day properly."

The club is actually voluntary and the kids can pick and choose when they attend. Alisha and Rhianna for example usually come two or three times per week and "...always eat toast and cereal and enjoy a good chat." Susan noted that many of the children would previously arrive at school just in time, or even late. "The breakfast club has given them an incentive to come to school early and get in the right frame of mind before 9am."

When the funding stopped in 2013 Susan turned to local baker Greggs and Nigel Wright for help. Greggs has been running breakfast clubs since 1999 and now provides breakfasts to over 10,000 children in the

UK. Nigel Wright, through the Nigel Wright Foundation, agreed to sponsor the Greggs breakfast club at Ivy Road Primary School, allowing the school to get bread and cereal from its local Greggs.

In December, to signal the start of the Nigel Wright Foundation involvement at Ivy Road Primary, Nigel Wright Foundation Committee members Alistair Moore, Sarah Glendinning, Suezanne Bennett and Kelly Robson visited the school to help out. Along with the three regular club helpers - Mrs. Butcher, Mrs Hodgson and Mrs Blacklock - who Susan describes as "fantastic", the Nigel Wright staff got involved in serving the food and helping the kids make Christmas cards and decorations.

According to Alistair Moore, "It's been great to come along and join in the club and to see how much they're all enjoying themselves has made us even more proud to be part of it." Alistair noted that the Foundation was hoping to make regular visits to the club to help out whenever they can.

An Ofsted report in November 2011 noted that *"The Breakfast Club effectively promotes pupils' well-being and learning. They care for each other well, have great respect for each other and for the adults in the school, and say they feel safe."*