

School principal apologises after Muslim pupils were accidentally fed 'halal' chicken sandwiches containing BACON

- **Muslim teacher bought 'halal' baguette for lunch in July**
- **She noticed 'smoky smell and taste' and then saw pieces of bacon**
- **More than half the pupils at Birmingham school are from ethnic minorities**
- **Head apologises for 'unfortunate mistake', blaming human error**

By Jennifer Smith

A school principal has apologised after Muslim pupils were inadvertently fed bacon when a box of sandwich spread was wrongly labelled as halal chicken and sweetcorn.

Chris Quinn, the executive principal of Ninestiles School in Acocks Green, Birmingham, formally apologised for the mix up on the school's website, putting it down to 'human error'.

A former teacher pointed out the mistake after eating one of the baguettes herself at the school where more than 50 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minorities.



Muslim pupils at Ninestiles School in Birmingham unwittingly ate the bacon after picking up baguettes labelled as halal chicken and sweetcorn

The principal posted a statement of apology on the school's website, saying it is 'nationally and internationally acknowledged as a high achieving, innovative and exciting school which recognises and celebrates the diversity of its community.'

The halal food error was discovered by a Muslim teacher who had bought one of the baguettes at lunch in July, during the last week of term before the summer break.

The teacher, who has now left the school, said: 'All the halal food is meant to be labelled clearly as halal and I took what I believed was a halal chicken and sweetcorn baguette.'

'But after eating it I became aware of a smoky smell and taste. As I looked inside I was horrified to find that there were pieces of what I thought were ham.'

She approached catering staff who confirmed the mislabelled baguette contained bacon.

APOLOGY

It has come to the school's notice that a small number of sandwiches, sold on the 17th July 2013, which were labelled as Halal, contained products which were not Halal. The school apologises for this unfortunate mistake. It is an important part of Ninestiles ethos that we meet the dietary requirements of all our students and staff.

The school is taking steps to ensure its suppliers meet their commitment to the school's expectations with regards to food standards. The school is also reviewing its own procedures to ensure that this does not happen again.

We apologise to anyone who inadvertently ate one of this small number of sandwiches.

© HotSpot Media

The statement on the school's website highlights its culturally diverse student body, apologising for the 'unfortunate mistake' which Ms Quinn later put down to 'human error'

'I felt physically repulsed, terribly upset. I had never eaten pork before and couldn't believe I was eating it by mistake at school,' the teacher said.

'I had taken the last baguette so all the others and the sandwiches with the same filler in would have been eaten by the pupils, many of whom are Muslim.

'This means pupils were therefore not only given non-halal chicken, but were also given bacon, a meat that is clearly forbidden in Islam and is not supposed to be anywhere near the lips of a Muslim.'

The teacher complained to the school immediately and an investigation was launched, with the full apology issued this week.

An above average number of students at the school are eligible for free school meals, according to its last Ofsted inspection report.



Chris Quinn, Principal at Ninestiles School in Birmingham apologised for the mistake, but said no parents had complained

Just over half are white British; slightly more than ten per cent are from Asian Pakistani backgrounds and a similar proportion are of Asian Indian heritage, the report said.

A special unit attached to the school has 45 students with speech and language or 'community difficulties'.

In her website apology Ms Quinn said: 'It has come to the school's notice that a small number of sandwiches, sold on the 17th July 2013, which were labelled as halal, contained products which were not halal.

'The school apologises for this unfortunate mistake. It is an important part of Ninestiles' ethos that we meet the dietary requirements of all our students and staff.

'The school is taking steps to ensure its suppliers meet their commitment to the school's expectations with regards to food standards. The school is also reviewing its own procedures to ensure that this does not happen again.

'We apologise to anyone who inadvertently ate one of this small number of sandwiches.'

Ms Quinn repeated the apology and told the Birmingham Mail that a supplier had provided the school with a wrongly labelled sandwich spread.

'This was down to human error,' she told the newspaper.

'This matter was raised by a former member of staff at the time. We have had no complaints from parents.