

## Schoolchildren showcase their cultivating skills at annual public market



Croydon pupils are returning for another year to sell bargain-price fruit, vegetables and herbs that they have grown at the popular one-day schools' marketplace on Thursday 5 July.

Children from eight local schools will set up their stalls for the third year from 1pm – 2.30pm at Croydon Clocktower, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX. Residents and those in the area can pick up bags of hand-picked fresh produce and more on the day.

Croydon Council is supporting schools to tackle childhood obesity through educating children about the benefits of healthy, nutritious food. Projects like the annual schools' marketplace, edible playgrounds and learning to grow their own food are helping them to better understand how regularly eating fresh produce will improve their health and wellbeing as they grow up.

The charity School Food Matters worked with some of the schools during the months of cultivation as they prepared for the market day in Croydon. All the proceeds from the fruit and veg sales are reinvested into future food growing projects at the schools.

The schools' marketplace is part of the legacy programme for the Croydon Food Flagship, a partnership with the council, the Mayor of London and Department for Education (DfE), to work with schools and communities to get more residents eating healthier meals and growing their own food. Food businesses in the borough are also supported to improve their customer menus.

The council launched the SUGAR SMART Croydon campaign earlier this year to make residents aware of the hidden sugars in some food and drinks and the risks to their health of consuming too much sugar in their daily diet.

A short film about the key achievements of the Food Flagship programme is available on YouTube.



"We are proud of our pupils for their hard work and determination each year to reap the best crops to sell at our schools' food market. Eating a healthy balanced diet is important for a person's physical and mental health and it reduces the risks of developing a preventable illness. We expect the market to get busy so residents should come along early with plenty of time to browse and snap up the good food on offer."

**Councillor Jane Avis, cabinet member for families, health and social care**

Councillor Alisa Flemming, cabinet member for children, young people and learning. "It is great that the Croydon schools' food marketplace is again open for business. This project is helping pupils to learn key life lessons like the importance of looking after their health and wellbeing as well as developing their food growing and business skills. We are also supporting school staff to learn more about healthy eating and improve school meals."

Dela Foster, Development Manager at School Food Matters: "This project helps young people in lots of ways and is one of few projects to engage secondary school students. We introduce them to the fun of growing their own vegetables and cooking from fresh, so that they are better equipped to make healthy eating choices throughout their lives, and combat unhealthy eating. Selling their home-grown produce gives them a new experience they will not get inside the school gates and allows them to demonstrate what they have achieved since the spring."