The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Speaker’s Guidance Note

What is the aim of the session and why is it important?

The main aim of the session is to help all teachers and school staff to understand why a good school food culture is important and how it improves pupil health and well-being. After reviewing examples of schools already benefitting from revolutionising their food culture, participants will be asked to identify some practical steps they can take to improve the food culture in their own school. Participants can then use the ‘additional resources and further reading’ document to learn more.

How to deliver the session

This is an informal 1 hour session and should be suitable for all members of school staff; the materials are designed to be presented by anyone regardless of their experience in school food. The session itself can be delivered in various ways, including i) by a member of school/university staff to colleagues/students, and ii) as part of a workshop or conference with attendees from multiple schools/caterers.

You are free to adapt elements of the session to suit your audience, including the order of slides within each section; for example you may wish to remove slides for any optional activities you are not going to cover. However, we suggest you keep the facts/figures and convey all the information on the ‘key messages’ slide for each section.

Please note: if you wish to cover all of the content in detail it may be necessary to split the materials across two, one-hour sessions. We would advise that you cover section 1 of the presentation in the first hour, to provide the background information and set the scene regarding the importance of a good school food culture. The second session can then be used to focus on a review of the case studies and action planning amongst participants. If you are a school that is already taking significant steps to improve your food culture, you may wish to skip over some of the content in the first section, to leave more time for sections 2 and 3.

The main presentation is provided in a PowerPoint format, with presenter notes under each slide. There is also a PDF version of both the slides and the presenter notes, which are suitable for printing.

Before you deliver the session

Look through the outline plan below, along with the slides and their notes for the presenter. For each of the three main sections review:

Section 1: the timings and select the most relevant activities from those that are optional.

Section 2: the case study summary document and decide which examples you would like to use and whether written stories or videos will work best for your group; you can use a mix of both if preferred.

Section 3: the template action planning documents; please feel free to develop your own versions. Familiarise yourself with the supporting resources, such as the Headteachers’ checklist and Ofsted guidance.

Equipment needed

To present the session you will need:

- A computer with internet access
- A projector
- Various printed resources (optional – see the session plan below for further details)
- Access to the Speaker’s notes for each slide
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>What Will I Be Doing?</th>
<th>Supporting Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 1</td>
<td>During this section you will primarily be presenting the slides to explain the importance of a good school food culture and the benefits this can bring to pupil health and well-being. The presenter’s notes are there to provide guidance on the key messages for each slide. There are three optional 5 minute activities included throughout this section which you will need to facilitate. If you are running the session within an hour you will probably only have time to use one or two. Please review each of the activities and choose those which are most relevant to your audience. Optional Activity A (Sugar): A useful ice-breaker and a means of gauging current levels of awareness within the group. Optional Activity B (Group Discussion): A chance for the group to review the key messages they have received and to relate this to their own experiences in school. Optional Activity C (Mixed Messages): An opportunity to consider practical examples of mixed-messages in schools and for the group to relate this to their own experiences.</td>
<td>Optional Activity A (Sugar): See Materials Pack. Literature on Health Impacts of a Poor Diet: See Presenter’s notes and slide-deck on ‘additional resources and further reading’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall: 15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of slides/ core content: 10 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optional Activities: 5-15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 2</td>
<td>At the beginning of the section you will be presenting a few slides to explain the ‘whole school approach’, the success achieved so far to improve school food culture across the country and some further information on what constitutes a ‘healthy diet’. Again, the presenter’s notes are there on each slide to provide guidance on key messages. Your primary focus for this section will be to facilitate the review of case studies from individual schools. As the presenter you should think about which format of case studies you wish to use (written, videos or a mix) and which specific case studies are most relevant for your group; further information is provided in the case study summary document. You may either wish for the whole group to review the case studies together, or to split participants into smaller groups to review the case studies independently and then feedback to the wider group. This activity is a useful time for participants to capture initial observations and ideas for the action planning element (section 3) in the mind-map template provided.</td>
<td>School Food Standards (A3 Poster): x 1 print-out per group. Ofsted Guidance: x 1 print-out per group and Dec 15 School Inspection Update (pg. 9-10). Further guidance on Healthy Eating: See Presenter’s notes and slide-deck on ‘additional resources and further reading’. Case Studies: see summary note and individual narratives/videos; x 1 print out of each written case study per group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall: 25 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of slides: 10 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of Case studies: 15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECTION 3</td>
<td>In this section you will be helping participants to develop their own actions to improve the food culture in their own school. Example headings are provided which may help to group related actions. There are also some example actions to discuss with participants if they are struggling for inspiration. You can use the headteachers’ checklist to help them identify steps they can take to improve the food culture in their own school, along with the template school food policies. Focus on ensuring that each participant has some tangible actions to take away from the session. These can be a mixture of ‘quick wins’ and more long-term goals.</td>
<td>Action planning templates (mind-map and tabular versions): x 1 per participant. Templates available in the resource folder. Headteachers’ Checklist x 1 per group. Template School Food Policies (optional): see ‘additional resources and further reading’. Additional resources and Further Reading: x 1 printed handout per participant. Available in the resource folder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall: 20 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of slides: 5 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Planning: 15 minutes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADDITIONAL</td>
<td>If time allows, you may want to move on to reviewing related activities/initiatives that are occurring in your own area, e.g. a local healthy schools programme. You can also look through the additional resources and further reading available in the accompanying slide-deck.</td>
<td>Additional resources and Further Reading: x 1 printed handout per participant. Available in the resource folder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Presenter Notes

Slide 1 (Title Slide): The Importance Of A Good Food Culture

1. Welcome attendees and ask for a quick show of hands to find out what everyone’s role is in school, e.g. trainee teachers, experienced teachers, food teachers, caterers etc…
2. Make it clear that this session should be useful for all school staff
3. Ask for a quick show of hands to determine how many people have heard of ‘a whole school approach to food’, the School Food Plan, School Food Standards, and the new reference to health and wellbeing in the Ofsted inspection framework etc…
4. Provide some background to the School Food Plan, which has been one of the key drivers for the recent improvements in school food and school food culture. The School Food Plan was commissioned by DfE and published in July 2013 with 17 agreed actions for government and other organisations to improve school food across the country. A link to the plan is provided within the ‘additional resources and further reading’ handout.

Slide 2: Session Aims And Objectives

1. The purpose of this slide is to communicate the high-level aims and objectives for the session
2. The aim is for all teachers, staff and trainees to understand the importance of a good school food culture and to be empowered to support wider pupil health and wellbeing.
3. Objectives
   I. The first is to understand why a good school food culture matters, in relation to the current obesity epidemic and other negative health impacts, along with the benefits including pupil attainment and being ‘ready to learn’.
   II. The second is to understand what a ‘whole school approach’ to food looks like through stories and videos from inspiring schools.
   III. The third is to draw on the examples from other schools and supporting resources, to help participants identify practical steps they can take to improve the food culture in their own school.

Slide 3: Sugar Activity Ice-breaker

1. Introduction Optional Activity A (5 minutes): This can be used to gauge the level of awareness amongst your audience and is also a useful ice-breaker. If you wish to run a more interactive (kinaesthetic) version of the activity then please see the ‘sugar activity’ handout provided.
2. Stress that schools need to do more to raise awareness of the importance of a good school food culture amongst staff, pupils and parents. This engagement should go beyond the school gates, i.e. schools should act as community assets to promote health and wellbeing.
Slide 4: Sugar Activity Ice-breaker (Continued)

1. Ask the group to guess the number of sugar cubes in each drink and re-order the drinks in order from lowest to highest sugar content.
2. Once the group has finished guessing, move to the next slide to reveal the answers 
3. **NB:** make the group aware that it is the total sugar in the product that is important, so the portion size of the drinks will have an impact. Also tell the group that even unsweetened fruit juice is sugary but that a 150ml serving counts as one of your 5-a-day. For the purposes of this activity one cube of sugar is equivalent to 4 grams

Slide 5: Sugar Activity Ice-breaker (Continued)

1. Click through to reveal the order and sugar content of each drink 
2. Spend a few minutes discussing the correct order with participants. Some questions they may wish to consider include:  
   I. Do they find this order surprising? 
   II. Are some or all of these products available in their school and do pupils often choose them? 
   III. What more can they do to promote water as the ‘drink of choice’, as in the School Food Plan 
3. **NB:** the values for each of these products were accurate as of the date listed at the bottom of the slide. To ensure accuracy these values should be checked periodically

Slide 6: Section 1 – Why A Good School Food Culture Matters

1. This is the slide to introduce the first section examining ‘why a good school food culture matters’

Slide 7: What Has Been Happening In School Food

1. Set the scene and demonstrate the **brilliant progress** that has been achieved **nationally over the last few years to improve the food culture across all schools.** Mention that there is a growing **political recognition** for the importance of **school food culture in improving pupil health, wellbeing and attainment** – mention the government’s **child obesity strategy** (due to be launched in 2016).
2. There is also a focus on food culture as a means of **wider character development**, e.g. healthy social engagement during lunchtimes as a vital means of developing pupil confidence and resilience.
3. **Highlight some of the key actions from the School Food Plan** (refer to supporting documentation, listed below, as required) 
   I. **Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM)** 
      a. Provided for all children from reception to year 2, irrespective of free school meal entitlement.
b. Schools have risen to the challenge magnificently to deliver UIFSM nationally from September 2014 and there was a commitment to sustain the policy in the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review

II. Ofsted Inspection Framework
   a. In the new Ofsted inspection framework inspectors will be looking at the extent to which schools are successfully supporting pupils to gain “knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy” and “make informed choices about healthy eating, [and] fitness” throughout their entire inspection.
   b. Inspectors were made aware of the School Food Plan and associated resources in the December 2015 School Inspection update (pages 9 and 10 – see the link below)

III. Cooking on the curriculum
   a. All students from 5-14 must be taught practical cooking skills.
   b. Refer any participants who are teaching cooking skills to the ‘additional resources and further reading’ handout for further support.

IV. Food-based Standards – further information is available on slide 17

Supporting documents for this slide:
1. Head-teacher’s checklist
2. Ofsted guidance and announcement around new inspection framework
3. School Food Standards A3 poster and guidance
4. New guidance for school governors

Sources and further Information:

Slide 8: Levels Of Childhood Obesity

1. Now move on to review the scale of the problem. The slide shows the high rates of overweight or obese children in both Reception (approx. 1/5th) and Year 6 (approx. 1/3rd)
2. What is shocking is the increase in the levels of obesity during school years.
3. The National Child Measurement Programme (2014/15) shows that 19.1% of children in Year 6 (aged 10-11) were obese and a further 14.2% were overweight. Of children in Reception (aged 4-5), 9.1% were obese and another 12.8% were overweight.
4. These costs are felt nationally - obesity costs the NHS over £5 billion a year.
5. Importantly, there is also a strong link between deprivation and higher levels of obesity at each age, i.e. those from more deprived backgrounds show higher levels of obesity (on average).
6. Consumption of sugar and sugar sweetened drinks is particularly high in school age children and also tends to be highest among the most disadvantaged.
7. So improving the school food culture can have a **huge impact on pupil’s health and wellbeing**

**Sources and further information:**

3. **If asked:** the definition used to define overweight vs. obese children is available from the National Obesity Observatory report, available here - [http://bit.ly/1QRwhRT](http://bit.ly/1QRwhRT) (June 2011)

---

**Slide 9: The Health Impacts Of A Poor Diet and Obesity**

1. Use this slide to summarise how **excess energy, high saturated fat, sugar and salt,** and **low intakes of fruit and vegetables, oily fish and fibre** is associated with **longer term health problems**, including increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers.
2. It **also has impacts beyond physical health,** such as increased school absence and emotional/behavioural effects.
3. Importantly, **overweight and obese children are also more likely to become obese adults,** and have a higher risk of morbidty, disability and premature mortality in adulthood.
4. So it’s vital we tackle this unhealthy food culture at school.

**Sources and further information:**


---

**Slide 10: The Wider Health Impacts Of A Poor Diet**

1. **However, obesity is not the only impact of a poor diet.**
2. Use this slide to stress that it’s not just overweight and obese children who’s health is at risk
3. While some children can appear to be a healthy weight, **an unhealthy diet** can lead to the **build-up of fat on the inside** that isn’t visible. This fat around vital organs can cause **serious diseases in the future**, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.
4. **Group Question:** mention that an unhealthy diet is also linked to tooth decay. Ask the group to estimate the proportion of children with tooth decay at 5, 8, 12 and 15 years old.
5. Reveal the answer, i.e. approximately a third of 5 and 12 year olds and nearly half of 8 and 15 year olds (2013 Children’s Dental Health survey).
   - **If asked:** the reason that these figures go up from 5 to 8 year olds, and then down for 12 year olds before going back up for 15 year olds, is due to the loss of milk teeth and secondary teeth coming through between 8 and 12 years.
Sources and further information:

Slide 11: Average Fruit And Vegetable Consumption

1. **Group Question:** ask participants to estimate, on average, how many of their five fruit and vegetables a day children eat?
2. Then click to reveal the answer – emphasise that many children are far below their recommended intake. Those aged 11-12 eat the smallest number of fruit and vegetables per day (2.3 portions for boys and 2.8 portions for girls).
3. Again, stress the point that there are links between levels of social deprivation, i.e. children living in households with the highest incomes consume the greatest amount of fruit and vegetables per day (3.9 portions for girls and 3.5 portions for boys).
4. Mention that the issue goes beyond fruit and vegetable consumption. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that on average, school aged children do not meet government dietary recommendations for saturated fat and oily fish. Moreover, children are eating 3 times more sugar than the maximum recommended amount.
5. **So most children do not meet dietary recommendations regardless of their weight status**
6. Make the point that helping children to develop long-term healthy eating behaviours can improve their health and reduce the likelihood of diet-related disease.

Sources and further information:

Slide 12: Malnutrition And A Summary Of The Information So Far

1. Stress the point that 77% of parents of overweight children do not recognise their child as overweight.
   I. There are specific resources from NHS Choices to help parents in these situations broach the subject with their children (link below).
2. **However,** reiterate that the issue goes beyond obesity. An unhealthy diet and malnutrition also includes children/pupils who are a normal weight and under-weight.
   I. In a January 2016 survey by YouGov it was found that:
      a. Nearly 50% of teachers said some pupils arrived at school hungry at least three or four times a week.
      b. Around 20% said they had brought in food within the last 12 months for children who had not eaten breakfast
   II. There is also an on-going issue with Holiday Hunger which was highlighted in a report by the All Parliamentary Party Group on School Food (link below). Key facts include:
      a. 29% of food bank referrals are for families with children (Jan 2013)
      b. In 2012-13 food banks fed 465,126 people nationwide. Of those helped 36%, (260,282) were children
c. More than a quarter of parents said they can't provide food for all of the meals their children need

III. There are a number of useful articles and tips for parents on dealing with underweight children on the NHS Choices website (see the link below)

IV. Children who are underweight will also be flagged as part of the National Child Measurement Programme (see the link below) and will have specialised care, if this is required, via GPs and dietitians.

V. Introduce Optional Activity B (5 mins): this is a group discussion to review the information so far. Some wider questions the group may wish to consider include:
   a. Are they surprised by the scale of the problem?
   b. How does it compare with their experiences in their own schools or placements?
   c. Do they think the situation is getting better or worse?
   d. Have they noticed any changes in their school or local area to improve the food culture?

Sources and further information:
1. Image (left) and YouGov data for taken from - http://bit.ly/1RpcUnN
2. NHS Choices website - http://bit.ly/1m64S6z

Slide 13: Mixed Messages

1. Reinforce the message that pupils spend so much time in school during such a critical period of their life (in terms of healthy eating habits and increases in obesity) that it's vital that schools act as champions and models for change.

2. Reference the School Food Standards which have been developed as an action of the School Food Plan (refer to the poster available via the Speaker’s Guidance note). The standards apply across the whole school day (including breakfast, break time, lunch, vending machines and after-school clubs). They are easy to use and set out clear requirements to help children develop healthy eating habits, e.g. a portion of vegetables or salad with every meal, no confectionery and water as the drink of choice.

1. Introduce Optional Activity C (5 mins): ask participants to spend 5 minutes thinking of any other ‘mixed food messages’ that occur in their own school
   I. Use the examples below as prompts if needed. Then ask the group to feedback.
      a. Staff walking through the school with a high sugar drink or bag of crisps
      b. Children mainly cooking sweet dishes, such as biscuits and cakes in school
      c. Cakes and other unhealthy foods used as regular promotional or fundraising opportunities, e.g. bake sales
1. Make sure you stress the four key points on the slide. Particularly the links between pupil health and wellbeing and academic achievement – also reference the WHO report (see the link below), which mentions the negative impact of obesity on attainment.

2. Mention the importance of schools as a model of positive behaviour both within the school gates and beyond - i.e. in the wider community.

3. Make the point that many teachers/caterers will know that just because you present children with healthy food it doesn't mean they will eat it. This is where the 'whole school approach', which is discussed in the next section, really comes in. It’s about more than the dinner the children are served, but about the food culture across the school and beyond, e.g. the culture in the dining room and the investment children have in their health etc...

4. For example, studies have shown that children are far more likely to eat fruit and vegetables they have grown themselves. Similarly children who learn to cook are more aware of the importance of a healthy diet and a longer lunch time increases fruit and vegetable consumption (see the links below)

5. Make the point that this is why there have been new ‘School Food Standards' introduced - to clarify what foods pupils should be eating and in what proportion, but it’s vital we stick to the guidelines.

6. Re-state the point that food preferences and eating habits can be greatly affected by food exposure during early years, which re-emphasises why the school food culture is so important.

Sources and further information:

1. Links between health/wellbeing and attainment:

2. Links between pupil fruit and vegetable growing and consumption
   II. Daily Mail: [http://dailym.ai/1A7aRx7](http://dailym.ai/1A7aRx7)

3. Link to demonstrate that food preferences and eating habits form during early years:
   I. Can J Diet Pract Res: [http://1.usa.gov/1U6l5Fo](http://1.usa.gov/1U6l5Fo)

4. Link to demonstrate that longer lunchtimes increase fruit and vegetable consumption
   I. J Acad Nutr Diet: [http://1.usa.gov/1Xi7D0A](http://1.usa.gov/1Xi7D0A)

---

**Slide 15: Section 2 – Creating A Whole School Approach**

1. This is the slide to introduce the second section which expands on the concept of the 'whole school approach' and examines what has worked well in other schools who have revolutionised their food culture.
Slide 16: The Whole School Approach

1. The end of the first section mentioned the importance of a ‘whole school approach’ to school food and the benefits this can bring to pupils. **Now move on to consider what a whole school approach is and how it can be delivered**

2. As mentioned, a ‘whole school approach’ to food **goes beyond the lunch-time/the dining room** and the learning and teaching in the classroom, **to pervade all aspects of school life, including**:

   I. **Culture, ethos and environment**: the health and wellbeing of students and staff is promoted through the ‘hidden’ or ‘informal’ curriculum, including leadership practice, the school's values and attitudes, together with the social and physical environment.

   II. **Learning and teaching**: using the curriculum to develop pupils’ knowledge, attitudes and skills about health and wellbeing.

   III. **Partnerships with families and the community**: proactive engagement with families, outside agencies, and the wider community to promote consistent support for children and young people’s health and wellbeing.

3. A ‘whole school approach’ requires the active involvement and training of teachers and the wider school workforce, including caterers, together with the leadership and support of head teachers and school governors.

4. **Introduce Activity D (5 mins)**: based on the definition above, ask the whole group to spend a few minutes discussing what they think a ‘whole school approach to healthy food’ would look like? *The next case study activity and supporting resources will provide examples.*

   I. Some things they may wish to consider, are:

      a. How is a good food culture and health and wellbeing integrated across the school, e.g. through cross-curricular activities?

      b. Does the school promote consistency in its messaging, e.g. are there any mixed messages, e.g. unhealthy food used as rewards?

      c. Is there an engaging dining environment, with a positive atmosphere, in which staff sit with pupils, pupils are able to serve themselves and there is a selection of healthy foods available?

      d. Do staff act as role models, e.g. eating healthy food and encouraging pupils to try new, healthy foods?

---

Slide 17: What Is A Healthy Balanced Diet

1. **With the move towards a national improvement in school food culture, make the point that we need national guidance on what a healthy diet is:**

2. Several tools are available to help. Of particular importance are the **School Food Standards** (see the link below) which are **mandatory for all schools**. These are food-based and provide clear guidance for caterers on what should be served to pupils in schools. Some key points to emphasise are:

   I. Standards are **mandatory across the school day**, i.e. they don’t just apply at lunchtime

   II. **Variety** across the school week is key

   III. The Standards advocate the use of sustainable, fresh and locally-sourced ingredients, where possible
IV. **If relevant**: mention that the Standards are not mandatory for academies formed between September 2010 and June 2014. However, we strongly encourage all such academies to voluntarily sign-up. A link is provided in the ‘additional resources and further reading’ handout.

3. There is also information provided in the PHE *Eatwell Guide* (link below), which defines the government’s recommendations on healthy diets more generally. *It defines a healthy balanced diet as:*

- Eat at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day.
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible.
- Have some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya drinks); choosing lower fat and lower sugar options.
- Eat some beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily).
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts.
- Drink 6-8 cups/glasses of fluid a day.
- If consuming foods and drinks high in fat, salt or sugar have these less often and in small amounts.

**Supporting documents:**
1. School Food Standards poster
2. PHE Eatwell Guide

**Sources and further information:**
3. Further information is available from NHS Choices who provide 8 ‘tips for healthy eating’ - [http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eight-tips-healthy-eating.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eight-tips-healthy-eating.aspx)

**Slide 18: Individual Schools – Case Study Review**

1. Case studies can either be reviewed in their written form, as videos on screen or as a mix of both. **Links to the videos are available within the main presentation on slide 19**
2. There are a range of case studies from primary, secondary and SEN schools, and you are free to use the combination most relevant to your audience.
3. **Introduce Activity E (15 mins):** ask the group to discuss and review the case studies.
4. If participants need prompting then ask them to think about:
   I. Where did each school start from and what has their journey been to improve their school food culture?
   II. How did the change in food culture take place, i.e. who had to be engaged (the headteacher/a school champion/the caterers)?
   III. What sort of changes has each school introduced, e.g. school gardens, a friendly dining environment, cross-curricular food messages etc…?
   IV. What have the schools said the perceived benefits have been, e.g. better concentration, children learning how to eat together, eating a healthier and more varied diet etc…?
V. NB: you can combine this activity with the start of the action planning exercise. In which case, distribute the action planning mind-map template at this point. Ask participants to write down the steps/actions taken in each of the case study schools, along with some ideas of steps they could take in their own school. Further ideas and examples are available during the review of the ‘headteacher’s checklist’ at slide 21.

VI. Actions can be grouped under the following headings:
   a. Community, i.e. what can be done to promote healthy food messages and raise awareness amongst the wider community, including parents
   b. Practical skills, i.e. food growing and cooking. Setting up clubs and visits to farms etc...
   c. Food provision, i.e. food across the whole day, including breakfast, snacks (tuck-shops), after-school clubs, the lunchtime dining environment, school trips and celebrations
   d. Cross-curricular messaging, i.e. how can food be used to teach multiple subjects and how does it link in with an active lifestyle and emotional wellbeing
   e. Being a role model, i.e. how can your own behaviour promote healthy eating and wellbeing, e.g. avoiding mixed messages
   f. Leadership, i.e. a school ‘champion’ to drive the change in culture across the school, e.g. through developing a new school food policy

Supporting documents for this slide:
1. Print-outs of each written case study x 1 per group (optional – see above)
2. Print-outs of action planning mind-map template x 1 per participant (optional - see above)
3. Paper/pens

Slide 19: Individual Schools – Case Study Review (Films)
1. Each of the case study icons links through to the respective video. The timings for each video are given in the case study summary document (available in the zip folder).
2. NB: If you are using the written case study narratives then this slide is not needed.

Slide 20: Action Planning – Mind Map
1. This is the first option for an action planning template; it is less specific and therefore may be more suitable for capturing initial ideas or observations during the review of the case studies. You may wish to provide participants with a print out or to add suggestions directly to the PowerPoint if you have an interactive white-board.
2. Ask participants to capture and group some observations of the key steps taken at each of the case study schools; as well as some initial suggestions for the actions they can take to improve the whole school food culture in their own school.
3. Make sure you allow time for participants to feedback ideas from the group discussions
**Slide 21: Section 2 – Key Messages**

1. Use this slide to re-iterate the key high-level messages coming out of the various case studies (these are available on the main slide).
2. It is important to ensure that all groups receive the same key messages regardless of the specific case studies you chose to review.

**Slide 22: Section 3 – What Can You Do**

1. This is the slide to introduce the final section which focuses on getting participants to identify specific actions they can take (both now and in the longer-term) to improve their own school food culture.

**Slide 23: Action Planning**

1. Now that you have seen examples of what has worked well in other schools, ask participants to consider **what actions they can take to improve the whole food culture in their school**.
2. **Introduce Activity F (10 mins):** hand out an action planning template to each participant. You may choose to use the mind-map template, the tabular version or to develop your own. A digital version of the action planning table and example action is given on slide 25.
3. You may also wish to give out some copies of a template School Food Policy – examples are available via links in the ‘additional resources and further reading’ handout.
4. Also **hand out other resources** to support the action planning, such as: the headteachers’ checklist, the Ofsted guidance and the School Food Standards poster.
5. Ask the group to spend 10 minutes **thinking about practical steps** they can take to **improve their own school food culture** and to **capture** these **ideas** within their **action plan**. NB: encourage everyone to take away the action plan and to use it to measure progress. Plans can be completed after the session if time is short. Also ask participants to identify actions they can deliver at different points, e.g. a few ‘quick wins’ as well as some more long-term ambitious goals.
6. Suggested actions under each heading are available below and slide 24 contains suitable examples from the headteachers’ checklist.
   I. **Community**, e.g. organise parent taster sessions and visits to local farms
   II. **Practical skills**, e.g. set up food growing and cooking clubs
   III. **Food provision**, e.g. set-up breakfast clubs, encourage staff to sit with pupils during lunch times, introduce a pre-order system to make food service more efficient, play music and change the dining room decor to make it more appealing to pupils and introduce a ‘no packed lunch’ policy.
   IV. **Cross-curricular messaging**, e.g. integrate food messages across multiple subjects. This could include cooking and preparing recipes from different periods to support history lessons and using food waste to develop a compost patch to support the biology curriculum.
V. **Being a role model**, e.g. avoid using unhealthy snacks as a reward and avoid eating unhealthy food in front of the pupils

VI. **Leadership**, e.g. who should lead the drive towards implementing a ‘school food policy’ which encompasses and promotes the whole school food approach?

Section 24: The Headteachers’ Checklist

1. Use this slide to support the action planning for a good school food culture. Suggest the group reviews the headteachers’ checklist, to identify what their school is currently doing compared to what it could be doing. Although the checklist was developed for headteachers (who need to lead and drive the change), adopting a ‘whole school approach’ to good food requires engagement and commitment from all staff

2. Highlight some of the key points, e.g.
   - **Leading the change**: all schools need a champion to lead the improvement in food culture. Any of the people in the room could be that champion
   - **Concentrating on things the children care about**: they are the customers and the school food culture should be adapted to reflect what they want. Set-up a SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group) and work with the school council to give pupils a voice
   - Make sure that there is a **variety of food** served across the school week – see the School Food Standards for more information
   - Make sure **packed lunches** are not a ‘better option’ – only 1% of packed lunches meet the nutritional standards applied to school food (see the link below)
   - Make sure the **dining hall** is a **clean and attractive environment** that pupils will want to eat in
   - **Make sure pupils have long-enough to eat** – re-emphasise the study that shows if pupils have longer to eat (>25 vs. 20 minutes) they are likely to eat more fruit and vegetables
   - Use **local and seasonal suppliers** and **get the contract right**. Think about where your food comes from and align with government buying standards and the plan for public procurement (available in the ‘additional resources and further reading’ document)
   - **Watch what children are eating throughout the day** and promote water as the drink of choice

3. Following the earlier discussion, re-state a few examples of how a whole school approach to food can be delivered
   - Treat the dining hall as an integral part of the school, where pupils and teachers **eat together**
   - Treat cooks and midday supervisors as part of the school team – invite them to staff meetings
   - Make sure food messaging to children and staff is consistent and cross-curricular – don’t give sweets as a reward to pupils or staff!
   - Grow and serve food in your school – examples are included in the case studies. Re-state the evidence to show that children engage more with food they have grown themselves

Supporting documents for this slide:
1. Print out the headteachers’ checklist (x 1 per group)

Sources and further information:
1. Analysis of packed lunches

Slide 25: Action Planning – Table

1. This is the more detailed version of the action plan; if time allows then participants should be encouraged to transfer their initial observations and ideas over to this template
2. Ask participants to write down some of the actions they can take to improve their whole school food culture. Make sure that the what, who, how and when is clear
3. Feedback: ask participants to spend 5 minutes swapping plans and sharing their ideas with each other, or open the discussion up to a wider group feedback session
4. See the speakers guidance notes for a link to this document, or use your own school template

Slide 26: Conclusion and Evaluation

1. Use this slide to re-cap on the original aims and objectives of the session and check that the group feels that these have been covered.
2. Ensure that all participants have specific actions to improve the food culture in their own school

Slide 27: What Next?

1. A key component of this session is that, now participants are aware of the importance of a good school food culture, they know where to look to access the huge number of additional resources, expertise and information that can support them in improving their own school’s food culture
2. Make sure each participant gets a copy of the ‘additional resources and further reading’ handout, which contains links to all of these key resources.

Slide 28: What Is Happening In Our Local Area

1. If time allows, adapt this final slide to summarise related activities taking place in your local area.
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture
Session Aims and Objectives

Aim:
For all teachers, staff and trainees to understand the importance of a good school food culture and be empowered to support wider pupil health and wellbeing.

Objectives:
- To understand why a good school food culture matters
- To share examples of what works well to create a whole school approach to good food culture.
- To reflect on how this can be applied to your role within school.
Sugar Activity Ice-breaker

We need to **do more** to **raise awareness** amongst **school staff and pupils**, as well as those in the **wider community, including parents**

**Group Exercise:** How many cubes of sugar are in these popular drinks

5 minutes
The Independent

SCHOOL FOOD PLAN

- Coca-Cola: 500ml
- Volvic: 500ml
- Water: 150ml
- Ribena: 288ml
- A108: 400ml
- Boost: 250ml
- Rubicon Mango: 288ml
- Capri-Sun Orange: 200ml
- Lucozade Orange: 380ml
- Tropicana Smoothie: 150ml
0 cubes
(15g in 150ml)

< 4 cubes
(15g in 150ml)

5 cubes
(20g in 200ml)

> 6 cubes
(24.8g in 500ml)

> 6.5 cubes
(26.5g in 250ml)

> 7 cubes
(29g in 288ml)

> 9 cubes
(37.8g in 288ml)

> 9.5 cubes
(38.4g in 400ml)

12 cubes
(48g in 380ml)

>13 cubes
(53g in 500ml)

Information on sugar content accurate as of: 15/03/2016
Section 1
Why A Good School Food Culture Matters
What Has Been Happening In School Food?

Children’s health and wellbeing is rising up the political agenda, with the launch of the government’s Childhood Obesity Strategy in 2016.

There is growing recognition for the role of a good school food culture in supporting pupil health, wellbeing and attainment.

Lots has changed in school food over the last few years following the publication of the School Food Plan (summer 2013), including:

- **Universal Infant Free School Meals** (Sept 14)
- **A new Ofsted Inspection Framework** (Sept 2015)
- **Cooking on the curriculum** for KS1-3 (Sept 2015)
- **Mandatory School Food Standards** (Jan 2015)
One in five children in Reception is overweight or obese (boys 23.4%, girls 21.6%)

One in three children in Year 6 is overweight or obese (boys 35.2%, girls 31.7%)

Adapted from: http://www.noo.org.uk/slide_sets
Obesity harms children and young people

- Emotional and behavioural
  - Stigmatisation
  - Bullying
  - Low self-esteem

- School absence

- Increased risk of becoming overweight adults
  - Risk of ill-health and premature mortality in adult life

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Pre-diabetes
- Bone & joint problems
- Breathing difficulties

Adapted from: https://www.noo.org.uk/gsf.php5?f=313571&fv=21149
Question?

What percentage of children have decay in their teeth?

Nearly a third of 5 year olds (31%) and nearly half of 8 year olds (46%)

Over a third of 12 year olds (34%) and nearly half of 15 year olds (46%)

Adapted from: http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17137/CDHS2013-Executive-Summary.pdf
On average, how many of their five (fruit and veg) a day do children eat?
Group Discussion

Majority of teachers in survey know pupils who arrive at school hungry

Survey of teachers in England and Wales finds pupils who haven’t had breakfast are likely to be lethargic or disruptive in class.
Group Discussion: Mixed Messages

Schools need to champion and model the change

What mixed messages are sent when schools have biscuits or sweets available as rewards in classrooms? What other examples of mixed food messages are there in your own school?
Section 1: Key Messages

Encouraging children to be more involved and have a greater understanding about diet and health is key to healthier, longer lives.

Pupils with better health and wellbeing are likely to achieve better academically. The culture, ethos and environment of a school influences the health and wellbeing of pupils and their readiness to learn.

Schools are a great environment to deliver this message and model a positive, healthy food environment.

Schools are also a point of wider engagement and should promote a good food culture to parents and others across the community.
Section 2

Creating A Whole School Approach
The Whole School Approach

A whole school approach is one that goes beyond the classroom to spread across all aspects of the life of a school, including:

- Culture, ethos and environment
- Learning and teaching
- Partnerships with families and the community

Group Discussion: What do you think a ‘whole school approach’ to healthy food looks like?

5 minutes

Logo Adapted from: http://www.cornwallhealthyschools.org/
What Is A Healthy Balanced Diet?

The Eatwell Guide

Use the Eatwell Guide to help you get a balance of healthier and more sustainable food. It shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group.

Foods high in fat, sugar and salt

- No more than two portions of fish that are high in fat or high in mercury, each week.
- No more than two portions of food which include plenty of salt, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of sugar, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of saturated fat, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of trans fats, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of processed food, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of sugar-free snacks, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of soft drinks, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of sweet and savoury snacks, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable juices, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable smoothies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable salads, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable soups, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable stews, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable pies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable tarts, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable cakes, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable biscuits, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable chocolates, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable candies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable gummies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable jellies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable jams, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable marmalades, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable preserves, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable chutneys, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable relishes, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable pickles, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable sauces, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable dressings, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable marinades, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable seasonings, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable stocks, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable gravies, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable pastes, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable purées, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable sauces, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable pastes, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable purées, each week.
- No more than two portions of food that include plenty of fruit and vegetable sauces, each week.
Individual Schools


What steps did these schools take to create a great whole school food culture?

Some areas to consider are:

Community
Practical skills
Food provision and environment
Cross-curricular messages
Being a role model
Leadership

10 minutes preparation and 5 minutes to feedback
Bath and North East Somerset: Improving the Dining Environment

Broadclyst Primary: The Benefits of Family Dining

The School Food Plan Vision

Carshalton Boys with Giles Coren

Phoenix High School: Farming in Urban Schools

Bath and North East Somerset: Cooking and Eating

Adapted from: http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/
A Good School Food Culture
Section 2: Key Messages

A good school food culture is one in which:

The dining hall is an integral part of the school, where children and teachers eat together.

Food is a vital element of school life and the catering team are important and valued members of staff.

All children have the practical cooking skills and knowledge to keep themselves healthy; making informed choices about healthy eating.

Children take home learned habits and the school engages with parents and others, so that a good food culture spreads throughout the community.

The pupil voice is taken seriously, to encourage a sense of ownership throughout the school.
Section 3
What Can You Do?
**Action Planning**

**Exercise:** what can you do to create a great school food culture?

**What:**
- Community
- Practical skills
- Food provision and environment
- Cross-curricular message
- Being a role model
- Leadership

**When:**
- Tomorrow…
- This term…
- Next term…
- Beyond…

10 minutes to consider your own actions and 10 minutes feedback to the group
A checklist for head teachers

Lead the change

- Obviously, not all of these actions are your responsibility; they can be shared across the school. Some are best done by the school cook, business manager, senior management team, or your external catering company, or even volunteers.

Concentrate on the things children care about

- Eat in the canteen often. Ask yourself whether the food looks appetising and tastes good.

- Be sure there is a mix of familiar and new foods for the children, and that the catering staff encourage children to experiment.

- Make sure packed lunches are not a ‘better’ option.

- Look around your dining hall. Is the room clean and attractive? Does it smell good?

- Give parents, carers and grandparents the opportunity to taste school food and eat with the children at lunchtime and/or parents’ evenings.

- Structure the lunch break so there is sufficient time for eating as well as activities or clubs.

- Organise a group to represent children’s views on school lunch,

- Use local and seasonal suppliers, and make a song and dance about it.

- Watch what gets served at mid-morning break. Many children eat their main meal at this time. Too often, that means filling up on pizza, paninis or cake.

- Ensure tap water is widely available at all times, make it the drink of choice across the school.

Adopt a ‘whole school’ approach

- This is a simple idea, but an important one. It means treating the dining hall as an integral part of the school, where children and teachers eat; lunch as part of the school day; the cooks as important staff members; and food as a vital element of school life.

- Treat your cooks and lunchtime supervisors as part of your team, on a par with teachers and business managers.

- Make sure children get consistent messages about nutrition in lessons and at lunchtime.

- Grow food in your school, and use some in the school lunch.

- Encourage teachers to eat in the dining room with the children. It’s...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>How (e.g who to speak to/what resources are needed)</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| e.g. Food Provision   | To ensure that all food across the school day (including breakfast, after-school clubs and vending machines) meets the School Food Standards | Me/ headteacher/ caterer  | 1. Find out about the existing School Food Policy and review  
2. Arrange a meeting with the headteacher and the school chef 
3. Print out the school food standards guidance and complete the checklist 
4. Meet with breakfast club staff to discuss challenges 
5. Organise an assembly to explain the changes to pupils | End of this term (review progress at the beginning of the next half term) |
Conclusion and Evaluation

Aim:
For all teachers and staff to understand the importance of a good school food culture and to be empowered to support wider pupil health and wellbeing.

Objectives:
To understand why a good school food culture matters.
To share examples of what works well to create a whole school approach to good food culture.
To reflect on how this can be applied to your role within school.
What Next?
What Is Happening In Our Local Area?

[INSERT OWN TEXT HERE]
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

What Next: Additional Resources and Further Reading

Teacher Training

Children’s Food Trust (http://bit.ly/1nhVkJ): a suite of training courses and resources to help teachers and schools improve their food culture and provision


Focus on Food (http://www.focusonfood.org/): offering teaching, training, resources and support to help schools, individuals and communities benefit from hands-on practical cooking sessions

Food Teachers Centre (http://foodteacherscentre.co.uk): platform to exchange best practice, give advice and support to less experienced teachers about food teaching, and answering practical concerns.

School Food Matters (http://www.schoolfoodmatters.com): home to a variety of useful resources, including cooking and growing ideas, as well as opportunities to receive training in school

Food Teacher Professional Portfolio (http://bit.ly/1PYnoJk): for teachers, at all stages of their careers, to audit, plan, organise and record their professional development.

Teaching Resources

What Works Well (http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com): a collection of the best examples and ideas for delivering great food and food education in schools

C4L School Zone (https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/schools): PHE-sponsored healthy eating resources, including to ‘food detectives’ materials to support the ‘Sugar Smart’ campaign

Jamie Oliver’s Kitchen Garden Project (http://www.jamieskitchengarden.org): an online community hosting over 400 simple and beautiful teaching resources ranging from Jamie Oliver children's recipes to lesson plans, tips, fact sheets, nutrition information, posters and more


Food for Life (http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/schools): a range of resources, including awards packages to support schools through any changes to improve their school food culture

Food a Fact of Life (http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk): a wealth of free resources from the British Nutrition Foundation about healthy eating, cooking, food and farming for children and young people aged 3 to 18 years.

The Food Forum (http://www.foodforum.org.uk/curriculum/index.shtml): various food-related resources for teachers (and parents)

Food route: a journey through food (http://bit.ly/1ARyUkg): a range of age-appropriate resources to help young people to gain food and active lifestyle related skills and knowledge
The Natural Hydration Council (https://www.nutrition.org.uk/foodinschools/teachercentre.html): useful resources about water and health

Design and Technology Association (https://www.data.org.uk/): provides an outline programme of study for Cooking and Nutrition, a progression framework for KS1-3 and assessment guidance

Countryside Classroom (http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk): range of resources to connect food, farming and the natural environment

**Practical Cooking Skills**

Fun Kitchen (http://www.funkitchen.co.uk/learning-with-our-childrens-holiday-cookery-classes-in-exeter-1): food cookery class workshops and recipes for children and adults to learn new practical cooking skills

Chefs Adopt a School (http://www.chefsadoptaschool.org.uk): a national team of trained chefs and volunteers who deliver a holistic food education in schools all over the country

Let’s Get Cooking (http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/lets-get-cooking-at-home): a large collection of recipes appropriate for children/families. Members have access to skills videos, practical guidance and session plans

Times Education Supplement (https://www.tes.com/resource-collections/Food-education-6412605): food education guidance and inspiration to coincide with the new curriculum for food education, including: recipe sheets and booklets

Catering Health Online (https://www.nutrition.org.uk/online-training-sp-221.html): online BNF course to provide caterers, food service providers and catering students with the skills and knowledge they need to offer creative and healthier menus

**Food Provision**

The Lunchtime Experience (http://bit.ly/1ZTeUnS): tips on the What Works Well website to deliver a positive lunchtime experience

Magic Breakfast (http://www.magicbreakfast.com): providing free, nutritious breakfasts to over 480 schools and 23,500 children each morning


The Government Buying Standards (http://bit.ly/1E5M4dh): a set of government procurement standards which emphasise the importance of criteria other than cost

A Plan for Public Procurement (Food and Catering) (http://bit.ly/1UqSyZm): a balanced scorecard for those procuring food and/or catering services within the public sector. Includes techniques for incorporating criteria, other than cost, into tender evaluations

**School Food Policy**

The School Food Plan (http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/): 17 actions to improve the whole school food environment. Further documents and resources are available in the SFP Library.


Creating Tools for Practice: Food and the Self-evaluating School (http://bit.ly/1IT3eUN): a clear, systematic process to support schools in self-evaluating and developing their food practices, efficiently and cost effectively from the University of Sheffield, School of Education
Good Food for Small Schools - A Practical Toolkit (http://bit.ly/1SKvXJJ): a toolkit from LACA and the Children’s Food trust providing practical advice to help small schools improve their food culture

Packed Lunch Policy Template (http://bit.ly/1RD74wy): from the Children’s Food Trust. Includes suggested headings for the policy, and examples of the types of information that can be included in each section

Various template resources (http://bit.ly/1WTeux5): from the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Service, including a detailed packed lunch guidance leaflet

Croydon Whole School Food Policy template (http://bit.ly/1TO8JBH): to help ensure a consistent approach to healthy eating across the school community including pupils, staff and parents/carers

St Luke’s Primary Whole School Food Policy (http://bit.ly/1Riyxkt): developed using School Self Evaluation questionnaires, Open Evenings, periodic ESS Road Shows and staff INSET days, alongside informal discussions with staff, pupils, parents and governors

Campaigns And Awareness Raising

Food Revolution Day (http://www.foodrevolutionday.com/campaign): a campaign led by Jamie Oliver for global practical food education for all children. Includes a number of resources, recipes and lesson plans for teachers

Let’s Get Sugar Smart (https://www.nhs.uk/change4life-beta/campaigns/sugar-smart/home): a campaign from Change 4 Life to raise awareness about the amount of added sugar in everyday foods. Includes the ‘food detectives’ series of lesson plans and resources for teachers as well as the ‘sugar smart’ app.

The Big Cookathon (http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/lets-get-cooking-at-home/big-cookathon): an annual event from the Children’s Food Trust to get the nation cooking

National School Meals Week (http://www.thegreatschoollunch.co.uk/): an annual week-long event from LACA to celebrate all that is great about school food

Healthy Eating Week (http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/section.aspx?sectionId=114): an annual week-long event from the British Nutrition Foundation in which schools are encouraged to run whole school food and health activities

The Crunch (https://thecrunch.wellcome.ac.uk/the-crunch): an exciting year of activities, experiences and discussions about our food, our health and our planet, delivered by the Wellcome Trust.

Awards and Accreditation

The Food for Life Catering Mark (http://www.sacert.org/catering): an independent endorsement that food providers are taking steps to improve the food they serve

Healthy Schools Programmes (http://www.healthyschoolslondon.org.uk): local and regional schemes to recognise and reward those schools taking steps to help children make healthy choices and lead healthy and active lifestyles

Children’s Food Trust Excellence Award (http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/childrens-food-trust/what-we-do/award): a great way to showcase commitment to children’s nutrition. Reviews things such as: menus, how you give children the time, space and facilities they need to enjoy their food and the chances you’re giving them to start their own cooking journey.
Further Reading

The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment (http://bit.ly/1plIxST): a Public Health England briefing for head teachers, governors and staff in education settings


NHS Live Well Choices (http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/goodfood/Pages/Goodfoodhome.aspx): a host of useful articles on various food and health related subjects, including eating a balanced diet, understanding food labelling and advice for parents with overweight children

National Obesity Observatory (http://www.noo.org.uk/slide_sets): a part of PHE producing guidance, tools and useful summaries of current obesity levels. Includes the child weight data factsheet and the slides on 'making the case for tackling obesity'

The National Child Measurement Programme (http://www.hscic.gov.uk/ncmp): an internationally recognised annual measure of the height and weight of children in reception class (aged 4 to 5 years) and year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years) to assess overweight and obesity levels in children within primary schools.

Children's Dental Health Survey (2013) (http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB17137/CDHS2013-Executive-Summary.pdf): the statistics to support the levels of dental decay in children from 5-15 years old

The academic paper summarising the link between pupil fruit and vegetable growing and levels of consumption (http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/apa.13028/abstract)

The Daily Mail article commenting on the link between pupil fruit and vegetable growing and subsequent levels of consumption (http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3083454/Sowing-seeds-healthy-eating-Children-grow-veg-FIVE-times-likely-eat-them.html)

Evidence for food preferences and eating habits forming during childhood (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2678872/)

Eight Tips for Healthy Eating (http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/eight-tips-healthy-eating.aspx): advice from the NHS on top tips to eat healthy

Length of Lunch and Fruit and Veg Consumption (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26372337): study demonstrating the link between a longer lunch and increased fruit and vegetable intake amongst pupils

Ending Childhood Obesity (Jan 2016) (http://www.who.int/end-childhood-obesity/news/launch-final-report/en/): A report from the WHO with 6 main recommendations to end childhood obesity; including focusing on childhood diet and physical activity

Evans C, Greenwood D, Thomas J, Cade J (http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/79612/2/greenwood16.pdf): the survey of children's packed lunches which demonstrated that only 1% meet the nutritional standards for school food

The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Section 2: Case Study Summaries

Below are just a handful of stories and videos from schools doing amazing things to create a great school food culture. We hope their journeys will inspire you to think about your own school and support your action planning.

Written Case Studies

Primary

Holy Trinity, Bury: The first steps on our food journey: The staff at Holy Trinity are just beginning on their journey to improve their school food culture. With a broad pupil demographic in a deprived area, there are many challenges to overcome. But after piloting this new training session, everyone is now inspired to make a change and Headteacher Marcus Elder has a clear plan of action to deliver lasting improvements through small manageable steps.

Charlton Manor, London: Headteacher’s top ten tips for a whole school approach to food: Headteacher Tim Baker has been an inspiration to his school and across the country in promoting the importance of a whole school approach to food. Charlton Manor weaves food across the curriculum, supports the local community food environment and even has beehives!

Washingborough Academy, Lincolnshire: Integrating food education: Four years ago Washingborough had no hot school meal provision. With the headteacher leading the change, they have recruited a chef, involved the local community and made food education central to the culture and ethos of the school. Some of their innovative ideas include an enterprise project “snack shack” and great social media engagement with parents to celebrate the food being grown and served in school.

Hargrave Park, London: Creating a food culture to improve attendance, learning & wellbeing: Hargrave Park School serves a diverse community within an area of high deprivation in Islington. Indeed, 78% of children are entitled to free school meals and a lack of ‘school readiness’ was identified as a key barrier to learning. But a revamp of the food and dining culture and a universal free breakfast club, funded by Pupil Premium, has helped improve children’s attendance, learning and wellbeing.

Secondary

Carshalton Boys Sports College, London: Creating an incredible food culture: Putting food at the centre of school life has helped transform school results from 4% to 60% 5 A*-C (including English and Maths). Carshalton have created an incredible food culture through their food service and food education, including growing fruit and vegetables and keeping chickens!

Dereham Neatherd, Norfolk: Increasing meal take up by 40% through a whole school approach: A school with growing, cooking and healthy eating at the centre of its thinking. Dereham Neatherd has created a great school food culture through strong leadership, proactive caterers, pupil and community involvement, cooking and food growing.

Special Educational Needs

Ravenscliffe High School, Yorkshire: Food central to life at school: This special school for pupils aged 11-19 is committed to offering students the best possible lunchtime and food experience; with a school chef who received BBC Cook of the Year in 2014 (BBC Food & Farming Awards). Food is a focus for enterprise groups involved with the 6th form catering café and lunch clubs within the community, and also sees students working in the main kitchen with the catering team.
The New Rush Hall School, London: The benefits from the school allotment: A special school for children aged between 4 and 16, who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Produce grown in the school allotments is used in school meals and cookery lessons so that pupils can experience every stage of food use, from planting, through to growing, harvesting and eating. There is also a great summary to reflect on ‘what the children get out of it’.

Video Case Studies

Overview

The School Food Plan Film (4’48 mins): A must watch if you haven’t seen it already, which emphasises why a good school food culture really matters. There is an overview of the actions in the plan and it also shows the importance of increasing the take up of school meals to create a financially viable school food system. http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/film/

Primary

Broadclyst, Devon: The benefits for pupils, staff and parents of family dining (4’45 mins): Hear from Headteacher Jonathan Bishop who speaks to parents, teachers and the school chef about how they made dining central to the school culture. High quality food in a high quality environment has meant they have educated staff, parents and children and influenced the attitudes and future lifestyles of their pupils. https://youtu.be/JrtRjrtF0p4

Bath and Somerset: Tips on improving the dining environment (6’17 mins): Brilliant practical top tips from primary schools in Bath and North East Somerset that have radically improved their pupil’s dining experience: http://youtu.be/7hVEcodwf_8

Secondary

Carshalton Boys, London: Giles Coren (food critic) reviews school lunch (5’11 mins): Putting food at the centre of school life has helped transform school results from 4% to 60% 5 A*-C (including English and Maths). Carshalton have created an incredible food culture through their food service and food education, including growing fruit and vegetables and keeping chickens! http://youtu.be/QMgeCA1joEA

Phoenix High School, Shepherds Bush, London: Farming in urban schools (6’49 mins): Situated on the White City Estate in West London, the sixth most deprived area in the country, with a 25% obesity rate amongst children aged 11 and the worst dental hygiene record in the city. The urban farm teaches both students and parents about the importance of nutritious food and has become a focus for the local community. http://youtu.be/AcsKrdYrbKI

Primary and Secondary

Sharing and Inspiring: Growing, cooking and eating in Bath and North East Somerset schools (4’45mins): Inspiring children to grow, cook and taste food across primary and secondary schools in Bath and North East Somerset. Look out for great practical tips to embed cooking, growing and farm visits into the curriculum http://youtu.be/P7XBzCwMVXs
A Good School
Food Culture
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>How (e.g. who do you need to speak to and what resources are needed)</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Sugar Activity: Supporting Materials

Running the Activity

This activity can be useful as an ice-breaker at the beginning of the session to gauge the existing level of awareness amongst your audience. For example, if participants are able to accurately guess the number of sugar cubes in each of the drinks, it may be suitable to spend less time on the first section, summarizing why a good school food culture is so important, and more time on the case study analysis and action planning.

The aim of the activity is to identify the amount of sugar that is in a number of common drinks. Ask participants to rank the drinks, from lowest to highest, based on the number of cubes of sugar in each. For the purposes of this activity, 1 cube of sugar is equivalent to 4 grams. The images on the slide and the page below are listed in no particular order with regards to their sugar content.

Make the group aware that it is the total sugar in the product that is important, so the portion size of the drinks will have an impact. Also tell the group that even unsweetened fruit juice is sugary, but that a 150ml serving counts as one of your 5-a-day

The activity can be run in three ways:

Option 1: Using the first two presentation slides, ask the whole group to guess the order in which the drinks should appear and the number of sugar cubes in each. Then reveal the answers on the final slide.

Option 2: Using the sheet provided below, ask the group to write the order and the number of sugar cubes above each image. Then reveal answers on the final slide.

Option 3: If you wish to run a more kinesthetic version of the activity and have sufficient time to prepare, provide the group with empty containers for each of the drinks listed along with a number of sugar cubes.

Once groups have guessed and the answers have been revealed, you may wish to emphasise a few key points:

1. Do participants find the order surprising?
2. Are some or all of these products available in their school and do pupils often choose them?
3. What more can they do to promote water as the ‘drink of choice’, as in the School Food Plan

Additional Materials

If you choose to run this exercise as option 2, then each group will need:

A copy of the page below

If you choose to run this exercise as option 3, then each group will need:

An empty container for each of the drinks listed
Sugar cubes (x 77 in total)
500ml
500ml
150ml
288ml
400ml
250ml
288ml
200ml
380ml
150ml
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: New Rush Hall SEN School

The New Rush Hall School is a special school for children aged between 4 and 16, who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is located in the London Borough of Redbridge. In the last two Ofsted inspections it has been judged to be outstanding.

The Allotment

The school allotment has been running for approximately six years. It required fairly substantial set up costs, mainly for installing a high fence to protect the designated area, to have water plumbed in and to buy and install a sturdy shed, greenhouse and tools, including a small rotavator. The school employs a horticulture teacher two days a week, one in primary and one in secondary, to manage the allotment and teach the pupils.

What Do We Grow And How Do We Use It?

In the communal areas we grow herbs, flowers, fruit and vegetables. These are mainly tended by the primary pupils. Secondary pupils have their own small plots within the allotment and research and choose their own varieties for growing. The only restrictions are that what they grow does not interfere or shade anyone else's plot and that it is legal! Primary and secondary pupils also cut and arrange flowers for the dining room and school foyer. The produce is used in school dinners or in cookery lessons so that pupils can experience every stage of food use, from planting, through to growing, harvesting and eating.

The school feels so strongly that this an important part of the curriculum and learning for life that three years ago it invested in a new food technology room, at a cost of £100,000, that provides a state of the art learning environment. For the last 6 years it has also employed an experienced chef to improve the quality of school lunches and provide children with wholesome, freshly cooked meals every day. Along with the food technology teacher, he also helps to teach the children how to cook and prepare what they grow.

What Do The Children Get Out Of It?

- They are encouraged to try new types of fruit and vegetables, improving their diet and expanding the range of healthy food they eat. They are also encouraged to use the wide range of herbs that they grow in cooking and learn how they can enhance the flavour of food.

- They learn how to use a range of tools safely and the horticultural techniques needed for successful growth.

- They learn to understand the links between animals and plants, for example, the importance of earthworms in improving the soil and the damage that slugs and snails can do to plants.
• They learn patience! In a world that often makes them demand instant gratification, having to wait a few weeks or months to get their final product can be much more rewarding; this can be seen in the face of the child who eats the first strawberry that he grew himself!

• As many of the children have emotional and behavioural problems, the therapeutic value of the allotment cannot be underestimated. It provides a quiet and non-threatening space which allows them to think and talk about what is going on in their lives as they work.

• For a child with low self-esteem, a huge sense of achievement can be gained from growing their own food and seeing others enjoying eating it.
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Charlton Manor Primary

Head-teacher’s Top Ten Tips for a Whole School Approach to Food

“Food is an amazing tool for us to deliver almost all the learning objectives of the National Curriculum. Not only that, but children learn to share food, build friendships, problem solve and our local community becomes more resilient”

1. There can be no argument that healthy eating is vital to raising attainment, particularly where pupil premium children are concerned, so encouraging, teaching and providing healthy food should be part of every school development plan. How is this achieved?

2. Firstly ensure that you as a school are providing healthy food. If not talk to the food provider and insist on high standards. If they are resistant, look for another provider or provide the meals yourself.

3. Provide an environment that you would be prepared to eat in. Too many dinner halls look awful; that also includes the servery. Get rid of flight trays and use tables that encourage sitting and eating together.

4. Work with the parents on after school clubs. Cooking clubs with parents and children also help to forge greater links, but target those parents whose children eat unhealthy packed lunches.

5. Assign parent food champions and get them to mentor other parents who have children who are ‘reluctant’ eaters.

6. Encourage the children to write articles for the school newsletter about the school dinners. This also supports literacy and being printed gives it a purpose.

7. Encourage teachers to eat with the children and role model eating at the table. Have discussions with the children about food and its benefits.

8. Grow the food on the school grounds, encouraging the children to look after it getting as involved as much as possible, and then harvest it. The children can then eat it or sell it in the school shop.

9. Embed food growing and healthy eating across the curriculum through topic work, such as Fairtrade, Organic food and even history lessons, e.g. comparing the food Tudors ate and how they cooked it.

10. Allow enough time for children to finish eating their food, paying particular attention to slow eaters.
How do we do this?

We have a topic based curriculum that focuses mostly on food. As well as employing teaching assistants we employ a gardener and 2 professional chefs. Every day children cook and grow which means that numeracy and literacy is taught through growing and cooking with children working with real world dilemmas in real world contexts.

Our attainment is increasing exponentially and we have no issues with behavior, as children are confident and engaged. We have many children joining our school, who have often been excluded from other schools, who prosper in Charlton Manner with their attainment rising, which we put down to our kinesthetic approach to learning.

Food is an amazing tool for us to deliver almost all the learning objectives of the National Curriculum. Not only that, but children learn to share food, build friendships, problem solve and our local community becomes more resilient.”

Tim Baker, Head-teacher, Charlton Manor Primary, London
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Hargrave Park Primary

Where did we start from?

Hargrave Park School serves a diverse community within an area of high deprivation in Islington; 78% of our children are entitled to a free school meal.

For some of our children their school lunch is their main meal of the day. A number of children who present poor progress rates are also those with attendance and punctuality issues. Some of these children also come to school without having had any breakfast. This lack of ‘school readiness’ is one of our biggest barriers.

Although the majority of children at our school have always taken up a free hot lunch (approximately 1 or 2 children per class bring a packed lunch), the quality of provision wasn’t good enough. This impacted on the amount they were actually eating as well as the variety and suitability of their choice. This in turn impacted on their focus and behaviour in afternoon lessons and subsequently their progress measures.

Children did not appear to enjoy their lunch. Their choice often did not include many vegetables, fruit or salad. There was a vicious circle of children not eating salad or fruit, so the presentation of what was put out was not to standard; there was a culture of ‘the children won’t eat it so we won’t put it out’.

In addition, the environment was poor. The school had a very large, ageing kitchen and poorly configured store area, but no designated dining area. The server counter, tables and chairs had to be put out daily in the assembly hall. The counter was not height appropriate, so the younger children could not see what the offer was.

What improvements have we made?

A full review of the catering contract was undertaken. Notice was given and a range of providers visited to understand more fully the vision for the improved lunch. The school council were involved in discussions about reconfiguring the kitchen and storage area.

This was funded by the school with the support of match funding from the local authority and a private donor.

The counter area is now attractively presented and lit. Food is not served from catering sized trays, but in family sized dishes.

Pupils are now vertically grouped in ‘Houses’, with siblings in the same house, enabling them to eat together and support the younger children. This has proved to be popular with families and has supported improvements in behaviour and the overall pastoral environment across lunch.
We launched a Universal FREE breakfast club in summer 2013, which is funded by Pupil Premium. Our new Breakfast Club now averages 35 to 40 students every day. Many of these children are those with attendance, punctuality and ‘school readiness’ barriers.

What impact has it had?

Children are eating more, both in terms of amount and variety. They are eating more vegetables, salad and fruit. Behaviour across break times and lunch is also much improved.

Although the school attendance figures are still a key priority and work is on-going, individual case studies demonstrate improvement.
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture
Case Study: Holy Trinity Primary

Our School

Holy Trinity Primary School in Bury Town Centre has a broad pupil demographic, with 91% of children speaking English as an additional language and 17 languages spoken in total. The school is one of the most deprived in the area, with very low levels of attainment on entry.

School meals are provided by the Local Authority, with 150 pupils being served each day. Although the food is of good quality, budget restrictions have traditionally limited choice and variety. Outside of the dining room, all pupils have a snack during the morning. Like many schools, we have some issues with mixed messaging, with children often bringing cakes or sweets in to share with classmates on their birthday. We also hold ‘Easter egg’ raffles and regular cake sales to raise funds.

However, we know that a good school food culture is important for our pupils and have developed a number of our own schemes, including a Friday ‘party table’ to reward good behavior for one child in each class. But we wanted to learn more about the ways in which we can improve our food culture and so jumped at the chance to take part in the pilot for this new training resource.

The First Steps on Our Food Journey

The training session led to some extremely lively and positive staff discussions about school food culture and its relationship to pupil health and wellbeing. The video case studies were especially useful, providing all of our staff with some concrete ideas to deliver improvements. Some practical suggestions that particularly resonated were:

1. Staff eating with the children and the introduction of table cloths, water and cutlery - to create a more sociable and enjoyable dining environment
2. Establishing a ‘Bistro Buddy’ system, in which year 6 help to serve the younger pupils. This provides useful experience for older children and some welcome support for catering staff!
3. The introduction of salad bars and vegetable gardens, to improve pupil choice and get them actively involved in growing their own food

The session has galvanized us into action. We've already introduced a number of ‘quick wins’ including changes to our breakfast snacks, to eliminate unhealthy options, and many members of staff have begun to eat with the children.

In the longer-term, we plan to:

1. Meet with our caterers to ensure food is suitably varied and healthy.
2. Install a self-service salad bar
3. Set-up our own ‘Bistro Buddies’ scheme
4. Eliminate unhealthy paid-for snacks and expand our provision of free or subsidised fruit to all pupils
5. Get pupils involved in growing their own vegetables

“We're only at the start of our journey to improve our school food culture, but, after undertaking the training, we’re confident that we can deliver improvements through small manageable steps and that our efforts will provide enormous benefits to the health, wellbeing and attainment of all our pupils”.

Marcus Elder, Headteacher
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Washingborough Primary School

Integrating Food Education

Our journey to raise the profile of Food Education at Washingborough Academy began six years ago when Headteacher, Jason O'Rourke, took up post. Committed to embedding a strong food culture, he was passionate about providing children with the opportunity to learn about healthy food choices and essential life skills. He quickly engaged all members of the school community in active roles, developing the children's understanding and appreciation of the role that food plays in a healthy and active life.

Four years ago we had no hot school meal provision at the school. We took the opportunity to bid for a commercial school kitchen on site. The addition of our very own School Chef at the start of this academic year means that we are now able to provide our children with outstanding, freshly prepared food on a daily basis.

Chef Callow’s inspirational menus celebrate locally sourced, seasonal ingredients which, in itself, has encouraged support from and forged strong links with local businesses. Having our own chef means we are able to build purposeful curriculum links across the school through themed menus which link closely with the learning curriculum, reinforcing and further supporting the learning in the classroom.

By regularly posting photos and feedback on social media about the meals, parents have been able to see what's on offer and, as a result, school dinner uptake has increased steadily. Word has spread about the quality of the meals and we are now delivering over 120 meals a day. The dining experience is now a calmer and more enjoyable time of the day, allowing different age groups to enjoy their lunch together.

Our lunch hall, “Food, Glorious, Food”, has music playing to create a pleasant atmosphere, proper plates and cutlery, and lunchtime supervisors to encourage children to make good choices. Our older children don a uniform and act as ‘Salad Servers’ and ‘Aqua Sommeliers’ working alongside members of staff to mentor our younger pupils; promoting good behaviour, manners and a positive attitude towards food. See our video from our parents and grandparents day here: http://bit.ly/1nCM3ly

A more recent and very exciting addition to our school grounds has been the introduction of a beehive; the produce of which will be sold at our extremely popular biannual Farmers’ Markets. These markets are held in our school hall and are a great way of showcasing local food suppliers and involving our local community. Our children take part, growing micro-herbs and creating different types of food to sell at these events.

Another one of our successful Food Education projects is our healthy ‘Snack Shack’. Each week, the children make healthy snacks to sell for 50p. By recording the number of portions sold, and how much profit they have made, they can ascertain the best sellers. As well as developing great food skills and knowledge, this is also a fantastic enterprise project.

With so much research, cooking and growing going on at our school we are proud to have made Food Education an integral, innovative and meaningful part of our school curriculum.

Follow our food stories: @washingborough
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Carshalton Boys College

Food as the Centre of School Life

Carshalton Boys Sports College, in Sutton, is not blessed with a great location. A large aerial photo in the headmaster’s office shows the academy as a tiny rectangle in the middle of a red brick estate that sprawls to the edge of the frame in every direction. It is one of the largest estates in Europe. A massive 40% of the school’s children are eligible for free school meals.

When Simon Barber took over the school twelve years ago, only 14% of children managed to meet the academic benchmark of five GCSEs at A* to C grades including English and maths. The atmosphere and the discipline were terrible. School dinners weren’t just bad: they were virtually non-existent. Children were actually locked out of the main school building for the duration of the lunch break, to give the teachers a break from the mayhem.

Simon’s genius was to realise that the canteen ought to be the centre of school life. It was the one place where the whole school could meet in an informal setting: where teachers and children could sit down together to eat and talk, and in doing so cultivate a happier atmosphere. He understood the importance of table manners, not as a snobbish display of gentility, but as a means of teaching consideration, courtesy and social skills.

So having driven children from the dining hall for so long, how did Carshalton woo them back? The answer was to hire an experienced restaurant chef, Dave Holdsworth, and to compete directly with the local fast food outlets for the custom of older children, while introducing a stay-on-site policy for younger ones. Dave makes proper food taste so good that children have flocked back to the canteen. From a low of 20%, take-up is now at 80%!

But Carshalton hasn’t stopped there. It also offers a £1 breakfast for boys turning up early and a free curry in the late afternoon for those staying late. In the classroom, cooking lessons are compulsory for all children up to the age of 14. They even run a ‘lads and dads’ course where the boys teach their fathers to cook, to tackle the broader problems of malnourishment in the local area. They have chickens laying eggs and a garden club growing vegetables, all of which get used in the school kitchen.

This is all part of Simon’s mission to nurture the whole child: alongside its amazing food culture, the school excels in sport and drama as well as more academic subjects. Last year, 60% achieved English and Maths GCSE at A*-C (significantly above the national average for boys) with this figure predicted to rise again next summer.

Simon is in no doubt about the connection between food and academic achievement. “For many of my boys, this lunch will be their main meal of the day. Good food makes them happy, but also helps them work better. And the culture and behaviour that begin in the canteen are responsible for an atmosphere that supports attainment across the whole school.”
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Dereham Neatherd

Increasing meal take-up by 40% through a whole school approach

Through adopting the whole school approach, Dereham Neatherd has increased its school meal take-up from 20% to 60%. With strong leadership, proactive caterers, pupil and community involvement, alongside a fantastic cooking and growing culture, we have made a real difference to our school food culture.

But how have we done it?

Strong leadership – making lunchtime a priority

- The Head Teacher’s school food policy has been signed off by the governing body and continues to give lunchtime a clear priority in the school day.
- Vulnerable pupils, including autistic children, are taken down to the canteen slightly earlier, in order for them to have a positive and calm dining experience.
- An early lunch has been used as a reward for some of our more challenging classes, a strategy which has impacted positively on behaviour and learning.
- Head Teacher Peter Devonish says, “Actions have taken the place of words and our Food for Life status is now central to the school’s ethos”.

Pupil voice

- The most significant change to impact pupils’ dining experience has been the pupil-led changes to the canteen, all of which were a result of pupil surveys, School Nutrition Action Group discussions and a mini-conference of the School Council, canteen and site staff.
- The school magazine has a full page spread in every issue, featuring growing, cooking, recipe-making and apron-designing competitions, showcasing the huge number of people in the school community who ‘Make a Positive Contribution’.

Parents and community involvement

- Many parents attended cooking competitions, such as the Chilli Cook-Off, where over 20 staff and pupils competed to be crowned best chef.
- By promoting healthy eating assemblies, organising whole school growing and cooking competitions and inviting parents in to the school on a regular basis, it is clear that pupils and their parents have been taking an interest and are now growing and cooking at home.
Growing

- Every lunchtime, students take part in a gardening club, run an allotment, and plant edible borders with herbs, fruit and onions, to supply the school canteen, where an estimated 40% of the ingredients come from organic sources.

- Every year the school runs growing competitions, which involve vegetables being grown in every form room and office in the school (so far they have had chilli, pea, cucumber and tomato competitions).

The dining environment

- A breakfast bar has been built and 20 bar stools purchased. With the addition of a pupil-chosen playlist for the new sound system, the canteen is a vibrant and healthy social hub of the school site.

- The school has purchased 20 picnic benches and constructed two covered outside dining areas for children who eat packed lunches or the canteen’s ‘Grab and Go’ lunches. Uptake of school meals continues to rise: 550 meals per day + 110 ‘Grab and Go’. Free schools meals uptake is currently at 91%.

- The school has a designated budget to improve the displays in the canteen and aims to get pupils to research and design their own food provenance display.
The Importance of a Good School Food Culture

Case Study: Ravenscliffe High School

Food Central to Life at School

Ravenscliffe High School (RHS) are committed to offering students the best possible lunchtime and food experience. Food in school is not only embedded into cookery lessons, it is also a focus for enterprise groups involved with the 6th form catering café, as well as the lunch clubs within the community; all of which see students working in the main kitchen with the catering team.

As a special needs school, RHS’s focus is to give their students the best in educational and life skills. One of the key areas is working with food - planting seeds and growing fruit and vegetables, having students harvest and cook them, before taking them to the kitchen to be used in school lunches or for the café clubs.

Food and cooking are at the heart of many lessons in school. The importance of eating healthily and knowing how to prepare nutritious meals are essential life skills and RHS students are frequently given the opportunity to learn and practice these skills.

A good example is the sixth form’s Home Management lesson, in which the students shop for ingredients, prepare a large variety of both simple and challenging dishes and then eat together as a 'family unit'. The students thoroughly enjoy this lesson and for those who have aspirations to live independently, this opportunity is invaluable.

Having students work in the kitchen is an area that has worked well. Students gain specific skills which could help them get work experience and lead to full time paid work in the future. As well as helping students with their life skills, this has also inspired other students to want to work and serve in the kitchen.