



## Cooking on the Curriculum

To APSE contact in England and for information to contacts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

### Key issues

- Cooking skills and nutrition are now part of the national curriculum in England
- School catering teams are able to deliver the classroom service cost effectively
- Using the catering team allows food to be incorporated into the whole school day

### Introduction

Cooking is now part of the school curriculum in England for Key stages 1 to 3, having been identified as an important life-skill lacking in many pupils. The method of delivery within schools was left to the head-teacher and governors. Local authorities often deliver the existing school meal service and already possess the necessary skills to deliver cooking on the curriculum. This briefing highlights one such successful scheme.

### Background

In September 2014, the revised school curriculum in England introduced a new duty on schools that pupils be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. The curriculum acknowledges that cooking is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well.

The curriculum builds knowledge over the pupil's journey through Key stages 1 to 3. The requirements are:

#### key stage 1

- use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes
- understand where food comes from

#### Key stage 2

- understand and apply the principles of a healthy and varied diet
- prepare and cook a variety of predominantly savoury dishes using a range of cooking techniques

#### Key stage 3

- understand and apply the principles of nutrition and health
- cook a repertoire of predominantly savoury dishes so that they are able to feed themselves and others a healthy and varied diet

- become competent in a range of cooking techniques [for example, selecting and preparing ingredients; using utensils and electrical equipment; applying heat in different ways; using awareness of taste, texture and smell to decide how to season dishes and combine ingredients; adapting and using their own recipes]
- understand the source, seasonality and characteristics of a broad range of ingredients

Many schools remain uncertain how to implement the new curriculum, which marks a significant change from the past where pupil cooking was too often associated with cupcake type baking and limited attention to nutrition.

### **The Liverpool Solution**

One solution which has had a remarkable rapid uptake by schools since its inception in September is that offered by the School Food Advisors at School Improvement - Liverpool. The project has already been referenced following a recent school inspection that resulted in an Outstanding Ofsted rating. The service is entirely free standing and receives no additional funding at present.

To date 19 schools have already signed up to pay £2,000 per term for the School Food Advisors to deliver cooking in the curriculum. For that they get 1 advisor for 1 day per week delivering between 3 and 4 sessions. Typical session numbers average around 30 pupils.

#### Equipment

Each school is supplied with a Make Me - Bake Me Cookery Kit. These cost around £225 and contain all the scales, graters, spoons and saucepans required to involve the entire class. The box remains the property of the School Food Team and an inventory is taken on entry and at term end with the school responsible for any shortfall. Additional disposable pots are purchased through the school as are tabards to keep the children clean.

A Prolex cooker, available for £19.99, from a well-known discount retailer, is used for all cooking. This versatile device is more than capable of cooking paella for an entire class of 30.

Food is specified by the Team who set up an online ASDA account for each school from which the school is required to purchase the fresh food for each session. Where practical this can be replaced or supplemented by locally sourced veg-boxes or produce grown at school.

#### Lesson plans

Free curriculum support, resource and lesson plans which are available at [www.foodafactoflife.org.uk](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk). The site is hosted by the British Nutrition Foundation. Building on these the Liverpool team has devised an entire range of lesson plans

Typical lessons include

- Origins of food, difference between vegetables and fruit
- Bread, from dough to pizza involving flour, weighing, volume with final pizza
- Dips & Dippers, knives, hygiene, food handling and cutting techniques

## Staffing

The current offer is staffed by officers with food and nutrition qualifications of which one holds a Post Graduate Certificate of Education. All have Disclosure and Barring Service checks and hold level II hygiene qualifications. They are confident that suitably motivated school cooks would be able to deliver the programme themselves after 4 weeks shadowing an existing officer. Liaison with the school Head Teacher is made to identify particular events in the school calendar and also to identify particular allergies or sensitivities over certain food ingredients.

The officer's work autonomously in structuring the lesson plans to fit the school curriculum. A teaching assistant is normally supplied by the school to help with the lesson. In one example, the school was studying Africa and the lesson was themed around African food and included chocolate grasshoppers and meal worm grubs. Washing up is a communal task, completed in a plastic tub if access to washing up facilities is limited.

## Location

The current lessons are normally carried out in a classroom setting. However there is no reason why they could not be conducted in the school kitchen following a risk assessment. Basic measures including counting knives out and back in should be followed.

## Contact:

Liverpool's Healthy Eating Officer may be contacted on 0151 233 3901, Bernadette.Lee@si.liverpool.gov.uk or contact Rob Bailey at APSE on rbailey@apse.org.uk

## **APSE Comment**

APSE has been at the heart of the changes to the curriculum and contributed towards the School Food Plan. The revised curriculum goes further in providing children with the ability to cook savoury dishes, think more about food and should provide a lasting legacy in reducing obesity as pupils enter adult life.

The catering teams at many local authorities already provide a professional and nutritionally balanced menu to the pupils within their schools. Most are also now delivering Universal Infant Free School Meals and are aware of any allergies or specific food requirements within the school. There therefore often exists a trained resource already on site and rather than wait to retrain school teachers, schools can and should avail themselves of this service

**Rob Bailey**  
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