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## Creating Tools for Practice: Food and the Self-Evaluating School

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Front Cover Photograph: Choice of prepared fruit, presented in bowls, for pupils to self-serve following main course.

Back Cover Photographs, clockwise from top left: Multi-lingual dining room sign; hot school dinner token; child-friendly cutlery; fruit bowl in school foyer, free for pupils to self-serve; attractive menu display; example of a ‘place maker’ on dining tables, to help children to meet and find friends.

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# How to Use this Review

## Introduction

In this review key findings are reported from the Sheffield School Food Project which researched food practices in primary schools across Sheffield. Drawing on the research, the review offers a clear, systematic process to support schools in self-evaluating and developing their food practices, efficiently and cost-effectively. It aims to empower school communities to take ownership of their environment in order to maximize the social and personal benefits of food practices.

We recognize schools are busy places so:

- If you only have a few minutes, read the **one-page summary**, then find someone in your school community to read the rest! But do also have a look at the pictures as they quickly show you the importance of reviewing your whole school food practices.
- To understand the wider context of **food in schools and related policy** read Part 1.
- To learn about **research aims and findings** from the Sheffield School Food Project, see Part 2.
- To learn about the **School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox (SET)**, developed to support schools in evaluating and developing their food practices, see Part 3.
- To discover more about the **School Food SET Tools**, and further sources of information and support for schools, go to Part 4.

## Note

The review does not intend to criticize any individual or organization in a negative way. It aims to adopt a reflective gaze that helps to illustrate why the practices associated with food in school are so significant. The practices observed in Sheffield, for better or worse, are likely to be happening elsewhere too. The aim is to increase our understanding about the factors that help to enhance the context of food practices in schools in ways that ultimately benefit children. As noted in the recent School Food Plan 2014 annual report, 'providing a free meal doesn't guarantee that it will be good, or that the child will eat it. Excellence is created by great school leaders, and by imaginative school cooks and teachers who are given the right circumstances and the right culture in which to flourish' (p.2). For more information about the national School Food Plan, launched in July 2013, go to [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com).

For ethical reasons, schools and individuals in the review remain anonymous throughout and photographs do not contain images of pupils. All photographs were taken by Caroline Sarojini Hart as part of the Sheffield School Food Project 2013-14.

# One-Page Summary

## The Purpose

Food is vital for our survival. Food also forms a key part of social life in schools. The research aimed to learn more about the social context of food in schools and how we can evaluate and develop practices in ways that enhance pupil well-being and help to build strong school communities.

## The Project

During 2013-14 twenty primary schools participated in the Sheffield School Food Project, granting access to their school dining spaces and wider learning environments, policy documents, menus, staff, pupils, caterers and much more. Observations, interviews and the collection of photographic data took place during lunchtimes, in dining halls, playgrounds, kitchens and school offices to understand more about the institutional contexts in which food practices take place.

## Key Findings

1. **Food practices in schools are complex and diverse** both within and across individual school settings. Many elements of excellent practice were observed but it was also found that one weak link in a chain can impact negatively on pupils' experiences.
2. **School food offer, uptake and intake differ significantly** and school lunch uptake alone is insufficient to illuminate pupils' food habits and consumption.
3. **Resources, such as Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are a great asset** in the quest to improve children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. However, schools face numerous challenges in transforming resource potential into tangible individual advantage that will achieve long-term change.
4. **Choice plays a key role** in the activities and habits of pupils regarding their food practices. Pupils navigate menus and are selective in what they choose, often leading to imbalanced food consumption. It was found that there are many simple strategies that can help shape and guide pupils' food choices in positive ways.
5. **School communities are often best placed to determine their own priorities** regarding school food, and what will support their pupils most in developing good food practices and, in turn, more flourishing lives.
6. **There are many personal, social, educational and health benefits that accrue from good food practices in schools.**

## Key Outcomes

1. **The research has increased knowledge and understanding** of the complex micro-processes influencing food practices in schools.
2. **The empirical findings have informed strategies** to enhance the transformation of resources, such as UIFSM, into individual benefits.
3. **A School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox (School Food SET) has been created**, in light of the Sheffield School Food Project, to support the systematic evaluation of school food practices in an approach that empowers school communities. The School Food SET is based around four core areas of practice related to **people, preparation, settings and service**.
4. **The approach advocated is based on the principles of Social Quality and Pupil Capability**, i.e. building social cohesion, participation, inclusion and security, whilst increasing pupil well-being.
5. **The School Food SET provides a coherent framework and approach** within which further resources can be incorporated. Links are provided to sources of further support.
6. **Creating Tools for Practice: Food and the Self-Evaluating School**, and all of the School Food SET Tools included in Part 4 of this review, are available for individual schools to download for free from the 'What Works Well' section of the School Food Plan website at [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com). See copyright notice.

## Part 1: Food in Schools

Summer fairs, concerts, school plays, parents' evenings, sports days, school discos and educational trips are all associated with the provision of food and drink in one form or another.

From breakfast clubs, to school lunch and after school club snacks, there is a variety of food on offer. Sometimes food becomes part of a curriculum activity, for example in learning about the celebration of different religious festivals, food in different cultures or as part of 'healthy' eating education. Many schools have areas where food such as herbs and vegetables are grown. In some cases, pupils offer the freshly harvested produce to the school cook or else make their own tasty dishes. Parent-teacher associations frequently fundraise with coffee and cake mornings.

Parents regularly meet their children after school with a drink or a snack, sweets and cakes often being given as treats. Infant pupils are offered milk and fruit during morning break time whilst their older siblings queue up to buy a variety of goods sold by school tuck shops. This might range from pitta bread and toast to canned drinks and crisps, depending on the school in question. Secondary school pupils, academy and college students frequently go off site during the school day to buy food from local shops and mobile vendors. Pupils bring packed lunches to school. Thus 'home food practices' and local community food cultures become entwined with school food practices. It is not uncommon to see an ice cream van outside the school gates on a sunny day.

Good school food practices can positively influence pupils' health and wellbeing, as well as their ability to maintain energy and concentration across the school day. In addition food practices arguably have a role in developing cohesive and inclusive school learning communities. There are many examples in this review of how food-related policies and practices can enhance school communities and contribute towards supporting pupil well-being. However, the way forward needs to be tailored to your school by you, and your school community. Different settings have diverse rules, customs and practices, variously enforced. Within institutions there may be different opinions about what is ethical and what constitutes 'good' food practice. The way forward lies in small incremental steps rather than overnight change. This review acts as a guide to support schools in this ongoing process.

### Food is used in many ways

Celebration, Ritual, Reward, Exchange, Sharing, Nutrition, Welcome, Offering, Charity Fund-raising and Enjoyment.



Milkshakes for sale in a primary school



Hot dessert option of apple pie and custard



Example of a packed lunch from home



Example of a school café for pupils, parents and staff across the day.



Preparing a school allotment, building a school community.

## Wider Policy Context: The School Food Plan

A new national School Food Plan (SFP), commissioned by the Department of Education, was published in July 2013 ([www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)) linking the 'health of our nation' and academic performance in schools. Schools are seen as a key component in a plan to address national health inequalities. The SFP, links the importance of healthy eating to children's readiness to learn at school. Indeed, there are a number of reasons why it is important to encourage children to eat well, not only related to learning potential, but also in order to address both growing malnutrition and obesity challenges facing the nation. It is recognized that there is a social gradient in health outcomes as a whole in England, with individuals from lower socioeconomic groups more likely to be adversely affected by malnutrition as well as obesity (Marmot et al, 2010). According to Brown et al (2013:23), 'child obesity has reached epidemic levels' and it has been reported that, '25% of children starting school in the UK are overweight or obese' (Willis et al, 2012:1), posing a serious public health challenge' (Willis et al, 2013). It has been further argued that the, 'foundations for health in adult life are established in childhood' (NHS Sheffield, 2011:20). Malnutrition may stem from poverty but pupils' knowledge, skills and dispositions to eat well also play a vital part. Schools have a crucial role in supporting pupils regarding their food practices.

The SFP has been significant in highlighting the need for a wide-ranging approach to tackling the challenges around pupils' nutrition in schools. The School Food Plan has been over-shadowed somewhat in the last year due to the media attention on the policy to introduce Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) from September 2014. However, the breadth of the SFP is a great strength as it proposes a comprehensive approach to support focused work across school life to enhance food culture in the dining room, classroom and beyond. The SFP calls for a whole school approach to improving food across the school day. There is now national recognition that education, training, resources, policies and environment matter. The School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox, presented in this review, aims to support schools in putting a whole school, whole food ideal into practice in a way that maximizes benefits to individuals and the wider community.

The specified areas in the SFP have been supported by additional funding, expert advice, curriculum changes, new food standards and enhanced training for kitchen staff. For example, cooking and learning about food has been introduced as a statutory part of the new national curriculum from September 2014. Within Design and Technology, a new area of cooking and learning about food has been introduced from KS1-KS3 (Department of Education, 2014).

The School Food Plan sets out an agenda with key areas targeted including:

- Cooking in the curriculum
- New food-based standards
- Increasing the uptake of school meals
- Incorporating healthy lifestyles, behaviour and culture into Ofsted criteria
- Increasing sustainable breakfast club provision
- Widening access to Free School Meals
- Training Head teachers
- Promoting policies to improve children's diets
- Improving school food image
- Linking caterers with the rest of the food industry
- Sharing what works well
- Improving catering workforce skills
- Fair funding for catering in small schools

'Treat your lunchtime as part of the school day, your canteen as an extra classroom and your cooks and lunchtime supervisors as key members of staff' (SFP, 2013).

Source: [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)

A whole school, whole food policy will also need to consider how to encourage good food practices at clubs before and after school, during break times and importantly during school holidays. For example, in the United States, summer feeding programmes operate to stem child hunger and malnutrition during the long summer vacation period.

### Changing School Lunch Uptake

There are over eight million children in primary and secondary education in England (DoE, 2013). School meal uptake has dropped significantly from a 70% average uptake in the mid-1970s (SFP, 2013). In 2013, overall school meal uptake nationally stood at 46.3% in primary/special schools and at around 40% in secondary schools. Take-up overall is varied within and between local authorities both for paying and non-paying pupils. Although nearly one in five pupils (18%) was eligible for means-tested free school meals in 2013, uptake of entitlement varied within and across local authorities (DoE, 2013).

Drawing on evidence from the Children's Food Trust, The SFP puts forward an argument that, on the whole, school meals are nutritionally better balanced than the packed lunches many children bring into school. The SFP also argues that if a greater proportion of pupils have a school dinner this will help to generate a more economically viable school meals service. The SFP called on the government to consider rolling out universal free school meals and in response, since September 2014, primary schools in England have been able to offer all Foundation, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils a free school meal, irrespective of family income. This resource contribution is vital in supporting whole school change and resonates with the principles of *Social Quality* and *Pupil Capability* which frame the Sheffield School Food Project. The UIFSM funding is guaranteed for a limited period and the aim is for schools to develop sustainable meal provision that can outlast the funding. The aim is to increase school meal uptake of both means-tested FSM and paying pupils.

### Non-School Food at School

Prior to the introduction of UIFSM most children throughout primary and secondary school opted for a packed lunch, off-site meal or snack rather than a school meal and school meal numbers have been in decline for some time. Since the introduction of UIFSM in September 2014, there has been a massive increase in school meal uptake among infants across England. In addition, there have been some early indications that increased numbers of older children are taking up school meals as well (Sheffield City Council, 2014). This may in some way be related to younger siblings benefiting from the UIFSM scheme.

Nonetheless the majority of older pupils continue to have a non-school midday meal or snack. The two main reasons given by pupils in the Sheffield Food Project for having a packed lunch were, because it was cheaper and because parents gave pupils what they liked to eat. The main reasons pupils gave for not having a school dinner were that parents could not afford it and they did not like the food on offer. In other words, finance, and pupil preferences for different foods, are the main drivers of decisions between a home-packed lunch and a school meal. It was interesting to note that there were a number of pupils who indicated that although they were eligible for free school meals they chose not to take advantage of this economic benefit because they did not like the food on offer.



Typical packed lunch table



Sample packed lunch



Sample packed lunch items

It is vital that non-school food, and especially balanced home-prepared lunches, form a key target area of a whole school, whole food policy.

## Empowering School Communities

**Tackling unhealthy food habits means putting pupils at the heart of change.** Some of the wording of recommended actions in the SFP does not adequately acknowledge the central role that pupil choice plays in what they eat. For example,

*Headteachers are encouraged to ‘manage children’s choices to ensure they get a balanced meal, instead of stuffing themselves with bread rolls; offer a cheaper set menu; require children to fill their plates with options from different categories; or simply put vegetables on their plates ... make sure packed lunches are not a ‘better’ option.*

(The SFP Headteachers’ Checklist, 2013)

Eating well needs to be important to the child, not just the grown ups or the government and so finding ways to develop pupils’ ownership of the need to balance food practices is crucial in the short and longer term. Putting vegetables on plates does not necessarily mean children will eat them and ‘managing children’s choices’ is complex. Similarly, the SFP direction to, ‘**replace prison-style trays with proper crockery**’ might be an appropriate use of resources in some settings, but school communities need to decide whether this is a key priority for their school food practices (and wider school issues) compared with other development plans. Schools need to be empowered to self-evaluate their school practices, not just around food but in terms of the holistic development and personal and social wellbeing of pupils. The School Food Self-Evaluation Tools in Part 4 help schools to assess their priorities and plan accordingly. **Schools are best placed to trial different strategies to make changes for the better.**

### Why evaluating your own success is so important

Statistics on school meal uptake are limited as they are based on the division of number of school meals taken over a set period, divided by number of pupils on roll and number of days in a given census period. This does not show whether a proportion of pupils always had a school meal or whether different pupils have school meals on different days. In addition, data from the Sheffield School Food Project show some days, such as ‘fish and chip Friday’ were very popular days leading to a spike in uptake compared to other less popular days and this is not reflected in an average uptake figure.

Moreover, figures on school meal uptake are limited because they do not indicate the actual food served to each child, whether all components of a meal are served and whether, for example, fruit or chocolate pudding is chosen for dessert. Significantly, the figures do not indicate which of the meal components an individual has actually eaten. In some schools in the Sheffield School Food Project, towards the end of service, pupils were able to return to the dining hatch for second helpings, and again this would not be reflected in school meal take up figures. In addition, serving sizes were observed to vary from school to school and among year groups. If you really want to make food practices part of a comprehensive strategy to improve pupil well-being, and readiness to learn, then **it is important to develop your own measures of success, based on the values and priorities that are most relevant to you and your school community.**

Despite the limits of national policy evaluation (see box overleaf), the good news is that school communities are well placed to develop their own ways of observing patterns of practice, for groups and individuals in their setting. For example, asking pupils to record and reflect upon their food choices, and what they have actually eaten, across a week; training midday supervisors to offer feedback to pupils on packed lunch choices; inviting parents to take part in a ‘healthy lunch from home’ workshop.



Examples of diverse choices made by pupils when selecting their school meal options

## School Food Plan Evaluation Measures

The following indicators have been proposed to assess the successful implementation of the SFP:

1. Take-up of school lunches in primary and secondary schools.
2. Nutritional quality of what children eat (measured by the percentage of schools meeting food standards).
3. Morale of the workforce (measured by the percentage who would recommend the job to a friend).
4. Number of schools winning awards from the Food for Life Partnership and the Children's Food Trust.
5. Number of 16 year olds able to cook 5 savoury dishes.

Source: School Food Plan, 2013.

Unfortunately the criteria are limited because they reflect selective monitoring of a top-down approach that does not address values, aspirations and culture change effectively. The statistics from such evaluation are likely to be limited because:

1. Uptake of meals does not tell us anything about food intake. Taking a school dinner means many different things in practice due to large degrees of choice, selection, consumption and waste.
2. Nutritional standards do not apply universally to all schools and different meal options within a setting may vary in meeting the standards.
3. Many schools in England do not follow the national curriculum and so the new elements on cooking will not apply to all pupils.
4. Most children do not have a school lunch (except for infants).
5. Packed lunches will not be monitored in terms of nutrition.
6. Aggregate figures for measuring school meal uptake do not account for individual behaviours (e.g. only having a school lunch once a week on 'fish and chip' Friday).

The national evaluation indicators are likely to miss out on picking up some of the key processes that influence the efficacy of policy in ensuring that pupils are accessing, and consuming, balanced and nutritious food in schools. Indeed, overall the findings indicated that there is a gap between the recommendations in the School Food Plan and the mechanisms for their achievement. The School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox aims to help bridge the gaps identified, both in terms of increasing understanding of the key processes influencing children's food intake and in offering tools to support the development of the whole school workforce, pupils and school communities to address the highlighted challenges.

In Part 2 we turn to look in more detail at the Sheffield School Food Project, its aims, methods and findings. We also introduce the two key principles that informed the work from inception to the development of tools to support schools. The ethos is centred around pupil well-being and building strong school communities. School food practices offer multiple opportunities to contribute to these areas in ways which will also have benefits in other aspects of school life.

## Part 2: The Sheffield School Food Project

### Food Practice

The term 'food practice' is used in this review to encompass not only school eating habits, but also food policies, attitudes, behaviors, culture and physical environments. Individual practices evolve in a social context and therefore in seeking to support positive school food practices, it is important to understand established staff, pupil and community-wide food-related behaviours as well as the structures, values, customs and habits that frame them.

The research took place in Sheffield, South Yorkshire in 2013-14. Sheffield has a population of just over 550,000 and it is the third largest metropolitan authority in the country (Sheffield City Council, 2014). There are 152 primary schools in Sheffield of which around 80% fall within the central catering contract with Taylor Shaw, negotiated by Sheffield City Council. The remaining 20% of primary schools have their own catering arrangements provided by a mix of in-house caterers and contracted in providers. In 2012-13 average school meal uptake in Sheffield was around 40.5% for primary and 33% for secondary pupils during this period (Taylor Shaw, 2013). In Sheffield, during the research period, around one in four of those pupils eligible for means-tested Free School Meals was not claiming their entitlement, reflecting a national trend in under-claiming of means-tested FSM. Data over the last five years indicate that this amounted to over 250,000 means-tested FSM meals unclaimed annually in the city (2013, Taylor Shaw). School meal take-up among paying pupils over the same period reflected the national average, with only around a third of non-FSM eligible pupils opting for a school meal for which they paid. There has been an upward trend in take-up over the last two years.

During the academic year 2013-14 over 6,000 primary pupils from 20 schools across Sheffield participated in this study of school food practices. Pupils participating in the research ranged from 4 to 11 years of age. A purposive sample of schools was identified for the Sheffield School Food Project. This aimed to ensure the inclusion of schools inside and outside the central catering contract, in different socioeconomic areas and with contrasting food services and settings. The research was focused on a whole school context with a particular focus on the provision of lunchtime meals. The project aimed to identify the features, benefits and challenges of different types of service, setting and practice.

The research was informed by the literature on 'Social Quality'<sup>1</sup> and 'Pupil Capability'<sup>2</sup>, emphasising the promotion of pupil well-being in a broad sense (Hart, 2012). **The research highlights the importance of processes as well as resources in supporting food practices in schools.** Through a process of research and reflection the School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox was developed, based around the principles underpinning Social Quality and Pupil Capability. These two guiding principles are explained on the following two pages before going on to summarise the project aims.

### Well-being

The term 'well-being' is used in this review to encompass not only the well-being that individuals achieve, but also the freedom they have to achieve well-being. The latter is framed in terms of an individual's capability, or freedom, to transform resources into ways of living that have value for them. This interpretation of well-being is drawn from Amartya Sen's capability approach (Sen, 1992; Hart, 2012). In the context of school food practices, well-being is thought of in relation to individual, social and learner-related goals.

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<sup>1</sup> From Van der Maesen et al (2011)

<sup>2</sup> From Sen (1992)

## Social Quality

'Social Quality defines the space within which citizens are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities, under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential. It requires the empowerment of individuals, the provision of economic security and other resources, the ability to participate in social life, and a shared set of norms and values' (Wallace et al, 2009:117). Four key dimensions have been developed, drawing on the literature on Social Quality and each is briefly described below:

1. **Social Cohesion** – This dimension of Social Quality refers to the extent to which individuals in your setting bond as a community. This includes not only teachers and pupils but the whole school workforce, parents, governors and other stakeholders. Sharing meals together, whole school events, celebrations and team science projects can all help to bring the school community together.

Core values: Sharing, Understanding, Bonding,

2. **Social Participation** – This dimension of Social Quality refers to the extent to which members of your school community actively engage themselves with others in undertaking particular practices. In relation to food practices, this is not only about eating school meals but extends to, for example, growing and preparing food, designing menus, discussing arrangements for tuck shops, helping in the dining room and learning to cook.

Core values: Responsibility, Empowerment, Ownership

3. **Social Inclusion** – This dimension of Social Quality refers to the extent to which all individuals feel included in different aspects of school life. Regarding school food, social inclusivity is influenced, for example by seating arrangements, types of food on offer. It also relates to whether practices are socially inclusive, both for pupils having school and home-provided lunches, and across cultural and social groups.

Core values: Recognition, Entitlement, Affiliation

4. **Socioeconomic security** – This dimension of Social Quality refers to socioeconomic security, particularly with reference to pupils and their families or carers. For example, practices which may help include a booking system that enables pupils to book lunches daily rather than weekly, accepting meal payments in cash, as well online, and subsidizing lunch with Pupil Premium where necessary. UFSM has already made a big contribution towards supporting the families of infant children since September 2014, but it is important to consider how to support children, of all ages, in accessing a nutritionally balanced meal.

Core values: Security, Confidence, Belonging

### Activity for Reflection:

- Which of the core values above are reflected in your school setting already?
- Are there core values you would like to further embed in your school food culture?

The School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox and related Tools, explained in Parts 3 and 4, can help to support the self-evaluation and development of your school food practices.

## Pupil Capability

This concept refers to an individual's capabilities to act in ways that they have reason to value. It is based on Amartya Sen's *capability approach* (Sen, 1992; Hart, 2012). This is different from simply having access to resources or the right to behave in a particular way. It involves **the combined impact of resources, pupils' own attributes and their interactions with the social and physical environment**. The capability approach highlights the need for supportive individual, social and environmental factors to transform potential resource benefits, such as UIFSM, into tangible individual advantage.

**Core Values: Agency, Well-being, Choice.**

### Example 1

Charlie's friends all regularly have a packed lunch at school. Although Charlie is eligible to claim a means-tested free school meal (FSM) he chooses to have a packed lunch from home because he wants to do the same as his friends. Looking solely at his FSM eligibility does not give a full view of Charlie's circumstances and the factors that help and hinder his capability to be well nourished. We understand more about the social context of food practices when we think about 'capability' as well as resources, rights, entitlements and the observed choices children make. It is not only the resources that matter, in this case a Free School Meal, but also Charlie's ability to make use of the resource, without feeling he is compromising his social well-being.

### Example 2

A child eating a chocolate spread sandwich for lunch was asked about who decided what went into their packed lunch from home, and who helped to prepare it. The pupil said their father made their packed lunch and he told the child, 'you get what you are given'. He alternated jam and chocolate spread sandwiches although the pupil said they would prefer to have cheese or ham with some salad sometimes. In this example, although the pupil had some knowledge around healthy eating they were not in a position to change their eating habits because of the wider social context of the family.

### Example 3

A pupil discarded the whole apple they were given in their cold school lunch. When asked why they were throwing it away they said they could not eat it because they had wobbly teeth. Here the resource is the apple but its presentation as a whole fruit impedes consumption by the child. A softer fruit, or chopped up fruit (see front cover), may enable the child to, 'transform the potential resource benefit into tangible individual advantage'.

### Activity for Reflection:

- What key practices in your setting help support and enable pupils to make balanced food choices across the school day? (for example, at breakfast clubs, lunchtime, break time snacks and after school clubs).
- When reading about the research findings in the rest of Part 2, reflect on the practices reported from other school settings and how they might help you to self-evaluate and develop your own school practices.

## A Social Quality and Pupil Capability Framework

The ethos behind the research focused on a holistic view of pupil well-being together with the importance of building strong school communities. Both of these strands were perceived to be significant in developing schools that promote individual flourishing, but which also prepare pupils to participate fully in the social life of their communities. Therefore it was seen as important to think about the ways that school practices, in this case related to food, could contribute towards, on the one hand, empowering young people to have the freedom to engage in health-supporting food practices. On the other hand, it was important to think about how food practices can contribute to social cohesion, inclusion, (active) participation and the overall social and economic security of pupils and their families.

By bringing together the ideas of ‘Social Quality’ and ‘Capability’, the Social Quality and Pupil Capability (SQPC) framework for school development and evaluation was created (Hart, 2013). The eight key dimensions are summarized below and they have been used to inform the research and the School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox (SET) that follows later in Part 3. These eight dimensions can be related to pupil nutrition and school wide food practices. The School Food SET Tools in Part 4 shows how the SQPC framework offers a simple practical approach to self-evaluation and development for schools<sup>3</sup>.

Social Quality Dimensions	Description
SQ1: Social Cohesion	This dimension of Social Quality refers to the extent to which individuals in your setting bond as a community.
SQ2: Social Participation	This dimension of Social Quality refers to the way members of your school community actively participate in undertaking particular practices.
SQ3: Social Inclusion	This dimension of Social Quality refers to the extent to which all individuals feel included in different aspects of school life.
SQ4: Socioeconomic Security	This dimension of Social Quality refers to socioeconomic security, particularly with reference to pupils and their families or carers.

Pupil Capability Dimensions	Description
PC1: Resources	This refers to the resources that support pupil capability (agency, empowerment and well-being) <sup>4</sup> .
PC2: Individual knowledge, skills & dispositions	This refers to the individual knowledge, skills and dispositions that may support and empower pupils.
PC3: Social context	This refers to the kind of social context that may support pupil capability in contributing to their well-being and agency.
PC4: Environmental features	This refers to the environmental features that may support a pupil’s capability.

<sup>3</sup> The SQPC framework can be applied to other areas of school practice and work is currently under development at the University of Sheffield regarding other aspects of school life (Hart, forthcoming).

<sup>4</sup> See Hart et al (2014) for further discussion of children’s agency and well-being.

## Project Overview

### Aims

- To understand the social context of food practices in schools.
- To explore how school food practices can support social cohesion, participation, inclusion and security as well as individual well-being, educational and health-related goals.
- To explore the aspirations and capabilities of school communities in meeting the objectives of the School Food Plan (2013).
- To develop a School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox to support schools in developing effective whole school, whole food policies and practices.

### Methods

- Observations of food practices across the school day, focused on lunchtimes.
- Informal interviews with kitchen staff, school staff, pupils, parents, local authorities, catering contractors and national stakeholders.
- Secondary analyses of policy documents, menus, administrative systems and procedures.
- Partnership with the University of Sheffield, Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Hallam University.
- Children as researchers investigating school food and its social context.

### Findings

The research began before the national *School Food Plan* was launched in July 2013 and the fieldwork was ongoing at the time of Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg's September 2013 announcement, to introduce Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) to 4-7 year olds in schools in England. Although this research did not initially set out to study the School Food Plan and the UIFSM policy, these topics naturally became a part of the conversations and informal interviews that took place during the Sheffield School Food Project. There has been a media spotlight surrounding the introduction of UIFSM and significant pressure on schools to prepare for implementation of the policy from September 2014, within a relatively tight timescale. In this sense the research occurred at a very opportune time and it is hoped that sharing the findings and reflecting on the work can contribute to schools' onwards efforts to continually improve food practices, and enhance understanding, in terms of the culture change required, to successfully implement new food standards from January 2015 (see [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com) ). School communities shared their experiences and views in relation to cooking, growing and eating food as well as in relation to national policy regarding the introduction of UIFSM and the School Food Plan. Whilst the findings cannot be said to be representative of all schools in England there are likely to be insights that may support schools and academies elsewhere in developing their food practices in positive ways. In this project 'positive' is conceived as those practices which enhance 'pupil capability' and 'social quality' as explained earlier in Part 2.

For the purposes of this review findings are reported in relation to school lunch in particular under the four areas of **people, preparation, settings and service**. There are interactions between areas and the structure offers a broad framework to facilitate communication of key aspects of food practice. Further research findings from the Sheffield School Food Project will be reported elsewhere<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> See Hart, C.S. (2015, forthcoming) The Social Context of Food in Schools: Swapping, Sharing, Stacking & Starving, *Cambridge Journal of Education*.

## Findings: People

It was found that a wide range of adults and children are involved in the food practices that occur in schools across the day, including pupils, parents, teachers, caterers, governors, suppliers, before and after school providers, child minders and others. For the purposes of simplicity, people have been broadly considered in terms of **pupils and families, head teachers and staff, businesses and communities.**

### Pupils and Families

Pupils are central to food practices in schools in multiple ways. They are variously involved in decision-making around food choices, from selection to consumption. It was found that pupils having home-packed lunch often made requests to parents about what to include, and they also made active choices about what to consume of the food they were given. In terms of school lunches it was found that there were several stages at which key choices were made. Pupils also reported making diverse choices about breakfast club and break time snacks. Pupils reported being involved in a range of food-related activities beyond eating, including growing, cooking, learning about food and fund-raising events. These activities are important as part of a whole food, whole school approach but, for example, the ubiquitous 'bun-sale', birthday cakes, sweet rewards and chocolate advent calendars in school are unhelpful in promoting balanced food practices.



Pupil food investigation

Pupils are faced with a number of key choices regarding their lunch. Examples of school meal-related choices are summarized in the table below. There are some school variations e.g. not all offered more than one main meal choice, only some offered a school packed lunch or extras such as salad, milk or fruit-based drinks.

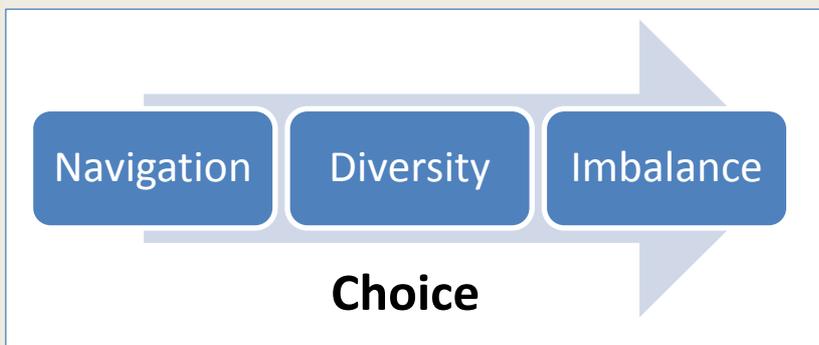
Key School Lunch Choice Points	Pupil Options
Main meal option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single/multi-choice, vegetarian, halal, special diet</li> <li>• School packed lunch, sandwich type, fruit/cake, salad.</li> <li>• Book weekly/daily/half termly</li> </ul>
At the serving hatch	Which vegetables, which pudding/fruit
In the dining room	Choice of additional items included e.g. salad, bread or items for sale, e.g. juices, milkshakes.
At the table	Which items to eat/try
At the waste disposal	What is thrown away/saved/swapped

Pupils' consumption of the different meal components was observed to vary. For example a pupil might eat all of their chips but none of their peas. Dessert choices were not monitored in relation to individual pupils or meal combinations so it is not known whether there are patterns in choices that individuals or groups make. The only indication is the overall consumption of fruits/yogurts/hot puddings across the service so it was not possible to know whether some individuals, for example, never or always have fruit. Monitoring this in more detail would add to our understanding of food practices in schools.

It was observed that pupils navigate menus. Many pupils indicated that they were not keen on fruit and so they tended to opt for the cooked pudding of the day rather than the yogurt or fruit alternatives. The latter tended to be poorly positioned and were given low status and profile on menus compared to the cooked pudding options and their names, perceived as more exciting by many pupils. Pupils did not generally select a dessert when opting for a school meal in advance of lunch service, but rather selected at the service area, generally a hatch. This means choices are made in a rush and on a hungry tummy.

Navigation can lead to significant imbalances in nutritional intake over time. Given a diverse choice of meal options and meal components, many pupils have a tendency to navigate menus and optional extras (e.g. bread, salad, drinks) according to their preferences. This leads to diversity in food uptake and creates an imbalance and variety of food intake. If the menu offers room for navigation, and that navigation is unmonitored, and unsupported, then food habits will be hard to change. Young children in particular need time to think, reflect and gain help with making positive, balanced food choices. It is key to put pupils at the heart of change by helping them to develop a wider range of tastes and greater experience of different food types.

### Choice Flow Diagram



The Choice Flow diagram shows the way that choice can lead to a range of outcomes including pupils' navigation of menus to suit their tastes, a diversity in the meals served in a single school on the same day, and unbalanced meals being served and eaten by pupils. Pupils' choice opportunities need to be coupled with health education and also linked to learning strategies

pupils use elsewhere in school. So, for example, being a risk-taking, resilient learner, and thinking about developing food senses in a similar way to thinking about developing literacy or numeracy skills (see for example [www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk](http://www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk)).

Clearly the taste of food is a big factor in determining whether pupils will eat the food on their plate. If it sounds good on the menu, looks good on the plate but does not taste good, pupils are unlikely to eat it.

**Children need time to learn to like new and unfamiliar foods** so opportunities to try new dishes that are

planned can offer a chance to familiarize their palates but also a chance for cooks to gain useful feedback from the children. There could be opportunities to sample 'taster' dishes at school events (Taylor Shaw put this idea into practice, for example, by offering sample dishes at parents' evenings), during cooking lessons or during the lunch break itself. Pupils could be invited to offer feedback. Dining rooms are often busy, noisy places where pupils move quickly from the food service area to seating areas. In many schools the salad trolley/table is situated somewhere in between taking hot food from a hatched area, collecting cutlery and collecting water cups. This setting is not conducive to pupils challenging themselves to try new foods, being resilient as they attempt to handle over-sized serving utensils, wait their turn at a busy salad area and so on. Schools can support pupils in trying new foods by creating opportunities



These photographs show examples of the diversity of choices that pupils make about their food uptake and consumption. In the picture, bottom left, a school has decided to pre-serve meals but pupils still make choices about what they actually eat and are less empowered when choice is made by others. Pupil education and support are key.

outside of busy, noisy lunch rooms. It was found that parents and carers have important roles in contributing to their children's knowledge, skills and dispositions related to food. They help to determine whether, and how often, a child will have a school lunch or a home lunch. Where children had a packed lunch these were largely prepared by parents. Parents influenced the food purchased and the make-up of the lunchbox. When meeting children at the end of the school day, again parents had a role in deciding what children were offered in terms of snacks. Parents also have a role in whether pupils have money to spend at school, at a tuck shop, for example, or else on the way to or from school. In a very small number of schools parents were able to join their child for a school meal and this seemed a good way of sharing the mealtime, promoting social bonding and allowing parents to understand what kind of school meal provision exists.

### Headteacher and Staff

A diverse range of staff was observed to be engaged in food practices around the schools in the Sheffield School Food Project. In addition to the head teacher, teachers and support staff, it was found that business managers, administrators, school bursars, supervisors, cooks, catering staff and caretakers played important roles in food preparation, administration, budgeting and related service activities. Specifically regarding lunch, staffing varied in the ratio of adults to pupils, the job titles, perceived roles, training and familiarity with pupils. Some staff came in solely to help with the



Catering staff preparing for lunch service

breakfast and/or lunch service whereas in several schools staff were teaching assistants who knew most children by name and were in school across the day. Staff tended to rotate duties inside the dining area and outside in the playground overseen by a lead staff member. On almost all research visits lunchtime staff met as a team in advance of the service starting. This could in future provide a good opportunity to introduce and discuss school food evaluation and development plans.

Some adults were more proactive than others in facilitating the dining service and eating practices. This was the same in relation to enforcing policies, for example, related to prohibited food items in packed lunches. It was common to see staff opening packets and putting straws in drinks for pupils having packed lunch. It was rare to see staff giving pupils feedback on the contents of their packed lunch but some schools did give written feedback and stickers, for example, where fruit was included or to ask parents to refrain from giving children certain foods such as sweets in their break time snacks or packed lunches. Support staff were sometimes seen eating in dining halls with pupils in infant schools and senior staff reported sometimes sitting on a 'reward' table (usually once a week) with a small number of pupils. Several schools had a weekly special table for up to 10-12 pupils to reward good behaviour. Here, senior leaders or other teaching staff would share meals with pupils. However, it was uncommon to see staff eating with pupils across the whole dining area apart from when Foundation pupils were dining.

### Businesses

There is a potential tension between the economic drive to increase school meal uptake and the health and education drives to ensure that each meal served offers a balance of nutrients. The caterers providing food in school are often part of a larger catering business, with a profit-making business plan. There were many good examples of ways in which the catering businesses working with schools had tried to support healthy eating habits among pupils. For example, colourful salad trolleys were provided to attract pupils, nutrition action groups were created, and stickers and tokens were given to reward good eating habits. In a number of schools catering companies had paid for dining furniture to be improved and for plates and bowls to replace the commonly used flight trays. However, some of the strategies used to encourage pupils to opt for a school meal on at least some days of the week, such as 'fish and chip' Friday, or 'pizza and garlic bread' Monday, meant that many pupils were exposed to unbalanced meal choices. This is because menus were planned to be balanced across a two to three week cycle but many pupils only had lunch on a Friday or a Monday. In addition, it was found that some cooks felt under pressure to produce meals in a limited amount of time with limited staff and they found this challenging. A number of kitchen staff commented that they had performance targets for increasing sales of school meals and that the hours offered to kitchen staff depended on certain floor targets being met. At times this led to shortcuts in preparation

rather than optimized service to encourage food consumption by children. For example, fruit might be served whole rather than being cut up. It may be that investing more time in the food preparation and service may lead to greater pupil interest and intake of a range of foods. For example, individual portions of salad offered by some schools appeared to be popular. This would need further research to verify.

The ratio of staff to the number of meals prepared did vary somewhat between schools. However, it was also apparent that some cooks and their teams were more efficiently organized and had different approaches to preparing meals. This partly depended on the type of meal service offered, for example, single/multi-choice, hot and cold, number of special diets and overall numbers to be served. It was apparent that there were some kitchen staff that went the extra mile to prepare food in child-friendly ways, making it colourful, attractive, appropriately sized and shaped. Little touches, like garnishes and presentation seemed to be appreciated by children. Some schools offered a wide range of interesting salads with healthy dressings, whereas others just offered tomato, cucumber and lettuce in three separate bowls. Kitchen equipment was another contributory factor. For example, some schools had more space than others for keeping food warm or for storing fresh produce.

### Communities

The local community plays an important role in influencing the way pupils think about food. The messages local businesses send out can have a powerful effect on children. Communities were involved in schools in terms of voluntary organizations supporting food growing and a local grocer's store who sponsored a school garden. Many schools reported visiting local farms or having staff from a city farm come into school to teach growing skills to pupils, staff and parents. Some schools had engaged with local supermarkets who had 'community champions' who led educational activities, for example, learning about where food comes from and how to read food labels.

## Findings: Preparation

Preparation was found to play a key role in supporting good food practices in schools. The four main components of preparation identified include human development (professional development and pupil education), marketing (e.g. promoting balanced meals), administration (e.g. budgeting, payments and planning) and resources (e.g. food, drink, learning materials and facilities).

### Human Development

The way that staff are trained and the education and learning opportunities that children have can help significantly in ensuring that resources are sourced and used to maximum benefit. The research found that training with regard to school meals tended to focus on catering qualifications, food and hygiene, food storage, health and safety and midday supervisor induction. The latter tended to centre around health, safety and efficiency. There was no specific school-food related training reported for school administrators, teaching staff or leadership with the exception of training for school meal bookings. There are simple ways in which lunchtime supervisors can support children further. For example, in some schools, tables were pre-set with cutlery and water which meant that pupils could concentrate more on meal choices. Some schools monitored salad replenishment and offered feedback to pupils on packed lunches and at waste disposal areas, supporting pupil learning. Making space on flight trays by putting cups on tables, for example, makes it possible to serve pupils individual salad pots or soup bowls helping to boost uptake of vegetables. The positioning of salad trolleys can influence the flow of pupils moving from the main food service area and encourage pupils to stop to select items. Knowing how to maximise the setting to encourage good food habits is key. These kinds of tips could be incorporated into future staff development.



Example of pre-set table



Over-cooked broccoli

In terms of pupil education, it was found that pupils were involved in a variety of food activities in school. This included learning about 'healthy' diets, scientific investigations, cooking, gardening and growing food. Pupils in some schools had participated in school trips to farms and supermarkets to learn about healthy eating and where food comes from. Research activities showed that pupils enjoyed smelling fresh herbs, spices and fruits and learning about how



Individual pots of fruit

different aromas are used to enhance the flavours in a range of savoury and sweet dishes. Examples in Part 4 offer suggestions for pupil learning activities around food. Children experience food in different ways, using all of their senses. So, making food look visually appealing is one way to get pupils interested in trying different foods.

The picture (above right) shows how one school served the fruit to

make it eye-catching. Chopping up fresh ingredients helps to give out aromas that pupils can smell as they come to choose their food. Pupils often commented on the texture of food they tried as part of a school meal. Overcooked vegetables, particularly broccoli, were mentioned as being unpalatable. Some younger pupils noted that whole apples are hard to eat when you have got wobbly teeth. As losing teeth is typical in the primary age range this is worth considering when preparing foods that are hard to bite on.

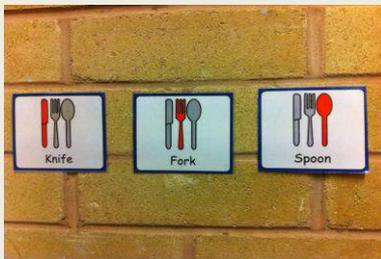
### Marketing and Administration

School bursars, business managers and office staff undertook a range of activities which supported food practices in schools. Typical activities related to preparing and displaying menus for parents and pupils and dealing with meal bookings and free school meal entitlement enquiries. It was more common to find daily booking systems in low-income areas as it was recognized by several school leaders that weekly booking could act as a constraint to low-income families. Daily booking can be viewed as an enabling technique in terms of numbers of school meals served. However, if the 'popular' meals offered are the less healthy ones,

fish and chips on Friday and pizza with garlic bread on Monday, then it also acts as a constraint on pupil health. Many pupils indicated only having a school lunch once a week due to financial reasons and therefore the impact may be greatest on low-income groups. School meal figures in all schools using a daily booking service showed a substantial increase in school meal uptake on fish and chip Friday. Interviews with a range of catering staff in the schools visited indicated that it is common practice to plan a school lunch menu over a cycle of up to three weeks. Individual dishes and combinations of items on the menus differed in nutritional value and, despite aiming to meet the nutritional standards over the cycle, this is dependent on pupil choice and consumption. Schools varied in their methods for record-keeping in relation to school meals but no school recorded dessert choices in relation to main meal choices. This means it is not possible to tell how individual pupils combine different meal components.

Schools' food policies often seemed to involve a tacit understanding of accepted/non-accepted food/drink items. However these were not always written down formally, or clearly displayed, and perceptions within schools sometimes conflicted among pupils and staff. The main rules and guidelines regarding food in schools related to items which were prohibited or recommended. Banned items tended to include fizzy drinks, sweets and chocolate, although rules varied significantly and were sporadically enforced. Crisps were generally viewed as unacceptable, although they were prolific, and fruit was generally encouraged.

## Resources



Prepared signs support pupils' language learning



Simple resources like cutlery pots enable cutlery to be placed on tables and pupils can focus more on food choices

Different schools had variable resources available to support food practices related to eating in schools. The resources were found to be mainly related to kitchen, dining, cooking and growing spaces, catering and dining equipment, administrative systems (such as online cashless payment meal-booking systems) and staff resources. Resources were seen by

staff to be important in thinking about the type of meal services that could be offered. It was observed that there are a number of factors that affect a school's capacity to offer school meals to large numbers of pupils. This was particularly apparent when talking to primary schools as they were preparing for the introduction of UIFSM from September 2014. The capacity challenges identified will apply to junior and secondary settings too if they are to increase school meal take-up significantly in the future. Ten key capacity challenges are highlighted in the table opposite. The common focus for capacity in the run-up to the introduction of UIFSM tended to be around cooking facilities, caterers, dining capacity, sittings and supervisors. Pupil 'capacity' in terms of their knowledge, skills and dispositions to make balanced food choices is a neglected area. Similarly, the capacity of the social context of schools to support balanced nutrition is also underplayed. In order to support pupil learning and a whole school, whole food approach there needs to be i) space in the curriculum, ii) facilities for cooking, iii) facilities for growing, iv) staff expertise and v) appropriate teaching and learning resources. In terms of the wider social context, families, communities and businesses need to develop capacity to support children in their food practices further. A comprehensive approach to building capacity across these areas will be an advantage in supporting pupil well-being.

### 10 Capacity Challenges for Raising School Meal Uptake and Intake

Adequate kitchen facilities

Trained catering staff

Appropriate dining facilities

Trained lunch supervisors

Trained Administrators

Adequate lunchtime duration

Pupil knowledge, skills and dispositions that support good food practice

Whole school staff training and supportive school ethos

Family knowledge, skills & dispositions that support good food practice

Supportive community environment

## Findings: Setting

The participating schools in the Sheffield School Food Project were situated in a variety of community settings. Variables related, for example, to socioeconomic circumstances, ethnic communities and language diversity. It was found that the provision and physical arrangement of tools and equipment impacted on the flow of pupils in the dining areas and the focus of their attention on food practices.

### Whole School

There were many excellent examples of ways in which food practices were embraced as part of a whole school ethos across the school day. There was some good practice related to growing food with many schools having growing areas within school grounds or access to an allotment in the community. Role play around food preparation was observed, for example, using 'mud kitchens' outdoors. Pupils in many schools had experience of cooking activities and, some schools had specialised pupil kitchens and



Outdoor mud kitchen



Pupils gardening tools



Dedicated café for pupils and families



Pupil cooking equipment



Family-style kitchen



Teachers and parents preparing an allotment

cooking facilities. Several schools also had a 'family-style' kitchen where pupils could experience a home-style cooking and dining environment. There were many excellent examples of innovative and creative ways in which individual schools had developed food-focused work with pupils. Some of the facilities and learning resources available were impressive and many schools had individual staff



Café-style dining with small tables



Long tables with integral button seating



Family-style dining



Classroom dining

members who were particularly passionate about cooking or growing or scientific investigations around food. It was found that the resources varied widely with diverse funding sources. Some of these developments in food practices can only happen over time with sustained investment and staff commitment.

### Dining

Most schools converted a hall and sometimes classrooms into a dining area for the lunchtime period. A few schools had a dedicated dining room or café. The amount of physical space

varied significantly between schools and the spaces between tables varied. Some dining halls were very cramped with little space for adults to circulate between tables and others were more spaced out with plenty of room. Most pupils having a packed lunch placed their lunch boxes on the tables making them very crowded and making it hard for the younger children to see each other across the tables. Most schools had rows of long tables with integral 'button' seats for six to eight pupils. Two tables were often placed end to end in a banquet-style for 12-16 pupils. Some schools had smaller square, rectangular, hexagonal or octagonal tables for 4-8 pupils. Some schools had a café style layout with tables for 4-6 pupils. Smaller tables of 4-8 offered greater opportunity for pupil interaction. Individual chairs with backs appeared more comfortable and relaxing for children. There were notable differences in quality, appearance and comfort of seating. Further research is needed to establish whether there is a link between eating habits and type of seating. Table layouts varied with some schools placing water jugs, cups, cutlery, lunchboxes and pre-served meals on tables. Lighting was used more or less effectively in different schools to create a warm atmosphere and to enhance the appearance of food in the service areas. In some schools indicators were used to guide pupils to seating areas for particular classes or year groups. Some schools had additional areas for pupils to eat outside in good weather or additional spaces for pupils who preferred a quiet area.

Many schools used 'flight trays' and served both main course and dessert at once, while other schools uses plates and bowls on trays with pupils either being served the full meal at once or else returning to a service area to choose a cooked dessert, fruit or yogurt once the main course was complete. In the family service setting pupils served food from family sized dishes with serving utensils. Where pupils self-served salad, utensils ranged in size, type and ease of use. Medium to large spoons tended to be easier for younger children to use with springy over-sized tongs, or a lack of utensils, making it hard for children to serve themselves salad. Water was generally provided in plastic jugs with smaller jugs proving easier for young children to use. Cups were generally handle-free and either clear or coloured plastic. Many pupils were observed struggling to use the cutlery provided. Only one school offered different sizes of cutlery for children to choose which suited them best (see back cover). Cutlery often ran out during the lunch service and it was common to see pupils eating school lunches without cutlery, either through choice or necessity. Some schools had cutlery pots on tables, replenished by pupils as needed to avoid overcome this challenge. Tablecloths and placemats were used in some schools to make table settings more attractive and pupils commented positively about these practices.



Over-sized utensils do not support SQPC dimensions

### Catering

Catering facilities varied although most schools had their own kitchens. Some schools provided cooked food to a neighbouring school in addition to preparing food for their own pupils. Some schools had multiple catering sites including a family/community kitchen or dining setting in addition to the main dining area. Training, motivation and efficiency of staff was observed to vary in different settings.

### Community

The wider community setting varied among the schools visited as part of the project. Some community settings were affluent, whereas others were in areas of significant socioeconomic deprivation. Some schools were within easy walking distance of shops, parks and allotments and many were on bus routes. Some schools reported engaging with shops, farms and supermarkets in their community, either visiting as part of pupils learning about where food comes from or in seeking sponsorship for school gardens. Many schools reported collecting food donations for local Food Banks although these were not always local to the school.



Sign on a take-away near a primary school does not support SQPC dimensions

## Findings: Service

Good practice was found to include activities that promoted a learning environment in dining areas and where facilities were designed to regulate pupil flow around the dining areas in a calm manner. Positioning, access, preparation and presentation of food items was significant in influencing pupil behaviours. Reducing choice activities in the dining areas (i.e. choosing in advance) and increasing pupil focus on good food practice (i.e. rather than tray logistics) is recommended in light of the research.

### Food Service

Most lunch services had a feeling of a 'fast-food service' and once pupils came in from the playground they often did not remove coats or wash hands before eating. Lunch service in most schools generally consisted of a choice of hot meals, including a vegetarian choice, with a choice of vegetables and a choice of cooked pudding, fruit or yogurt. Many schools also offered a cold meal option, called a 'grab bag' or cold school lunch. Meals were generally served via a hatch or counter with pupils waiting their turn in a queue. Family service was another style of service with similar meal options but served at the table by pupils.

### Flow

Queues tended to be organized to attempt to minimize the time taken to complete service. Generally, whole year groups were moved into the queue at once and in some schools pupils were summoned in from the playground using a whistle and hand held-cards. Usually school dinners were served to pupils queuing at one or more hatches, where caterers served the main meal and dessert. Children on the whole queued at a hatch, sliding a flight tray along as they collected first their main course and then their dessert. In some schools pupils took a main course initially and returned to the hatch or another specified area (table) to collect dessert once the main course was eaten. On timing pupils moving across the hatched areas where food was served, it generally averaged 12-20 seconds per pupil. There was usually very brief interaction between the caterers and the children over which main course or which choice of vegetable they wanted, whether they wanted gravy, custard and so on. Pupils were frequently observed declining meal components, especially vegetables at this stage. There was one school where there was much greater adult-pupil interaction in the process of serving food at the hatch. In this school, caterers seemed to have a rapport with pupils and were actively encouraging children to try the full range of the meal components on offer. Interesting in this school the queue was managed so that only around 10-12 pupils were in the queue at a time leading to a calm atmosphere and potentially less pressure on both the staff and pupils at the service area. Another school seated pupils at tables in the dining room and then invited them to go up to join the queue in small groups, again contributing to an orderly and calm atmosphere. Staff talked to pupils at the tables while they waited, again demonstrating good practice. One school offered a family service where pupils sat at octagonal tables in pairs across four year groups. The eldest pupils served from serving dishes placed on the tables by staff. Pupils cleared their own tables at the end of the main course and staff brought dessert to the table, again to be served by pupils. Most pupils remained seated throughout the mealtime and there was a very positive interaction between staff and pupils who shared the responsibilities of serving meals.

### Time

A specific lunch break, usually with more than one sitting was the norm. The lunch break was universally split into playing time and eating time. Pupils generally ate their lunch in year groups organized into sittings. Year groups were regularly rotated usually with two or three year groups eating at a sitting, but always with Foundation pupils dining first where applicable (some schools were infant or junior only). Virtually all pupils in the Sheffield School Food Project schools either had a school-prepared lunch or a packed lunch from home with very few going off-site or home. In some schools pupils were able to sit where they wished, within specified dining settings, and in other schools pupils having packed lunch were seated separately from those having a school meal, and sometimes in a completely separate classroom or other area. Time to eat was limited by the need to get many children in and out of dining spaces which could not cater to all pupils at once. The number of sittings was generally 2-3 and the overall lunch break usually lasted 50-70 minutes.

### Portion Size

Different portions were available in different schools, After passing the hatch or service counter, most schools offered pupils optional salad and many schools offered optional bread. These options were generally available on a self-serve and unmonitored basis leading to wide variation in the amounts taken, if any at all, by different pupils. The positioning of the salad trolleys and the items provided varied significantly across the sample schools. Salad servers and bread layouts did not always enable children to serve themselves appropriate portion sizes. Portion sizes were not always consistent with food standards. By contrast in some settings, for example, salad was pre-served in small bowls or heat-sealed packs.

### Food Supervision

In some school settings at times when staff assisted pupils to their seats, in order to help ease congestion at the hatch, this constrained pupils in stopping to self-serve salad items. In one school the lunchtime supervisor literally stood with her back to the salad trolley completely blocking pupils' access to it as they were shepherded to seating at the far end of the dining room. Through the whole sitting no pupil had salad as a result.

### Salad

In one school, albeit with a large dining area, the salad trolley was centrally positioned in the room with two members of staff available to assist children with their salad choices. The trolley was replenished by both staff and student monitors throughout the lunch service and pupils were able to return for salad after eating the main course if they wished. In other schools, popular items, such as grapes and cucumber, often ran out and were not replenished. There were notable differences in efforts to



Single unsuitable springy utensils



10 salads with appropriate utensils



Individual salad portions

encourage salad to be taken by pupils. Crudely speaking, from a commercial perspective, the less salad served, or wasted, the lower the costs. From a health perspective, the more salad served, and eaten, the better opportunities for achieving balanced meal intake.

### Waste

Most schools had specific waste disposal points situated around the dining room where pupils took their plates or flight trays once they finished eating. Where waste areas were occasionally staffed, the role related mainly to driving efficiency, with supervisors taking the plates and trays from pupils to speed up the process. However, occasionally supervisors were observed talking to pupils about what they were leaving and in some cases encouraging individuals to eat more. Pupil monitors also helped to clear plates and in one school they were observed issuing stickers when pupils had eaten well, tried new foods



Typical example of pupil discarding food



Typical food waste disposal area



Example of waste, multiple baked potatoes

and show good manners. Coloured tokens were used for a similar purpose. Unfortunately, in many schools pupils were observed discarding vast amounts of food in an unsupervised manner. In particular, fish fingers, vegetables, whole apples and baked potatoes were often thrown away.

### Food Choice

Some schools used a 'banded' system where children pre-chose their main course for school lunch from a menu and were issued with an appropriately coloured wristband. Once at the meal service hatch they would exchange the band for their chosen main course and then select their dessert option from the choice on offer. Other schools allowed pupils to make their selection of main course item on arrival at the service area. It was observed that generally pupils had very little time to choose meal components once at the hatch or other service area and there was a degree of pressure generated by the existence of usually large queues behind them. As desserts tended to be chosen at the point of service, rather than in advance, there was little time to reflect on what might constitute a balanced choice. Cakes, biscuits, tray bakes and similar items were mostly the first dessert option presented and served by caterers. Yogurt and fruit options tended to be placed at the end of the hatch on a self-serve basis.



Cake presentation



Bands used to show pupils' main meal choices



Typical hatch food service

It may be that choice can be positively influenced by repositioning food options (e.g. offering fruit before hot dessert), pre-choosing in a less pressured context or offering a half portion of cooked dessert with a half or full portion of fruit. Some schools did offer fruit in addition to cooked dessert but this was rare. Another simple change might be to encourage pupils to make their dessert choices at the same time they pre-plan their main meal allowing adult support in evaluating balanced choices across the day or week. Food diaries can also be a useful way of helping children reflect on their food choices.

### Food Preparation

The left hand picture shows bread served by staff at a hatch, prepared attractively by cutting slices into heart shapes. Unfortunately it is white sliced bread so although the presentation is attractive the bread is not ideal but could be improved easily by using wholemeal bread. The picture to the right shows bread



White heart-shaped bread served by staff



White bread rolls self-served by pupils

rolls prepared by halving them and offering them for pupils to self-serve. This method of serving often leads to pupils taking several pieces of bread which again is not ideal. Staff or peer support with service can help.

### Salad

The salad appeared to be popular with pupils although the range and presentation of salad varied across settings. In one school grapes were offered as one of the salad options proving extremely popular and according to pupils interviewed this encouraged children to stop at the salad trolley. Once there they might also try other items on offer. Although salad trolleys in many schools looked attractive it was observed that younger pupils often had difficulty using the serving equipment provided and as often only 1-2 pupils could serve themselves at one time this caused congestion and many pupils did not seem to want to wait when they had already spent time queuing for their hot meal.

### School-Packed Lunch

School packed lunches varied in content and quality. Some schools offered salad in addition to a sandwich, cake and fruit but others did not, as shown in the far right picture. The quality of service for cooked and cold schools meals was notably different. In terms of thinking about the Social Quality and Pupil Capability dimensions that were described earlier, there was inequity between those having a hot school meal and those having a cold school meal. In order to meet the new food standards from January 2015 practices will need to change.



Lunch from pile opposite, lacking vegetable component with whole fruit



Cold school lunch on flight tray improves presentation with space for salad pot



Pupil searching for their named school packed lunch, September 2014. The jumbled lunches show layout is important in supporting SQPC dimensions and good food practice.



Pupils having cold school lunch given a choice of bags of colourful fruit and vegetables positioned in eye-line.



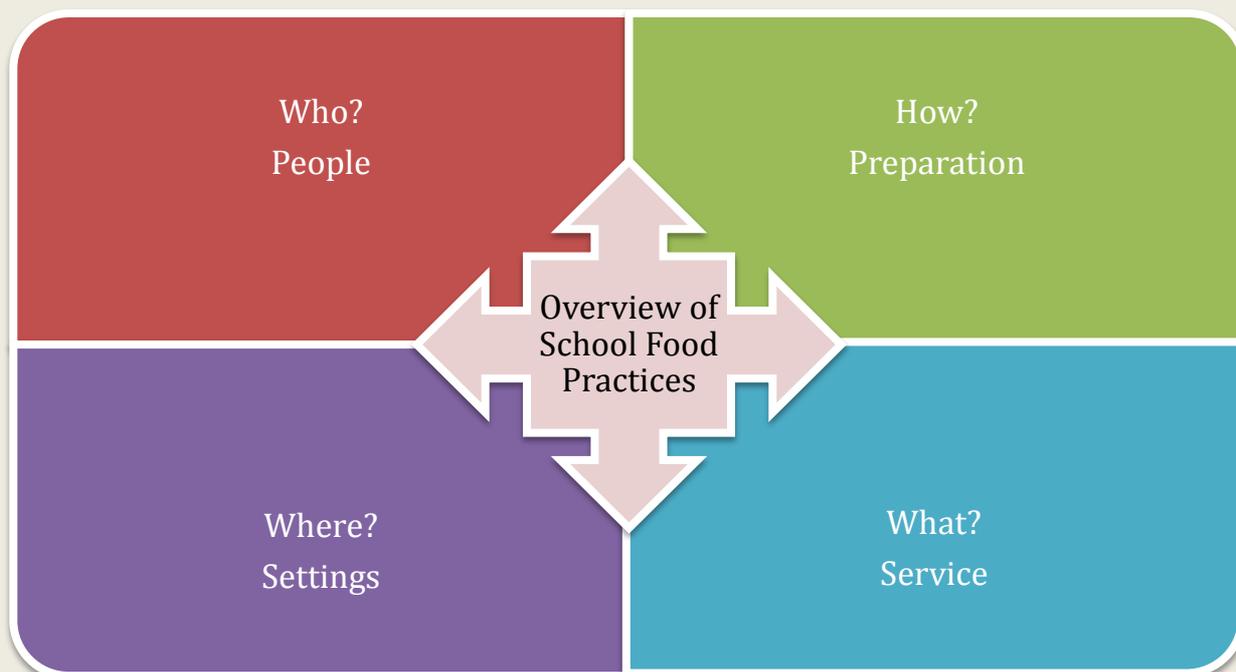
### Home-Packed Lunch

A wide variety of home-packed lunch items was observed. Crisps, sugary drinks, sweets, cakes, biscuits and chocolate bars were commonplace in many schools. Sandwiches and fruit, cucumber, tomatoes and carrot sticks were also common but amounts and combinations varied significantly within and across schools. There were many examples of packed lunches contained items with 'red traffic light' food labels in terms of high fat, sugar, and salt. There was often little or no fruit or vegetable component in packed lunches although this varied in different schools. Portion sizes varied hugely with, for example one five year old having six slices of bread in his packed lunch. One pupil was observed eating the chocolate bar below, seen by staff but with no intervention or feedback given. When this school was asked if they had a food policy the response was, 'we do not want to dictate to parents'. The resources section in Part 4 includes links to the Sheffield healthy settings website with activities for improving packed lunches.



Examples of contents from pupil packed lunches from home

## Part 3: The School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox



The findings from the research led to the development of a School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox (SET). It offers an overarching framework to evaluate and develop school food practices. The premise of the School Food SET is that **nurturing food aspirations, values, culture and practices needs to be grassroots based, building on assets**. The School Food SET aims to support schools in identifying features of good practice that already exist in their schools and in developing short, medium and long term plans to make continuous small steps towards further improvements. The aim has been to make the evaluation and development tools user-friendly and accessible to staff, caterers, parents, pupils and governors alike. In self-evaluating school food practices it is important to try to include participants who represent different voices in your community. The School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox is made up of four core areas of practice related to People, Preparation, Settings and Service. Each of these areas has been sub-divided into four further sub-sections to help focus attention on details that make a difference. For each area, you will be guided in thinking about how the eight dimensions of the Social Quality and Pupil Capability (SQPC) framework can be developed to support the pupil wellbeing and social quality of your school. Different groups within your school community could work on each area of practice according to their interests and skills. The four core areas and their components are listed below:

### People

Pupils and families, head teacher and staff, communities and businesses

### Preparation

Human development, administration, marketing and resources

### Settings

Whole school, dining, catering and community

### Service

Food preparation, food supervision, food choices and food service

## How to Use the School Food Self-Evaluation Toolbox

Food practices in schools are complex and there are multiple activities, individual, social and environmental factors that play a role. The School Food SET allows schools to work at different levels depending on their stage of development and the resources available for this area of school practice.

### Level 1: Your School Food Practices

**Aims:** To develop a systematic overview of food practices in your setting using prompts linked to the four core areas including people, preparation, settings and service.

### Level 2: People, Preparation, Settings and Services

**Aims:** To help you to identify strengths and aspirations related to food practices in your setting. The aim is to develop a more detailed evaluation of practice by working through the four components of each of the four core areas used in Level 1. Each core area is looked at in turn, initially to highlight existing strengths and then later, to develop an 'Aspiration Action Plan'.

### Level 3: Unique Features

**Aims:** To develop an advanced review of progress in developing your school practices as a whole, extending beyond the four components of the four core areas of people, preparation, settings and service. Also to share good practice beyond your own school setting.

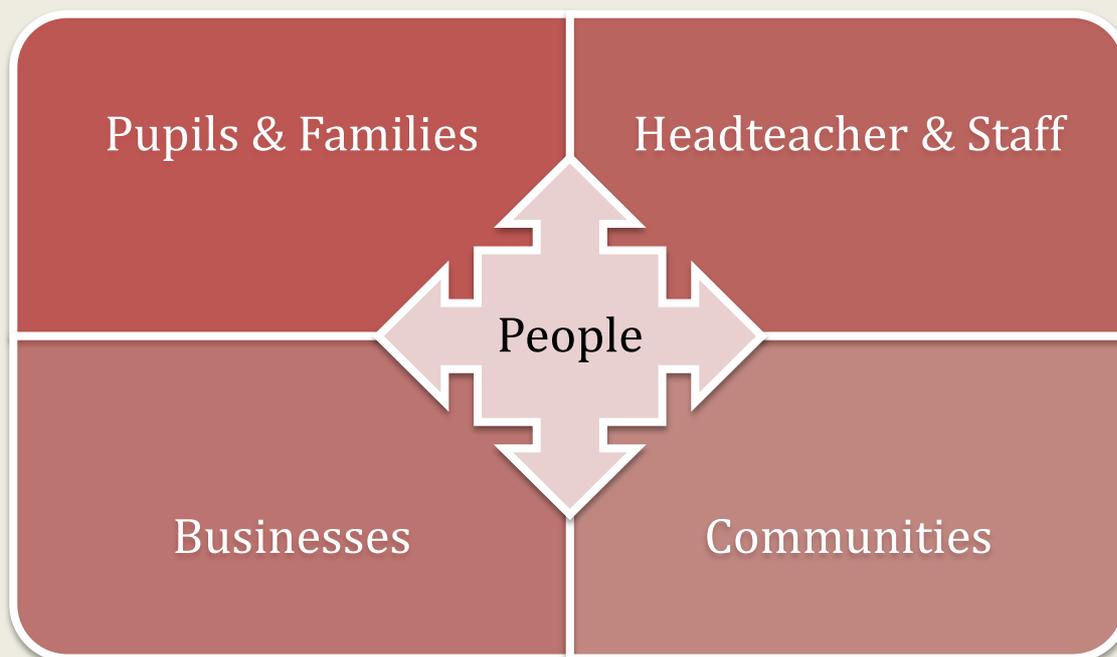
Over time schools can progress from one level to the next. It is suggested that all schools start with Level 1 and progress at their own pace to Levels 2 and 3. Some schools may be able to progress quickly to these levels and others will want to take time to review and implement changes over a longer period of time. Either approach is fine, and the essence of the School Food Toolbox is to support schools in developing practices in small steps following a research-informed efficient, systematic method. It also offers schools a way of demonstrating to their community, Ofsted, and others, how they are making a commitment in this area of policy and practice. We now go on to explore the four core areas in more detail before moving on to introduce the School Food SET Tools in Part 4.

#### Building on Your Good Practice

To enhance pupil well-being and to strengthen your school community, use the School Food Toolbox to:

- **Highlight, Share and Celebrate** your current good food practices.
- **Plan, Implement and Review** your *Aspiration Actions* to develop your food practice further.

## Core Area A: The People



### **Pupils and Families**

Pupils and families are key to achieving good school food practices. A free school meal will not have an impact unless a pupil is willing to try it, and a breakfast club will have limited effect unless the most vulnerable pupils attend. Also, engaging parents is vital in supporting pupils' positive food habits. For example, as this review shows, packed lunches from home often evidence unhealthy food choices.

### **Headteacher and Staff**

The head teacher's leadership, personality and approach, the make-up of staff (number, range of experience, interests, strengths), the relationships with governors, business managers, school caterers and mealtime supervisors are all significant. For example, it is crucial that head teachers feel they can discuss changes in menu choices, presentation or food suppliers with catering staff.

### **Businesses**

The ethics of suppliers, shop keepers, ice cream vendors, school garden sponsors, breakfast club caterers, the socioeconomic circumstances of local communities, engagement of volunteers, sponsors, charities and the level of social cohesion within and beyond the school gates will all impact on the nature of food practices in your school including, e.g., growing/cooking food.

### **Communities**

Developing community partnerships is important in supporting your school food practices. There will be tensions within local policy agendas, for example, boosting and supporting local food businesses and yet attempting to promote a public health agenda to improve the obesogenic environment of fast food chains and takeaway outlets serving nutritionally unbalanced foods.

#### **Activities for Reflection**

- How easy do you find it to initiate school community discussion on policy change or practice development around school food?
- What are the challenges of working with pupils and families, staff, caterers, businesses and others in your local community?

## Core Area B: The Preparation



**Human development** refers to the education, engagement, skills development and training that pupils, staff, caterers, governors and head teachers experience in your school and which can help to support positive food practices.

**Administration** refers to the behind the scenes preparation that goes on in order to ensure pupils have access to healthy food options across the school day. This may relate to setting up a breakfast club, budgeting allocation, administering payments for school meals, book keeping, negotiating with suppliers and caterers. Administration can also cover school policies, local authority food strategies, national standards and legislation, such as the new allergen and food labelling regulations (in force from December 2014), and the new school food standards (to be introduced from January 2015). See the resources in Part 4 for details and links to resources.

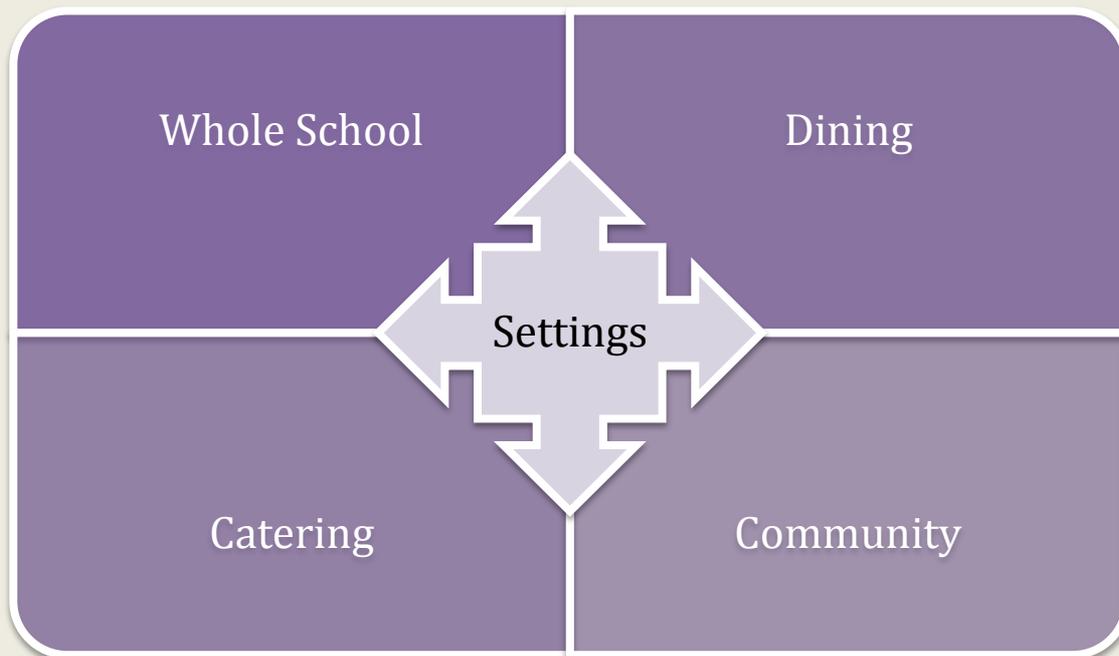
**Marketing** is another key aspect of preparing your school to support positive food practices. It may involve advertising a breakfast club, encouraging school meal uptake (FSM and otherwise) with menu displays, attractive posters or letters home to parents. It could involve events such as taster evenings or opportunities for parents to share a lunch with their child.

**Resources** are all those things that make the provision of different foods and meals available in schools. This might range from the funds needed to purchase the food supplies themselves to furniture, kitchen and storage equipment, buildings, utensils and, of course, the people to make it all happen.

### Activities for Reflection

- Who are the people that make up your school community, for example, in terms of pupil age range, number on roll, socioeconomic profiles, staff, parents and beyond?
- What are the strengths in your current preparation practices related to food? (For example, a well-prepared setting or menu display, planning parent and pupil taster sessions).

## Core Area C: The Settings



**Whole School** setting refers to the overall physical and social school environment as well as the buildings and grounds that form the school property. It extends beyond eating areas to other locations such as classrooms, outdoor spaces, food preparation areas and wider learning facilities, such as libraries and pupil kitchens.

**Dining** settings refer to the spaces where pupils (and staff) eat during the school day. This may include a dining hall, classrooms, outdoor picnic tables, play areas and so forth. Visual displays, decoration, lighting, flooring and furnishings add to the impact of the setting. Settings, for example, may be enhanced with promotional images encouraging healthy and balanced food habits.

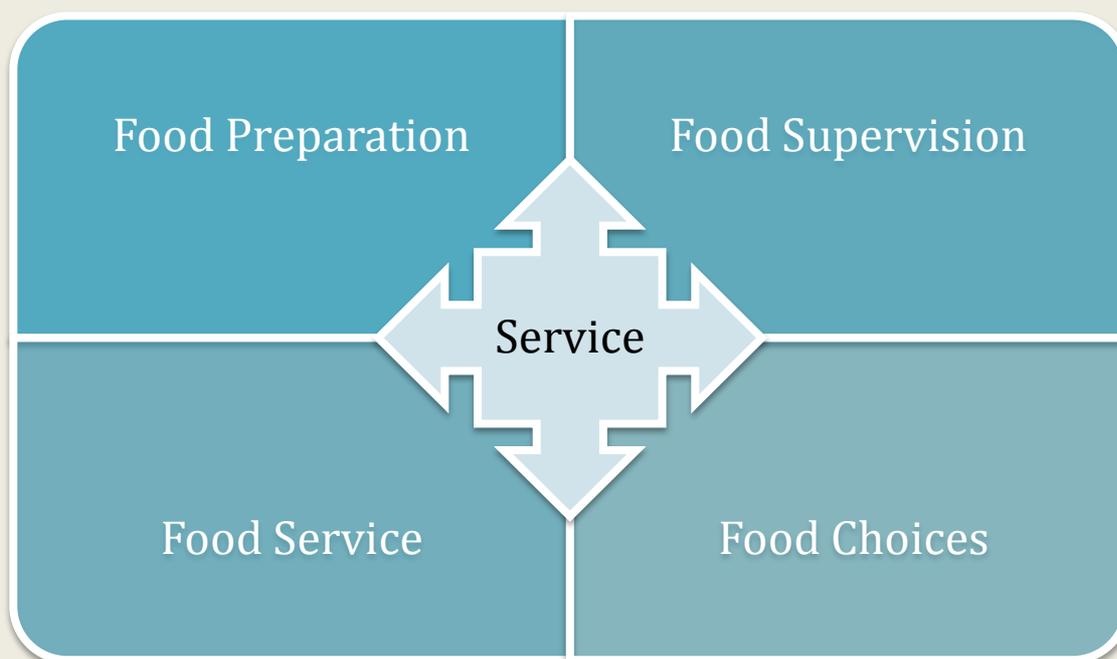
**Catering** settings refer to the places and spaces where food is prepared and served. This might include, for example, a school kitchen, a breakfast club room a 'family' kitchen or a classroom. It also refers to the serving areas, often 'hatches' but also sometimes freestanding and/or mobile. It includes instances where food is prepared outside of school and brought onsite as well as the occasions where food is served at events such as school fairs and parents' evenings.

**Community** setting refers to the local area around the school. It includes, for example, the facilities, services, housing and shops as well as the variety of people in terms of culture, language and demography.

### Activities for Reflection

- What are the characteristics of your local community setting?
- How does your whole school setting contribute to the range of food practices that occur across the school day?

## Core Area D: Service



**Food Preparation** concerns the way that food is prepared, for example, on/off-site, from using fresh/processed produce, to the methods used such as frying, baking, grilling, steaming and whether food is pre-prepared for all sittings at once, and kept warm, or in batches as needed. It also refers to the preparation of food, e.g. vegetables and salads and whether, for example, different foods are mixed or served separately, whether ingredients are finely chopped, diced, in batons, presented in individual portions or served at tables by staff. All of these factors and others can affect the quality and nutritional content of food, as well as its appeal to pupils.

**Food Supervision** refers to the adults who are helping in the dining areas during the lunch break. This may include teachers, learning mentors, midday/welfare supervisors, head teachers or others. Roles may, for example, be related to helping to seat pupils, guiding pupil choices, helping to make food items accessible (e.g. cutting up), monitoring waste, offering feedback or tips on healthy eating.

**Food Service** refers to the types of food service available, for example, hot/cold meals, single or multi-choice menus, family/café style service or queuing at a hatch. It also refers to whether some items, e.g. salad, are self-service or served by staff or pupils, and whether the food is provided by external or in-house caterers.

**Food Choices** refer to the options pupils have regarding their lunch. For example, lunch from home, single/multi-choice of cold school lunch, single/multi-choice of hot school lunch, snack foods, additional drinks, salad, bread, soup and so on.

### Activities for Reflection

- What are the roles of those that are present during lunch service? Are they more concerned with efficient serving, seating and clearing or with interacting with pupils about their food choices alongside more general social interaction?
- Do any extended conversations take place between adults and pupils or is it more a case of catering staff asking pupils at the hatch, 'do you want beans or peas?'

## Part 4: The School Food SET Tools

We now turn to introducing the particular tools that have been developed to help schools to self-evaluate their food practices and to begin to make plans for onward development. The tools included in the following pages aim to take you through a gradual introduction to self-evaluating food practices in your school, and to creating action plans to support the development of your practices in ways that enhance pupil well-being. The first tool take you through a series of reflective steps to help you to develop an overview of your school food practices, in collaboration with other members of your school community. Tools 2-5 concentrate in more detail on the four core areas that contribute towards food practices, namely, people, preparation, settings and service. You can go through these tools in any order and you may find it beneficial to look at more than one at a time, especially if you have different groups helping within your school community. Tool 6 comes into play once you have completed Level 2, but before you go on to this stage, have a look at tools 9-11 which help you to evaluate and develop specific areas of practice at Level 2. The specific areas are related to Social Quality, developing a school policy and checking your salad provision. The latter was highlighted as a key area in many schools where simple changes can immediately have impact on pupil food practice. Tools 7-8 are to help you plan your goals and check your progress, building on any assets you have highlighted along the way. Tool 12 is aimed at helping you to summarise and keep track of progress and finally tools 13-16 offer examples and case studies to offer ideas for your own school food development plans.

Work through these tools in order:

1. *School Food SET Tool Level 1: Your School Food Practices*
2. *School Food SET Tool Level 2: People*
3. *School Food SET Tool Level 2: Preparation*
4. *School Food SET Tool Level 2: Settings*
5. *School Food SET Tool Level 2: Service*
6. *School Food SET Tool Level 3: Unique Features*

Use these tools, at Levels 2 and 3, to highlight your successes and to make plans for development:

7. *School Food Highlights Tool*
8. *School Food Aspiration Tool*

Use these tools to look at specific key areas at Level 2:

9. *Social Quality Barometer Tool*
10. *School Food Salad Tool*
11. *School Food Policy Tool*

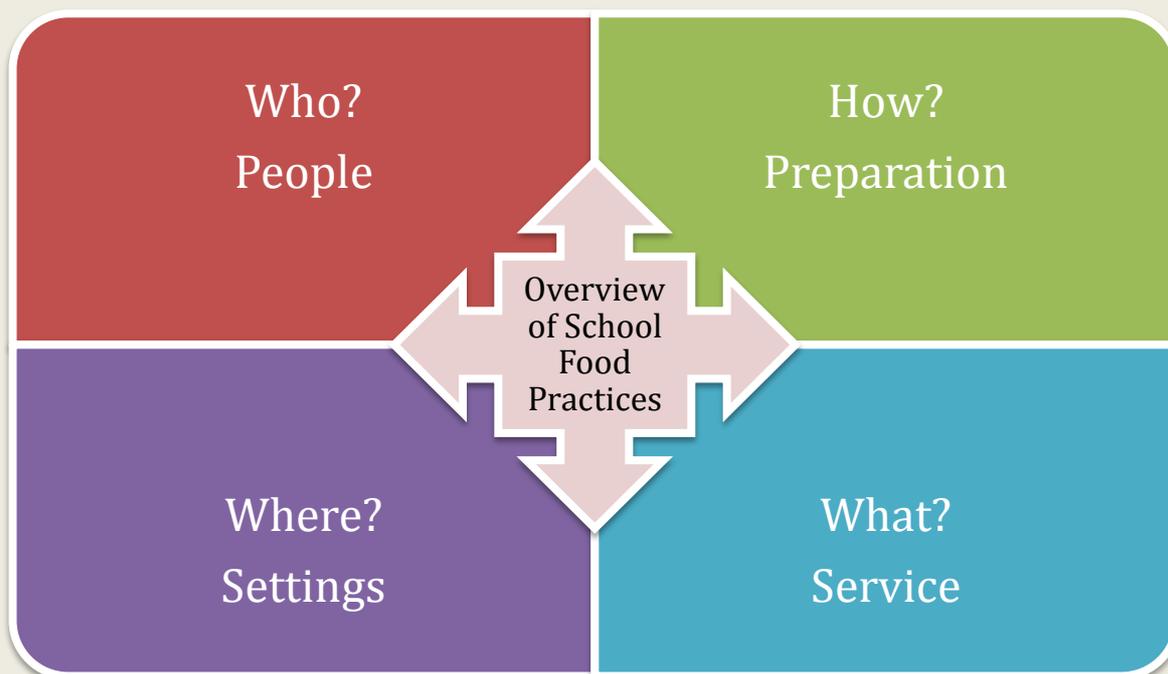
Use this tool to create an overview of your plans:

12. *School Food Planning Tool: Evaluating and Developing Your Practices*

Use the Examples and Case Studies as tools to help you to develop participatory activities with pupils:

13. *Example 1: Salad Tasting Challenge*
14. *Example 2: Pupil-led research on School Food*
15. *Example 3: Chef-led Healthy Food Activity*
16. *Example 4: Small changes that can make a difference*

## School Food SET Tool Level 1: Your School Food Practices



Use the question prompts below, together with the activities for reflection in Part 3, to begin your self-evaluation process. Identify and reflect on your current school food practices, linked to the four core areas. Make notes, in a format to suit you, to record your thinking.

**Who are the key people that are involved in food practices in your school across the day?** For example, they might include teachers, pupils, parents, governors, leaders, local authority staff, external caterers or adults running clubs before and after school.

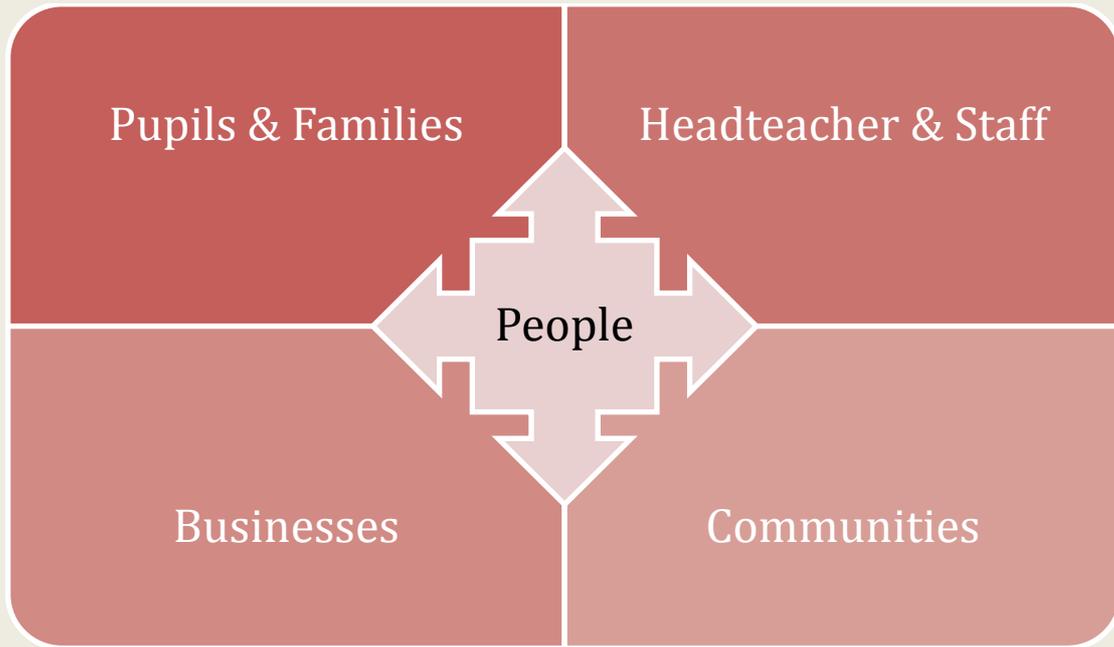
**How are these people involved in food practices and what preparation is involved?** For example, they may deliver, prepare, cook or serve food; they may be customers, educators, gardeners or lunchtime supervisors.

**Where do food practices occur in your school?** Settings may include a classroom, tuck shop, dining room, playground, pupil kitchens, allotment or gardening areas.

**What different food practices can you identify in your school?** For example, these might be related to eating, learning, playing, making, growing, fund-raising, entertaining or celebrating.

Compare your observations with others in your school community and start to develop a dialogue on school food practices, encouraging people to think broadly. Do you have a shared understanding of your current food practices? Discuss any differences and explore further if you are unsure of different people's roles or food practice activities. Once you have built a shared picture of your current food practices, and acknowledged any differences, you are ready to move to Level 2.

## School Food SET Tool Level 2: People



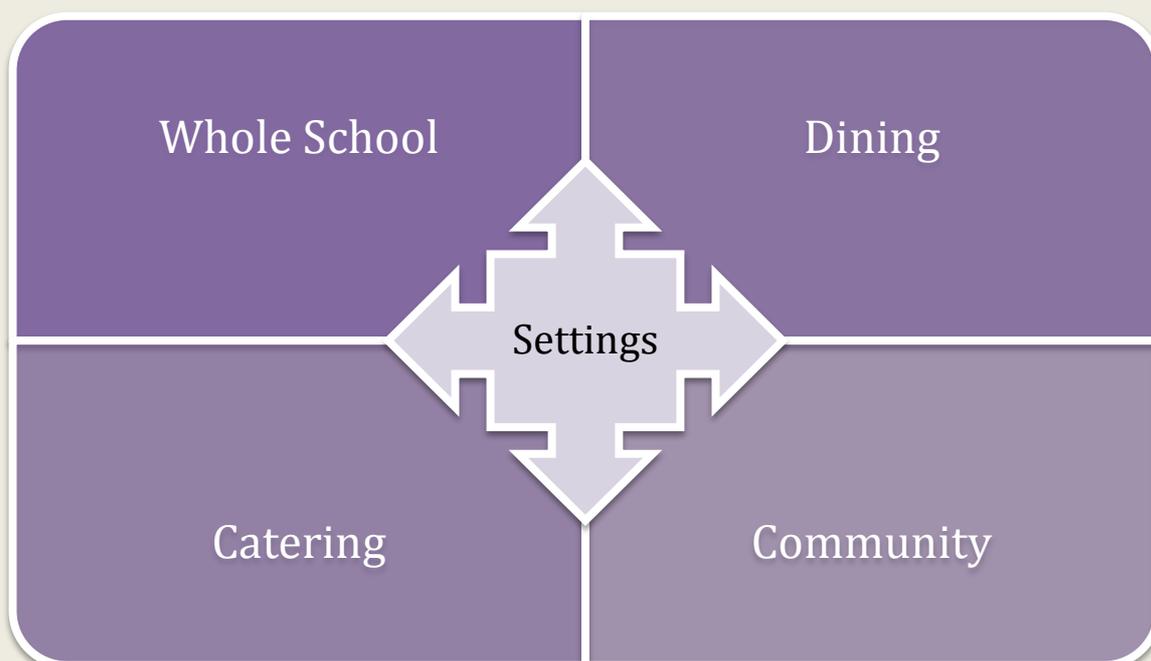
1. For each of the groups of people in the figure above, try to identify the key strengths they bring to food practices in your school. You may need to discuss this with a range of representatives in your school community, or to observe and reflect over a period of time. Try to think of examples to illustrate the strengths you highlight and to think about how they relate to the Social Quality and Pupil Capability dimensions introduced earlier in this document. If you need a reminder look at page 12, or refer to the tick boxes on the Highlights and Aspirations Action Tools which summarise them.
2. Once you have identified strengths in each component, decide how best to share and celebrate the successes you are already achieving. Use the Highlights Action Tool for this purpose. For example, the action might be to hold an event or write a school blog or a letter to parents. The objective may be to share what you are doing well, to celebrate your success, or as a springboard for developing new goals.
3. The third step at Level 2 is to discuss and decide on your aspirations for further developing the roles of people in your setting in relation to developing whole school, whole food practices based on the SQPC principles. Select up to four aspirations that you would like to work on and use the Aspiration Action Tool to record them.
4. Then, continue working with the Aspiration Action Tool to identify your objectives, who will have 'ownership' of them and when you plan to review your progress.
5. Implement your plans. You can work on one or more of the four core areas within Level 2 at the same time, depending on your school priorities, and the pace at which you are comfortable working.
6. Review your developments and move to other areas in Level 2 when ready.

## School Food SET Tool Level 2: Preparation



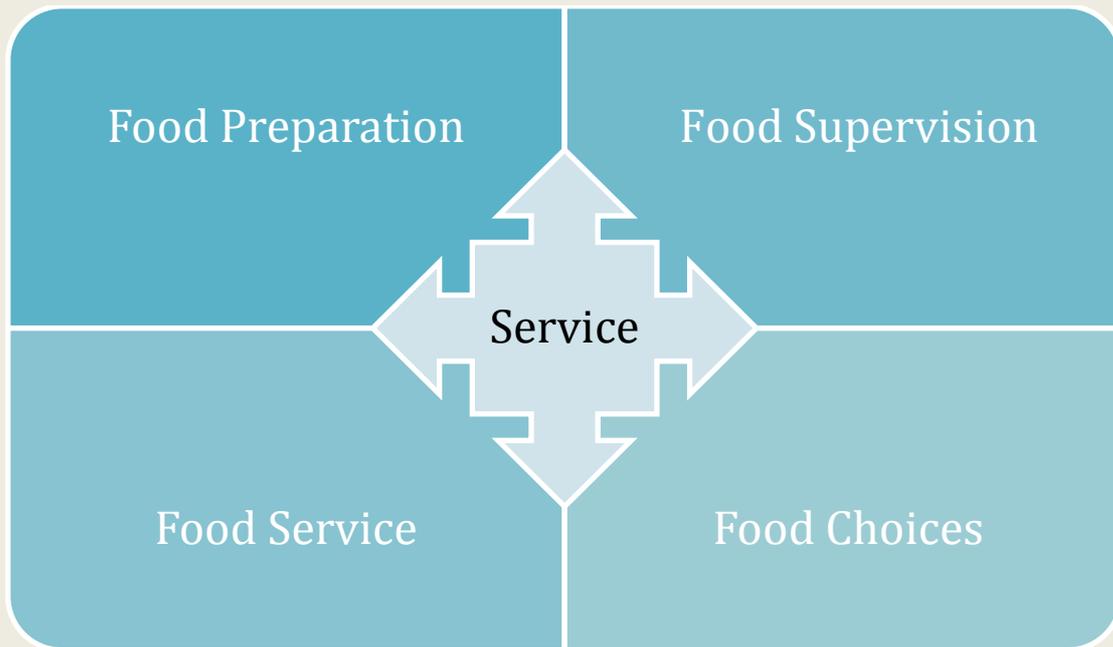
1. For each of the areas of preparation in the figure above, try to identify the key strengths they bring to food practices in your school. You may need to discuss this with a range of representatives in your school community, or to observe and reflect over a period of time. Try to think of examples to illustrate the strengths you highlight and think about how they relate to the Social Quality and Pupil Capability dimensions introduced earlier in this document. If you need a reminder, look at page 12 or refer to the tick boxes on the Highlights and Aspirations Tools which summarise them.
2. Once you have identified strengths in each component, decide how best to share and celebrate the successes you are already achieving. Use the Highlights Action Tool for this purpose. For example, the action might be to write a report or to thank individuals or organisations. The objective may be to share what you are doing well, to celebrate your success, or as a springboard for developing new goals.
3. The third step at Level 2 is to discuss and decide on your aspirations for further developing the preparation components in your setting in relation to developing whole school, whole food practices based on the SQPC principles. Select up to 4 aspirations that you would like to work on and use the Aspiration Action Tool to record them.
4. Then, continue working with the Aspiration Action Tool to identify your objectives, who will have 'ownership' of them and when you plan to review your progress.
5. Implement your plans. You can work on one or more of the four core areas within Level 2 at the same time, depending on your school priorities, and the pace at which you are comfortable working.
6. Review your developments and move to other areas in Level 2 when ready.

## School Food SET Tool Level 2: Settings



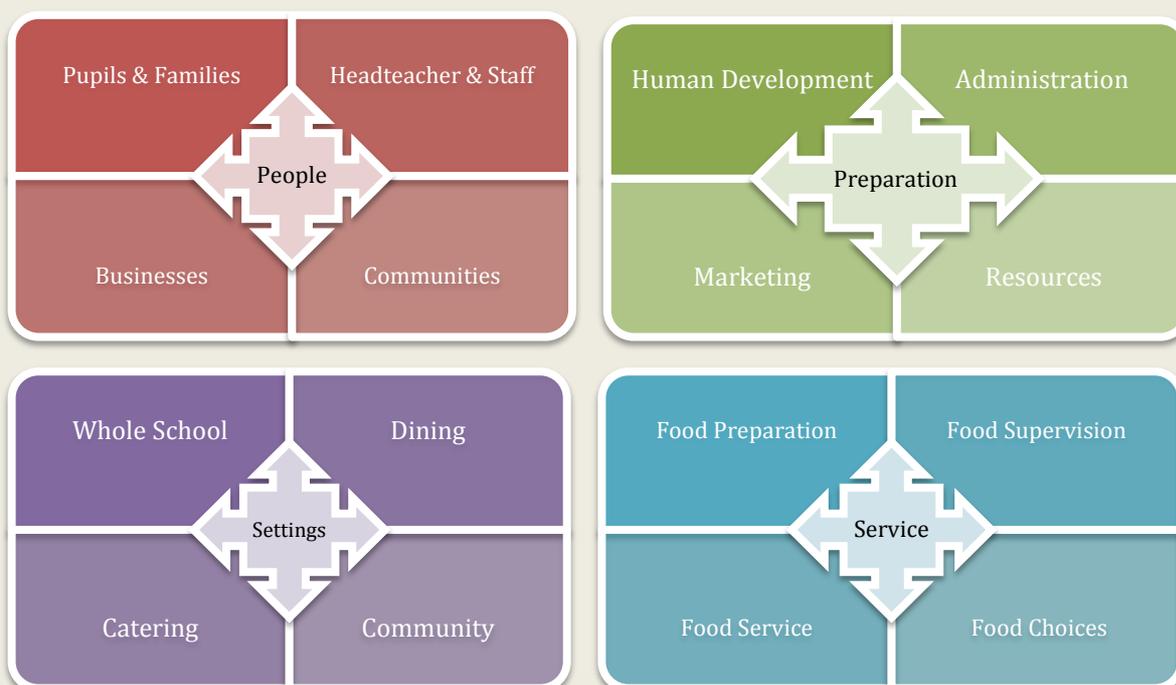
1. For each of the setting components in the figure above, try to identify the key strengths they bring to food practices in your school. You may need to discuss this with a range of representatives in your school community, or to observe and reflect over a period of time. Try to think of examples to illustrate the strengths you highlight and think about how they relate to the Social Quality and Pupil Capability dimensions introduced earlier in this document. If you need a reminder, look at page 12 or refer to the tick boxes on the Highlights and Aspirations Tools which summarise them.
2. Once you have identified strengths in each component, decide how best to share and celebrate the successes you are already achieving. Use the Highlights Action Tool for this purpose. For example, the action might be to create a display with photographs related to different settings or to invite parents into your school to learn about what you have achieved. The objective may be to share what you are doing well, to celebrate your success, or as a springboard for developing new goals.
3. The third step at Level 2 is to discuss and decide on your aspirations for further developing your school food settings in relation to developing whole school, whole food practices based on the SQPC principles. Select up to 4 aspirations that you would like to work on and use the Aspiration Action Tool to record them.
4. Then, continue working with the Aspiration Action Tool to identify your objectives, who will have 'ownership' of them and when you plan to review your progress.
5. Implement your plans. You can work on one or more of the four core areas within Level 2 at the same time, depending on your school priorities and the pace at which you are comfortable working.
6. Review your developments and move to other areas in Level 2 when ready.

## School Food SET Tool Level 2: Service



1. For each of the areas of service in the figure above, try to identify the key strengths they bring to food practices in your school. You may need to discuss this with a range of representatives in your school community, or to observe and reflect over a period of time. Try to think of examples to illustrate the strengths you highlight and think about how they relate to the Social Quality and Pupil Capability dimensions introduced earlier in this document. If you need a reminder, look at page 12 or refer to the tick boxes on the Highlights and Aspirations Tools which summarise them.
2. Once you have identified strengths in each component, decide how best to share and celebrate the successes you are already achieving. Use the Highlights Action Tool for this purpose. For example, the action might be to invite parents to share a lunchtime with their child, or for pupils or teachers to spend time in the kitchens with the school cook, to see the strengths you have highlighted. The objective may be to share what you are doing well, to celebrate your success, or as a springboard for developing new goals.
3. The third step at Level 2 is to discuss and decide on your aspirations for further developing the roles of services in your setting in relation to developing whole school, whole food practices based on the SQPC principles. Select up to 4 aspirations that you would like to work on and use the Aspiration Action Tool to record them.
4. Then, continue working with the Aspiration Action Tool to identify your objectives, who will have 'ownership' of them and when you plan to review your progress.
5. Implement your plans. You can work on one or more of the four core areas within Level 2 at the same time, depending on your school priorities and the pace at which you are comfortable working.
6. Review your developments and move to other areas in Level 2 or 3 when ready.

## School Food SET Tool Level 3: Unique Features



1. Once you have completed a Level 2 cycle across each of the four core areas, consider whether there is anything unique to your school in terms of its strengths and challenges regarding food practices.
2. Discuss with your school community whether there are any additional components that have not been covered at Levels 1 and 2, or features that are particularly unique to your school, such as owning a farm with livestock, or the setting or size of your school.
3. Develop your own sets of indicators of good practice for your unique features. Link them to the SQPC dimensions and use them to develop your aspirations and plans for further progress using the School Food Highlights and Aspiration Action Tools. Look at the 'Salad Check Tool' and the 'Social Quality Barometer' for examples of how you might do this. If you do develop new tools for this purpose, then please share them with other schools via the 'What Works Well' section of the School Food Plan website at [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com).
4. Once you have reached Level 3, you are ready to repeat further cycles of reflection, highlights, aspiration and action over time at a pace to suit your school. As new food practices are developed, as the school body changes (e.g. new pupils, staff, governors) or as new policy comes into place (e.g. the new food labelling regulations and the new food standards for schools), it will be important to self-evaluate your evolving achievements and plans.
5. Finally, think about how you might be able to support other schools nearby in working towards becoming a self-evaluating school regarding their food practices. Use the Aspiration Action Tool to put your ideas into action and to review your progress.

# School Food Highlights Action Tool

1. Describe the good food practice you wish to highlight:

---

2. Which SQPC dimension(s) does it address?

SQ1	<input type="checkbox"/>	SQ2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SO3	<input type="checkbox"/>	SO4	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC3	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Cohesion		Social Participation		Social Inclusion		Socio-economic Security		Resources		Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions		Social Context		Environmental Features	

3. Which core area(s) of food practice does it address?

	<input type="checkbox"/>	PEOPLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PREPARATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	SETTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SERVICE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupils/Families	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whole School	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Head teachers/Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dining	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Supervision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Catering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Service	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What action is needed?

Action	Objective (e.g. sharing/celebrating/development springboard)	Ownership	Completion Date	Review Date

Add space or use additional sheets as needed.

# School Food Aspiration Action Tool

1. Describe your food practice aspiration:

---

2. Which SQPC dimension(s) does it address?

SQ1	<input type="checkbox"/>	SQ2	<input type="checkbox"/>	SQ3	<input type="checkbox"/>	SQ4	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC1	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC2	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC3	<input type="checkbox"/>	PC4	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Cohesion		Social Participation		Social Inclusion		Socio-economic Security		Resources		Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions		Social Context		Environmental Features	

3. Which core area(s) of food practice does it address?

	<input type="checkbox"/>	PEOPLE	<input type="checkbox"/>	PREPARATION	<input type="checkbox"/>	SETTINGS	<input type="checkbox"/>	SERVICE	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pupils/Families	<input type="checkbox"/>	Businesses	<input type="checkbox"/>	Human Development Administration Marketing Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whole School Dining Catering Community	<input type="checkbox"/>	Food Preparation Meal/snack supervision Food Service Food Choices	<input type="checkbox"/>
Headteachers/Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>				

4. What action is needed?

Action	Objective (e.g. to encourage more pupils to try new foods)	Ownership	Completion Date	Review Date

Add space or use additional sheets as needed.

## School Food Social Quality Barometer Tool (Level 2)

Indicator	SQ Dimensions	Score
1. <i>Do you have a school food policy that reflects the core values of Social Quality?</i>	SQ1-4	
2. <i>Do your school's overall food practices help to develop a socially cohesive environment for pupils, teachers and the wider community?</i>	SQ1	
3. <i>Do your dining arrangements enable pupils and staff to eat together on a regular basis?</i>	SQ1	
4. <i>Do your dining arrangements enable parents to share a meal (breakfast/lunch) with their child on an occasional basis?</i>	SQ1	
5. <i>Do pupils and teachers have the opportunity to work in partnership with organisations or individuals in your local community to develop food practices?</i>	SQ1	
6. <i>Do pupils have the opportunity to be involved in the self-evaluation of food practices in your school ?</i>	SQ2	
7. <i>Do pupils have opportunities to grow food that is healthy and nutritious?</i>	SQ2	
8. <i>Do pupils have opportunities to prepare and cook food that is healthy and nutritious?</i>	SQ2	
9. <i>Do pupils actively participate in the serving of food in your school?</i>	SQ2	
10. <i>Are measures in place to ensure that all pupils feel included in food practices within the school?</i>	SQ3	
11. <i>Do you have an inclusive, sustainable breakfast club, catering for different dietary and cultural needs?</i>	SQ3	
12. <i>Do practices in your setting encourage all pupils to access healthy school lunches?</i>	SQ3	
13. <i>Does your school help all pupils to access a sufficient range and quantity of food across the school day to support their nutritional needs?</i>	SQ4	
14. <i>Are steps made to ensure that all pupils entitled to claim for a means-tested FSM have done so, and can access this benefit?</i>	SQ4	
15. <i>Are steps taken to support parents in budgeting and preparing healthy home prepared lunches?</i>	SQ4	

Score: 0 = No measures in place; 1 = new area of development; 2 = significant progress towards target, 3 = appropriate policies and practices are in place, 4 = Evaluation has shown that policies and practices are effective.

- ✓ Once you have completed the School Food Social Quality Barometer check using this tool, reflect with your school community to identify what you are already doing well.
- ✓ Use the Highlights Action Tool to share and celebrate your successes.
- ✓ Use the Aspiration Action Tool to plan, implement and review your next small steps to raise your score in one or more of the Social Quality areas above.

## School Food Salad Tool (Level 2)

Indicator	SQPC Dimension*	Score
1. <i>Is salad accessible and well positioned in the dining area(s)?</i>	SQ3, PC4	
2. <i>Is salad presentation of a high standard?</i>	PC1	
3. <i>Is a choice of salads available?</i>	SQ3, PC1	
4. <i>Are salad choices replenished throughout the lunch service?</i>	PC1	
5. <i>Do salads include herbs or other produce grown by pupils in school?</i>	SQ1-3, PC1	
6. <i>Is salad included in all hot school lunch options?</i>	SQ3, PC1	
7. <i>Is salad included in all cold school lunch options?</i>	SQ3, PC1	
8. <i>Are utensils for pupils to self-serve salad easy to use and adequate in number?</i>	SQ2-3, PC1	
9. <i>Do pupils have guidance in understanding portion sizes for salad?</i>	SQ2, PC2	
10. <i>Are salad pieces easy for children to handle and to eat?</i>	SQ3, PC1	
11. <i>Are low fat, low salt dressings available for pupils to add to their salad (e.g. yogurt, lemon juice, pepper)?</i>	PC1	
12. <i>Are some salads pre-dressed?</i>	PC1	
13. <i>Do pupils assist peers in serving salad?</i>	SQ1-3, PC2, PC3	
14. <i>Do staff assist pupils in serving salad?</i>	SQ1-2, PC1, PC3	
15. <i>Is salad offered to pupils bringing a packed lunch from home?</i>	SQ3-4, PC1	

\*The SQPC dimensions indicated are the main ones supported by the food practice but are not necessarily exhaustive.

Score: 0 = No measures in place; 1 = new area of development; 2 = significant progress towards target; 3 = appropriate policies and practices are in place; 4 = Evaluation has shown that policies and practices are effective.

- ✓ If needed, adapt the indicators to reflect the way that salad is served in your school, e.g. at the hatch, at the table, self-serve or pre-packed (e.g. No. 8 may not be relevant if salad is pre-packed).
- ✓ Once you have completed the Salad Check Tool, reflect with your school community to identify what you are already doing well.
- ✓ Use the Highlights Action Tool to share and celebrate your successes.
- ✓ Use the Aspiration Action Tool to plan, implement and review your next small steps to raise your score in one or more of the Salad Check areas above.

## School Food Policy Tool (Level 2)

Indicator	SQPC Dimension*	Score
1. Do you have a comprehensive school food policy?	SQ1-4, PC1-4	
2. Was it developed in collaboration with your whole school community?	SQ1-3, PC2-3	
3. Is the policy clearly explained and displayed to members of your school community in appropriate language(s)?	SQ2, PC2-4	
4. Does your school policy need to be revised in light of the new Trading Standards regulations on allergens and food labelling?***	SQ4, PC1-4	
5. Does your school policy need to be revised in light of the new school food standards?***	SQ4, PC1-4	
6. Does your school policy need to be revised in light of the School Food Plan recommendations?***	SQ4, PC1-4	
7. Do all your school breakfast, break time and lunch food and drink choices comply with the new school food standards?	SQ4, PC1	
8. Have you taken steps to ensure all adults working with pupils before/during/after school hours on school premises are aware of the new food standards and allergen labelling regulations?	SQ3, PC1-2	
9. Do snacks offered during and outside the school day on your premises comply with the new school food standards and allergen labelling regulations?	SQ3, PC1-2	
10. Do you review or monitor food/drink offered on school premises by extra-curricular activity providers?	SQ2, PC2	
11. Is your school community aware of environmental issues around food production and consumption?	SQ3, PC1	
12. Is your school aware of current standards for the storage and preservation of foods?	PC1	
13. Does your school review or monitor food waste in your setting?	SQ4, PC1	
14. Do rewards in your school meet food standards where they include food or drink items?	SQ4, PC1, PC3	
15. Do fund-raising activities support the new food standards for schools?	SQ4, PC1, PC3	

\*The SQPC dimensions indicated are the main ones supported by the food practice but are not necessarily exhaustive.

\*\* See [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk) and [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com) for details.

Score: 0 = No measures in place; 1 = new area of development; 2 = significant progress towards target; 3 = appropriate policies and practices are in place; 4 = Evaluation has shown that policies and practices are effective.

- ✓ Once you have completed the School Policy check with this tool, reflect with your school community to identify what you are already doing well.
- ✓ Use the Highlights Action Tool to share and celebrate your successes.
- ✓ Use the Aspiration Action Tool to plan, implement and review your next small steps to raise your score in one or more of the School Policy Check areas above.

# School Food Planning Tool: Evaluating and Developing Your Food Practices

Time Period: .....

Core Areas	SQPC Dimensions	SQ1 Social Cohesion	SQ2 Social Participation	SQ3 Social Inclusion	SQ4 Socio-economic Security	PC1 Resources	PC2 Knowledge, Skills & Dispositions	PC3 Social Context	PC4 Environment Features
<b>A</b>	<b>People</b>								
A1	Pupils & Families								
A2	Headteachers & Staff								
A3	Businesses								
A4	Communities								
<b>B</b>	<b>Preparation</b>								
B1	Human Development								
B2	Administration								
B3	Marketing								
B4	Resources								
<b>C</b>	<b>Settings</b>								
C1	Whole School								
C2	Dining								
C3	Catering								
C4	Community								
<b>D</b>	<b>Service</b>								
D1	Food Preparation								
D2	Food Supervision								
D3	Food Service								
D4	Food Choices								

- ✓ Use this grid to record, share and keep track of the areas you are working on in your school.
- ✓ Use different colours or symbols with a key to show activity in different time periods (e.g. L=Level, W=Weeks, colours for year).
- ✓ Fill in the relevant boxes to identify the areas, and levels you plan to work on in a set time period (e.g. L1, W10-20).
- ✓ Link activities to the Highlights and Aspiration Action Tools you are developing.
- ✓ Add space or use additional sheets as needed.

## Food Practice Activities with Pupils

Over a 100 pupils took part in participatory research activities to explore children's encounters with different foods and food practices in their schools. The following examples from the Sheffield School Food Project help to illustrate the kinds of activities that can help to enhance dimensions linked to Social Quality and Pupil Capability. You can adapt the ideas for use in your own settings to help children explore food and to encourage pupils to engage in the whole school, whole food approach.

### Example 1: Salad Tasting Challenge



Salads designed by a Y2 pupil

Pupils took part in salad tasting challenges in order to explore ways of supporting pupils in trying different foods and encouraging staff to think about how they might develop food-learning experiences in their schools. Some pupils worked in schools undertaking a researcher-led activity with support from school staff and parent helpers. In each activity the idea of developing sensory perception was introduced. Pupils took part in salad challenge experiences where they were encouraged to use all of their senses to explore different salad ingredients.

The activity plan was briefly as follows:

1. Pupils identify their five senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell.
2. Pupils 'turn on' their senses by sensing different food items, e.g. basil for smell, cauliflower for touch, lemon for taste, celery for hearing, pomegranate for sight.
3. Pupils learn about ingredients used to make salad dressings such as herbs (whole/chopped), spices, yogurt, lemon juice, olive oil.
4. In learning teams pupils create their own salad dressings using a range of ingredients and appropriate vessels/utensils.
5. Pupils use testing trays to select a range of salad ingredients, being encouraged to choose some known to them and some which are unusual.
6. Pupils try the different items with their learning partners using as many senses as possible.
7. Pupils choose favoured ingredients to create their own team salad.
8. Pupils select a 'presentation dish' (a small/large plate or small colourful/clear bowl) encouraging them to think about visual perception.
9. Pupils design their salad and decide whether and how to apply the salad dressing (tossed, accompaniment, topping).
10. Salads are presented to the rest of the group.
11. Pupils take turns to test their own and others salads using the tasting notes.
12. Pupils reflect on their salad challenge experience.

*Pupils learn to:*

- use all of their senses to try new and familiar foods.
- create different food flavours, textures, appearances and aromas.
- develop ways of communicating about food in more complex ways (not just like/don't like).
- express and discuss their preferences with regard to food (e.g. how food looks, smells, tastes).



Equipment used for salad and dressing creating and tasting, together with tasting notes to record, 'like', 'unsure', 'don't like' for 'look', 'smell', 'taste' and 'feel' of the different ingredients, salad and dressing combinations.

### Example 2: Pupil-led Research on School Food

Activities included pupil-designed surveys regarding things pupils would like to improve in their dining environment.

In one primary school, alleviating boredom whilst queuing and reducing the noise in the dining area were the two factors that stood out. Pupils were asked for suggestions to reduce these problems and they included:

To make the queue more interesting:

- Older pupils as 'queue busters' who can help monitor the queues and talk to pupils who are waiting.
- Posters along the queue route to be made/changed by pupils from different classes on a rotating basis.
- 'Quiz' questions (food-related/ 'learning' topics) on the walls by the queues.

To reduce noise:

- Table/small group monitors who encouraged 'soft' voices
- Reminders to talk quietly (pupil-designed stand up cards on tables)

### Example 3: Chef-led Healthy Food Activity

Some pupils worked with a local chef who was able to demonstrate different food preparation techniques and salad recipes, also giving the pupils chance to create their own dishes. Many pupils in schools had commented that they preferred to eat fish and chips (commonly served on a Friday) with tomato ketchup but most schools did not provide this item due to salt and sugar restrictions. So the pupils learned how to develop a recipe for tomato



Chef making healthy tomato ketchup



Pupils making and testing their salads



homemade tomato ketchup



'Angel' salad by pupil

ketchup, made from fresh ingredients and without adding salt or sugar. They also designed their own salads thinking about how we use all of our senses to experience food. The pupils added creative names to their salads to make them appealing to peers. There was an opportunity to present the salad created to a panel of 'judges' who offered positive comments on their sensory experiences. Pupils tried each other's dishes and discussed their preferences, highlighting what they liked best about each dish.



Pupil designed Tomato salad with onion, gherkin and crispy bacon



Judges Lee, Justin and Myles tasting pupils' salads



Lee Mangles 'judging' salads

#### Example 4: Small Steps that Make a Difference

Following participation in the Sheffield School Food Project a school business manager decided to assess their priorities for developing food practice. They were particularly concerned about the impact of the UIFSM policy and so prioritized the implementation of a cashless online payment system. This was embedded in advance of the introduction of UIFSM in September. They also got in touch with the University of Sheffield and asked for volunteers to help paint the school dining room to give it a fresh and inviting appearance. Finally, the school decided to change from flight trays to individual plates and bowls as they felt this would enhance the dining experience for pupils. Pupils have reported that they like being able to select their dessert following their main course and keep the two courses separate instead of having everything on a flight tray at once. The small steps described are impacting on food practice in terms of efficiency for school staff, convenience for parents and dining experience for pupils.

Another school changed their salad food practice in light of reflection, following participation in the Sheffield School Food Project. It was noted that pupils collected their meal from the service hatch, as well as their cutlery and cups from a table located just after the hatch before arriving at the salad table. This arrangement meant that many pupils moved away from the queue once cutlery and cups were collected. Repositioning the salad table immediately after the hatch and before the cutlery and cups area has made the salad more visible and within the flow of pupils moving to the different service points on their journey from hatch to table. In addition, this school noticed that the cold school lunches being served did not contain any vegetable or salad option, although fruit was regularly included. Although in theory pupils were allowed to have salad, they had no plates on which to serve themselves salad so in practice they did not really have the opportunity to have salad as part of their meal. The headteacher discussed the issue with the catering staff who now provide pre-packed salad items for pupils to collect along with the rest of their cold school meal. The kitchen already had a machine for prepackaging so no additional equipment was needed. Pupils have reported that they like the colourful packages and it encourages them to eat more vegetables when having a cold school lunch.

#### Examples of Small Steps That Can Make a Difference

1. Try alternatives to fish fingers or battered fish such as baked fish with parsley sauce, baked fish with tartare sauce, grilled fish with lemon and black pepper.
2. Offer half portions of cake with half/full portions of fruit to reduce the navigation of pupil choices which exclude fruit altogether i.e. a cake/sponge/tray bake or bun.
3. Offer soup containing vegetables as a starter (as an alternative to dessert) on some days.
4. Offer soup containing vegetables as an accompaniment instead of salad on some days.
5. Offer pupils having a cold packed school lunch a plate or flight tray and the opportunity to choose salad from the salad trolley, or soup where offered to boost vegetable intake. This applies to both pupils eligible for the UIFSM as well as in older age ranges.
6. Replace deep-fried chips with oven baked chips, baked or roast potatoes on some or all weeks.
7. Link growing, cooking and eating within a whole food, whole school strategy.
8. Think about food across the school day.
9. Think about food practices beyond eating.
10. Think about changing food practices throughout the year and be aware of seasons, holidays and weekends.

#### Engaging Pupils in Self-Evaluating Food Practices in Your School

Pupils are likely to have different ideas from adults about what matters most and how to improve the social and personal benefits of food activities across the school day. Think about using this review as a prompt to start discussion with pupils around food practices in your school. Give them cameras and notepads so pupils can take their own photographs, draw pictures or make their own notes about what they think is done well and where new development might take place. Use pupil feedback to contribute towards developing aspirations for your school around food practices.

## Closing Remarks, Further Support and Resources

This review acknowledges that government policy can sometimes feel distant from daily activities and demands in schools. But food plays a key role in our lives and schools are well positioned to support pupils' food values, customs and practices in ways that will benefit them, not only now, but into later life as well. Here's a reminder of the key findings highlighted in the One-Page Summary:

### Key Findings

1. **Food practices in schools are complex and diverse** both within and across individual school settings. Many elements of excellent practice were observed but it was also found that one weak link in a chain can impact negatively on pupils' experiences.
2. **School food offer, uptake and intake differ significantly** and school lunch uptake alone is insufficient to illuminate pupils' food habits and consumption.
3. **Resources, such as Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM) are a great asset** in the quest to improve children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. However, schools face numerous challenges in transforming resource potential into tangible individual advantage that will achieve long-term change.
4. **Choice plays a key role** in the activities and habits of pupils regarding their food practices. Pupils navigate menus and are selective in what they choose, often leading to imbalanced food consumption. It was found that there are many simple strategies that can help shape and guide pupils' food choices in positive ways.
5. **School communities are often best placed to determine their own priorities** regarding school food, and what will support their pupils most in developing good food practices and, in turn, more flourishing lives.
6. **There are many personal, social, educational and health benefits that accrue from good food practices in schools.**

**The capabilities, opportunities and motivations of pupils to access, and consume, a nutritionally balanced and healthy lunch vary significantly across primary school settings.** Findings from the Sheffield study indicated that it is not only the number of school meals taken that is important, nor simply a matter of providing nutritionally balanced food. There are complex social processes at play that both enhance and diminish the likelihood of pupils having a balanced diet across the school day, at lunch in particular, as well as out of school. The better you understand these processes the more you can do to enhance the enabling factors and reduce the constraining factors. Remember details make a difference.

### The School Food Plan Website

There is lots of information on the specially designed website [www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com) and in particular the following may be of help:

- A free downloadable version of this document, *Creating Tools for Practice: Food and the Self-Evaluating School* provided courtesy of the University of Sheffield (see copyright notice).
- Free downloadable versions of the *School Food Toolbox* and related *School Food Tools*. These can be saved to your school computer system and then completed, shared and stored electronically (see copyright notice).
- The link to the Head Teachers' Checklist is a good starting point for whole school reflection and discussion to get things going. See <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/checklist/>
- The link to food standards guidance which may help you from January 2015 with the implementation of New Food Standards for schools. See <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/School-Food-Standards-Guidance-FINAL-140911-V2C.pdf>
- The link to the 'What Works Well' section of the School Food Plan website for examples of what schools have done around food in schools as well as many more links to other sites. See <http://whatworkswell.schoolfoodplan.com/>. In this section of the School Food Plan Website you can look under headings including, 'the food', 'the lunchtime experience', 'learning about food',

‘making it happen’ and ‘getting everyone involved’ to find examples of good practice. There are also many links to additional tools and resources, such as the UIFSM Toolkit, the TES Food Education Hub and the Guardian Teacher Network. There is a lot of information to get to grips with but the search function is helpful. Once you have had a chance to begin your school self-evaluation, think about sharing your own ‘highlights’ with other schools using the School Food Plan website.

- The Food for Life Partnership link from the SFP site takes you to their ‘what works well’ visit service (part of the government support service) to set up visits to other schools who can provide support. See <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/school-food-plan/increase-your-school-meal-take-up>

### Local Contacts for Sheffield Schools

- The school meals service team at Sheffield City Council can be contacted at [schoolfoodservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:schoolfoodservice@sheffield.gov.uk)
- [www.sheffieldhealthysettings.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldhealthysettings.org.uk) has a wide range of information and resources related to healthy schools. The emphasis is on health but there are educational and social elements to many of the resources. Impacting on children’s knowledge, skills and dispositions around food will contribute towards improving Pupil Capability as described in this review. In addition, using the healthy settings resources to help children think about food practices in different cultures (see for example, the ‘Cutlery Skills and Table Manners Plan’), can help to promote the *Social Quality* dimensions as described in this review. Resources of particular interest in the context of school food practices include the ‘Sheffield Audit Checklist’ under ‘Healthy Schools – General’ and the range of resources around healthy lunchboxes and Eatwell plates under ‘Healthy Eating’.
- Heeley City Farm at [www.heeleyfarm.org.uk](http://www.heeleyfarm.org.uk) can offer support with growing food.
- Whirlow Hall Farm at [www.whirlowhallfarm.org](http://www.whirlowhallfarm.org) is an educational charity that can arrange farm visits for pupils to learn about where food comes from and to support growing food in schools.
- Sheffield on a Plate can give you access to community food networks and the three main higher and further education providers in Sheffield at [www.sheffieldonaplate.com](http://www.sheffieldonaplate.com). The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University can arrange student volunteers to help support school food projects.

### Further National Resources and Support

The government has made funding available to a number of organizations to provide expert advice and support to schools. Key organizations include the Children’s Food Trust, The Lead Association for Catering in Education (LACA), the Food for Life Partnership and Magic Breakfast. Their websites, along with others are listed below:

- The Children’s Food Trust [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk) for help with UIFSM and the SFP.
- Food for Life at [www.foodforlife.org.uk](http://www.foodforlife.org.uk) for support with implementing the SFP.
- [www.magicbreakfast.com](http://www.magicbreakfast.com) for support with setting up and running sustainable breakfast clubs
- [www.laca.org](http://www.laca.org) can offer information on professional training for caterers.
- [www.growingschools.org.uk](http://www.growingschools.org.uk) for help with growing food in schools.
- [www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/Pages/change-for-life.aspx) for help with lifestyle changes.
- [www.schoolfoodmatters.com](http://www.schoolfoodmatters.com) for resources and information on food in schools.
- [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk) for information on list of 14 food allergens targeted by the food labelling regulations for England coming into force from December 2014.
- [www.jamieoliverfoodfoundation.org.uk](http://www.jamieoliverfoodfoundation.org.uk)

### New School Food Standards

Go to [www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/standards/) to download a new food standards poster for your school and a variety of guidance, checklists, photos, menus and recipes that will help you to put the standards into practice in your school.

## Cooking in the New National Curriculum

'As part of their work with food, pupils should be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. Instilling a love of cooking in pupils will also open a door to one of the great expressions of human creativity. Learning how to cook is a crucial life skill that enables pupils to feed themselves and others affordably and well, now and in later life' (DoE, 2014). The table below gives an overview of the curriculum changes in the new National Curriculum, from September 2014 around cooking and nutrition. In addition, a new GCSE in Cooking and Nutrition is under consultation, to be launched in schools in the next academic year. Go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-gcse-in-cooking-and-nutrition-announced> for further details.

### Cooking and Nutrition in the new National Curriculum (2014).

#### 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
- understand seasonality, and know where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed.

#### 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.'

Source: The new national curriculum available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4>.

## Food Allergens

EU regulations and food labeling regulations in England identify a list of 14 specific food allergens (shown in the table below) that will need to be clearly identified and labelled for most food in schools from December 2014. You can find further information at [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk) and also at: <http://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/allergenlabelguidance09.pdf>

14 Allergens Affected by new Food Labelling Regulations in England and EU Regulations on Food	Source: <a href="http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk">www.tradingstandards.gov.uk</a> .
Celery	Cereals Containing Gluten
Crustaceans	Eggs
Fish	Lupin
Milk (including lactose)	Molluscs
Mustard	Nuts
Peanuts	Sesame Seeds
Soybeans	Sulphur Dioxide and Sulphites

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