

HEADTEACHER'S TOP TEN TIPS FOR A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO FOOD

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1. There can be no argument that healthy eating is vital to raising attainment, particularly where pupil premium children are concerned so encouraging, teaching and providing healthy food should be part of every school development plan. How is this achieved?
2. Firstly ensure that you as a school are providing healthy food. If not talk to the food provider and insist on high standards. If they are resistant look for another provider or provide the meals yourself.
3. Provide an environment that you would be prepared to eat in. Too many dinner halls look awful. That also includes the servery. No flight trays and tables that encourage sitting and eating together.
4. Work with the parents on after school clubs. Cooking clubs with parents and children help also to forge greater links but target those parents whose children eat unhealthy packed lunches.
5. From this assign parent food champions and get them to mentor other parents who have children which are ‘reluctant’ eaters.
6. Encourage the children to write articles for the school newsletter about the school dinners. This also supports literacy and being printed gives it a purpose.
7. Encourage teachers to eat with the children and role model eating at the table. Have discussions with the children about food and its benefits.
8. Grow the food on the school grounds encouraging the children to look after it getting as involved as much as possible and then harvest it. They can then eat it or sell it in the school shop.
9. Embed food growing and healthy eating in the curriculum through topic work such as Fairtrade, Organic food and even history topics such as Tudors comparing the food they ate and how they cooked.
10. Allow enough time for children to finish eating their food, paying particular attention to slow eaters

How do we do this?

We have a topic based curriculum that focuses mostly on food. As well as employing teaching assistants we employ a gardener and 2 professional chefs. Every day children will cook and grow this means that numeracy and literacy is taught through growing and cooking with children working with real world dilemmas in real world contexts. Our attainment is increasing exponentially and we have no issues with behaviour as children are confident and engaged. We have many children joining our school, often who have been excluded from other schools, who prosper in Charlton Manor with their attainment rising, which we put down to our kinesthetic approach to learning. Food is an amazing tool for us to deliver almost all the learning objectives of the National Curriculum. Not only that children learn to share food, build friendships, problem solve and our local community become more resilient”

Tim Baker, Headteacher, Charlton Manor Primary London

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