



Case Study: Orleton Primary School – making Food for Life Partnership sustainable

Orleton School in Herefordshire joined Food for Life Partnership in 2008 when they successfully applied to become one of the first six Food for Life Flagship Schools in the West Midlands. Following a visit from the former Food for Life Partnership cooking bus and inspired by how involved both children and local community were, they have continued along with the programme for the last six years.

Making Food for Life sustainable

In order to ensure that they can make the most of their Food for Life activities, the school are keen to make them as sustainable in the long-term as possible. They have come up with some enterprising ways of doing this.

Extra produce from the Reception Class garden has been harvested, weighed, bagged, labelled and priced by pupils and then goes on sale at the front of the school. Children even make the signs to draw the attention of parents and members of the community to what's available. A quick sell out is guaranteed!

An annual plant sale has always generated funds with volunteer staff, parents and children growing vegetable plants for sale in the first week of May. Tomatoes, herbs, beans and squashes of all varieties are always popular.

Eggs from the school chickens, Milly, Molly and Mandy were sold at reception in boxes of four or six and the school had specially printed labels to show that the eggs came from happy school hens!

Proceeds from all the sales go into the schools 'Food for Life' fund, which is used to support other activities such as farm link visits, ingredients for cookery lessons and purchasing seeds and equipment for the vegetable growing. The school aims to continue to extend these activities so their Food for Life work becomes entirely self-funding.

Enterprising education

As well as providing valuable funds, this enterprise activity also provides a practical opportunity for numeracy-based learning for every age group.

Produce from the garden is also used in the school kitchen and eggs for cooking lessons, with children gathering the eggs prior to using them, giving them a true feeling of 'crop to crumble'.

Becoming better citizens

Milly, Molly and Mandy also helped the children to learn valuable lessons about the importance of

good animal welfare. The three ex-battery chickens, sourced through the school's membership of the British Hen Trust, first came to the school short of feathers from their previous environment and during the cold winter months there were some concerns that they would struggle to keep warm.

However, the local Evergreen group soon came to the rescue, knitting special stripy jumpers for them! Staff, volunteers and children made sure the hens only wore them in the right conditions (not when it was wet, or they were roosting) and in time their feathers and combs blossomed and they learned to scratch.

The children were also able to thank the Evergreens for their kind donation at their annual cream tea, which invites members of the group into the school where they are served delicious home-baking by pupils.

Improving children's health

The school kitchen plays an active role in the Food for Life work, providing a range of nutritious, locally sourced meals including a vegetarian option each day. Main course options include Spanish Chicken with rice and vegetables, bacon & courgette pizza and quorn mince tortillas. Organic bread, fresh water and fruit are served with every meal.

The tasty menu is clearly attractive to pupils, with over 60% of children taking up school dinners. Parents are able to pay for meals on line and a discount is offered for families with more than two children attending the school.

Cookery classes take place throughout the school year in the kitchen as an extra-curricular activity. In keeping with their innovative thinking, the school took a flexible approach when they noticed numbers dwindled in the summer term as children preferred to be outside by incorporating an outdoor activities on alternate weeks including nature lessons and gardening, as well as physical activities.

What the school say

Business Manager Rowena Morris said;

"Food for Life has become an integral part of school activities and also helped us strengthen valuable relationships with the local community. The commitment to seeing it continue and the innovative approach both staff and pupils are taking to secure this is a testament to the great results we see from the programme as well as its popularity."

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