



Case study: The Gartree Community School increasing uptake of school meals via student initiatives

For the Gartree Community School, a popular school for 11-16 year olds set in the Lincolnshire Wolds and the Fens, student initiatives have played a major role in achieving their Food for Life Partnership Silver Award status.

The school began a major project to increase uptake and quality of school meals in 2009 by asking all students for suggestions for improvements to the school canteen.

The transformation of the area into a café-style dining room, completed in April 2010, saw a 26% increase in sales of meals. Encouraged by such positive results, the school wished to continue its focus on catering and felt that the Food for Life Partnership award programme would provide them with the ideal framework to build on their existing achievements.

As well as the continued improvement of quality standards, FFLP also gave the school community the opportunity to meet other key aims, such as developing an understanding of where food comes from and how individuals can contribute to a sustainable future.

With pupil voice paramount, a Food for Life student project group was created to achieve criteria set by the award programme. The group enhanced the work connected with the Whole School Food Policy through creating guidance about 'Healthy Packed Lunches' as well as surveying their fellow pupils and coming up with practical solutions where students felt there was scope for improvement.

As a result of engaging with the Food for Life Partnership, the school has formed a Gardening Club. Gardening Club has enabled students to consider which crops to grow, the conditions required, planning a new garden, planting, cropping and maintaining the garden supported by advice from local experts. Visits to the local Garden Centre have provided an opportunity to learn about selecting good plants and purchasing supplies for the garden.

Both clubs have provided extended school activities which include student awareness of healthy foods and application of that knowledge into menu planning.

Visits from the school's food suppliers have helped students gain an understanding of food sourcing and seasonality whilst local Chefs have offered pupils cookery demonstrations, highlighting the importance of using good quality, local ingredients.

Activities have extended well into the community, engaging local volunteers to assist with the school garden, cooking with parents and staff.

The school has identified many benefits for students as a result of our Food for Life activities including a real improvement in their knowledge of cooking, growing, ethics and consumerism.

The FFLP activities have also been highly successful in terms of generating greater community engagement



We have also created a valuable working partnership between our in-house team and caterer Mouchel that ensures that we have both a clear focus on school needs and access to expertise and experience that Mouchel can bring.

As well as enhancing the curriculum, engaging with FFLP has given students skills and experiences which

we believe they will continue to benefit from well beyond their time here at the school.

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