

## Plymouth Council

Since implementing the Catering Mark, Plymouth has seen a 30%+ increase in uptake.



**FUSSY ABOUT FOOD?**  
We are...

We are proud to hold the Soil Association's Gold Catering Mark for our menus which recognises the fresh, local, seasonal and organic ingredients we use to cook 86% of our menu from scratch.

We use

- Locally caught and landed pollock
- Free range eggs (including in our mayonnaise)
- Organic milk (EU subsidised)
- Organic yoghurts
- Organic herbs
- MSC salmon
- Fairtrade apple juice
- Organic wholemeal flour
- Seasonal fresh vegetables and fruit.

For more information about school food in Plymouth please visit our pages at [www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolmeals](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/schoolmeals)

Information on free school meals can also be found by visiting [www.plymouth.gov.uk/freemeals](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/freemeals) or by calling the team on 01752 307410

Details about the standards which apply to all school food can be found at [www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk)

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2012 FINALIST

GOOD USE AWARD

food for life CATERING GOLD

- No overall increase in prices
- 30% + increase in meal up take
- Recognizable sign of good quality

Plymouth Council achieved the Gold Catering Mark in 2012, and are now serving 7,800 school meals to 81 schools across Plymouth every day.

“It was 2006, and we were charged with transforming Plymouth Council’s catering for education service, both in terms of quality and in take-up.” says Brad Pierce, Education Catering Manager. “It was a time when there was a lot of publicity about school food, and the changes needed to happen fast. We had council approval to use existing budgets, and the first step was refurbishing the kitchens.” It was a major undertaking, but by the end of 2011, 15 brand new kitchens had been built with better ventilation, facilities for cooking healthier food, and all deep fat fryers had been removed. “Before the refurb, we had no choice but to transport the food in; we were basically a provider of packaged food that was reheated. We were faced with the challenge of developing staff skills to create tastier, healthier fresh meals from scratch. The Catering Mark was vital to that process.”

Brad came across the Catering Mark at various events where the Soil Association were promoting it to providers of school food. He realised it would be a great framework for the changes he needed to make at Plymouth Council. When talking to suppliers, Brad built the ethos and the principles of the Food for Life approach into his requirements. This allowed the contractors to know exactly what was expected of them. “It allowed us to work with them constructively – making sure they were offering us produce that was fresh, local and seasonal,” Brad says. “That way, right from day one, our suppliers knew what we were trying to achieve and we were all on the same page.”

Brad was convinced that the Food for Life Catering Mark would make a real difference to his business. “We got the Bronze award, but knew we could do better than that, so we pushed ourselves forward for the Silver and the Gold awards. It just works and people recognize that it’s a sign of good quality.”

The Catering Mark has indeed been good for business. “We were able to contain whatever changes there were in costs – it was really just a few pence here or there – and maintain no overall increase in our prices. The suppliers have supported us all the way and offered us alternatives whenever we needed them.” Since implementing the Catering Mark, Brad has seen a 30%+ increase in uptake when compared to three or four years ago.

“The biggest change has been in people’s perceptions,” he says, “for example, we now use locally caught Pollock. At first, our staff were reluctant to cook with it, and didn't believe that the children would want to anything that wasn't square or cooked in batter. We got through that now, and more and more of them understand just how much better the new process is.”

The Herald (Plymouth):

# No horse in our meals, say council and hospital

by **SIAN DAVIES**

Herald Reporter

**THE city council and Derriford Hospital have reassured the public that there is no horse meat in the meals they provide.**

The horse meat contamination scandal started when Irish food pro-

made in the UK by hand.”

A spokesperson for Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust also tried to calm the public's nerves in the wake of information that horse meat was found in beef products in the UK.

They said: “Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust wants to reassure the public that we have sought assurance from our suppliers concerning their beef products.