



### **Cambo First School – making healthy meals a whole school priority in a small rural school**

Set in a rural community, pupils at Silver awarded Cambo First School often have first-hand experience of where their food comes from as many live on farms or have friends who do. The school's location gives them ample space for a school garden and they make the most of this by keeping both chickens and pigs.

However, as a small school with a roll of just 34 pupils, they faced another, very real challenge; making a high quality school provision viable as an independent service.

#### **Making small-scale catering work**

Using the Food for Life Partnership programme as a framework, they factored the research and development of an in-house service into their school improvement plan. Due to the size of the school, there was initial uncertainty about whether bringing their meals service 'in-house' was financially viable.

With the aim of seeing whether a meals service could break even, they developed a business plan to ascertain cost, need and potential threats. The change of service had to be a success to ensure that their meals service wasn't lost overall.

Lead by school staff with the support of parents and governors, they undertook a wide range of research which helped continually shape their plans. This included visiting other large and small schools who operated an independent service, sourcing food providers and visiting food fayres to establish what local, free range and organic produce was available.

In April 2012 they decided that the plan was feasible and worked towards starting the service in September of the same year.

The school now employs its own cook and buys in training services for both the cook and lunch time

supervisor. They have negotiated a range of contracts with providers using the Food for Life Partnership award criteria as a basis.

This ensures they have a range of certified organic, seasonal local and free range items on the menu.

Menu displays and leaflets for pupils show what produce is being used and highlight its origins. Eggs from the school hens and meat from the pigs reared by the school are used in school lunches.

As well as using their own school grown fruit and vegetables, they have developed a swapping system to purchase surplus vegetables from the surrounding community, further enhancing community links.

Their hard work has paid off. Just six months after making the changes to their school meals they received their Food for Life Partnership Silver award and are now swiftly heading towards Gold.

### **Managing waste**

As well as environmental benefits, the FFLP criteria around reducing food waste has become all the more important now the school are operating on a break-even budget. Following discussions involving pupils, staff and parents at the School Nutrition Action Group (SNAG) they have gone about this in a number of ways:

- Pupils were consulted around common items that were wasted and as a result, posters developed around why pupils should try and eat vegetables.
- The value of food has been discussed through project work, for example, rationing in World War II.
- Lunchtime supervisors encourage children to eat vegetables and leave a clean plate, with a reward system for those who do.
- Pupils and parents are consulted on menus and a pupil survey has been completed about veg that children like to eat and grow.

### **Supporting healthy lunches with food education**

The school hasn't relied on their surroundings to ensure that children get a broad education around food. They run a rolling series of visits to a variety of farms which is incorporated into an annual farming topic. Representatives from local businesses have delivered sessions for pupils and parents on healthy eating, the importance of tasting and vegetarian cooking.

Pupils receive 12 hours of cooking education each year and a twice yearly cooking club led by the school cook is operated for parents and the wider community. Parents also provide essential support for gardening activities and the care of the school animals.

Paula Cummings – Head Teacher said:

*“At Cambo we want the best for our children. We want healthy, active and informed students who can make good knowledgeable choices about their life style in the present and the future. Our healthy eating policy encourages all to reflect and build upon the values outlined in the National Curriculum and those in the schools’ mission statement.*

*“We are a school with an ethos that exudes growing and healthy eating. With the stimuli of the Food for Life Partnership our dreams became a reality.”*

Cambo First School

Cambo

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Head Teacher: **Mrs Paula Cummings**

Caterer: **Independent: in-house**