

Characteristic 7

Exploring where food comes from

A characteristic of good practice in primary schools is that pupils demonstrate their understanding of food origins, production and processing. They examine where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed, and consider seasonality, food waste and packaging.

Overview

- Staff have an understanding of food origins, production and processing appropriate to the age/ability of pupils being taught.
- Staff use up-to-date and relevant sources of information to inform their planning and teaching about where food comes from.
- Staff develop Schemes of Work and lessons around food that integrate where food comes from, seasonality, food waste and packaging, demonstrating progression in the development of key concepts and application over time.
- Staff use resources that reflect current UK food production and farming processes, and recognise a range of views exist about how food is produced. If other areas of global food production and/or processing are highlighted, the location should be clearly identified.
- Staff use ingredients that are seasonal and/or local, whenever possible.
- Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to recognise where and how a variety of ingredients are grown, reared, caught and processed and can describe the basic steps in the production and processing of food..
- Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to recognise that a range of ingredients/food is used in different cultures and traditions around the World.
- Staff provide the opportunity for pupils to grow food, such as fruit, vegetables and herbs.



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At the BNF National food and education conference in February 2020, teachers were provided professional updates and information about resources to support food teaching, focusing on healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from.

To show how food commodities could be used as 'hooks', BNF dedicated the primary teachers' session to focusing on cereals (wheat) and dairy (milk and cheese), exploring their production and processing, as well as aspects of their role in the diet and practical use in the classroom.

The teachers:

- engaged with a nutritionist to explore cereals and dairy in the diet;
- listened to presentations from a dairy farmer and a miller, getting a 'real life' account of food production;
- made their own bread rolls and discussed how this could be replicated in a primary school classroom.

The session was well received, and teachers reported feeling inspired and more equipped to fulfil their food curriculum. It demonstrated the importance of bringing food themes together, as well as engaging with experts.

TIPS:

1. Consider using food commodities (e.g. potatoes, fruit and vegetables) as themes for food lessons – explore how they contribute to a healthy varied diet, how they are used in recipes (the food skills used) and their 'farm to fork' journeys.
2. Invite experts, such as growers, nutritionists or chefs, into the classroom to talk to pupils about how food is produced, how it contributes to health or how it is prepared.
3. Explore the 'where food comes from' resources on the Food – *a fact of life* website (which include videos, posters and training events) to help pupils learn more about how their food is produced.

**CASE
STUDY**

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exploring where food comes from

In practice, staff:

- set activities to enable pupils to find out where food comes from, including how food is grown, reared or caught locally and around the world, seasonality and food availability;
- invite a local food producer or person working in the food industry to speak to pupils;
- use food/ingredients produced locally, whenever possible, to create a range of dishes;
- visit a supermarket, local farm shop or farmers market to find out more about ingredients;

- look at the 'farm to fork' process for a range of food using a variety of resources, such as web searches, videos, magazines/books and written tasks.

Other examples:



Seasonality

In practice, staff:

- use seasonal ingredients in practical food preparation and cooking lessons, whenever possible;
- discuss the advantages of using food in season, but also how choosing only seasonal food might impact on food choice and use.

Other examples:



Quality assurance

In practice, staff:

- explore with pupils the different quality assurance standards and/or marks used on food, such as Red Tractor, LEAF marque and British Lion Eggs;
- collect a variety of example logos that are used in food assurance schemes. Investigate which logos pupils are familiar with and the role they play in consumer choice.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Food supply

In practice, staff:

- offer activities that compare a range of ingredients and where they have come from, e.g. varieties of cheese, types of bread;
- discuss with pupils aspects of food sustainability, such as reducing food waste, composting;
- reduce food waste through preparation and cooking, e.g. use small quantities of ingredients, scrub rather than peel vegetables, use the whole herb rather than the just the leaves;

- use ingredients past their 'best-before date' (but not past their 'use-by date'), e.g. make soup with vegetables which have become soft;
- challenge pupils to give examples of how to use leftovers to make another dish, e.g. leftover chicken as a pizza topping/curry, brown bananas to make a banana loaf.

Other examples:



World ingredients

In practice, staff:

- provide the opportunity for pupils to explore a range of food from different cultures, explore their origin and use in dishes;
- source ingredients that pupils may not be familiar with and prepare, cook and taste them, e.g. rambutan, longan, mangosteen;
- provide a range of the same type of food from around the world for pupils to taste and research, e.g. different types of bread such as pitta, baguette, focaccia, naan, pretzel, challah;

- ask pupils to share with the class an ingredient or food typical to a country or culture.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor, Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team

- Set up growing activities in school. This could be small scale such as an herb garden, using 'grow bags' for tomatoes or a deep bin for potatoes. If facilities allow, create a school garden or allotment and grow produce for use in the classroom.
- Establish routines for recycling throughout the school.
- Encourage the use of seasonal and local food/ingredients in school food served throughout the school day.
- Work with the school catering team to have a focus on particular dishes from around the world.
- Hold a school farmers' market (these are real farmers markets held in school halls, community halls or playgrounds that give the local community the opportunity to browse and purchase local produce).

Curriculum lead/co-coordinator

- Organise tasting events to get pupils trying different food.

- Invite a speaker to talk to pupils about specific food/produce such as cheese or fish and how it is sourced/made.
- Run a competition for pupils/staff/parents focusing on local, seasonal ingredients. Showcase the entries.

Class teacher

- Organise a class visit to a local farm.
- Discuss the origins of fruit and vegetables that pupils may have eaten at break or snack time.
- Discuss the production and processing of milk using the free, or subsidised, milk provided for pupils across the UK as a focus.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this characteristic can be found on page 33.