

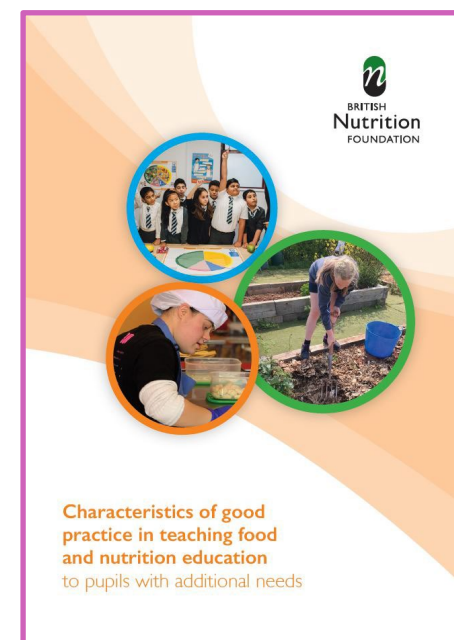


# Supporting pupils with additional needs

Frances Meek  
Education Services Manager  
British Nutrition Foundation

# Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education to pupils with additional needs

- **Defines the key characteristics of good practice** that are specific to teaching food and nutrition to pupils with additional needs.
- **Exemplifies these characteristics** of good practice in UK schools, both special and mainstream.



## [Guide and supporting resources](#)

The British Nutrition Foundation would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the [Savoy Educational Trust](#) for the production of this Guide.

# The Characteristics - overview


- The guide sets out **12 key characteristics**, with exemplification, but it is acknowledged that other characteristics and practice exists.
- The guide is **not an exhaustive or static list** to be followed rigorously. It is a **starting point** to support reflection of current practice in order to further develop teaching and learning.
- **Considerations for teaching pupils with additional needs are also included** for each key characteristic.
- **Four sections per characteristic:** *Overview*, *Case study*, *Putting the characteristic into practice*, and *Exemplary practice*.

## Characteristic 12 Making choices

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils can highlight different food preferences and the reasons for food and drink choices.

### Overview

- Staff are aware of the factors that affect food and drink choice.
- Staff are aware of allergies, intolerances and food sensitivities of different pupils.
- Staff consider and apply factors affecting food and drink choice when making decisions for themselves and pupils.
- Staff develop Schemes of Work and lessons that integrate factors affecting food and drink choice and demonstrate progression.
- Staff develop and/or select resources and ingredients that support pupils to make informed choices, exploring a range of factors.
- Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to make choices, apply and explain their knowledge through planning, verbal/written tasks and food activities, depending on individual pupil needs.



**Debbie Jenkins**  
Ysgol Bryn Derw  
ASD Special School  
Newport, Wales

Pupils with autism spectrum disorder commonly have a limited food selection or strong food dislikes. They may be sensitive to the taste, smell, colour and texture of foods and may limit or totally avoid some foods and even whole food groups. This is a worry for parents/careers, particularly in relation to a balanced healthy diet. I have worked with a number of pupils with very restricted diets, in order to help them make healthier choices.

For example, to encourage one pupil to eat more than spaghetti hoops at lunchtime, we began introducing a new food from the menu each day, such as a potato, or piece of vegetable. We gave him a tiny piece to initially try, and then built up to a bite, eventually building up to eating a very small amount. We then introduced different foods in the same way – over time (a few months), he was then able to eat a selection of foods and used symbol cards to choose what he wanted to have each day. He now eats a school meal every day choosing his own food using symbols, including how many pieces he eats – his favourite is broccoli!

Being able to make choices includes more than just a balanced diet – it impacts on family life too. It means that families can eat a meal together either around the kitchen table or in a restaurant.

**DEBBIE'S TIPS**

1. Use symbols and objects of reference to help pupils make choices for themselves.
2. Take time to build up a pupil's tolerance and acceptance of new foods – it can be a very slow process.
3. Work with parents and carers to continue familiarisation of different foods at home.



**CASE STUDY**

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PRACTICE IN TEACHING FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION TO PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

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# How can the guide be used?

The guide could be used in a variety of ways, such as:

- ensuring that the **teaching of food and nutrition is pupil-centred** and appropriate for a **pupil's own learning journey**;
- developing pupils' **skills for independent living** and the **world of work**, especially within catering and hospitality;
- **showcasing good practice** through defined characteristics;
- encouraging the consideration of other characteristics of good practice, leading to further discussion and implementation;
- **promoting lifelong personal and professional development**, helping individuals to audit their knowledge and skill set;
- developing the **management of food and nutrition teaching**;
- acknowledging the role of the teacher in the **whole school approach** to health and wellbeing.

## Characteristic 4 Teaching the curriculum

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that food teaching should reflect the curriculum, where appropriate, and individual needs of pupils, with due regard to progression based on a pupil's individual learning journey. Consideration should also be given to other reputable guidance, e.g. Core competences for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years: A framework of skills and knowledge around food, diet and physical activity, and specialist guidance documents across the UK.

### Overview

- Staff develop a curriculum that builds food skills applicable to everyday life, including independent living and work, and not in isolation.
- Staff address the needs of the pupil, whilst considering learning intent and measurable outcomes.
- Staff consider individual pupil learning journeys when developing Schemes of Work, lesson plans and food activities, accounting for possible gaps in curriculum knowledge.
- Staff develop Schemes of Work and lesson plans that meet curriculum requirements for food education and, where appropriate, follow other guidance, e.g. Core competences for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years: A framework of skills and knowledge around food, diet and physical activity, and show pupil-centred progression in learning outcomes over time.
- Staff consider pupils' allergies, intolerances, food sensitivities and behaviour around food when planning learning activities.
- Staff select and adapt teaching resources, equipment and ingredients to support and engage pupils.
- Staff teach lessons in food and nutrition via dedicated 'food' curriculum subjects and also within other curriculum areas to enrich pupils' food experiences and help provide context, e.g. English, science and mathematics, plus thematic learning and one-to-one support.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to complete accredited courses and/or achieve qualifications in 'food' to enable them to reach their potential.
- Staff ensure that good practice and healthy principles underpin all curriculum areas, such as sensory and sensory play key skills and understanding, work skills and independence, and approaches to behaviour management.
- Staff build risk assessment into planning practical food lessons and activities, ensuring it is specific to the environment and individual pupil's needs.
- Staff know what success looks like for individual pupils in food lessons and activities, and set clear learning intentions, which are shared with pupils.
- Staff are aware of the budget for food lessons and activities and plan for equipment and ingredient provision accordingly.
- Staff continuously evaluate teaching and learning in food lessons/activities and revise plans as necessary to meet pupil needs, ensure progression and take into account pupil voice.



Rosalie Forde  
Three Ways School  
Bath, England



At Three Ways School our curriculum structure has three broad levels: 'Pre-formal' (PFLD), 'Semi-formal' (SLD) and 'Formal' (FLD). Each level covers skills, knowledge and understanding across a range of areas of learning. These levels are not defined by age, but by need and achievement, allowing pupils to move flexibly between levels at any point. This is delivered through a rotating six-year thematic cycle. Our approach ensures that pupils have an enrichment of skills, but lessons are not repeated for those who do not have a linear learning journey. We aim to secure outstanding outcomes to develop their academic achievement, independence, engagement, life skills and social development as they transition through school and move towards adulthood, independence, and the world of work.

I focus on creating food experiences, activities and lessons that are relevant, interesting and challenging for their learning needs, constantly reflecting and assessing to identify opportunities for skill progression.

\* See the Introduction (page 2) for information about PFLD, SLD and FLD.

#### ROSALIE'S TIPS

1. It is okay to create lessons around pupils' hobbies and interests if it engages and achieves the objectives set.
2. Repetition is key to reinforcing good food habits and making life and living skills second nature.
3. Make it fun! Humour activates the brain's dopamine reward system, engaging goal-oriented motivation and long-term memory.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PRACTICE IN TEACHING FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION TO PUPILS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

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# The Characteristics of good practice

How can **you** use this guide in practice?

- Governors, head teachers and senior leadership teams – ensure provision is inclusive, pupil and family-centred, and appropriately funded.
- Trainee and newly qualified teachers/teaching assistants – determine your future practice.
- More experienced teachers/teaching assistants – check and reflect on your current practice and identify future actions.
- Teacher training providers – design programmes, set assignments, use as a framework for classroom observations or trainee assessment.

## Characteristic 12

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# Support for your professional development


## Reflection documents

- Help develop reflective practice.
- Ideal for staff at all career stages.
- Provide an opportunity to reflect on personal practice and identify future actions.

There are also [resources](#) to support needs analysis and planning your own professional journey based on the *Teaching food in [primary/secondary](#) schools: A framework of knowledge and skills*.

[Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education to pupils with additional needs](#) – free online training course!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_
Date: \_\_\_\_\_



### Developing skills for work - reflection

A characteristic when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils acquire, develop, and secure skills and knowledge from a range of experiences, to enable them to seek and maintain meaningful employment.

Putting the characteristic into practice	In practice, staff:	Personal reflection	My actions
<b>Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlight different employment opportunities in 'food', e.g. catering and hospitality, bakers, fishmongers, green grocers, farming, manufacturing (small and large scale);</li> <li>plan a range of activities that develop skills for work;</li> <li>enable pupils to recognise and become familiar with equipment used in the workplace;</li> <li>organise visits, trips and experiences to broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work;</li> <li>engage with those that can help broaden pupils' employment opportunities, e.g. local charities and hospitality organisations;</li> <li>provide opportunities for pupils to study for accredited courses or qualifications to support future employability.</li> </ul>		
<b>Breaking down barriers and building confidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>build relationships with employers and community groups;</li> <li>enable pupils to develop confidence around work experience in stages, e.g. starting with observational visits, leading to supported work experience, leading to independent work experience;</li> <li>provide opportunities for pupils to engage with role models in the workplace, either face-to-face or virtually;</li> <li>enable pupils to learn how to dress appropriately for work.</li> </ul>		
<b>Develop skills for working with food and drink</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide opportunities for pupils to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise and use kitchen equipment.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

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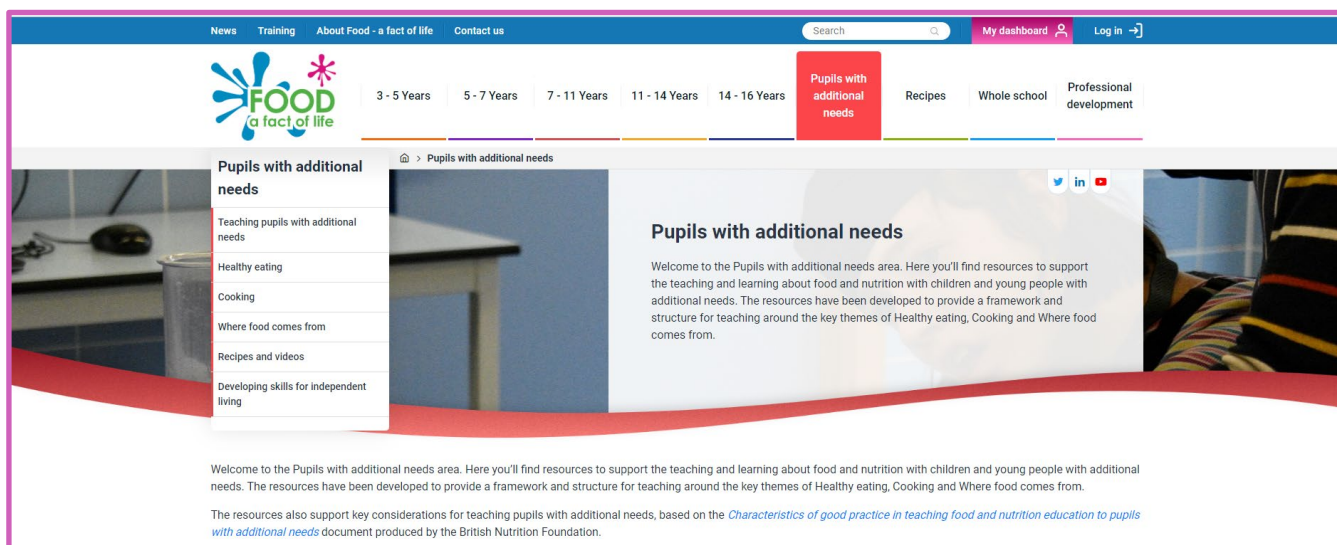
## [Reflection documents](#)

# Sources of support and further information

Three pages of websites and useful information/ documents can be found at the end of the [\*Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition to pupils with additional needs\*](#) guide.

Further sources of information and support		
<p><b>Characteristic 1: Developing professional competence</b></p> <p>Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in primary schools (SNF 2022)</p> <p>Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in secondary schools (SNF 2019)</p> <p>Education Endowment Foundation - Making the best use of teaching assistants</p> <p>Education Scotland (Inspection)</p> <p>Edyn (Wales)</p> <p>Food - a fact of life reflection, review and planning tool</p> <p>Food teaching in schools: a framework of knowledge and skills (79 EEF 2015) (primary)</p> <p>Food teaching in schools: a framework of knowledge and skills (79 EEF 2015) (secondary)</p> <p>General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland</p> <p>Office for Standards in Education (England)</p> <p>Establishing a whole school food policy (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Food - a fact of life whole school approach</p> <p>Food for life - transforming food culture</p> <p>Free breakfast in primary schools (Wales)</p> <p>Free food and drink in Wales</p> <p>Free school meals (England)</p>	<p>Free school meals (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Free school meals (Scotland)</p> <p>Free school meals (Wales)</p> <p>Grege Foundation breakfast club</p> <p>Health and wellbeing in schools (Scotland)</p> <p>Healthier breakfast clubs (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Healthy Schools Scotland</p> <p>Healthy schools rating scheme (England)</p> <p>Kellogg Breakfast Club Network</p> <p>Magic Breakfast (breakfast clubs in England and Scotland)</p> <p>School food nutrition standards (England)</p> <p>School food nutrition standards (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>School food nutrition standards (Scotland)</p> <p>School food nutrition standards (Wales)</p> <p>School food standards: resources for schools (England)</p> <p>School Milk Scheme (England)</p> <p>School Milk Scheme (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>School Milk Scheme (Scotland)</p> <p>School Milk Scheme (Wales)</p> <p>Walsh Network of Healthy School Schemes</p>	<p>Down's Syndrome Association</p> <p>Disabled children and the Equality Act 2010 Early Years</p> <p>Disability - education rights</p> <p>Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010</p> <p>Education Endowment Foundation - Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools - five recommendations</p> <p>Education, health and care plans information (England)</p> <p>Education Authority (Northern Ireland) - Special Educational Needs (SEN)</p> <p>Information for parents of children with SEND from the UK government</p> <p>Manicap</p> <p>Mind</p> <p>National Association for Special Educational Needs (nasen)</p> <p>National Autistic Society</p> <p>National Deaf Children's Society</p> <p>Pre-Key Stage Standards 2020/21 onwards (England)</p> <p>Royal Society for Blind Children</p> <p>SEN and disability early years tool kit</p> <p>SEN Magazine</p> <p>Sense</p> <p>Social and emotional behavioural needs - Education Scotland</p> <p>Special Educational Needs (Wales)</p> <p>Special educational needs and disabilities code of practice 0-25 years (England)</p> <p>Special educational needs code of practice (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Special educational needs code of practice (Wales)</p> <p>The Equality Act 2010 and schools</p>
<p><b>Characteristic 2: Taking a whole school approach</b></p> <p>British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week</p> <p>Establishing a whole school food policy (Northern Ireland)</p> <p>Food - a fact of life whole school approach</p> <p>Food for life - transforming food culture</p> <p>Free breakfast in primary schools (Wales)</p> <p>Free food and drink in Wales</p> <p>Free school meals (England)</p>	<p><b>Characteristic 3: Knowing your pupils</b></p> <p>Additional Support for Learning statutory guidance 2017 (Scotland)</p> <p>ADHD Foundation</p> <p>Autism/Restrictive Food Intake disorder (ATRI)</p> <p>British Dyslexia Association</p> <p>Council for disabled children</p>	

# New dedicated area on *Food – a fact of life*



## Areas



Teaching pupils with additional needs



Healthy eating



Cooking



Where food comes from



Recipes and videos



Developing skills for independent living

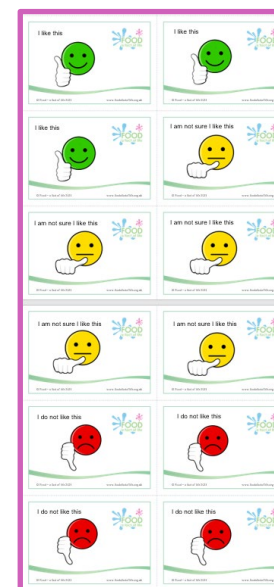
## Pupils with additional needs



# Food – a fact of life resources

The resources for pupils with additional needs cover nine key areas:

- Food and drink for life
  - Variety (eat well)
  - Being active
  - Choice, preference and occasions
  - Cooking (including food hygiene and safety)
  - Serving and sharing
  - Food origins
  - Food is produced and processed
  - Shopping
  - Plus Peer-to-peer recipe videos and adapted recipes
- Developing skills for independent living\*



### Class activity chart

Add a sticker each time the class is active


### Washing up - answers

1		Scrape left over food into the bin.
2		Stack items by the side of the sink.
3		Fill the sink with warm water and washing up liquid

### 3. Get the ingredients ready

Ingredients	
1	Butter or margarine to spread
2	Eggs
3	Black pepper
4	1 slice of wholemeal bread
5	1 slice of wholemeal bread



**Equipment cards:**  
These cards contain images of equipment, some labels and descriptions of the equipment. Some cards can be cut out and pasted. The food cards can be removed to make the game easier if required.

**Chopping board**

**Peeler**

**Mixing bowl**

**Kitchen scales**

**For measuring the weight of ingredients like flour.**

**Where in the fridge?**

Top/middle shelf

Bottom shelf

Salad drawer

**Sharp knives**

**Practical food skills**

Weigh

Measure

Blitz, puree and blend

Core

Crush

**2. Personal preferences**

I like it ...

**Tasting words**

First: Draw the food you have tasted in the box.

Then: How does the food look, smell, taste and feel like? Here are some words to help.

Bumpy	Colourful	Chewy
Soft	Smooth	Creamy
Hard	Strong	Crunchy

**Shopping vocabulary**

Aisle

Price

Receipt

Nutrition label

**Planning what to eat – now, next, then**

Now

Next

Then

**Planning what to eat**

## Ingredients

Ingredients can be used



## Potatoes



## Chicken



## Milk



## Lamb mince



## Tomatoes



All resources are fully editable

Ingredients

1

Butter or reduced fat spread

2

2 large eggs

3

4

5



Equipment

1 Bowl

2 Fork

3 Measuring spoon

4 Small non-stick

5 Wooden spoon

6 Toaster

7 Plate

8 Butter knife

Method

1 Crack the eggs into the bowl and season with black pepper.

2 Add 1 tablespoon of milk to the eggs and mix with the fork.

3 Melt the butter or spread in the frying pan over a low heat.

4 Once the butter or spread is melted, add the egg mixture to the frying pan.

## Scrambled eggs on toast - hob



**Ingredients**

Butter or reduced fat spread
2 large eggs
Freshly ground black pepper (optional)
1 x 15ml (tablespoon) semi skimmed milk
2 slices wholemeal bread
Butter or reduced fat spread

**Equipment**

Mixing bowl
Measuring spoon
Fork
Small non-stick
Wooden spoon
Toaster
Serving plate
Butter knife

**Method - on the hob**

**Preparing the eggs**

- Crack the eggs into the bowl and season with black pepper.
- Add 1 tablespoon of milk (15ml) to the eggs and mix together with the fork.

**Cooking the eggs**

- Melt the butter or spread in the small non-stick saucepan or frying pan over a low heat.
- Once the butter or spread is melted, add the egg mixture to the saucepan.
- Stirring constantly with the wooden spoon, cook slowly until the eggs are firm.

**Making the toast**

- Put the bread in the toaster and toast.
- Once toasted put the toast in the middle of the plate and spread with the butter or spread.

**Serving the eggs**

- Spoon the scrambled eggs on top of the buttered toast.
- Season with a little black pepper.

**Serving suggestion:**  
Serve with reduced sugar baked beans or sliced tomatoes.

**Food skills**

- Measure
- Combine and mix
- Melt and simmer
- Toast
- Spread

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MULTI-YR



## Scrambled egg on toast - on the hob

A short video which demonstrates how to make scrambled egg on toast on the hob.

Play ▶

MULTI-YR

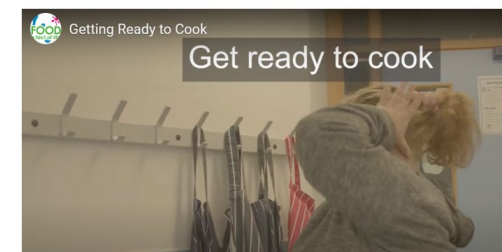


## Scrambled egg on toast - in the microwave

A short video which demonstrates how to make scrambled egg on toast using a microwave.

Play ▶

## 1. Get ready to cook



Click on the image to watch the video.

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# Developing skills for independent living

- [Planning what to cook](#)
- [Going shopping](#)
- [Cooking](#)
- [Eating and sharing](#)

## What does this social story cover?

1. Cooking uses a range of food skills

## 9. Wash and tidy up

### Cooking for too long



Food can burn



Wipe the surfaces



# Supporting pupils with additional needs



For further information, go to:

[www.foodafactoflife.org.uk](http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk)

Contact: [f.meek@nutrition.org.uk](mailto:f.meek@nutrition.org.uk) or [education@nutrition.org.uk](mailto:education@nutrition.org.uk)