

Characteristic 6

Developing food skills

A characteristic of good practice in primary schools is that pupils continually develop and build upon their food skills so they can prepare, cook and serve a range of dishes hygienically and safely.

Overview

- Staff expose pupils to a range of food skills and cooking methods, using a variety of ingredients and a range of equipment.
- Staff integrate food skills into Schemes of Work and lessons, demonstrating progression in the development of practical skills, precision/accuracy, use of equipment and recipe complexity over time.
- Staff ensure teaching resources, recipes, ingredients and equipment used are ability appropriate, encourage an awareness and understanding of safe practices, and promote current healthy eating advice.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to apply, demonstrate and justify their food skill competency through food preparation activities.
- Staff undertake assessment that reflect stated learning intent and provide constructive feedback to pupils.



Megan Johnston

Alexandra
Parade Primary
Scotland



I credit a lot of my own food skills to my upbringing with my family. My mother and Grandmothers were great cooks. By age seven, I was reading recipes and making pancake breakfasts for my family and this has grown into a love of cooking ever since. This life experience has allowed me to transfer my own practical skills into the classroom. Using the Experiences and Outcomes from the Curriculum for Excellence and embedding the skills into the learning anywhere I can, I have found that the children I work with are able to find their own passion for food and cooking. Through sharing these cooking experiences and working together to achieve a goal allows for a nurturing environment in the class and a positive attitude toward healthy eating and food. Across the school, there are rich learning experiences available to all children involving food and food handling skills. This lifelong learning gives children a greater confidence in themselves, grows their ability to problem solve, work cooperatively and value the process it takes to create something that everyone can enjoy.

MEGAN'S TIPS

1. Start with food skills you are comfortable with and build up from there. There are many resources out there that will help you better your own skills and knowledge.
2. Plan, Prepare, Practice. Plan out appropriate lessons which involve different food skills you can manage in your own class. Prepare and think of timing, ingredients, how many children you can work with at a time and space and equipment you might need. Practice, try recipes out before you do them in class or even just the one skill you are focusing on.
3. Everything is a teaching moment when it comes to cooking and working with food. Sometimes things fall through and you need to be creative. I didn't have yeast for a bread recipe but was able to adapt and make flatbreads instead. If you do it all with a smile, it will show your students that making mistakes while cooking is normal and all part of the learning process and experience.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning

In practice, staff:

- review food skills previously taught to pupils at school or home;
- map food skills in Schemes of Work;
- develop practical activities that are age/ability appropriate;
- build upon previous experiences, skills learned and pupil preference/feedback;
- focus on food skill learning intent, not recipe outcome;

- ensure planning reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of pupils and local environment.

Other examples:



Practical food work

In practice, staff:

- plan appropriate practical activities to allow pupils to develop their food skills;
- ensure recipes progress food skill development, are predominantly savoury and promote current healthy eating advice;
- encourage pupils to explore and evaluate ingredients using their senses, e.g. smell, taste;

- expose pupils to recipes and ingredients from different traditions and countries.

Other examples:



Teaching skills

In practice, staff:

- are confident in teaching, demonstrating and using a wide range of food skills;
- staff practice food skills before teaching pupils;
- staff develop their own food skills (if required) through training by external providers or working with more experienced food teachers, the catering team or professional chefs;
- ensure support staff are briefed fully before practical lessons regarding hygiene and safety expectation and the way food skills should be demonstrated and carried out;

- expose pupils to new experiences, ingredients and/or skills, e.g. through working with external experts;

- encourage pupils to support their peers in class.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor, Head teacher, Senior Leadership Team

- Systems are in place for staff to share pupil progress across year groups to ensure pupils' food skills progression as they move through the school.
- Ring fence, and make staff aware of, the budget for ingredients/equipment.
- Ensure appropriate facilities for food lessons.
- Enable staff to develop their own food skills, e.g. through undertaking practical skills courses, arranging for appropriate visitors to provide food preparation demonstrations.

Curriculum lead/co-coordinator

- Create links with local supermarkets and food producers. Provide opportunities for pupils to visit the shop/producer or for visitors to come into school.
- Invite a local chef to give a demonstration to pupils.
- Look out for, and enter, national competitions and local events to showcase pupils' work and raise the profile in school.

- Run food skills enhancement sessions at lunchtime or after school to encourage pupils, and staff, to further develop their food skills.

Class teacher

- Allow pupils to prepare and cook a range of different dishes in food lessons.
- Seek out upskilling courses, videos and webinars to enhance professional development.
- Plan a school visit to experience using new ingredients and learning new skills.

Other examples:



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