

Characteristic 3

Knowing your pupils

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that staff fully understand and plan for an individual pupil's learning and teaching needs. They develop and use the most appropriate resources and/or equipment to facilitate the desired learning intent for pupils' personal learning journeys, enabling them to achieve to the best of their capability, maximising opportunities for life and work.

Overview

- Staff understand the different learning, physical, medical and sensory needs of the pupils in their care and are aware of individual care plans.
- Staff receive continuing professional development on supporting pupils with different learning needs for their professional practice, classroom application and direct engagement with pupils.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills for independent living and work.
- Staff use food as a context for pupils to extend gross and fine motor skills, such as using equipment to make food and drink.
- Staff are aware of pupils' allergies, intolerances, food sensitivities and behaviours around food when planning lessons/activities.
- Staff plan lessons that support pupils' food and nutrition learning needs, based on the individual pupil's personal capability.
- Staff develop, use and adapt resources that deliver the planned learning and facilitate learning intent for pupils' needs.
- Staff use specialist equipment/utensils to enable pupils to participate in learning activities. In some cases, other adults will support pupils on a one-to-one level to ensure participation in learning where equipment/utensils cannot be used.
- Staff support parents/carers to make better choices and are aware of the opportunities available in the wider community.
- Staff keep up-to-date records of pupil development over time to evidence incremental changes, however small, to assess future learning needs.
- Staff work with colleagues within school to ensure that pupils are given the required support during practical food activities, e.g. one-to-one, teaching assistants working with small groups, nursery nurses.



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As teachers, one of our most important roles is to know each of the pupils in our care. Part of this is knowing which pupils have an individual education plan (IEP)* which identifies the pupil's needs, sets targets and highlights specialist involvement, e.g. physiotherapists.

As a food and nutrition teacher, it is important for me to set subject specific targets based on a pupil's needs, identified by the IEP, and implement strategies or make adjustments to ensure inclusion in lessons. For example, this could mean lowering workbenches for a pupil that uses a wheelchair or purchasing adapted equipment, such as knives with angled handles. It could also include me wearing a receiver during lessons to ensure that a pupil with cochlear implants can hear above the noise of the class and arranging the seating plan so that the pupil sits at the front.

Knowing my pupils means that I can plan tailored lessons to suit each individual

and adapt them accordingly no matter what the topic, enabling my pupils to achieve their full potential and maximise their opportunities.

* Known as an education, health and care plan in England, coordinated support plan in Scotland and individual health care plan in Wales.

LAURA'S TIPS

1. Be creative when planning lessons and adapting resources to meet the needs of the pupils in your care.
2. Openly engage with parents/carers and specialists to ensure you have the most up-to-date information about how to meet the individual needs of your pupils effectively.
3. Explore food as an opportunity for pupil growth, including the development of fine, gross and sensory skills, providing social experiences and having fun!

Putting the characteristic into practice

Knowing pupils' needs

In practice, staff:

- take the time to familiarise themselves with the individual care plans for pupils in their classes;
- work with outside agencies and healthcare providers to fully understand the support available for pupils in the classroom and beyond.

Other examples:



Planning

In practice, staff:

- plan food lessons and activities that are pupil-centred and:
 - meet the individual needs of pupils and take into account allergies, intolerances and food sensitivities;
 - are sensitive to the needs of pupils who are tube-fed or are on a restricted diet, enabling an inclusive food experience for them wherever possible;
 - use food as a context to develop pupils' physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing;

- develop literacy and numeracy skills using real-life examples;
- develop skills for independent living;
- develop skills for meaningful employment;
- consider local issues and family circumstances.

Other examples:



Working with others

In practice, staff:

- work with and support parents/carers to ensure consistent messages around food and nutrition;
- liaise with speech and language, occupational health and play therapy teams and others that work with individual pupils one-to-one or on a daily/longer term basis to support pupils' individual needs around food and drink.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

The whole child or young person

In practice, staff:

- recognise that food and drink is part of life, and support pupils to learn to feed themselves well and keep healthy.

Other examples:



Avoiding stereotypes and breaking down barriers

In practice, staff:

- do not 'label' pupils and understand that they may have complex needs;
- investigate opportunities for pupils to broaden their experiences around food and drink outside of school/home.

Other examples:



Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Ensure individual pupils' care plans are up to date and available to those that need them to design and deliver food lessons/activities.
- Run continuing professional development for staff to develop understanding about supporting pupils with additional needs.
- Ensure that sufficient budget is made available for resources and equipment for food lessons and activities, including trips and visits.

- Consider local issues and family circumstances when planning food lessons and activities.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Support colleagues in developing food lessons/activities that are pupil-centred and that meet the needs of the curriculum and skills for living and work, where appropriate.
- Provide resources and run activities for parents/carers to engage with healthy eating messages and build confidence and food skills.

Classroom teacher/teaching assistant

- Engender a two-way relationship with parents/carers to ensure pupils' needs are met and that approaches to food and nutrition are consistent at school and home.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop social skills, e.g. host a tea party for other pupils or parents/carers, make a hot/cold drink or a snack for another pupil or staff member and serve it to them, visit a local café and encourage interaction with the staff.



Other examples:

A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 73