

Characteristic 10

Exploring where food comes from

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils learn about where their food comes from. They explore how food is grown, reared, caught and processed, as well as 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 that a range of views exist about how food should be produced.
- 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 countries, 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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We wanted to get as many pupils as possible regularly involved in growing food activities in school so they could explore where their ingredients come from.

We already had small-scale herb pots around school, some old fruit trees and space set aside for growing at school, but we wanted to do more - a pupil 'Growing Food Group', a huge new food garden and new orchards for growing food for teaching. We filled six massive, raised beds with different vegetables where the long jump and shot put once were; we dug up an unused athletics field for a new orchard and surrounded everything with an array of different new fruit bushes.

Integral to the sustainable success was linking it all to a whole school approach with the reduction of food waste through composting and collection of school roof rainwater for irrigation.

Now pupils can demonstrate their understanding of food origins by planting, cultivating, and harvesting seasonal foods throughout the school year and use the ingredients grown on school grounds to create a range of dishes in the classroom.

TIPS

1. Begin with a plan for a whole year of planting, growing and harvesting starting with what and when you might harvest to fit in with the school calendar.
2. Don't be afraid to take risks with ingredients from around the world you might grow that your pupils may not be familiar with and then get them to prepare, cook and taste them, e.g. Pink New Zealand Yam.
3. Try and get pupils into the garden for the start of a practical food activity, it is an enormously valuable lesson in food provenance.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exploring where food is from

In practice, staff:

- set activities to enable pupils to find out where food comes from, including how food is grown, reared or caught;
- 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, where appropriate;
- invite a local producer into school to give pupils the opportunity to see and use ingredients that they are less familiar with and to learn about their provenance;
- use food/ingredients produced locally, whenever possible, to create a range of dishes;
- adapt recipes with what is available at the time;
- offer activities that compare a range of ingredients and where they come from, e.g. varieties of cheese, types of bread;



Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

Make learning experiential:

- organise trips to corner stores, specialist stores, supermarkets and markets to familiarise pupils with the different places that food can be bought;
- allow pupils to compile a shopping list and use money to buy ingredients to make a dish;
- make butter in a jar to demonstrate that butter is made from milk and also enable pupils to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Add 150ml double cream to a clean screw-top jar and shake vigorously until the curds and whey separate. Use the butter to make a topping for a savoury crumble or the butter and whey to make scones;
- grow fruit and vegetables (from herbs on a windowsill to a vegetable plot or fruit orchard);
- label growing plants with symbols or pictures to show their name;
- visit a farm to see the animals and/or crops, or invite a farmer into school;
- forage for food, such as blackberries or fallen apples;
- investigate where ingredients in a recipe originate, e.g. cottage pie, pizza;
- use 'farm to fork' images to create food chains, showing where foods originate;
- enable pupils to create their own pictures of food chains using fruit, vegetables or herbs grown in school;

- send seeds home for pupils to grow herbs with their parents/carers – encourage pupils to take photographs of the different stages of planting, growing, cutting and using;

- demonstrate how to use leftovers to make another dish, e.g. leftover chicken as a pizza topping or base to a curry, brown bananas to make a banana loaf.

Explain date marks on food labels to pupils and use ingredients past their 'best-before date' (but not past their 'use-by date') to show how to reduce food waste, e.g. make soup with vegetables which have become soft.

Plan a practical activity that enables pupils to recognise that food can be bought in different ways, e.g. fresh corn on the cob, canned sweetcorn and frozen sweetcorn; make two tomato sauces, one with fresh tomatoes and one with canned tomatoes; make two stir-fries, one with a bag of pre-prepared stir-fry vegetables and one with a bag of frozen stir-fry vegetables.

Organise a trip to a farm or farmers' market to develop pupils' recognition between knowledge and skills learnt at school and the wider world.

Enable pupils to spend time volunteering or undertaking work experience at a community garden or farm.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Seasonality

In practice, staff:

- incorporate the seasonality of food into lesson planning, e.g. tasting and cooking activities;
- use local and/or seasonal ingredients or food grown at school in practical food preparation and cooking lessons;
- provide seasonal ingredients for pupils' snack time or independent living activities;

- discuss with pupils the advantages and disadvantages of using only food in season from the UK.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use seasonal food to teach about the different months (passing of time) and seasons.
- Use seasonal food for tasting, sensory or familiarisation activities, e.g. make mushroom spore print pictures (the spore prints could be the wheels of a car or a bus).

Other examples:

Quality assurance

In practice, staff:

- explore the different quality assurance standards and/or marks used on food with pupils;
- 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:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Organise a trip to a supermarket to buy a food with a quality assurance standards mark or logo on the label, such as Red Tractor milk or British Lion eggs. Use the ingredients to make a food or drink when back at school.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

World ingredients

In practice, staff:

- provide the opportunity for pupils to explore a range of food from different cultures, 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;

- encourage pupils to share with the class, or a staff member, an ingredient or food typical of a country or culture.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Discuss the origins of food used at snack time or independent living activities with pupils.
- Create a display of different food from around the world to encourage recognition and familiarisation.
- Encourage pupils to try ingredients that they may be less familiar with, such as different types of pasta, breads or fruit and vegetables.
- Conduct a sensory activity using herbs and spices, e.g. stick a small amount of curry powder, garlic powder, ground cumin, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground chilli onto pieces of paper and encourage pupils to smell each one. (Bear in mind that some pupils may find this type of activity over-stimulating and unpleasant.)
- Organise a trip to a local shop or supermarket and investigate the world ingredients available.
- Use a world map to show where ingredients come from. Plan practical or tasting sessions that use a range of these ingredients.

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.
- Sell fruit and vegetable boxes – the pupils take the orders from staff, deliver the boxes, and collect the money due.
- 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 dishes from around the world.
- Hold a farmers' market at school.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- 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/carers focusing on local and/or seasonal ingredients. Showcase the entries.

- Work with organisations that redistribute food to enable pupils to experience how wasted food can be used positively.

- Keep school hens so that pupils can be involved in the process of egg production, from eggs hatching, hens laying eggs and eggs being used in dishes.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Set up a display that encourages pupils to investigate foods from different cuisines and how they are used.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 75.