



BRITISH
Nutrition
FOUNDATION



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

Introduction

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

While the curricula and qualifications around the UK set out what should be taught regarding food (including healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from), there is little in the way of specific guidance on teaching food and nutrition to pupils with additional needs.

The British Nutrition Foundation believed that there was a need to provide guidance and direction and highlight key characteristics of good practice that could be shared to support the profession. It was also important that the guidance was UK wide – as while there are differences between curricula, there are similarities regarding professional competence, classroom management, knowledge and skills. The inspiration for this work was initially based on the 1996 publication *Characteristics of good practice in food technology* (Ofsted), which was produced to help schools implement food technology as part of the National Curriculum for Design and Technology in England, as well as the more recent publications from the British Nutrition Foundation on the *Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in primary and secondary schools* (BNF 2019, BNF 2020). The work also builds on the *Food teaching in primary and secondary schools frameworks of knowledge and skills* published by government (PHE/DfE 2015).

This guide sets out a series of characteristics of good practice, determined via consensus-building exercises with primary and secondary school practitioners, awarding organisations, initial teacher training providers, and experts in supporting pupils with additional needs across the UK, which can be adopted as part of a good practice approach by all those that teach food and nutrition to pupils with additional needs. The guide also considers the importance of developing skills for independent living and the world of work, especially within catering and hospitality.

Pupils with additional needs

According to the *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years* (DfE/DoH 2015), 'a child or young person has special educational needs (SEN) if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.'

The **SEND code of practice: 0-25 years** also identifies four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction;
- cognition and learning;
- social, emotional and mental health;
- sensory and/or physical needs.

Pages 97 and 98 of the **SEND code of practice: 0-25 years** have further information about each area of need.

In addition, the ***Special educational needs in England: January 2020*** information, from the annual school census in England, categorises special educational and disability needs as:

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD)
Moderate learning difficulty (MLD)
Severe learning difficulty (SLD)
Profound and multiple learning difficulty (PMLD)
Speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)
Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD)
Visual impairment (VI)
Hearing impairment (HI)
Multisensory impairment (MSI)
Physical disability (PD)
Other difficulty/disability

Importantly, it should be noted that pupils often have needs that include many of these broad areas/categories and that individual needs change over time. Therefore, pupils should not be 'labelled' and plans should be in place which focus on a pupil and family-centred provision that is based on understanding individual strengths and needs.

Note: Special educational needs and disabilities, special needs, additional support needs, additional educational needs and additional learning needs are all terms used to describe pupils with additional needs. For the purpose of this guide, the term additional needs has been adopted.

Introduction

Scope and purpose of this guide

In order to enable pupils with additional needs to achieve their potential, it is essential that expectations are maintained, that schools are pupil-centred in terms of ethos and culture, and the needs of the whole child are addressed.

Therefore, this guide aims to provide a perspective on teaching pupils with additional needs and:

- define the key characteristics of good practice that are specific to teaching food and nutrition to pupils with additional needs;
- exemplify these characteristics of good practice in UK schools, both special and mainstream;
- identify exemplary practice and the school staff who could take responsibility for leading or enabling the practice, e.g. governor/head teacher/senior leadership team; curriculum lead/coordinator; special needs coordinator (SENCo); or class teacher/teaching assistant;
- highlight the key features of achieving these characteristics, showing how these can be put into practice, with case studies and suggestions of how to develop these for the future;
- support teachers that teach pupils with additional needs, especially those who are newly qualified;
- enable practising teachers to audit their own practice, to plan and implement personal and professional development goals.

While this guide sets out 12 key characteristics, with exemplification, it is acknowledged that other characteristics and practice exists. Therefore, this guide is not an exhaustive or static list to be followed rigorously. Rather, 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.

For structure, each characteristic has four key areas:

- Overview – bulleted information describing the broad approach to the characteristic;
- Case study – exemplifying the characteristic through real-life contexts;
- Putting the characteristic into practice – information organised under headings (appropriate to the specific characteristic), describing what teachers can do and focusing on supporting pupils with additional needs;
- Exemplary practice – how those with different responsibilities in the school can enable/deliver exemplary practice, e.g. governor/head teacher/senior leadership team; curriculum lead/coordinator; and class teacher/teaching assistant.

It is expected that school and curriculum leaders and other staff would work closely with external agencies and healthcare providers to ensure that pupils' needs are met. Therefore, this has not been included in the individual key characteristics.

In addition, food and nutrition education, and through this the promotion of healthy eating messages, is the focus of this guide. However, it is recognised that there are other aspects of healthy lifestyles that would be taught in schools as part of other curricula/subject areas, including science, physical education and health education.

Who is this for?

This guide has been developed for a variety of audiences, specifically those that teach (or are training to teach) pupils with additional needs.

Key audiences include:

- governors;
- head teachers;
- senior leadership team;
- SENCos;
- curriculum leads/coordinators;
- classroom teachers;
- newly qualified/trainee teachers;
- teaching assistants/higher-level teaching assistants;
- teacher training providers.

Note: It is recognised that support staff, teaching assistants and higher-level teaching assistants play an essential role in supporting pupils with additional needs, under the direction of and in partnership with the teacher. Therefore, the term 'staff' has been used to refer to all members of the school community who can make a meaningful difference to the inclusion and progress of pupils with additional needs.

How can this guide be used?

It is anticipated that this guide can 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.

Space has been provided for staff to add other ways in which the characteristics could be put into practice.

Note: It is acknowledged that terminology may be different around the UK, e.g. Schemes of Work may be known as Schemes of Learning or Teachers' Guides.

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Characteristic 1

Developing professional competence

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that teachers are sufficiently competent and confident in the delivery of food lessons, supported via initial training and/or professional development, and have an interest and willingness to develop their own knowledge and skills.

Overview

- Staff are up to date with pre-curriculum standards, curriculum requirements, and statutory guidance around pupils with additional needs, legislation, professional standards, and good practice in food education.
- Staff have strategies to support the learning and development of individual pupils.
- Staff have acquired key subject knowledge and skills. They have developed an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies and styles, which demonstrate inclusivity and are relevant to food and nutrition education.
- Staff provide teaching that is always of the highest possible standard, enabling pupils to develop, acquire and secure food skills, make choices and apply their knowledge, as well as develop skills for independent living and work.
- Staff ensure that planning documents for lessons in food and nutrition reference the curriculum, qualifications (where appropriate), food framework documents, such as the *Core food competences for pupils aged 5-16 years: A framework of skills and knowledge around food, diet and physical activity*, and the whole school food policy.
- Staff ensure that food activities reflect what has been planned.
- Staff are efficient in their planning and preparation for lessons, developing effective systems, managing time well, and showing excellent organisational skills. They lead support staff effectively to improve the quality of learning.
- Staff create, adapt and select resources that are up to date, evidence based and high quality, focusing on learning intent, inclusion and the different needs of pupils.
- Staff work collaboratively to share and discuss good practice.
- Staff invite and listen to pupil and parent/carer feedback to improve and develop teaching and learning styles, approaches and resources.
- Staff embrace the whole school food approach and reflect the ethos in their teaching.
- Staff review their knowledge and skills, linking these to performance management objectives, and take responsibility to develop a professional development plan for themselves and other staff they support.
- Staff make effective use of subject specialist help, knowledgeable colleagues and a wide range of training activities to support their personal and professional development.



Daniel Smith
Brannel School
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I set high standards for myself and my pupils, no matter their level of need. I believe that achieving great things comes with full commitment and finding the best way of imparting knowledge to pupils as individuals.

My journey into teaching may differ to conventional routes. Teaching was my ambition, but I was neither qualified nor ready. I worked as a teaching assistant supporting pupils of all years, then moved on to running a separate SEND/pastoral provision within the school, providing a safe environment for pupils when mainstream education became overwhelming. I then became a higher-level teaching assistant and taught catering as a Key Stage 4 option group. This was an amazing experience, paved the way to my position as catering

teacher, and enabled me to work towards gaining Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

I receive a lot of support from my colleagues and this has been a major aid in my development. I am always willing to learn and will provide help to anyone; remembering we are all part of a team.

DAN'S TIPS

1. Plan your personal development so that you are constantly evolving.
2. When planning lessons, plan for the class itself and the pupils within - allowing them to get the most from the lesson.
3. Seek support when needed and offer help to others when you can.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning and preparation

In practice, staff:

- reference key food and nutrition curricula, qualifications and framework documents in school planning and policies and share the research and evidence base used;
- plan flexibly to account for last minute changes;
- acknowledge that food has social, cultural, religious and emotional attachments that must be addressed with pupils when discussing their own eating habits;
- set pupil-centred goals that stretch and challenge;
- plan well ahead to ensure that lessons run smoothly, the room/food space is set up safely, and all resources are readily available;
- include opportunities for pre-teaching and post-teaching, e.g. provide the class teacher with material for pupils to do on the morning of a food activity and then a follow-up session afterwards to reinforce some of the key points/themes of the activity;
- analyse class dynamics and set up the classroom or food space accordingly, e.g. in a quiet area with few distractions;
- practise skills and recipes before the lesson to ensure that lesson delivery is confident and that the techniques taught demonstrate best practice for pupils;
- develop effective systems so all pupils can fully participate in lessons and independence is encouraged and supported;
- organise how ingredients and equipment will be obtained, e.g. funded, purchased, stored;
- use website alerts, newsletters from key organisations and social media to stay up to date.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Teaching and learning

In practice, staff:

- create a calm, caring, trusting and open environment for learning;
- establish and follow routines and develop a firm, but fair, approach;
- use modelling, explanation and repetition to reinforce concepts and learning;
- use mime, signs, gestures, expressions and words to convey meaning;
- use objects of reference, cards and symbols to convey meaning;
- encourage communication between pupils and adults in the room and between the pupils themselves;
- use clear, simple instructions;
- address pupils by their name where possible, not just class/everyone, so that they understand that the instruction includes them;
- develop and use resources, equipment and ingredients to support an individual pupil's needs;
- use IT to develop independent learning, including adapted technologies;
- keep pupils busy and make sure they always have something to do if they have finished a task, need help or are waiting for attention;
- use up to date, evidence based, impartial resources and information to help plan and implement lessons;
- include a wide range of learning opportunities to encompass varied cultures, traditions, customs and practices so that pupils have a wide range of experiences;
- act as a role model when teaching practical food lessons/food activities, reflecting the standards expected of pupils, such as preparing appropriately and demonstrating neat, methodical working practices;
- use pupils as role models;
- demonstrate a high level of practical skill, be aware of common mistakes that might be made in the recipes/skills taught and how to rectify them;
- develop safe and effective practical food skills through whole class and spot demonstrations, pre-recorded video instruction, step-by-step photo recipes and one-to-one support;
- share photo evidence of their work and peer outcomes with pupils as part of self-reflection and peer review, to increase engagement and memory recall;
- lead and manage support staff effectively; for example, establish clear ways of communicating with technicians and learning support staff;
- use social stories, pictorial representations of what is going to happen, to show what the pupils will be doing, e.g. next lesson they will be going to the food room for a food lesson (with a photo of the teacher/ ingredients/equipment);
- use visual timetable/reminder strategies, using images or physical objects, for food lessons, e.g. show the class a wooden spoon at the beginning of the lesson and attach the spoon to the whiteboard for the duration, as a visual reminder to the pupils that they are taking part in a food lesson;
- reflect on lessons and activities to understand what went well and what could be improved.

Other examples:



For further details see [Characteristics 4 Teaching the curriculum](#), [7 Running practical food lessons](#) and [9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Using effective pupil-centred teaching strategies

In practice, staff:

- use class, group and individual work, trips and experiences that are suitable for different pupils' needs and that spark an interest in food and drink;
- use different teaching strategies, which may include:
 - making food and drinks so that pupils can feed themselves and keep healthy;
 - making food and drinks so that pupils can develop skills for work;
 - planning and cooking meals considering lifestyle, consumer choice, nutritional need, cost, time and portion size. Pupils show and talk about their work;
 - role-playing tasks in food and drink outlets, e.g. taking customers' orders, making drinks/food either independently or with supervision, taking money and giving change;
 - exploring a range of ingredients and cooking techniques/styles from different culinary traditions;

- using local and seasonal ingredients and consider where food comes from;
- creating new, or modifying existing, recipes for a specific meal, occasion or person;
- using food tasting and tasting activities to explore the choices that people make;
- comparing ready-made and home-made dishes to help pupils make choices;
- using 'from farm to fork' videos or food cards to show where food comes from;
- making dishes using leftovers;
- growing fruit and vegetables to learn about seasonality;
- practising recycling.

Other examples:



For further details see [Characteristic 4 Teaching the curriculum](#).

Working with others

In practice, staff:

- work collaboratively with outside agencies and healthcare professionals;
- mentor other staff, trainee teachers, newly qualified teachers and others;
- participate in good practice networks with other professionals;
- manage support staff effectively, for example, being clear about the learning intent for the lesson and the assistance required;

- establish clear guidelines and protocols when dealing with parents/carers.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Continuing professional development

In practice, staff:

- review skills/knowledge and identify areas of development. For example, against the *Food teaching in primary/secondary schools: a framework of knowledge and skills*;
- develop a personal action plan;
- bid for funding, explaining the benefits of training for your school and pupils;
- further professional expertise by selecting appropriate professional development activities, such as shadowing other

teachers, school visits, practical training in food skills, updating subject knowledge through face-to-face events and/or online training or completing a continuing professional development portfolio.

Other examples:



Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Ensure that training is encouraged and available for staff that teach food and nutrition education.
- Offer placements for trainee/newly qualified teachers to develop subject expertise and teaching skills.
- Take the lead in promoting quality food education and practice across the school.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Act as a link to liaise with senior leadership and the learning support team to ensure pupils' inclusion in food and nutrition education.
- Mentor staff, trainee teachers, newly qualified teachers and others.
- Lead a staff meeting with a food focus.
- Bid for food education funding and explain the benefits to others of training for the school and pupils.
- Share good practice both in their own school and locally.
- Establish or take part in an existing food teaching network to share good practice and ideas that work well.
- Link with a local catering college, chef, or farmer/grower to learn new skills and

knowledge that can be used in the classroom and broaden the opportunities for pupils.

- Follow research into the latest educational developments.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Learn from mistakes. This is particularly important if food is not a main area of expertise. Knowing and understanding when and where pupils may make mistakes in practical lessons is a key to success.
- Show passion for the subject, including trying new food, exploring where food comes from, using different cooking techniques and highlighting healthy eating.
- Plan trips and experiences that engage the pupils with food, develop skills for independent living and work, and broaden their opportunities.
- Take time to reflect on lessons and activities. What went well and what could be improved?

Other examples:



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

Characteristic 2

Taking a whole school approach

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that the teaching of food is aligned with the whole school food approach, while being sensitive to the needs of individual pupils and their families. Food education is embedded in the health and wellbeing agenda of the whole school through the development and implementation of policies, encouragement and enforcement.

Overview

- Staff in school are dedicated to providing an inclusive environment that promotes health and wellbeing to all, they know their pupils and enable them to make healthier food and drink choices.
- Staff contribute to, and support, the whole school food policy, which sets out the food provision, curriculum (including developing skills for independent living and work), and ethos.
- Staff help to communicate the whole school food policy, both throughout the school and to the wider community, e.g. school food providers, governing body, parents/carers, work placements, learning cafés and external supporters such as local colleges and gardening opportunities.
- Staff support parents/carers to ensure a consistent message from school to home around healthy eating and active lifestyles.
- Staff work collaboratively across the school to enhance learning opportunities, secure consistency and coherence of key concepts and healthy eating messages.
- Staff act as role models in relation to food and drink, in line with the whole school food policy, when in the company of pupils.
- Staff across the school use resources, equipment and ingredients that promote healthy eating and active lifestyles and adapt them where necessary to ensure inclusion.
- Staff ensure that Schemes of Work, lessons, and food activities reinforce the whole school food policy, seeking to make the policy a reality, whilst also taking into account pupils' needs.
- Staff ensure that teaching encourages change in behaviour towards healthier lifestyles and choices.
- Staff regularly monitor and audit school food provision, after-school activities, rewards, celebrations and curriculum delivery for message consistency and consolidation.



Nerys Lloyd
Pen-y-Cwm School
Ebbw Vale, Wales

Pen-y-Cwm (PyC) is a special needs school (3-19 years). We believe that taking a whole school approach is the only way to making sustained change and raising achievement.

Health and wellbeing is fundamental. Food plays an integral part in teaching and learning. We are part of Healthy School Network Wales and school policies support a Healthy Schools approach. Adults model behaviour and we feature a 'rights and responsibilities' approach to develop healthy confident individuals.

Breaktimes and lunchtimes are classed as essential learning opportunities and are overseen by class staff. Daily classroom 'café' activities in primary and secondary phases are designed to create a holistic approach to learning. Food enterprise projects and weekly community visits in Post-16 years also add to providing social

scripts for pupils that can be used in real-life scenarios.

We also engage with community intergenerational projects, as well as local businesses that often provide essential work experience, enabling pupils to connect and apply their knowledge and skills and be ready to play a full part in life and work.

NERYS' TIPS

1. A consistent approach and following routines is essential.
2. Take a pupil-centred approach, knowing your pupils and identifying their needs and next steps.
3. Ensure clear and open communication of standards and expectations between pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.

CASE STUDY

Putting the characteristic into practice

Communication

In practice, staff:

- make sure that a clear statement of food and nutrition education is included in the school food policy, describing its principles and purpose, including learning intent;
- work collaboratively with other subject colleagues to ensure that food and nutrition education is embedded in the whole school approach and pupils receive consistent messages;
- ensure that the school governing body (or equivalent) is aware of, and informed about, the whole school food policy;
- keep up to date with the whole school food approach and participate in whole school food related events, e.g. British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week;
- share ideas for cross-curricular/ interdisciplinary food teaching to enhance pupils' food experience;
- are conscious of modelling healthy lifestyle behaviours for pupils to see, e.g. eating, drinking, being active;
- support colleagues who may be less experienced or confident about delivering food lessons;
- use visuals, images, symbols, pictures and words to ensure that healthy eating messages are inclusive;
- ensure that the school's approach to food is clearly communicated to the 'outside world' via its website, induction packs, social media and newsletters;
- provide pupils with opportunities to share healthy eating messages with parents/ carers and the wider community.

Other examples:



Reinforcing the whole school food policy

In practice, staff:

- use the Eatwell Guide to inform the planning and delivery of healthy eating messages across the curriculum;
- reinforce healthy eating messages through the Eatwell Guide food groups, e.g. discussing which food groups ingredients for meals or dishes come from, role-play buying fruit and vegetables;
- consider independence and skills for life and work when planning food lessons, e.g. food hygiene and safety, making better choices;
- take into account a pupil's food likes and dislikes, including sensory issues;
- use repetition of concepts/activities to reinforce learning and support progression;
- reflect on the *Core competences for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years: A framework of skills and knowledge around food, diet and physical activity*, pre-curriculum standards and statutory guidance for pupils with additional needs for progression mapping to ensure that pupils build on their prior knowledge;
- are aware that pupil progression may happen in small steps, depending on their individual needs.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Working with others

In practice, staff:

- plan with colleagues, to ensure progression in food teaching across the school and that pupils build on their prior knowledge;
 - carry out regular reviews across the curriculum to establish where, and when, food and nutrition education is taught;
 - collaborate with other staff to ensure that the whole school food policy is reflected consistently across the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities;
 - take a consistent approach to food in their teaching, with pupils and parents/carers;
- use appropriate resources, agreed upon as a school, for teaching and creating displays that reflect current healthy eating advice and encourage healthy food and drink choices.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Ensure there is a holistic, pupil-centred approach to the whole school food policy, taking into account the varied needs of pupils.
- Review, update and monitor the whole school food policy, considering breakfast and lunchtime food provision, after-school activities, rewards, celebrations and curriculum delivery, to ensure appropriateness and consistency across the school.
- Ensure the whole school policy includes food activities outside of the curriculum, including preparing snacks for breaktime, and developing skills for independent living and work.
- Where available, sign up for healthy school schemes (voluntary schemes designed to recognise and encourage the schools contribution to supporting pupils' health and wellbeing).
- Hold a parent/carer meeting to talk about the school's approach to food provision and teaching and expectations of pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure pupils can share their views about food in school, e.g. on school food provision, food lessons.
- Provide parents/carers with information and advice, to support healthy choices for their families and ensure consistent messaging between school and home.
- Offer parent/carer and child practical classes to encourage healthy eating choices, development of practical skills and enjoyment of cooking.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Work with senior leaders and school food providers to ensure that food and nutrition education is represented in the whole school food approach.
- Share evidence based resources and authoritative information, and teaching resources across the curriculum.

- Work with the school catering team to ensure consistency of message.
- Promote whole school participation in healthy behaviours, e.g. set health challenges for different year groups, make trackers available and reward healthy behaviours.
- Register for British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week and plan to be off timetable for some or all of this Week to provide a whole school focus on food and health. Invite health experts into school to talk to the pupils and parents/carers, e.g. dietitian, nutritionist, nurse, sports person.
- Ensure a coordinated and collaborative approach across the school for food and nutrition education.
- Ensure food activities, trips and experiences are in line with the whole school food policy.
- Create a display of example dishes made in practical food lessons to show at parents evening along with a wellbeing display, snack swaps and fresh fruit to try.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Join the school food policy steering group/committee and raise the profile of food and nutrition education.
- Plan assemblies to share learning about healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from.
- Promote healthier eating activities, clubs and awards.

Other examples:



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

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.



Laura Kelly
St Columbanus' College,
Bangor, Northern Ireland

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!

**CASE
STUDY**

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.

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.

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

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

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 outcome 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 sensology 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 pupils' 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' (PMLD), 'semi-formal' (SLD) and 'formal' (MLD)*. 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 PMLD, SLD and MLD.

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.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning and preparation

In practice, staff:

- consider the individual needs of pupils and plan pupil-centred activities around food that support the food curriculum and skills for independent living and work;
- ensure that planning and teaching delivers intended food knowledge and skills and is not driven by recipes;
- ensure lessons build on pupils' prior food education knowledge and experiences in healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from;
- are aware of pupils' food sensitivities and behaviour around food and plan activities accordingly;
- provide opportunities to try new food to expand pupils' experiences of less familiar food (taking into account allergies, intolerances and sensory issues);

- acknowledge that progress for individual pupils may be in smaller or larger steps depending on their own learning journey;
- investigate and promote the range of employment opportunities in food, e.g. catering and hospitality;
- ensure that health and safety is at the forefront of any practical food activities taking place by undertaking risk assessment and following the subsequent procedures put in place;
- work within planned budgets.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Consider a pre-curricula, statutory curricula (e.g. National Curriculum, Northern Ireland Curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence), and post-curricula (life skills) approach.
- Consider a rolling curriculum/multiyear plan to support those pupils that may remain in the same class or year group for a number of years.
- Plan activities that spark an interest in food and drink, including sensory, role-play, play/art and cooking.
- Plan food activities that develop pupils' senses, such as:
 - listening to food being prepared/cooked;
 - tasting food being cooked and the finished dish;
 - touching, feeling and smelling a range of ingredients;

- watching someone cook;
- having an awareness of hot and cold temperatures.
- Develop and use recipes that are clear, inclusive and suitable for pupils' needs, e.g. step by step, symbols, images, photographs and words;
- Invite role models to speak to pupils about their work in 'food', especially hospitality and catering.
- Investigate accredited courses and qualifications in 'food' that support independent living skills and skills for work. A list of courses/qualifications can be found on page 74.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 7 Running practical food lessons](#), [8 Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices](#) and [9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Teaching

In practice, staff:

- deliver food lessons as set out in planning documents while reviewing and adjusting as necessary to meet pupil needs;
- teach discrete food lessons and also use food as a vehicle to support the delivery of other curriculum subjects;
- use a range of pupil-centred teaching styles, tasks and resources to engage and extend/challenge pupils, such as group and individual tasks, tasting activities, videos and web searches, where appropriate;
- use resources that are suitable for individual pupil needs;
- use resources that are up to date, evidence based and reliable, e.g. the Eatwell Guide;
- use pupils' own food experiences to enhance work around food, e.g. talking about favourite food, food eaten at different times of the year, religion, or belief;
- use tools and equipment suitable for pupils' individual needs.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use food and drink activities to help pupils to:
 - demonstrate how to take care of themselves and others (food preparation and cooking skills, food hygiene and safety);
 - develop numeracy skills and apply them in real-life situations, e.g. put in order, compare, estimate, match, sequence, count, weigh, have an awareness of time and temperature;
 - use and develop descriptive language, verbal or non-verbal, in real-life situations;
 - explore nutrition, healthy eating and healthy lifestyles in real-life contexts;
 - experience how ingredients change, e.g. poaching an egg to demonstrate liquids changing to a solid state or bread changing colour when heat is added to make toast;
- Create classroom displays that support the teaching and learning of food education themes, e.g. a frieze of where food comes from.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Evaluation

In practice, staff:

- use self-reflection and pupil feedback to help review teaching and learning and make any appropriate moderations to lessons;
- assess pupils' knowledge and skills about food and tailor lessons and food activities appropriately to ensure pupils progress;

- involve parents/carers in the review of food lessons/activities and subsequent future planning.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use appropriate assessment and recording methods for evidencing the progress that pupils with additional needs make, even if they are only small steps.
- Invite parents/carers into school to try dishes made in food lessons, send ingredients and recipes home to encourage pupils to cook the dish again with their family.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 10 Where food comes from](#) and [11 Healthy eating](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Provide opportunities for pupils to undertake food preparation and cooking activities regularly, throughout their learning journey.
- Ensure there are suitable spaces and opportunities provided for pupils to develop skills for independent living and work through the context of food and drink, e.g. specialised/adapted equipment, a space set up as a 'flat' to enable pupils to recognise and transfer skills from school to a 'home' setting, community café/coffee mornings for pupils to experience 'working' with food.
- Add information to the school website/social media feed about food activities taking place in the classroom, provide information for parents/carers, e.g. sources of trusted information, recipes.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Develop relevant food lessons for colleagues to deliver, which may include training and resource development.
- Work with colleagues to complete risk assessments. Use exemplar templates but always 'adopt and adapt' to make them relevant to the setting, activity and pupils.
- Provide information and guidance to pupils about future opportunities for employment in food, such as catering and hospitality.

- Develop links with other areas of the curriculum to enhance pupil transferable skills, e.g. working with the mathematics department on numeracy and recipe costings, the English department on writing shopping lists, the IT department on using the internet to find recipes, search for ingredients, find takeaway menus.

Classroom teacher/teaching assistant

- Plan food themed trips, such as a visit to a supermarket, farm or restaurant.
- Invite speakers into school to expand pupils' food knowledge and experience, e.g. farmer, baker, nutritionist.
- Participate in school assemblies, e.g. give a talk on eating and drinking well.
- Invite the link governor to visit a lesson to see first-hand the value of the subject.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 74.

Characteristic 5

Developing skills for independent living

A characteristic when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils acquire, develop and secure skills and knowledge, and have a range of experiences around food and drink, cooking, and looking after themselves, to support their health, wellbeing and independent living.

Overview

- Staff plan food, drink and cooking activities to promote skills for independent living that are pupil-centred and focus on being able to feed themselves well and keep healthy.
- Staff ensure provision has been made for pupils with physical disabilities, food allergies, intolerances and/or other dietary requirements, including sensory issues, so they can participate safely in food activities.
- Staff plan activities that use food as a context to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in relation to independent living, such as planning meals, compiling shopping lists, reading food labels and making a budget.
- Staff plan activities that promote recognition and familiarisation from home to school and the wider world, including meaningful employment.
- Staff set up hygienic and safe independent living spaces for practical food preparation.
- Staff act as role models and ensure that food hygiene and safety standards are maintained.
- Staff use positive reinforcement and motivate pupils to become familiar and more competent with new skills, leading to an increase in pupils' confidence, interest and motivation.



**Adele Louise
James**

**Whitefield School
London, England**

CASE STUDY

At Whitefield School, pupils have always participated in learning to develop skills for independent living.

This provides them with invaluable first-hand experiences and develops their confidence in working independently or as part of a team. Pupils are given a scenario, such as planning a meal for themselves for a given theme and budget or planning a menu for dinner with a friend with a specific dietary need.

Opportunities are provided for pupils to look for suitable dishes, identify the key ingredients and practical food skills required, adapt the ingredients if needed, or even create a new dish.

Pupils are taught to identify where different ingredients can be purchased. They sort ingredients into traditional suppliers, such as bread from a bakery and fish from a fishmonger; or consider which

section of a large supermarket they need to visit to locate the ingredients that they need.

Pupils' numeracy skills are developed by being taught how to scale down or scale up a recipe, as well as weighing and measuring. This helps pupils put together a shopping list which can be used during a trip to purchase ingredients or when shopping online, while keeping to the given budget.

ADELE'S TIPS

1. Provide real life scenarios for pupils to reinforce learning between home, school and future independent living.
2. Use practical food activities to encourage pupils to work with others.
3. Enable pupils to develop their IT skills through food activities, such as shopping safely online.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning what to eat and buying food

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - planning what to eat or drink;
 - compiling a shopping list;
 - making and following a food budget;
 - buying food – in person and online;
 - handling money;
 - knowing where food comes from – growing food, buying from independent shops, supermarkets, markets and farm shops, online, food banks;

- storing food safely;
- cooking economically – using canned/frozen food, safe use of leftovers, buying in bulk.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use supermarket websites to plan what to buy and compile a shopping list to buy in person or online.
- Use recipes (with words, pictures or symbols) to plan shopping lists.
- Use and compile shopping lists using words, pictures or symbols to reinforce recognition from home/school/shopping.
- Use real-life menus from takeaway or delivery services to plan what to eat.
- Use meal occasions as a context for learning how much food costs, e.g. finding out the cost of breakfast items either online or by visiting a supermarket. As an extension, pupils could be taught that some items may be cheaper depending on the brand, where it was bought or whether it was on a multi-buy deal.
- Use a breakfast menu from a local café and the costs calculated by the pupils (in the activity above) to explain how it can be cheaper to buy food and cook and eat at home.
- Show pupils that food may not have to be bought every day, e.g. calculate how many days it may take to use up a loaf of bread. Repeat with other items such as a jar of coffee, tea bags, carton of juice, box of cereal (using the recommended portion size).
- Take pupils on trips to experience handling and using money in realistic situations, e.g. on the bus, to pay for food or drink in a café, to buy food in a shop.
- Use money in class, e.g. have a range of food to 'buy' and receive change.
- Grow food from seed, e.g. cut a tomato in half, place on a bed of soil in a small pot, cover with soil and water regularly.
- Take pupils on trips to experience buying food in bulk, e.g. a bowl or bag of fruit or vegetables from a local market.
- Take pupils on a trip to a supermarket, or use online shopping sites, to demonstrate that prices for the same food item can differ, e.g. a can of baked beans or chopped tomatoes.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Making choices and using information

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - making choices for health, e.g. choosing a drink that is lower in sugar;
 - planning food and drink choices, such as cooking from scratch, reheating ready-meals, using canned/frozen ingredients, purchasing takeaways, and eating out at a restaurant/café/pub;
 - planning what to eat for their individual food preferences;
 - making others aware of their choices, expressing likes and dislikes;

- making food and drink decisions between different options, based on a criteria, e.g. lower salt;
- using food labels to find out information, e.g. what the food is called, its cost, how it should be stored, number of servings, serving suggestions, nutrition information, how long it lasts;
- reading menus to make decisions, considering their preference and other needs, e.g. vegetarian, money available.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Encourage pupils to try new food using repetition and role models, e.g. adults or other pupils.
- Encourage pupils to express their food likes and dislikes verbally or through signs and symbols/pictures.
- Support pupils to make simple choices at snack or mealtime based on preferences, e.g. water or milk, toast or cereal for breakfast, apple or pear at snack time, progressing to more complex decisions based on a criteria such as health, e.g. lower salt foods.
- Compare food labels using the colours of the traffic light front-of-pack labelling, e.g. use red, green and amber coloured circles, with sad, happy or neutral smiley faces, to demonstrate what the colours mean.

- Sort food or shopping into the correct storage places, following the instructions on the food labels. Pupils could be taken on a trip a supermarket to buy a variety of food items and sort them into the correct storage places, e.g. fridge, freezer, cupboard. Alternatively, images of a fridge, freezer or cupboard and empty food packages could be used.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Following recipes

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - following a recipe or set of instructions;
 - demonstrating an awareness of, and an ability to use, common measures, e.g. weighing and measuring ingredients for recipes, knowing quantities to purchase when shopping.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Ensure that instructions are clear and easy to follow, building step by step.
- Use recipes with symbols, images, pictures and words to ensure inclusion.
- Engage pupils in following instructions to make food and drink, increasing in complexity, e.g. start with making a cold drink, and move on to making a cup of coffee/tea, a sandwich, soup, macaroni cheese or chilli con carne.
- Measure quantities of a liquid using a measuring jug. Use coloured water, as this may be easier to see. Use labels with 10ml, 25ml, 50ml, 100ml to help pupils link written measurements to what is physically in the measuring jug. Repeat the activity with measuring scales, balance or digital, and a solid food such as rice (avoid using flour due to allergies and be aware of the expansive properties of foods such as rice and lentils if ingested) and labels with quantities in grams.
- Demonstrate to pupils that whilst a whole bag, jar or container may need to be purchased, the contents could be used for more than one recipe. For example, use half a bag of potatoes to make mashed potato. Then make jacket potatoes or oven-baked wedges with the remaining potatoes.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 4 Teaching the curriculum](#) and [9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Using practical food skills

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - using practical food skills to feed themselves, independently or with support;
 - preparing and serving a hot or cold drink, independently or with support;
 - making and serving a healthy snack or meal, either independently or with support;
 - using kitchen equipment safely and with purpose either independently or with support, or via inclusive technologies,

such as switches;

- using different cooking methods;
- opening packaging, such as bottles, jars, cans and packets.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Encourage pupils to independently make a snack, dish or drink for themselves, considering individual needs.
- Start with one simple instruction, e.g. place a tea bag in a cup, and progress to more complex instructions/steps, e.g. boil the kettle, pour the water safely, remove the tea bag, add the milk.
- Use inclusive technology such as switches to enable pupils to control a blender to make a smoothie or mix a cake in a stand mixer:
- Use an electric soup maker or a bread machine.
- Gather a selection of bottles, cans, jars and packets and practise opening them by hand or with equipment such as a jar gripper; an electric can opener; jar opener with a pop-up handle, non-slip cone jar/bottle opener:
- Practise opening packets and using a range of skills to make a food or drink with the contents. For example, pupils make a sugar free jelly – boil a kettle, open a packet of sugar free jelly crystals, pour the crystals into a jelly mould or bowl, measure the required amount of boiling water into a jug (with supervision if required) and add to the bowl. Stir to dissolve the jelly crystals and leave to set. Serve with freshly prepared or canned fruit.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Food hygiene and safety

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - personal hygiene, including handling food and following simple healthy routines;
 - cleaning and food hygiene, including washing and drying equipment (being aware of hot water), wiping surfaces, cleaning the fridge, washing the floor, and washing and drying tea towels;
 - placing waste in the bin and recycling/composting;
 - storing food safely – where and how food should be stored, including covering with foil or film;
 - knowing when food is cooked and safe to eat, independently or with support, e.g. time, temperature control, colour;

- personal safety and the safety of others, including:
 - awareness of safety symbols;
 - safe use of kitchen equipment, including different types of hob, e.g. gas, electric, induction;
 - sources of heat;
 - following instructions to act safely;
 - accepting the support of others (another pupil or staff member) to keep safe;
 - following simple rules (use of water, electricity and gas, household and kitchen equipment).

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Practise, and repeat, effective hand washing routines before touching food or eating.
- Allocate pupils tasks or roles when preparing food or drink, e.g. washing or drying the equipment and then swap so that all pupils become secure in maintaining a clean environment.
- Enable pupils to know when food is cooked by setting and using a timer and showing photographs/videos of what food should look like when it is cooked, e.g. chicken skin is golden brown, the meat is white, with no pink remaining, and the juices run clear.
- 'Think out loud' when being safe, e.g. explain, model/demonstrate and repeat how to hold a knife safely.
- Use paper-based, digital or physical 'spot the hazards/dirty kitchen' activities to enable pupils to recognise a dirty kitchen and understand the consequences.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristic 8 Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Working with others/social situations

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - working with others, e.g. support staff, other pupils, tutors or peers in other settings, such as a local college;
 - sharing ideas with other people, such as recipes and healthy eating messages;
 - celebrating special occasions with food, e.g. birthdays, religious festivals, customs;

- being aware that they can contribute to the community, such as volunteering in a community project;

- being aware that they can contribute to society through meaningful employment.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Organise for pupils to spend time in another setting or for work experience.
- Invite parents/carers into school for a coffee morning or assembly to find out from pupils what they have learned about healthy eating.
- Celebrate birthdays or other special occasions using food and drink as a context to encourage pupils to share and think about others.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Using and communicating with IT

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure skills in:
 - finding suitable food or drink recipes;
 - sharing recipes;
 - choosing and buying food and drink online, e.g. from supermarkets, delivery services, takeaways.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Create a newsletter for pupils to share with their parents/carers via email.
- Share photographs of food and drink made by pupils via the school social media channel or website page.
- Enable pupils to choose a recipe that they would like to make as a group or class. Pupils then order the ingredients from a supermarket website (with support), sort

the ingredients into the correct storage place on delivery and then make the recipe and share the dish.

Other examples:

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Ensure that suitable provision is made for pupils to develop independent living skills.
- Provide suitable and appropriate spaces for pupils to develop independent living skills around food and drink, e.g. a 'flat' set up like a home so that pupils can recognise and transfer skills between school and home.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Enable pupils to develop independent living skills, and relate experiences in school to the wider world, through trips and visits.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Compile a calendar of class birthdays and organise a celebration event for each pupil for their birthday to encourage pupils to share and think about others.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 74

Characteristic 6

Developing skills for work

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. *(In this document, the context of work is set around food.)*

Overview

- Staff plan activities and seek out opportunities and experiences around food and drink to promote developing pupil-centred skills for work.
- Staff build pupils' confidence and competence in order to fulfil their individual potential.
- Staff plan activities that use skills for work as a context to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
- Staff plan activities that promote recognition and familiarisation from home to school and the wider world, including meaningful employment.
- Staff enable pupils to follow accredited courses or qualifications, with a focus on skills for work, where appropriate.
- Staff ensure that provisions have been made for pupils with physical disabilities, food allergies, intolerances and/or other dietary requirements, including sensory issues, so they can participate safely in work experience and external skills development activities.
- Staff use positive reinforcement and motivate pupils to become familiar and more competent with new skills, leading to an increase in pupils' own confidence, interest and motivation.



Caroline Parsons

Square Food
Foundation

Bristol, England

At Square Food Foundation we understand the confidence, pride and dignity that come from meaningful work in a real-life business. Our community kitchen buzzes with young people with all kinds of backgrounds and educational profiles, getting involved in a range of food-related activities tailored to their interests and strengths.

Years of experience show us that learners with additional needs can be valuable, reliable members of a catering team working at events or in professional kitchens in a wide variety of roles. All that is needed for this to happen is the right support for that individual and for expectations to be clear. It's amazing to see young people flourish through being given responsibility for specific tasks; we've asked them to do all kinds of things from making canapés to handing plates around, and they often surprise themselves and us with how well they rise to the occasion. Some young people will gain much job satisfaction from repetitive food preparation tasks, or from the vital role of washing up, and that is fine.

Hilary Long, the mother of Joshua who attended the Square Food Foundation, says that after cooking at a number of events, her son is now embarking on a How to be a Chef course, during which he will not only learn the technical skills that he needs for work, but also employability skills such as teamwork, reliability and resilience. He is looking forward to some work experience to find out what sort of hospitality and catering setting he would thrive in most.

CAROLINE'S TIPS

1. It's very important to build upon a young person's individual interests and strengths when choosing how to support them getting involved in a working kitchen.
2. Take some time to research local food businesses and build contacts in this community.
3. Preparation is key prior to an event or work placement.

**CASE
STUDY**

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning

In practice, staff:

- highlight different employment opportunities in 'food', e.g. catering and hospitality, bakers, fishmongers, green grocers, farming, manufacturing (small and large scale);
- plan a range of activities that develop skills for work;
- enable pupils to recognise and become familiar with equipment used in the workplace;
- organise visits, trips and experiences to broaden pupils' understanding of the world of work;

- engage with those that can help broaden pupils' employment opportunities, e.g. local charities and hospitality organisations;
- provide opportunities for pupils to study for accredited courses or qualifications to support future employability.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Organise trips to food and drink outlets such as cafés, restaurants and leisure centres so that pupils can familiarise themselves with the different types of roles.
- Organise visits to school from people working in 'food' to broaden pupils' knowledge of the roles available to them, e.g. café owner, chef, farmer, baker, hotelier.
- Organise trips to 'world of work' play centres so pupils can role-play different types of work.

- Organise for pupils to study for a work-based qualification in food hygiene and safety, if appropriate.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Breaking down barriers and building confidence

In practice, staff:

- build relationships with employers and community groups;
- 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;
- provide opportunities for pupils to engage with role models in the workplace, either face to face or virtually;

- enable pupils to learn how to dress appropriately for work.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Invite parents/carers who work in 'food' into school to speak to the pupils about their job.
- Create a display with photos of people in the world of work that are like them.
- Role-play getting ready for work using examples of uniforms or work clothes that pupils may be required to wear in a work environment, e.g. chef whites, service aprons, tabards, tunics.

Other examples:

Develop skills for working with food and drink

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to:
 - recognise and use kitchen equipment;
 - prepare hot and cold drinks;
 - plan, prepare and cook a variety of ingredients to create dishes;

- serve hot and cold drinks, snacks and meals.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Show real-life pictures of equipment used at home/school and those that pupils will see in a catering kitchen to enable them to recognise an industrial version.
- Where possible, enable pupils to experience and use catering equipment, e.g. in the school kitchen or an on-site café.

- Create opportunities for pupils to plan, prepare, make and serve hot and cold drinks, snacks and meals to others, e.g. lunch for pupils and staff, a coffee morning or tea party for parents/carers.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristic 9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Knowing how to work in a safe and hygienic way

In practice, staff:

- teach pupils about health and safety in the workplace, particularly the safe use of kitchen and cleaning equipment where appropriate;
- teach pupils about hygiene in the workplace, particularly personal hygiene.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Work with school catering or cleaning staff to help pupils recognise the various safety signs and symbols that they may come across in a workplace and what they mean, e.g. prohibition, mandatory, warning, safe condition and fire equipment.
- Explain, model/demonstrate and repeat health and safety routines regularly, e.g. not running/shouting, safe use of hot or sharp equipment, getting ready to cook.
- Encourage pupils to clean an area of a kitchen or food preparation space following simple instructions and using basic equipment, e.g. wiping a work surface with a clean cloth, moving onto more complex instructions, e.g. sweep and then clean the floor using a mop, bucket and cleaning product.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 5 Developing skills for independent living](#) and [8 Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices](#).

Working with others

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to:
 - know how to act appropriately in a workplace situation:
 - work with others, e.g. with a member of staff or in a team;
 - communicate with others;
 - follow instructions from others;

- give instructions to others;
- ask for, accept, or offer help.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Pupils work in pairs to lay a table for a meal with one pupil giving instructions and the other pupil following them. The pupils then swap leader and follower roles to complete a different task.
- Pupils work as a team to plan and run a tea party for parents/carers.
- Encourage pupils to support each other and offer help if they see it is needed.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Literacy and numeracy

In practice, staff:

- ☐ provide opportunities for pupils to:
 - read, write and review menus;
 - take food and drink orders and relay them to other pupils or members of staff;
 - calculate a bill, where appropriate;
 - take money and give change;

- observe that bills can be paid by card or contactless through a smart phone.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- ☐ Role-play a café scenario with pupils and staff where some pupils are the kitchen staff and others are waiting/front of house and then swap over.
- ☐ Organise trips to catering outlets for pupils to practise reading menus, placing a food or drink order and paying a bill either independently, or with support.

Other examples:

Making decisions and solving problems

In practice, staff:

- ☐ plan activities where pupils have to make decisions;
- ☐ help pupils to recognise when they have a problem;
- ☐ suggest sources of help, e.g. a colleague, mentor, supervisor;

- ☐ enable pupils to identify a solution.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- ☐ Provide pupils with a list of tasks that need to be completed in order to get a café ready to open for lunch service. Ask the pupils to decide the order in which the tasks should be completed so that the café can open on time.
- ☐ Discuss different scenarios that pupils might experience whilst at work and identify what the solution might be or who they could ask for help, e.g. how to deal with a difficult or rude customer.

- ☐ Provide pupils going on work experience with assistance, help or time-out cards that they can show a supervisor if they need help.
- ☐ Sunflower lanyards, supported by the Royal National Institute of Blind People, the National Autistic Society, Action on Hearing Loss and other charities, can be worn by pupils to let others know that they have a hidden disability.

Other examples:

Note: It is acknowledged that there are other skills for work that should be developed to support pupils with gaining meaningful employment. However, the focus of this guide is food and nutrition and therefore, the emphasis in this Characteristic is developing skills for working in 'food'.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Ensure that suitable provision is made for pupils to develop skills for work, such as the world of food and drink employment.
- Provide suitable and appropriate spaces for pupils to develop skills for work, e.g. kitchens, school canteen, table service.
- Enable pupils to follow accredited courses or qualifications, with a focus on skills for work.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Enable pupils to develop skills for work, and relate experiences in school to the world of work through trips and visits and talks from role models, e.g. chefs.

Classroom teacher/teaching assistant

- Create a display of famous chefs that they may feel affinity with, e.g. Michael Caines, Scott Garthwaite, Christine Hà, Ronnie Murray.

- Set up a café in the classroom to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, including reading and writing menus, calculating costs, and handling money.
- Use a variety of resources and equipment to inspire an interest in working in a food and/or drink setting, such as posters, videos, menus, and pieces of kitchen equipment.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 74

Characteristic 7

Running practical food lessons

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that food and drink preparation activities and cooking lessons are delivered in a hygienic, safe and organised way. The classroom is set up and resourced appropriately and pupils are shown what they should do and how they should behave.

Overview

- Staff select and organise resources, ingredients and equipment appropriately, including specialist/adapted equipment, to support learning intent and pupil capability.
- Staff ensure provision has been made for pupils with physical disabilities, food allergies, intolerances, sensory issues, and/or other dietary requirements so they can participate safely and be included in food activities.
- Staff set up classrooms or food spaces to become hygienic, safe and practical food and drink preparation areas.
- Staff ensure that the food hygiene and safety standards are always the same, no matter the space being used.
- Staff ensure equipment for food lessons is well maintained and stored safely and appropriately.
- Staff ensure that food purchased for practical lessons is safe for use, e.g. is within its date mark, has undamaged packaging, is stored correctly.
- Staff ensure ingredients are handled and stored safely before, during and after food lessons.
- Staff ensure pupils and adults are aware of and follow the safe practices, as stipulated in the risk assessment.
- Staff are aware of any individual pupil behaviours or potential risks that may cause harm, such as head banging, along with how the group as a whole interacts.
- Staff teach pupils, and any adults supporting the lesson, to follow specific routines and procedures to ensure food lessons are safe and successful, e.g. getting ready to cook, knowing where equipment is stored, recycling.
- Staff set and share learning objectives, which are pupil-centred, and recap throughout the lesson to ensure pupils are focused and on track.



Kate Hufton

Retired special
needs teacher

London, England



Developing resources to ensure that all pupils, including nonverbal, have access to lessons can be quite challenging.

My previous school advocated a total communication approach, so symbols and lots of visuals form the basis of all class interaction. As part of the planning of practical food lessons, I worked closely with the class teachers and personalised pre-teaching and post-teaching activities were incorporated to prepare the pupils for each lesson and consolidate learning.

I developed a 'first, next and then' and a 'first/now and then' visual resource for some of the pupils using the *Food a fact of Life* resources for practical lessons, as a picture sequence was for some pupils the most appropriate way of assisting them to complete practical activities.

During practical lessons, support staff helped individuals to work at a pace that allowed them to progress.

Using a consistent, repetitive approach to teaching, utilising visual prompts and objects of reference, supported pupils' progression in retention of knowledge, and greater manual dexterity was noted over time.

KATE'S TIPS

1. Have a consistent approach to all aspects of teaching food.
2. Plan pre and post-teaching activities to enhance and support learning.
3. Explain, model/demonstrate and repeat skills and methods at a pace all pupils can access.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning lessons and practical activities

In practice, staff:

- plan Schemes of Work and lessons that are based on learning intent;
- are flexible and adapt lessons/activities to take into account pupils' individual needs and capabilities;
- are aware of, and build on, prior learning;
- consider individual needs when planning recipes, e.g. some pupils may find it difficult to focus on complex or longer recipes, whilst others may find complex recipes overwhelming;
- plan recipes that create interest in pupils, e.g. by using spices to stimulate their senses;
- plan activities that enable pupils to use all their senses and discover new tastes and textures, slowly over time and with repetition, if required;
- plan activities that enable pupils to become familiar with the different textures of food and/or parts of food;
- use repetition and regular practice to embed learning;
- create and use recipes in different formats to suit pupil needs, e.g. using symbols, images, pictures, words, storyboards, step by step, videos;
- make effective use of IT, e.g. videos of real-life situations.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Teach and reinforce skills, routines and working procedures continually throughout pupils' food education, so that these become default practice.
- Demonstrate progression through making recipes with an increasing number of ingredients, e.g. starting with two ingredients and then increasing the number.
- Demonstrate progression by making the same dish but using a more complex recipe, e.g. start with pizza toast, and then make a scone-based pizza, and finally a yeast-based dough pizza.
- Plan a lesson to make a stir-fry using a bag of ready-prepared vegetables and adding freshly grated ginger, Chinese five spice and the juice of a fresh lime to provide sensory stimulation (but bearing in mind that some pupils may not like food that is highly flavoured or not able to be served separately on a plate).
- Plan a lesson where a pupil feels a food to become familiar with its texture, e.g. a whole avocado. Then encourage the pupil to feel the prepared or cut food, e.g. the flesh of the avocado and the stone. Then encourage the pupils to taste the flesh. This activity could also be carried out using other fruit or vegetables, e.g. apple, orange, cucumber.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Routines and procedures

In practice, staff:

- establish classroom routines, procedures and rules for food lessons. For example:
 - how the classroom is set up;
 - how to get ready to cook, such as wearing an apron and washing hands;
 - how to handle ingredients and equipment hygienically and safely, such as not eating while cooking and using a clean spoon to taste food;
 - how to deal with recycling and food waste appropriately;
 - how to clear away/wash up after the lesson.
- set clear expectations and ensure all staff are consistent in applying these in every lesson;
- define and establish roles and responsibilities for teachers, teaching assistants, technicians, pupils and other staff, as appropriate;

- plan how food waste and packaging will be disposed of during the lesson, e.g. organise a container for food waste that will be composted, designate a recycling bin for packaging;
- plan ahead to help practical lessons run smoothly and take into account pupils' individual needs and capabilities, e.g. appropriate recipe formats, adapted equipment, pre-prepared ingredients, pre-lined tins, one-to-one support;
- use and display resources to support pupils, e.g. pictorial/symbol recipes, food skills videos, step-by-step recipes.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Label equipment storage boxes and/or cupboards and drawers with familiar symbols or real-life images of the equipment. Real-life photographs help the pupils make connections between settings and situations, e.g. school, home, the workplace.
- Label equipment storage boxes or cupboards with braille, if appropriate.
- Take photographs of the correct layout of equipment storage cupboards.
- Create a resource to act as a prompt when pupils put clean equipment away at the end of the lesson, this could be stuck inside the cupboard door or drawer.
- Where possible, ensure consistent symbols/ images are used throughout the school.
- Use a variety of recipe styles dependent on pupil needs, e.g. step-by-step photographs, symbols, symbols with words, recordings of instructions.
- Use visuals, symbols, words or photographs with Velcro attached to the back to show what the pupil will be doing 'now' and 'next' – step-by-step photographic recipes can also be used in this way.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 5 Developing skills for independent living](#), [8 Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices](#) and [9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Safe and easy to use food rooms/food spaces

In practice, staff:

- plan how the classroom furniture will be arranged during food lessons for safe movement around the room and avoiding bottlenecks;
- plan the placement and storage of equipment carefully and ensure pupils are familiar with procedures;
- store sharp equipment safely in a locked cupboard or drawer;
- ensure there is sufficient, hygienic storage space for ingredients and finished dishes, e.g. fridges, freezers and ambient storage (cupboards).

- ensure there is a fully supplied first-aid kit available, if this is part of the school's risk assessment.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use labelled photographs to identify the hand-washing sink, if available, and the sink to wash the equipment.
- Use photographs to illustrate the process of safe hand washing and the washing and drying of equipment.
- Ensure there is enough space for pupils using wheelchairs or other mobility aids to move safely around equipment, tables and other pupils.
- Provide equipment, such as tables, worktops and ovens/hobs that can be adjusted in height for safe use by all pupils.
- Provide physical supports such as handrails, where appropriate, for pupils to access practical activities safely.

- Position worktops/tables and equipment so that there are clear sightlines for both pupils and staff.
- Be aware that some pupils may need more space around them to avoid conflict.
- Provide a place to serve and eat the food and drink made.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Ingredients and equipment

In practice, staff:

- select appropriate ingredients based on pupils' dietary requirements, sensory needs and physical suitability;
- plan to make dishes that are predominantly savoury, using seasonal ingredients where possible;
- choose equipment that is suitable for the pupils being taught, e.g. the correct size, so it can be properly controlled by the pupil and is appropriate for pupil ability;
- have a process for checking out/in sharp equipment before/after the lesson;

- have a process for checking that equipment is in good working order and safe to use, e.g. no rust or broken parts;
- are aware of first-aid procedures if a pupil or staff member is injured during the food lesson/activity.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Part-prepare or pre-weigh ingredients, unless preparing or measuring is the main learning focus of the lesson.
- Use softer ingredients for pupils practising a new cutting technique or smaller sized ingredients for younger pupils with smaller hands.
- Use adapted equipment such as a knife with a handgrip, non-slip mats, mixing bowls with suction bases and pan guards.
- Use assistive technology software or hardware to enable inclusivity, e.g. dyslexia software, speech and hearing amplifiers, sound/switch adapted equipment such as blenders or virtual reality headsets.

- Practise opening bottles, cans, jars and packets by hand or using equipment, such as jar grippers and electric can openers.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 5 Developing skills for independent living](#) and [9 Developing practical food skills](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Stimulating learning environment

In practice, staff:

- create displays that engage pupils and provide a stimulating, bright environment, e.g. fruit and vegetables, the Eatwell Guide, names of equipment;
- use posters, pupils' work and other resources as a learning reference to assist pupils and stimulate discussion;
- use displays, photographs and images of role models to help break down barriers and misconceptions;
- consider seating arrangements or where pupils work for practical activities to encourage focus and attention

(depending on the needs of the pupils), e.g. near the teacher or another staff member; near another pupil that can support or be a role model, a quiet corner of the classroom;

- limit the noise in the classroom, where possible, to assist pupils with a visual or hearing impairment.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Create displays with images of people in the workplace, e.g. chefs, which reflect the pupils in school, so that they are seen as role models.
- Be aware that some pupils may find displays on walls distracting, so consider leaving an area of the classroom free from 'visual clutter'.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Safe and easy to use food rooms/food spaces

In practice, staff:

- make sure that routines are established with pupils, e.g. 'clean as you go' procedures;
- constantly model expectations for safe and hygienic working, e.g. washing hands and washing and drying equipment;
- are aware of individual pupils' dietary needs (such as allergies), including sensory issues, and take these into account when planning activities;
- adapt spaces, equipment and procedures to take into account pupil needs and behaviours, always ensuring that safe and hygienic practices are followed;

- plan to ensure that food waste is minimised and composted where possible, or used in cooking;
- recycle where possible and organise disposal of rubbish;
- ensure that laundry is regularly washed and stored correctly.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Position pupils so that everyone can see and be seen. Make this a repeated activity so it becomes default for pupils at school, home and future work.
- If required, allow pupils to wear gloves when handling food, use scissors to cut food or use a fork to secure food when cutting so that they do not have to touch food during preparation.
- Where possible, explain, model/ demonstrate and repeat practical food skills, e.g. explain how to hold a knife safely, demonstrate how to cut a piece of food using the bridge hold or claw grip, ask the pupils to repeat/show the process.
- Encourage pupil-centred modelling and ask pupils who have secured a skill to demonstrate it to other pupils.
- Adopt a 'thinking out loud' approach, e.g. when getting ready to cook, ask pupils to talk through what they are doing.
- Encourage pupils to talk about what they are doing and why.
- Teach pupils to place tea towels and cloths used for food activities into a laundry basket and/or wash them, so they know they are dirty and need to be cleaned.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Provide opportunities for pupils to undertake food preparation and cooking activities regularly throughout their learning journey.
- Ensure that there is space and sufficient equipment, including adapted resources, to enable practical work with food. This will also include adequate budgets, e.g. equipment and ingredients.
- Make composting and recycling facilities available and encourage use by staff and pupils after food is consumed or after practical food lessons.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Complete effective risk assessments that are specific to the pupils and the environment they are working in. Make sure all staff have access to the risk assessments and have a process in place to review and update as necessary.
- Establish and maintain rigorous standards of hygiene and safety (based on best practice) that are monitored and reviewed regularly.
- Establish cleaning schedules for the practical food room; these should be monitored and reviewed as necessary.

- Make sure that all staff undertaking practical food activities understand the school first-aid procedures and that these must be followed.
- Use senior pupils/prefects before and after school to support the teacher (preparation of equipment, resources and lessons).

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Create a display of photos showing the pupils working in a food lesson in the school reception area to ignite an interest in food in other pupils.
- Invite the link governor, head teacher or a member of the senior leadership team to observe, and perhaps participate in, a food lesson.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 74.

Characteristic 8

Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils prepare, cook and serve a variety of drinks, meals, dishes and snacks, and taste a variety of food, hygienically and safely.

Overview

- Staff establish food hygiene and safety procedures and practices to prevent bacterial multiplication, food poisoning and allergic reactions.
- Staff integrate food hygiene and safety teaching during practical food lessons to help pupils learn about, and apply, food hygiene and safety procedures and practices.
- Staff integrate food hygiene and safety teaching appropriately, and with relevance, when developing pupils' skills for independent living and work.
- Staff and other adults act as role models and demonstrate good food hygiene and safety practices.
- Staff use teaching resources and equipment that support the highest standards of food hygiene and safety.
- Staff ensure ingredients are purchased from a reputable supplier; are in date and are stored correctly before, during and after lessons.
- Staff ensure equipment for food lessons is well maintained and stored safely and appropriately.
- Staff ensure provision has been made for pupils with food allergies, intolerances and/or other dietary requirements, including sensory issues, so they can participate safely in food activities.
- Staff ensure guidance regarding food hygiene and safety during food lessons is embedded in the whole school food policy.



Jessica Simpson
Ogilvie School,
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CASE STUDY

When delivering food-based experiences within in any educational setting, it is important that food hygiene and safety underpins each lesson. When I moved into the Additional Support Needs sector from a mainstream school, it was important for me to still have those high expectations and standards, yet I needed to change my delivery and approach to meet the complex needs of the pupils. I quickly realised that routines and room layout are imperative to establish safe practices.

To support routines and food-based lessons, I have adapted a wide range of resources, including the use of pictures, symbols, objects of reference and 'how and next' cards. At each work area, splash backs have pictorial or symbolised routine strips for washing hands, washing dishes,

and drying and storing equipment. This is reinforced during teaching. I also use staff support to role model the hygiene practices, for example 'clean as you go', and the correct use of vocabulary to encourage development and growth of skills required.

As we build strong procedures and routines at appropriate levels, we are able to focus on the skills for learning, life and work.

JESSICA'S TIPS

1. Break down routines so they are manageable and repeat regularly.
2. Back up routines with visual aids.
3. Ensure all support staff are using correct terminology and techniques to best support pupils, making lessons consistent.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Getting ready to cook

In practice, staff:

- establish a routine for pupils to get ready to cook, modelled by all staff. Examples include:

- placing ingredients in the food room at the start of the day and storing in the correct place (if parents/carers provide the ingredients);
- removing blazers and jumpers (if appropriate), before starting a food lesson/activity;
- removing nail varnish and jewellery;
- keeping school bags away from food preparation areas;
- tying up long hair, ensuring it is not hanging down;

- securing long head scarves or coverings;
- rolling up long sleeves;
- thoroughly washing and drying hands;
- putting on a clean apron.

- illustrate and reinforce the procedures using labelled photographs or images.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Create displays to reinforce the importance of getting ready to cook, such as:

- posters of hospitality workers who are 'ready to cook';
- pupils' work showing the stages of getting ready to cook;
- a mannequin dressed and 'ready to cook'.

- Use videos and social stories to reinforce the importance of getting ready to cook.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Food hygiene and safety procedures

In practice, staff:

- check date marks on ambient, chilled and frozen food. Label open bottles and jars in the fridge with an 'opened on date' to ensure good stock management. Label and date food in the freezer, where appropriate;
- ensure ingredients are stored correctly before and after use;
- avoid washing raw meat to prevent cross-contamination;
- use digital temperature probes to check the core temperature of cooked food is at least 75°C (or 70°C for 2 minutes);
- make sure that hot food is cooled quickly and stored below 5°C within 1-2 hours;

- ensure that finished dishes are stored appropriately in the food room until the end of the day;
- place any dishes not collected by pupils in food waste bins after 48 hours, or 24 hours for rice dishes;
- ensure first-aid procedures are in place in case of accidents.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Show how food is stored as part of a lesson or display.
- Highlight first-aid procedures visually around the room, e.g. using posters.
- Explain first-aid procedures to pupils so that they know what to do if they injure themselves, e.g. role-play a situation where a staff member pretends to have an accident, being aware that some pupils might find this distressing.

- Demonstrate how to hygienically use a digital temperature probe, making sure it is cleaned with an anti-bacterial wipe before and after use.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Safe and hygienic food spaces

In practice, staff:

- ensure the space used for food work is clear; and that tables/work surfaces are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray or wipes;
- make sure there is access to a sink with hot and cold water and anti-bacterial handwash, where pupils and staff can wash their hands;
- make sure there is access to a sink with hot and cold water and washing up liquid, where pupils can wash fruit and vegetables (in a bowl of cold water or under a running tap), and equipment after use;

- ensure that cleaning chemicals are stored away from the food area, in a locked cupboard or cabinet.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use plug socket covers to prevent pupils from putting fingers and other objects into them.
- Unplug electrical appliances so that they are not accidentally or deliberately turned on when not in use.
- Use stove locks to prevent them being turned on when not in use.
- Label hand washing sinks with photographs.
- Label equipment washing sinks with photographs.
- If tables are general classroom furniture and not used solely for food preparation, cover with clean, plastic tablecloths.
- Use different coloured or patterned cloths for different jobs, e.g. washing up, wiping surfaces, cleaning the floor.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Safe and hygienic practices

In practice, staff:

- regularly practise effective hand washing techniques with pupils as part of their 'getting ready to cook' routine;
- confidently and competently, demonstrate how to prepare food safely and hygienically, to prevent cross-contamination or injury;
- demonstrate safe use of sharp equipment and electrical items, e.g. knives, graters, blender;
- understand the challenges that some pupils will face, e.g. single handed, lack of muscle strength, visual impairment, using a wheelchair;
- use oven gloves when handling hot items or taking items in or out of the oven (pupils to be supervised);
- establish clear guidelines for sampling food and drink hygienically, e.g. no licking fingers, eating while cooking;

- use clean, tidy and effective procedures for practical activities, including demonstrations;
- demonstrate the correct use of equipment for practical activities to prevent cross-contamination, e.g. red chopping board for raw meat;
- demonstrate effective and safe washing of equipment, e.g. use hot water and washing up liquid, clean less dirty equipment (such as glasses) first, wash saucepans and baking dishes last. Rinse and dry with a clean tea towel or paper towel.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use social stories, or pictorial explanations, to let pupils know in advance if something is going to be noisy, e.g. a blender, or potentially dangerous, e.g. a sharp knife or hot pan.
- Create a display of pupils' work highlighting food hygiene and safety procedures, e.g. posters of effective handwashing, safe use of electrical equipment, safe tasting of food.
- Illustrate correct hand washing techniques using labelled images next to the hand wash sink.
- Practise effective washing and drying of equipment until it becomes the default.
- Create a display showing the equipment used to wash up.
- Use a variety of equipment to support pupils, e.g. a dough hook or metal pastry cutter to cut food instead of a knife.
- Demonstrate the safe use of electrical equipment, e.g. correct assembly, safe use of blades/guards, not using near water/ submerging in water to clean.
- Use chopping boards with images of the food on to support pupils that may be unable to recognise different colours.
- Support pupils to recognise similarities in other settings in order to transfer knowledge to the wider world, e.g. storing food safely in the home, school or work place.
- Teach pupils to spray the cloth and not the table when cleaning, to enable them to transfer this skill from home/school to the workplace.
- Use pump dispensers for washing up liquid to prevent overuse or harm through ingestion.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Allergies and intolerances

In practice, staff:

- store food containing allergenic ingredients in containers with lids to prevent cross-contamination;
- make sure equipment is used, cleaned and stored separately to prevent cross-contamination of allergens;
- check ingredient food labels used in practical activities to ensure that they do not contain ingredients that any pupils should not consume (as identified by parents/carers);
- inform all pupils about the importance of not sharing ingredients or equipment that have come into contact with ingredients to which others in the lesson may have an allergy or intolerance;

- ensure the procedures for food tasting are safe and hygienic, being aware of food allergies and intolerances and prevention of cross-contamination;
- be aware, and vigilant, that pupils may still want to consume the food or drink that they are allergic or intolerant to.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Use labelled photographs to identify food containing allergenic ingredients.
- Keep an up-to-date record of all allergies and intolerances to food and drink that staff and pupils may have, along with other issues around food, e.g. sensory or behaviour.

Other examples:

For further details see [Characteristics 4 Teaching the curriculum](#), [5 Developing skills for independent living](#) and [6 Developing skills for work](#).

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Establish procedures to ensure that pupil and staff food allergies and intolerances are known, recorded and reviewed regularly.
- Use labelled photographs/images throughout the school to reinforce effective hand washing techniques, e.g. in the food room, pupil toilets, snack preparation areas.
- Plan staff meetings with a focus on food hygiene and safety.
- Invite the school cook or caterer to talk to staff about how they approach food safety and hygiene.
- Encourage all staff that are involved in the delivery of food education to complete a Level 2 food hygiene course, as part of the school's due diligence.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Establish cleaning schedules for the practical food room; these should be monitored and reviewed.

- Complete daily fridge temperature checks, record and monitor.
- Create a 'dishes and their allergen content' board for use in the practical room. Use the board to identify the allergenic ingredients present in directed recipes made by pupils. Use this chart from the Food Standards Agency as a guide: [Dishes and their allergen content](#).

Classroom teacher/teaching assistant

- Write songs using familiar tunes, for pupils to sing at an assembly about good food hygiene and safety.

Other examples:



A list of useful websites to support this Characteristic can be found on page 74

Characteristic 9

Developing practical food skills

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils acquire, develop and secure a range of practical food skills and use a range of cooking methods so they can prepare, cook and serve a variety of drinks, meals, dishes and snacks hygienically and safely.

Overview

- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to acquire, develop and secure practical food skills so they can feed themselves well, keep healthy, and develop skills for independent living and work.
- Staff expose pupils to a range of practical food skills and cooking methods that work best for each pupil, using a variety of ingredients and a range of appropriate equipment.
- Staff integrate practical food skills into Schemes of Work and lessons, demonstrating progression in the development of practical food skills, precision/accuracy, use of equipment and complexity of recipes over time.
- Staff ensure teaching resources, recipes, ingredients and equipment used are capability appropriate, encourage an awareness and understanding of safe practices, and promote current healthy eating advice.
- Staff undertake assessment that reflects pupil-centred learning intent and provides constructive feedback to pupils.



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Programme
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CASE STUDY

When delivering the Springboard Let's Cook programme (a 10-week programme over two days a week covering industry knowledge, employability and cooking skills), we acknowledge the importance of applying nutrition principles, using locally sourced and seasonal foods, and having the opportunity to extend the range of taste experiences by trying new foods.

When planning a session, we always start with the basics:

- knife skills;
- easy and interesting food plans;
- taster sessions to encourage wider understanding of healthy choices;
- food groups and extended knowledge, e.g. different cuts of meat, pasta, seafood.

We also look to extend underpinning knowledge and understanding. For example, when we make breads we explain the science involved. It's not

just simply making bread! There are also additional opportunities to be creative, add flavours and shape the breads to have fun with the learning.

Over the course of the programme, the aim is for the pupils to work together to discuss, plan, budget and create a two-course meal for family and friends in celebration of their hard work and achievements.

JAN'S TIPS

1. Start simply and build on the experience. Everyone has more to give than they first think and this way everyone can experience success.
2. Use a variety of ingredients and different cooking methods/styles to develop a wide range of practical skills.
3. Encourage experimentation, creativity and presentation skills while being supportive and giving guidance.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Planning

In practice, staff:

- review practical food skills previously taught to pupils through formal education or social and family experiences;
- ensure planning reflects pupils' family/ social circumstances, food availability in the local area and financial circumstances;
- define and map out practical food skill progression in Schemes of Work;
- develop practical activities that are age/ ability appropriate, building on previous experiences, skills learned and pupil preferences;
- plan activities that are inclusive and enable pupils with physical disabilities to take part and develop practical food skills, making adaptations where appropriate;
- focus on practical food skill learning intent, not recipe outcome;
- are flexible and plan food activities that can be undertaken in a variety of food spaces, e.g. a classroom, snack area, dining room, sensory room, flat, or specialist classroom;
- plan practical activities that develop skills for independent living and ensure that pupils can feed themselves well and keep healthy;
- ensure planning reflects the cultural diversity of pupils and local environment;
- enable pupils to experience a wide variety of foods that may not be available at home;
- use food as a context to develop literacy and numeracy skills as well as physical skills, e.g. reading/listening to recipe instructions, weighing and measuring;
- ensure individual pupil needs and capabilities are considered, and risk assessments are undertaken, shared and followed;
- are sensitive to the needs of pupils who are tube-fed or are on a restricted diet and plan an inclusive food experience for them wherever possible;
- use a variety of assessment styles, including self, peer, and teacher.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Consider potential risks and behavioural issues when planning practical activities and ensure other staff are made aware of these.
- Consider the individuals in the group and how they may interact with staff and other pupils.
- Be aware that some pupils may live in a care setting which may impact their past and future learning experiences.
- Plan pupil-centered practical activities that focus on the individual needs of the pupils in the class, e.g. some pupils may wipe and prick potatoes ready to be microwaved and others may peel, dice, boil, drain and mash potatoes for mashed potatoes.
- Use pre-prepared ingredients to support pupil learning, e.g. ready-made pastry, frozen or sliced vegetables.
- Use pupil-centred modelling where appropriate, especially if working with a mixed age group, e.g. ask a pupil who has secured a practical food skill, such as dicing an onion, to demonstrate to another pupil or the rest of the class.
- Make a recipe on several occasions, so that the different steps and food skills are practised, and support is decreased over time as pupil confidence/competence increases.
- Ensure that food activities are inclusive to all pupils through providing adapted equipment, assisted technology and/or accessible/adjustable tables, sinks and cookers.
- Provide opportunities for pupils with severe learning needs to participate through sensory activities, e.g. touching raw and cooked bread dough, tasting edible paper flavoured with lemon/lime juice, smelling fresh and dried herbs and spices.
- Consider the focus of food skills lessons/activities, including:
 - weighing and measuring using balance/digital scales, measuring jugs, measuring spoons, cups, hands;
 - opening and closing packets, jars, bottles by hand or with equipment;
 - using knives, scissors, graters, peelers;
 - using hands and fingers to mix, rub-in, form and shape;
 - using small equipment such as a sieve, rolling pin, mixing spoons, fish slice, cutters;
 - using small electrical equipment such as a kettle, toaster, electric whisk, microwave, blender, food processor, soup maker, bread machine;
 - using the cooker (hob, grill and oven);
 - using pans, baking trays, dishes and tins;
 - serving prepared items.

For further information about practical food skills, techniques and equipment, see Appendix: Practical food skills chart.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Recipes and practical activities

In practice, staff:

- use tried and tested recipes and avoid pupils selecting recipes from internet searches/magazines which may not have the desired learning intent;
- ensure recipes promote current healthy eating advice and are predominantly savoury;
- ensure recipes develop practical food skills over time;
- create and use a variety of recipe formats to suit pupil needs;
- expose pupils to recipes and ingredients from different traditions and countries;
- plan practical activities to allow pupils to develop their food skills and build confidence over time;
- use food as a vehicle for inclusion and to develop fine motor skills, e.g. gripping, twisting;

- provide creative experiences around food to encourage recognition and familiarisation;
- enable pupils to link recipes to different contexts, e.g. celebrations, occasions, home, eating out, work;
- encourage pupils to explore and evaluate ingredients using their senses, e.g. smell, taste, but with an awareness of sensory issues for some pupils.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Ensure all recipes and practical activities follow the same pattern to develop independent working.
- Create and use a variety of styles of recipes, e.g. using symbols, pictures/images, simple commands extending to more complex instructions.
- Show a variety of uses of recipes, e.g. at home (a recipe book or the internet), in the school kitchen, a restaurant, café or pub.
- Encourage pupils to keep a recipe book or create their own recipes using index cards.
- Enable pupils to share recipes with others through written tasks or by email, if appropriate.
- Use recipes for guided reading or to develop numeracy skills, not just for 'cooking lessons'.
- Provide creative experiences around food, not just 'cooking' experiences, e.g. create pictures with dried pasta, painting with broccoli florets or growing 'cress-heads' in yogurt pots.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Teaching skills

In practice, staff:

- are confident in teaching, demonstrating and using a wide range of practical food skills;
- practise their own practical food skills before teaching pupils;
- develop their own practical 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/food activities regarding hygiene and safety expectations and the way food skills should be demonstrated and carried out;

- expose pupils to new experiences, ingredients and/or skills, e.g. invite a chef into school to demonstrate a particular food skill, a butcher to show how to prepare meat dishes or a local food producer to show some of the produce they grow;
- encourage pupils to support their peers in class.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Understand the specific needs of pupils and employ different teaching strategies to support them. For example:
 - demonstrate cutting techniques to an individual pupil, such as the bridge hold or claw grip. Explain the technique, model/demonstrate and then repeat. Ask the pupil to do the same: explain what they are going to do; cut the food and then repeat the technique;
 - ask another member of staff to guide a pupil's hand when cutting or support a pupil to operate a switch to start a blender or food processor.

- Encourage pupils to experience different settings in order to develop their food skills, e.g. a school or community café, work experience with a local employer, short courses at a local college.

Other examples:

For further details see Characteristics 4 Teaching the curriculum, 5 Developing skills for independent living, 7 Running practical food lessons and 8 Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices.

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 to undertake cooking activities.
- Ensure appropriate facilities and equipment for food lessons and practical activities.
- Enable staff to develop their own food skills, e.g. through undertaking practical skills courses, arranging for appropriate visitors to provide food preparation demonstrations.
- Support families, parents and carers to work with pupils outside of school to develop practical food skills and create healthy recipes.
- Organise a monthly local market on the school site working with several local producers that encourages contacts with local businesses, pupil enterprise and work experience.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Work and plan effectively with technicians and support staff to ensure the smooth running of practical activities, including positive behaviour management strategies.
- Create links with local supermarkets and food producers. Provide opportunities for pupils to visit the shop/producer or for visitors to come into school.
- Create links with organisations that provide food and ingredients through redistribution schemes from local producers and supermarkets.

- Produce 'cooking at home' packs for parents and carers with a recipe to make a healthy meal.
- Run parent/carer healthy eating and cooking workshops.
- Invite parents/carers into school for a coffee morning or lunch created and served by the pupils.
- Fundraise for donations to support the creation of a space for pupils to develop independent living skills around food, such as a flat or community café.

Classroom teacher/teaching assistant

- Discuss positive strategies for behaviour management around food with parents/carers.
- Plan a school visit to experience using new ingredients and learning new skills.
- Plan a trip for pupils to experience food in other settings, e.g. a café, leisure centre, farm shop or supermarket.
- Build in the opportunity for competition-style activities that can be used to teach specialist knowledge/skills for working in 'food', e.g. food styling and presentation.

Other examples:



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

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.



Joe Mann
Torquay Girls'
Grammar School
Devon, England



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;
- visit a supermarket, local farm shop or farmers market to find out more about ingredients;
- discuss reducing food waste and composting with pupils;
- 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 just the leaves;
- develop lessons around using store cupboard ingredients, frozen or canned food or food provided by food banks.

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.

Characteristic 11

Healthy eating

A characteristic of good practice when teaching pupils with additional needs is that pupils learn about healthy eating and can apply this to make healthier choices.

Overview

- Staff demonstrate knowledge of the Eatwell Guide, the UK healthy eating model, including its food groups, and current dietary advice, and apply this in their teaching.
- Staff ensure that healthy eating messages are clear and consistent throughout the school day, including food and drink at mealtimes, before and after school sessions and during breaktimes.
- Staff ensure information sources are reliable and evidence based, developing teaching resources based upon this information and share these with colleagues in school.
- Staff develop Schemes of Work and lessons that integrate healthy eating and demonstrate progression in the development of key concepts and its application over time. Healthy eating is embedded throughout all aspects of food learning, including practical food lessons and food-based activities.
- Staff use ingredients and equipment that promote current healthy eating advice.
- Staff provide pupils with the opportunity to apply and explain their knowledge of food groups and healthy eating through planning, verbal/written tasks and food activities.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to share healthy eating messages with parents/carers.



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School and College
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CASE STUDY

As a residential special school, we have a whole school approach to healthy eating based around the Eatwell Guide.

The school is for deaf pupils, many with additional needs, and the approach is to be flexible and adapt to a variety of individual needs. Although most can take part in established, interactive Eatwell activities, this does not necessarily translate into practice. Some pupils will not be willing to touch or eat foods that are outside of their preferences or experiences. Establishing confidence in and around food is the key to engagement.

For example, a pupil did not want to eat anything with his bread. This pupil has a special interest in trains, so we cut out a train shape from a slice of bread, added an egg and baked it in the oven. The pupil said he did not want the egg,

but undertook the activity because he wanted to make his train. He was very happy with his finished dish; he then tried it and ate a tiny bit of egg – I considered this huge progress for this pupil.

SILVIA'S TIPS

1. Progress with healthy eating for some pupils will be in very, very, small steps. Progress may not be apparent at first, but this is okay.
2. Start with some tasting of foods that you know they like, to give them confidence to be in the room, around food and with you.
3. Do not make a 'big thing' around the types of food selected – just slowly increase the choice and variety of food available over time.

Putting the characteristic into practice

The Eatwell Guide (the UK healthy eating model)

In practice, staff:

- use the Eatwell Guide as the cornerstone of healthy eating teaching;
- use reliable, evidence based sources of information about healthy eating and share these with other staff;
- plan and apply a consistent whole school food approach to healthy eating and dietary recommendations;
- ensure that there is a consistent approach to healthy eating across all food-based activities and food and drink opportunities, e.g. independent living activities, school trips and behaviour management, e.g. do not reward with confectionery;
- ensure that the main healthy eating recommendations act as a thread throughout all work. These include 5 A DAY, reducing salt, sugar and fat, increasing fibre and eating more fish (two portions a week, one of which should be oily);
- ensure that the message of at least 6-8 drinks to be consumed per day is used;
- consider portion size to pupils' age when planning and delivering lessons;
- plan a series of practical/food-based activities that illustrate the use of a variety of ingredients from the different Eatwell Guide food groups;
- discuss the Eatwell Guide food groups and encourage pupils to consider what it means to them, e.g. 5 A DAY, two portions of fish a week, at least 6-8 drinks a day;
- select recipes that reflect healthy eating recommendations;
- explore the main nutrients provided by each of the food groups, e.g. fat, protein, carbohydrate (fibre, starches and sugars), vitamins and minerals, plus water; where appropriate for a pupil's individual learning journey;
- provide opportunities for pupils to investigate sources of different nutrients, highlighting their functions, where appropriate for a pupil's individual learning journey;
- provide opportunities for pupils to share healthy eating messages with their parents/carers.

Other examples:



Putting the characteristic into practice

Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Provide opportunities for pupils to familiarise themselves with foods from each of the Eatwell Guide food groups and develop manual dexterity, vocabulary, recognition and numeracy through play, e.g. set up a greengrocers using artificial fruit and vegetables and ask pupils to sell, to an adult or another pupil, a bag of apples (or another fruit/vegetable).
- Encourage pupils to learn how to make hot and cold drinks and recognise how they fit into the 'at least 6-8 drinks a day' message.
- Teach pupils to use easy and appropriate portion size measurements, such as handfuls. See the [Get Portion Wise](#) resources, from the British Nutrition Foundation, for a guide to using hands or spoons to measure ingredients.
- Develop pupils' numeracy skills and understanding of healthy eating messages by counting fruit and vegetables (real, artificial or images) for their 5 A DAY.
- Encourage pupils to wash or scrub fruit and vegetables, rather than peeling them (to increase the fibre content of recipes), e.g. potatoes for mashed potato or carrots for vegetable soup.
- Develop independent living skills through making a range of lunch items that promote healthy eating messages, e.g. jacket potato with reduced fat cheese, or baked beans on wholemeal toast to encourage pupils to eat more fibre.
- Plan recipes that demonstrate the use of herbs and spices instead of salt, to add flavour.
- Explain, model and repeat healthy eating messages regularly.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Diet and health

In practice, staff:

- are aware of pupils' individual dietary and health needs;
- teach pupils to consider the needs of different people, including dietary restrictions, when planning lessons, dishes and menus;
- help pupils plan a menu for a day, investigating whether it meets healthy eating recommendations, e.g. 5 A DAY, basing meals on starchy food, at least 6-8 drinks;
- use recipes that are predominantly savoury;

- use menus to support choosing dishes for themselves and others.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Plan and make a simple dish, such as scrambled egg on toast, and discuss with the pupils the different food groups used. Ask the pupils to match the food with the correct food group on the Eatwell Guide.
- Share a range of meal ideas and ask pupils if they look healthy and balanced. Create meals which deliberately do not have any fruit, vegetables or drinks (for example). The meals can be created using food cards, illustrations or symbols.
- Gather a selection of restaurant or takeaway menus and discuss healthier options.

- Discuss healthier choices with pupils when eating out, e.g. jacket potatoes or oven-baked potato wedges instead of chips, no butter on vegetables, opting for balsamic vinegar rather than a dressing for salads, not adding salt to meals.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Making choices

In practice, staff:

- are aware of pupils' individual needs and behaviours around food, such as tactile defensiveness or touch-sensory sensitivity, and provide pupil-centred alternatives;
- help pupils read food labels to help them compare products and make informed decisions;
- encourage pupils to make healthier decisions when choosing food and drink, during the school day or when on trips and visits.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Offer alternatives when tasting food, e.g. some pupils may not like the feel of a sticky, soft banana, but would eat a slice of dried apple.
 - Use a selection of packaging to practise label reading/recognition, particularly front-of-pack nutrition labels (traffic light colours, go for greens and ambers). Use labels for similar dishes, such as sandwiches or pizzas, to show how to make healthier choices, e.g. a lower salt option.
 - Provide pupils with the opportunity to make choices at snack or lunchtime and demonstrate their likes or dislikes.
- Other examples:
- 'Think out loud' when making healthy eating choices to help pupils understand the decision making process, e.g. when choosing a filling for a sandwich or a jacket potato at lunchtime.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Establish a breakfast club for pupils to ensure that pupils who have not had breakfast have one in school. Support, guidance and funding for breakfast clubs is provided to schools across the UK by a number of organisations, see links on page 75.
- Work with the school cook/caterer to develop menus that ensure consistent healthy eating messages across the school.
- Register for, and participate in, British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week. Make sure the whole school community are aware of the event and how they can be involved.
- Add information to the school website or regular newsletter about healthy eating, to encourage pupils and their families to follow government recommendations.
- Enable staff to undertake online or face-to-face accredited training on nutrition and healthy eating.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Work with colleagues in other curricula areas to ensure that pupils receive consistent, up-to-date information about nutrition and healthy eating. Learning should be cross-referenced across areas to demonstrate progression.

- Organise a display and tasting session at open evening/parents events to raise awareness of the Eatwell Guide.
- Liaise with the PE lead to have a display or stands at sports day or another sporting event to highlight the importance of healthy eating and staying hydrated.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Undertake online or face-to-face training on healthy eating and disseminate the information to all staff.
- Teach pupils, where appropriate, how to calculate the energy and nutrients provided by a recipe or diet, e.g. using the Explore Food nutritional analysis tool (available at www.foodafactoflife.org.uk).

Other examples:



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

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

CASE STUDY

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/carers, 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 lick, 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.

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exploring factors that affect food choice

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to learn that the choices people make around food and drink depend on a number of factors, such as allergy, intolerance, age, religion, personal preference, cost, time of day and occasion;
- consider local issues, religious, cultural, socio-economic and ethical beliefs when planning activities and dishes;
- devise lessons to allow pupils to explore personal preferences;
- introduce pupils to a range of fruit and vegetables, with an awareness of culture, parental/carer confidence and budgets;

- run food tasting lessons, enabling pupils to use their senses to taste and evaluate different food, being sensitive to those pupils who are tube-fed, on restrictive diets or have food allergies or intolerances.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Make art stamps using fruit and vegetables to introduce variety without pupils having to taste the food, e.g. if they have food sensitivities.
- Develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through conducting a survey, using words, symbols or pictures, to find out about class or staff food preferences.
- Discuss meal occasions and the types of foods commonly eaten for each occasion. Make a dish for breakfast, lunch and an evening meal to familiarise pupils with the differences.
- Create a display of favourite meals and drinks, helping to show variety and personal choice.

- Ask pupils to draw a picture of themselves. Around the portrait, ask them to show in words, symbols, pictures or drawings, all the factors that affect their food choices, including likes and dislikes. Where appropriate, ask the pupils to explain their answers.

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Making food choices

In practice, staff:

- provide opportunities for pupils to recognise healthy choices through practical experiences, e.g. selecting school meals, independent living activities, shopping, using food labels;
- challenge pupils to create new, or modify existing, recipes for different people and occasions, e.g. look at menus from a range of high street food outlets, choose a meal for a specific person and justify their choice;
- demonstrate how informed choices can be made through using food labels, ingredient lists and nutrition information (front and back-of-pack labels);

- encourage pupils to modify recipes, dishes and menus, based on their food tasting experience, and talk about the changes made and why.

Other examples:



Considerations when teaching pupils with additional needs

- Enable pupils to select between two simple choices, making the choices more complex over time, e.g. grapes or an apple at snack/breaktime, picking from two different pizzas.
- Plan a series of lessons that investigate how the cost of meals can be reduced through careful planning, choice of ingredients and cooking. These could include:
 - using local and/or seasonal produce;
 - using cheaper cuts of meat;
 - batch cooking;
 - using 'leftover' food to make a dish, e.g. mashed potatoes in fish cakes;
 - buying canned or frozen food or value/own brand ranges.
- Plan lessons that illustrate how special occasions are often linked to food, e.g. birthdays. Enable pupils to create dishes to share with their peers, where appropriate, encouraging them to taste new food, practise sharing with others and make choices based on preferences (likes and dislikes).

- Using several menus from high street food outlets, encourage pupils to choose a meal and explain their choice.
- Plan a series of lessons around eating to a budget, using leftovers or 'store-cupboard meals'.
- Look at a range of food packaging. Ask pupils to identify what information is used to help make a choice, e.g. nutritional content, ingredients, date marks, storage instructions, serving instructions, image/photo, quantity/number of servings, price (including special offers).

Other examples:

Putting the characteristic into practice

Exemplary practice

Governor/head teacher/senior leadership team

- Provide parents/carers with information and advice, to support healthy choices for their families and ensure a consistent message between school and home.
- Offer parent/carer and pupil practical classes to encourage healthy eating choices, development of practical skills and enjoyment of cooking.

Curriculum lead/coordinator

- Create a display in the entrance hall or library area, highlighting the factors affecting food choice.
- Work with parents/carers or members of the local community to offer a variety of cultural experiences to staff and pupils, e.g. tasting sessions, talks or cooking activities, using local or traditional ingredients/techniques.

Class teacher/teaching assistant

- Visit a local supermarket and investigate the seasonal fruit and vegetables on offer. Allow the pupils to choose an item and pay for it independently. Prepare the fruit/vegetables, cook if necessary, and taste them.

Other examples:



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

Further sources of information and support

Characteristic 1: Developing professional competence

Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in primary schools (BNF 2020)

Characteristics of good practice in teaching food and nutrition education in secondary schools (BNF 2019)

Education Endowment Foundation – Making the best use of teaching assistants

Education Scotland (inspections)

Estyn (Wales)

Food – a fact of life reflection, review and planning tools

Food teaching in schools: a framework of knowledge and skills (PHE/DfE 2015) (primary)

Food teaching in schools: a framework of knowledge and skills (PHE/DfE 2015) (secondary)

General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland

Office for Standards in Education (England)

Teacher professional development Wales (Professional Standards)

Teachers' standards (England)

The Education and Training Inspectorate (Northern Ireland)

The General Teaching Council for Scotland

Free school meals (Northern Ireland)

Free school meals (Scotland)

Free school meals (Wales)

Greggs Foundation breakfast clubs

Health and wellbeing in schools (Scotland)

Healthier breakfast clubs (Northern Ireland)

Healthy Schools Scotland

Healthy schools rating scheme (England)

Kellogs Breakfast Club Network

Magic Breakfast (breakfast clubs in England and Scotland)

School food nutrition standards (England)

School food nutrition standards (Northern Ireland)

School food nutrition standards (Scotland)

School food nutrition standards (Wales)

School food standards: resources for schools (England)

School Milk Scheme (England)

School Milk Scheme (Northern Ireland)

School Milk Scheme (Scotland)

School Milk Scheme (Wales)

Welsh Network of Healthy School Schemes

Note: check your local area for Healthy Schools initiatives.

Characteristic 3: Knowing your pupils

Additional Support for Learning: statutory guidance 2017 (Scotland)

ADHD Foundation

Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder (AFRID)

British Dyslexia Association

Council for disabled children

Down's Syndrome Association

Disabled children and the Equality Act 2010: Early Years

Disability – education rights

Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010

Education Endowment Foundation – Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools – five recommendations

Education, health and care plans information (England)

Education Authority (Northern Ireland) – Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Information for parents of children with SEND from the UK government

Mencap

Mind

National Association for Special Educational Needs (nasen)

National Autistic Society

National Deaf Children's Society

Pre-Key Stage Standards 2020/21 onwards (England)

Royal Society for Blind Children

SEN and disability early years tool kit

SEN Magazine

Sense

Social and emotional behavioural needs – Education Scotland

Special Educational Needs (Wales)

Special educational needs and disabilities: code of practice: 0-25 years (England)

Special educational needs: code of practice (Northern Ireland)

Special educational needs: code of practice (Wales)

The Equality Act 2010 and schools

Characteristic 2: Taking a whole school approach

British Nutrition Foundation Healthy Eating Week

Establishing a whole school food policy (Northern Ireland)

Food – a fact of life: whole school approach

Food for life – transforming food culture

Free breakfast in primary schools (Wales)

Free food and fitness in Wales

Free school meals (England)



Further sources of information and support

Characteristic 4:

Teaching the curriculum,

Characteristic 5: Developing skills for independent living,

Characteristic 6:

Developing skills for work

Adopt a School (Royal Academy of Culinary Arts)

ASDAN awards

BBC Bitesize (Home Economics: Food and Nutrition CCEA)

BTEC Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 1 Introductory (Hospitality) – Pearson Qualifications

BTEC Home Cooking Skills – Pearson Qualifications

Building Bulletin: Designing for disabled children and children with SEN

CareerScope

Chilled Education

Core competences for children and young people aged 5-16

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (Northern Ireland)

Crest awards

Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland)

Curriculum for Wales 2008

Curriculum for Wales 2022

Design and Technology Progression Framework (England)

Eat Like A Champ

Education Endowment Foundation – Using Digital Technology to Improve Learning

Entry Level Home Economics – CCEA

Entry Pathways Qualifications – WJEC

Flo Longhorn sensory books – free download

Food – a fact of life

Food – a fact of life careers in food resources

Food4life

Food Teachers Centre

Food – a fact of life guidance for setting up a practical lesson

Food teaching progression chart 5-11 years (UK)

Foxes Hospitality and Catering College (Foxes Hotel)

FutureChef

Grow Your Own Potatoes

Guidelines for producing education resources for schools about food

Institute of Food Science and Technology

Learning resources for SEN (CCEA)

Level 1/2 Hospitality and Catering – WJEC

National curriculum (England)

National 1 Qualifications – SQA

Savoy Educational Trust

STEM Learning

Springboard

Square Food Foundation

Tasty Careers

TES

Twinkl

Unit Award Scheme – AQA

Characteristic 7:

Running practical lessons

Allergy UK

CLEAPSS Primary and Design and Technology

Scottish Schools Education Research Centre

Characteristic 8:

Establishing good food hygiene and safety practices

Food – a fact of life support and resources for good food hygiene and safety practices (Primary)

Food – a fact of life support and resources for good food hygiene and safety practices (Secondary)

Food Standards Agency (England, Northern Ireland and Wales)

Food Standards Agency YouTube – videos

Food Standards Scotland

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (England)

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (Northern Ireland)

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (Scotland)

The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (Wales)

The Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents



Further sources of information and support

Characteristic 9: Developing practical food skills

Food – a fact of life practical food skills videos

Food – a fact of life recipes

Characteristic 10: Exploring where food comes from

Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board

British Hen Welfare Trust – rehoming hens in school

Countryside Classroom

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Eat seasonably

Food certification and assurance schemes

Growing for the future

Keeping chickens in school

LEAF Education

LEAF FarmerTime

Love Food Hate Waste (England)

Love Food Hate Waste (Scotland)

Love Food Hate Waste (Wales)

NFU Education

The Royal Highland Education Trust

Characteristic 11: Healthy eating, Characteristic 12: Making choices

British Dietetic Association

British Heart Foundation

British Nutrition Foundation

Change4life

Change4life accessible activities

Daily Mile Challenge

Disability Sport (England)

Disability Sport (Northern Ireland)

Disability Sport (Scotland)

Disability Sport (Wales)

Explore food (nutritional analysis)

Institute of Grocery Distributors (IGD):
nutrition information on packaging

National Disability Sports Organisations

NHS healthy eating advice

Practical Action

See and Eat ebooks and activities
(vegetables)

The Eatwell Guide

UK government food labelling and
packaging advice



Acknowledgements

The content of the guide was developed through a consensus workshop and consultation with:

Christine Arnold

Pearson

Roy Ballam

British Nutrition Foundation

Louise Davies

Food Teachers Centre

Rosalie Forde

Three Ways School, England

Kate Hufton

Consultant and University of East London

Adele Louise James

Whitefield School, England

Linda Jordan

National Development Team for Inclusion

Laura Kelly

St Columbanus' College, Northern Ireland

Nerys Lloyd

Pen-y-Cwm School, Wales

Jan McCutcheon

Springboard

Amanda McDade

Springboard

Frances Meek

British Nutrition Foundation

Jessica Simpson

Ogilvie School, Scotland

Silvia Trabucchi

Hamilton Lodge School and College, England

Ewen Trafford

British Nutrition Foundation

We would also like to thank the following for providing photographs and case studies to demonstrate the characteristics of good practice:

Rosalie Forde

Three Ways School, England

Kate Hufton

Consultant and University of East London

Invicta Grammar School

England

Adele Louise James

Whitefield School, England

Debbie Jenkins

Ysgol Bryn Derw ASD Special School, Wales

Laura Kelly

St Columbanus' College, Northern Ireland

Nerys Lloyd

Pen-y-Cwm School, Wales

Hilary and Joshua Long

Parent and son with additional needs, England

Joe Mann

Torquay Girls' Grammar School, England

Jan McCutcheon

Springboard

Caroline Parsons

Square Food Foundation, England

Jessica Simpson

Ogilvie School, Scotland

Daniel Smith

Brannel School, England

Silvia Trabucchi

Hamilton Lodge School and College, England

Step and Stone

Bristol, England

Valley Park School

England

The British Nutrition Foundation would like to gratefully acknowledge the financial support provided by the **Savoy Educational Trust** for the production of this guide.