

What change is needed?

Teacher and pupil research from across the UK

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**Please note that this presentation
was updated in November 2021,
following an extension to the pupil
survey deadline.**

Methodology

The British Nutrition Foundation asked practising teachers, as well as their pupils aged 13-18 years, a few questions to find out about their teaching/learning experiences, as well as consider any potential changes to the subject to ensure its relevance in the future, e.g. subject content, pedagogy, pupil experience.

The surveys were open from 18 August to 24 September 2021 (pupil survey extended until November 2021).



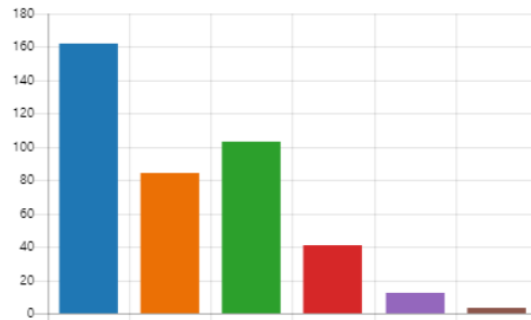
Pupil survey

405 pupils responded

1. How old are you?

[More Details](#)

13 years	162
14 years	84
15 years	103
16 years	41
17 years	12
18 years	3



2. Where in the UK are you based?

[More Details](#)

England	284
Northern Ireland	56
Scotland	43
Wales	22



3. Indicate your level of food and nutrition learning - either now or in the past ...

[More Details](#)

13-14 years, e.g. Key Stage 3, S2	229
14-16 years, e.g. GCSE / Natio...	182
16-18 years, e.g. A-level/Level ...	17

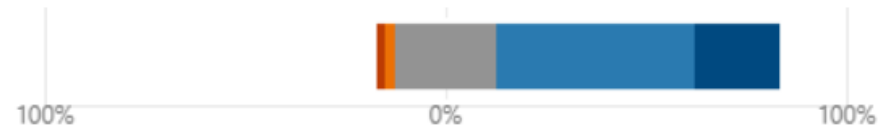


Pupil survey

4. Please rate your food and nutrition learning experience overall.

[More Details](#)

Very poor Poor Fair Good Very good



5. Please rate the different parts of your food and nutrition learning ...

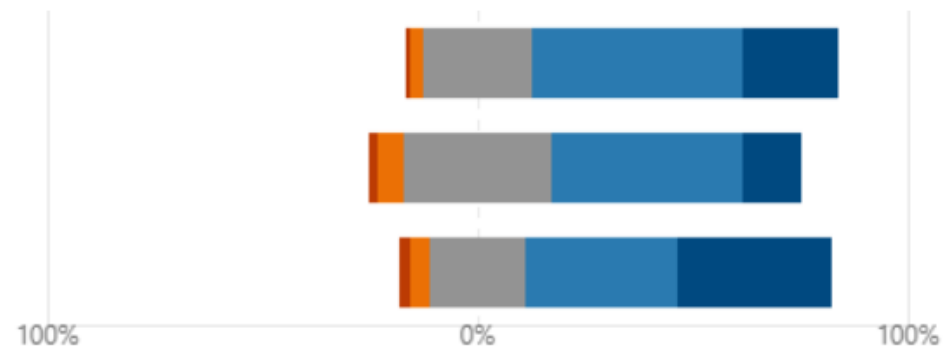
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Very poor Poor Fair Good Very good

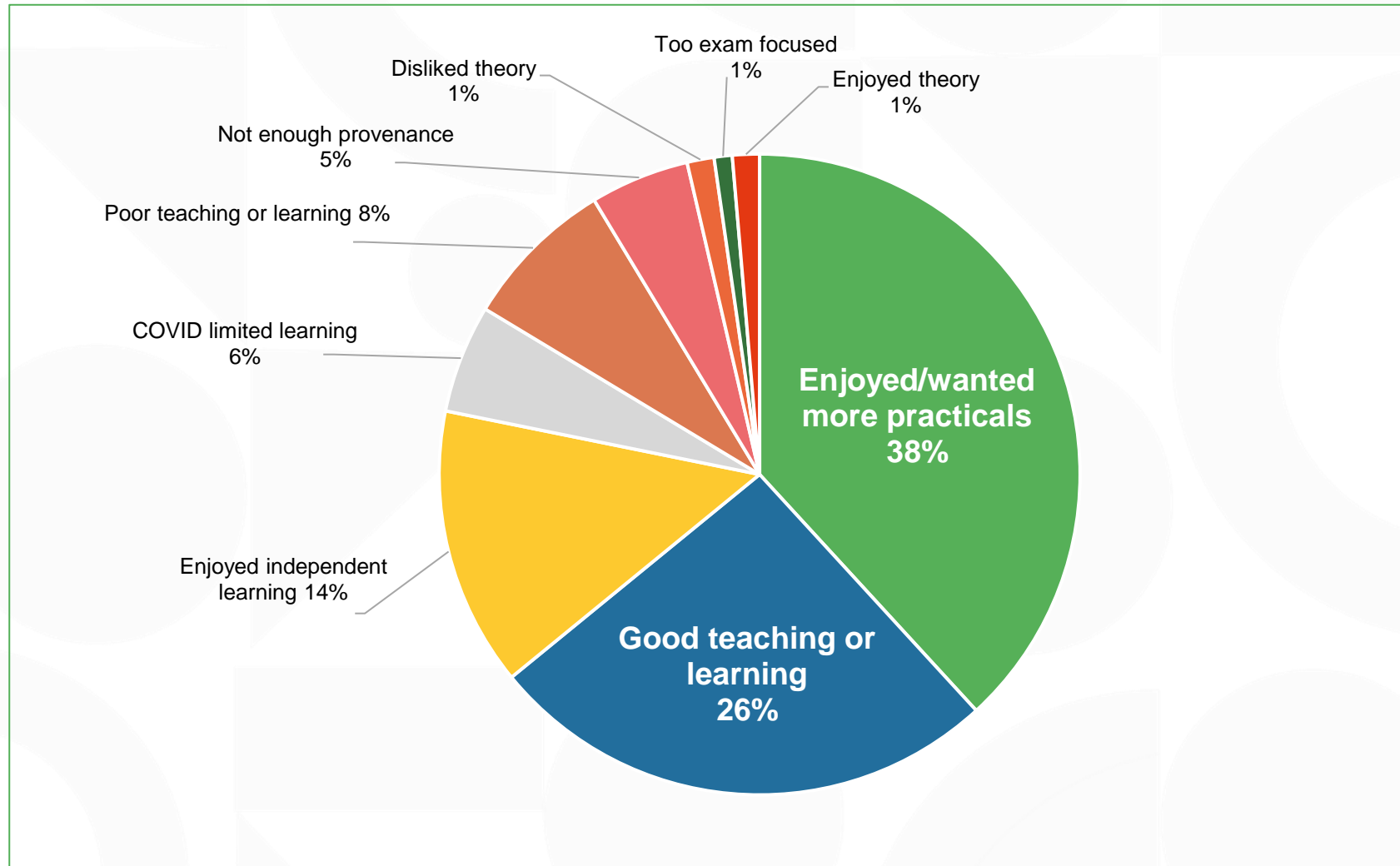
Healthy eating and nutrition

Where food comes from

Cooking

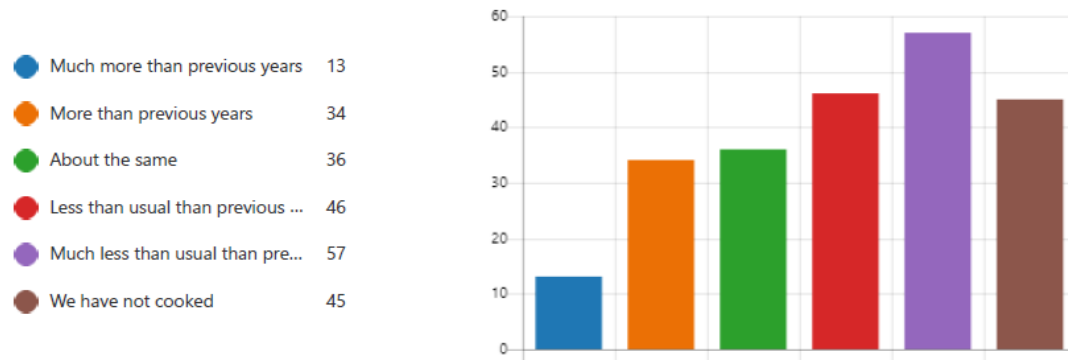


Q6 Why pupils scored Q4 and 5 the way they did



Q 7 The impact of Covid-19

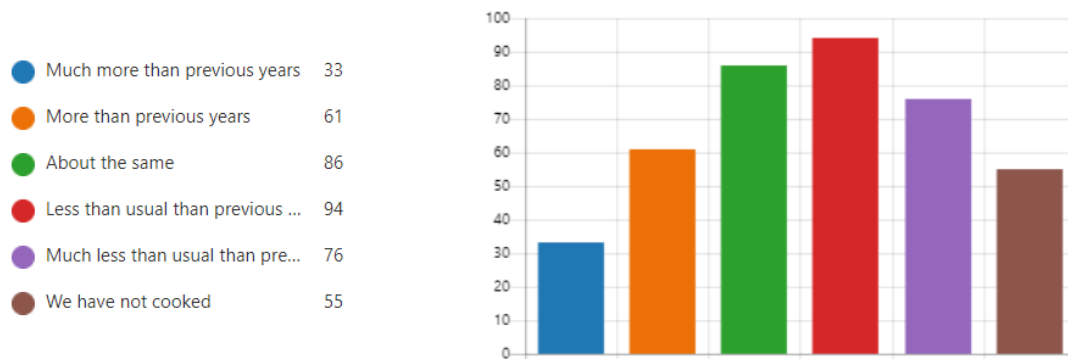
7. Covid-19 has impacted all of us over the past 18 months. Thinking about you cooking at school, how much have you done compared to previous years?



Original cohort (215)

7. Covid-19 has impacted all of us over the past 18 months. Thinking about you cooking at school, how much have you done compared to previous years?

[More Details](#)



Full cohort (403) – leftward shift could indicate a return to more ‘normal’ levels, but may just reflect the different classes that answered later.



Q8 - Suggest FIVE words that sum-up your food learning experience



Informative, fun, exciting, enjoyable, helpful.

Interesting, essential, practical, enjoyable, informative.

Nutritional, fair, enjoyable, crowded, loud.

Fun 53%!

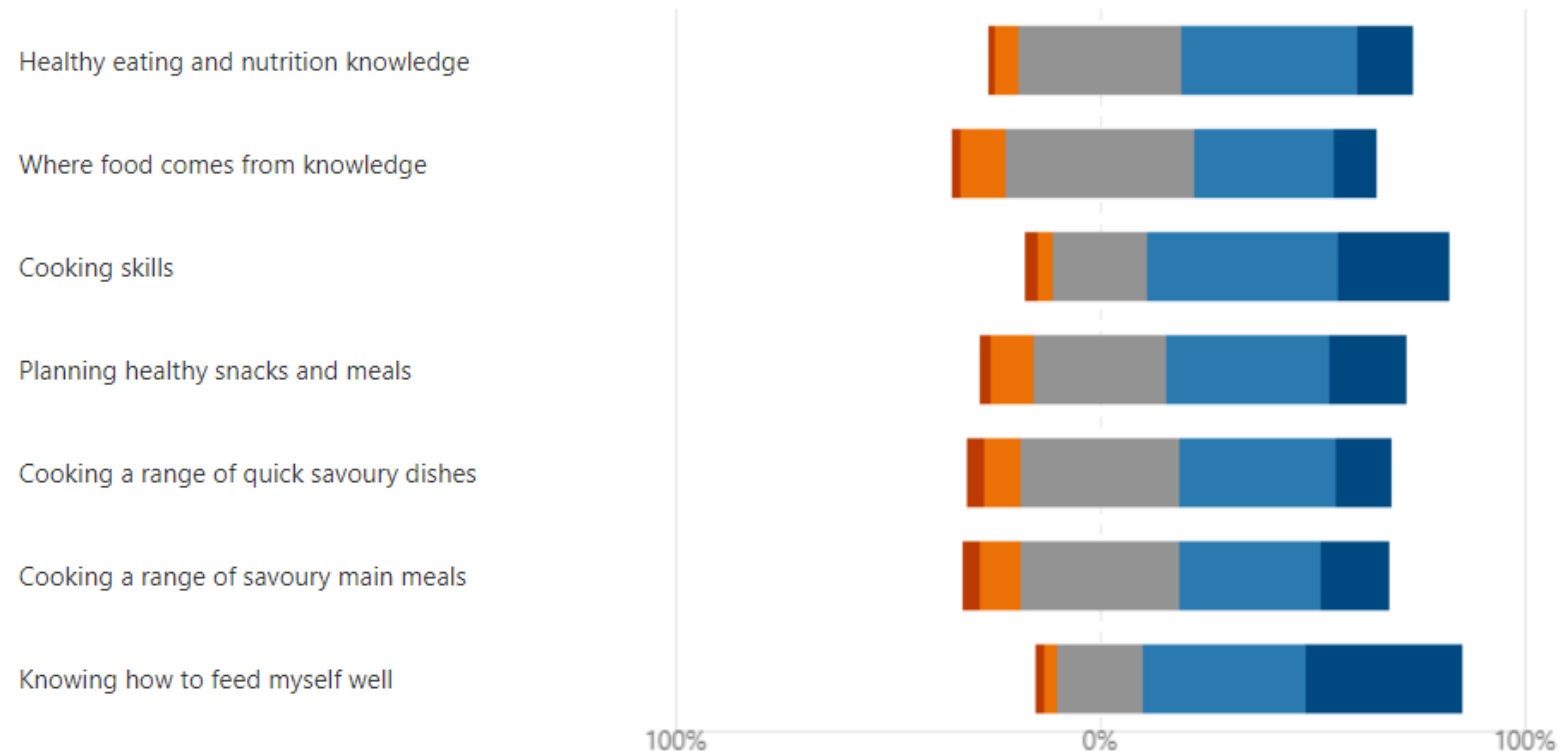


Pupils' knowledge and skills

9. Rate your own food knowledge and skills - be honest.

[More Details](#)

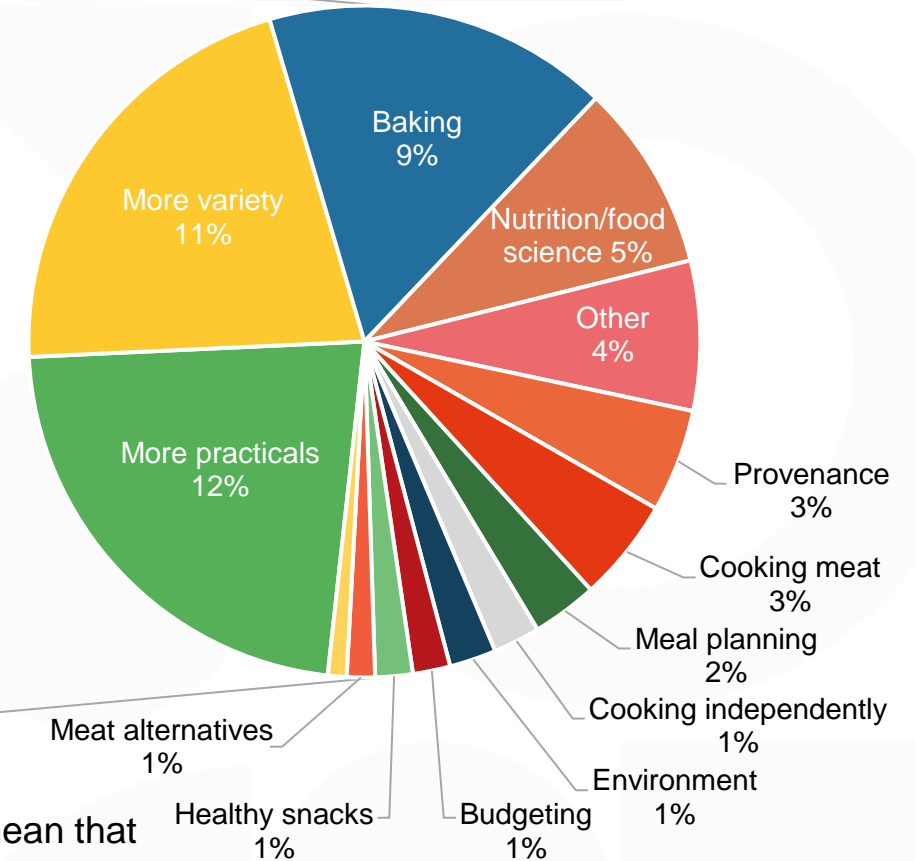
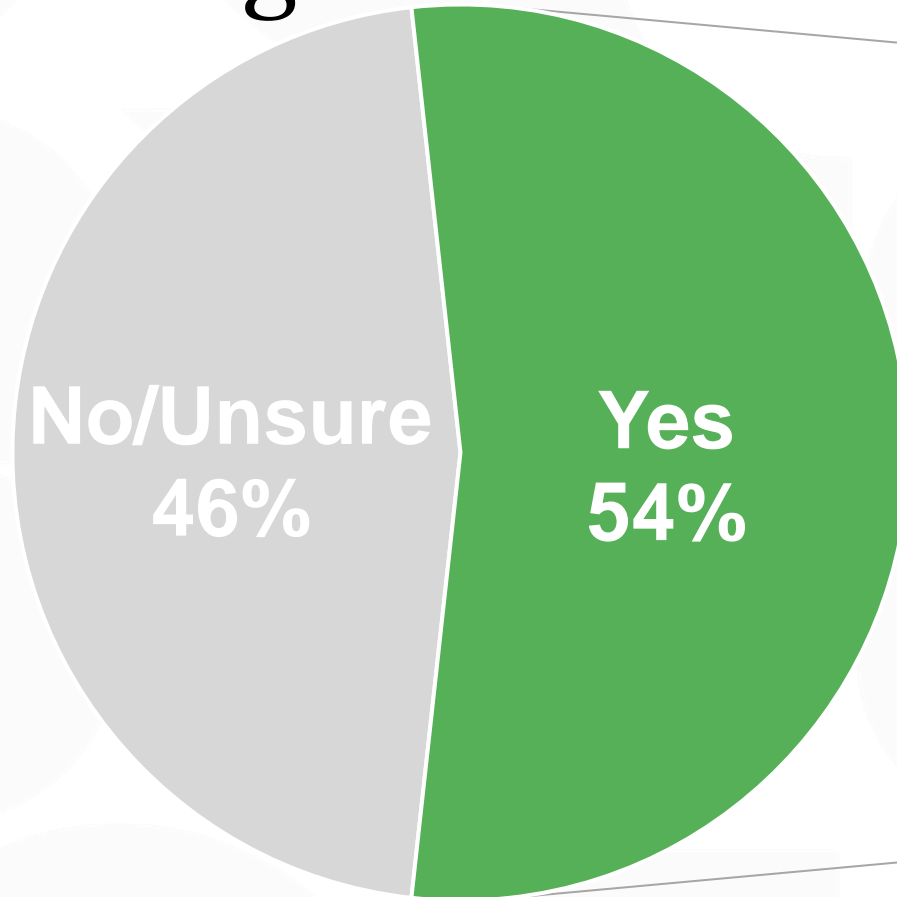
■ Very poor ■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very good



Where food comes from – do we need to do more?



Q10 Is there anything you would have liked to be taught?

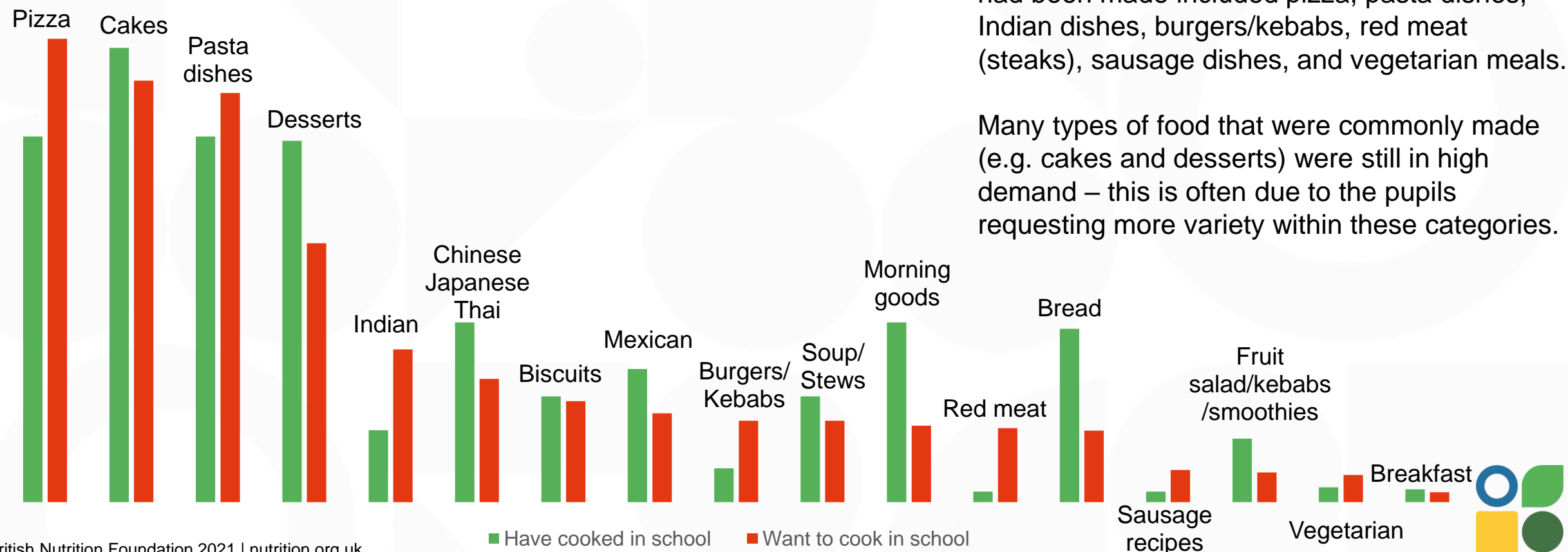


46% of pupils said no or that they were unsure. Interpretation of this is difficult – it could mean that they are happy with everything they have been taught, or that they had not considered the question.

For those that did answer, top themes included additional practical, further baking skills, a wider variety of recipes and more focus on nutrition, food science and provenance.

What have you cooked in school and what would you like to cook in school?

The graph below plots some of the most commonly mentioned types of food. Green indicates where pupils state they have made this type of food and red indicates where they said they would like to make this type of food.



Thinking back, name ONE memorable dish that you cooked at school. What was it? Why was this memorable?

Dishes were memorable to pupils for a variety of reasons.

Enjoying a return to cooking:

"Fajitas, they were the first dish we had cooked post lockdown and it was so nice being able to cook again."

Acquiring new skills and feeling pride:

"Cornish pasties – it involved marinating, cooking meat, preparing shortcrust pastry, filling, baking and serving with garnish. The ingredients and skills are still memorable. I would never have believed I could bake tasty and healthy foods when I took my first food lesson."

Creating foods suitable for all:

"Focaccia Bread because it was SO yummy and I made it gluten and dairy free for all my family to eat!"

Generating positive feelings:

"Victoria sponge cake because I've made it with my family and it brought back all the memories I've made with them whilst cooking."

Trying new things/cultural diversity

"Massaman, because it was Moroccan and I had never made it before."

Making healthy food and tasty combinations:

"The Mediterranean scones and soup - the soup was full of vegetables which were delicious and the scones contained olives, sundried tomatoes and feta which went so well together."

Being creative and independent:

"Focaccia. It was memorable as we got to be creative with our designs"

Eating food and engaging with family

"I remember when I made flapjacks, the reason for this is because when I got home I gave some of it to my family to try and they enjoyed it and said it tasted good."

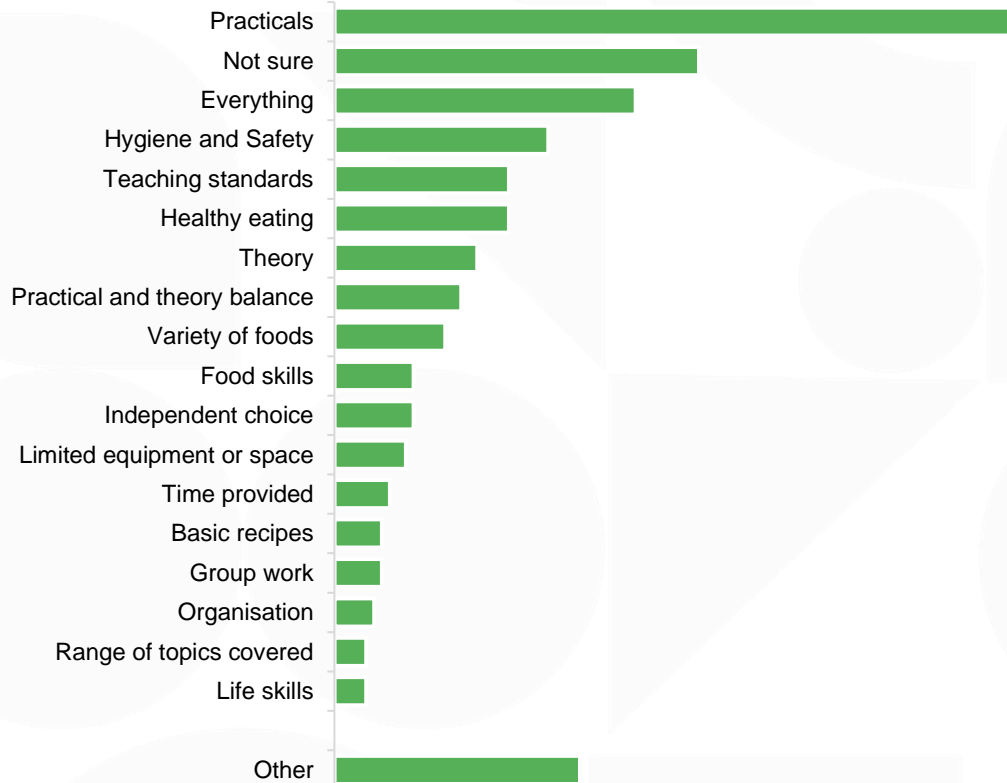
Being challenged:

"The fishcake was memorable because it was one of the hardest to cook"

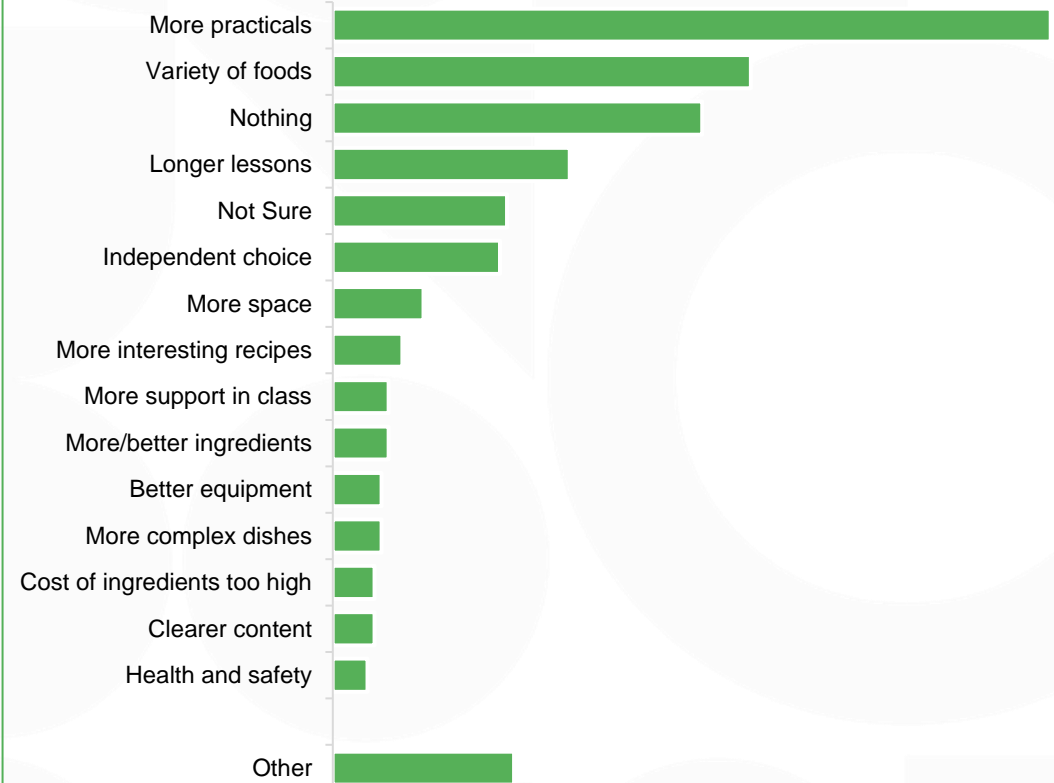


Q16 and Q17 – food lessons

What should be kept the same in food lessons?



What should be changed about food lessons?



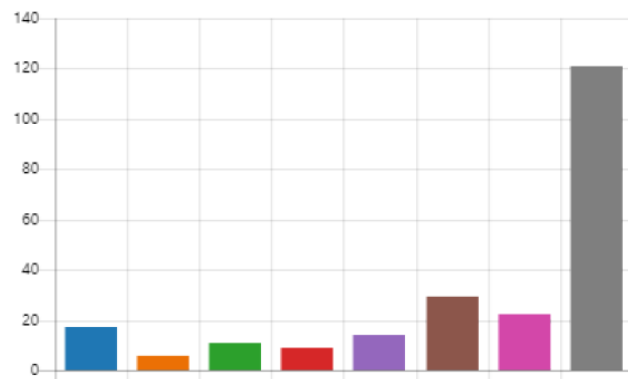
For many pupils, what they are asking for reflects a desire for more of what they already value – for example, practical cooking lessons. However, other standout changes include a greater variety of foods available to make (including more culturally diverse dishes), longer lessons in which to cook more complex dishes and a desire for independent choice around the foods and ingredients (a will to take control over their own learning).

Teacher survey

229 teachers responded

1. How long have you been teaching?

I am not a teacher	17
0 years (I am a trainee teacher)	6
1-2 years	11
3-5 years	9
6-8 years	14
9-11 years	29
12-14 years	22
15+ years	121



2. Where in the UK are you based?

England	138
Northern Ireland	12
Scotland	52
Wales	10



3. Indicate your level of food and nutrition teaching current or past.

11-14 years, e.g. Key Stage 3	184
14-16 years, e.g. GCSE / Natio...	193
16-18 years, e.g. A-level/L3, A...	99



The majority of schools did not have a whole school food policy, which includes food education BUT a significant number of respondents didn't know



Teachers – liaison, support and engagement

5. The majority of teachers indicated that there was little liaison with other subjects, e.g. RSE/PSHE, health education, PE.

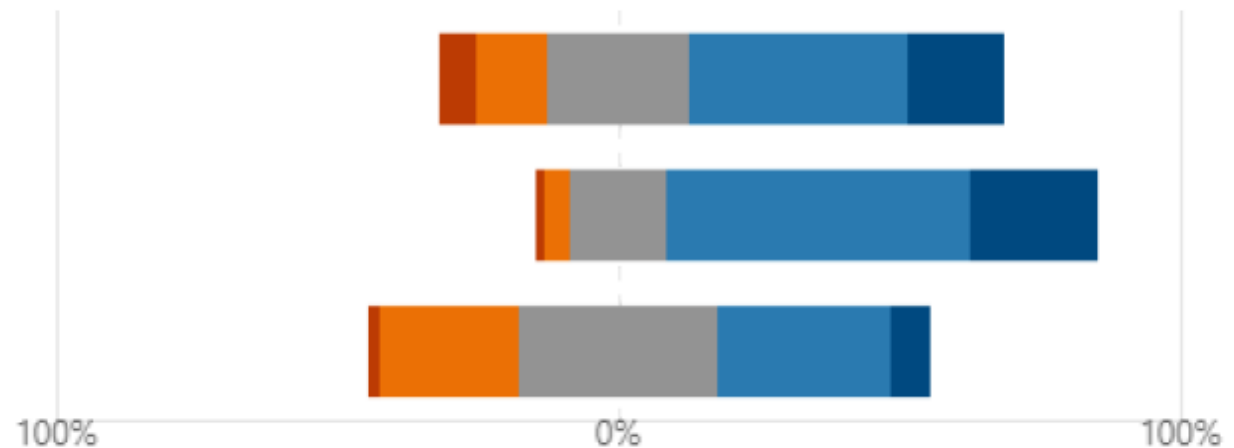
6. Rate the following statements:

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

My SLT/Governors fully support food and nutrition education

Pupils are fully engaged in food and nutrition education

Parents are fully engaged in food and nutrition education...



Q11 - If you went to a 'food' lesson in 10 years' time, state FIVE differences you would expect to see

Kitchen technology and equipment:

"More advanced cooking equipment"

"Greater use of video technology for demonstrations to encourage independence"

Practical lessons:

"Focus on healthy eating and practical skills rather than food science"

"Emphasis on training for work and jobs / earning potential not health"

Recipes and alternative options:

"More vegetarian and plant-based recipes being used in food preparation"

"Quicker dishes, lower fat dishes, no added sugar dishes, international dishes from regions not seen as frequently today, low cost dishes"

Food preparation:

"Increased advance level skill preparation"

"Skills being embedded, e.g. making pastry, decorating skills, reflecting the need for catering skills (3rd largest industry!)."

Healthy eating:

"Focus on healthy eating and obesity"

"Ensure no food is off limits but instead practise moderation"

Pupil skillset and engagement:

"More students choosing the subject at GCSE for the right reasons, see the link to science and future career prospects."

"Students still see food lessons as more relaxed/ frivolous than other lessons and see it as an opportunity to just make cakes, this attitude needs to change"

Sustainability:

"More sustainable ingredients used - probably less meat and dairy and more carbon neutral ingredients"

Lesson time:

"Longer lesson times to allow for less pressured learning"

Funding for ingredients:

"Schools providing ingredients paid for by education funding"



7. Using the scale below, indicate the **current** emphasis of each of the following subject areas in your pupils' food and nutrition learning:

■ No emphasis ■ Low emphasis ■ Some emphasis ■ Moderate emphasis ■ Significant emphasis

Healthy eating/nutrition

Food preparation and cooking

Where food comes from

Food science

Healthy, sustainable diets

Planning healthy snacks and meals

Cooking a range of quick savoury dishes

Cooking a range of savoury main meals

Knowing how to feed myself well

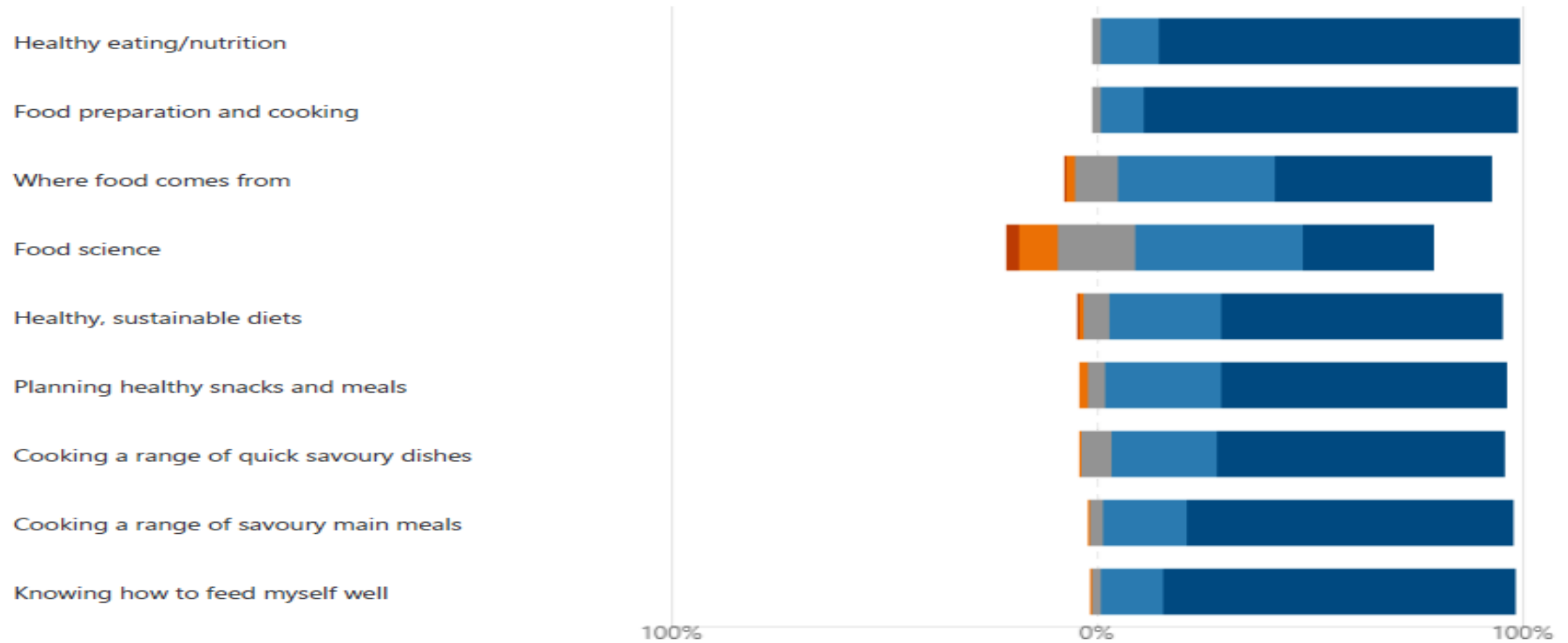
100%

0%

100%

8. Using the scale below, indicate what the **future** emphasis of each of the following subject areas should be in your pupils' food and nutrition learning:

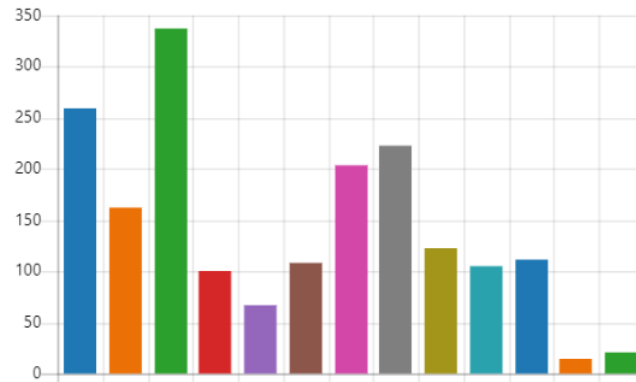
■ No emphasis ■ Low emphasis ■ Some emphasis ■ Moderate emphasis ■ Significant emphasis



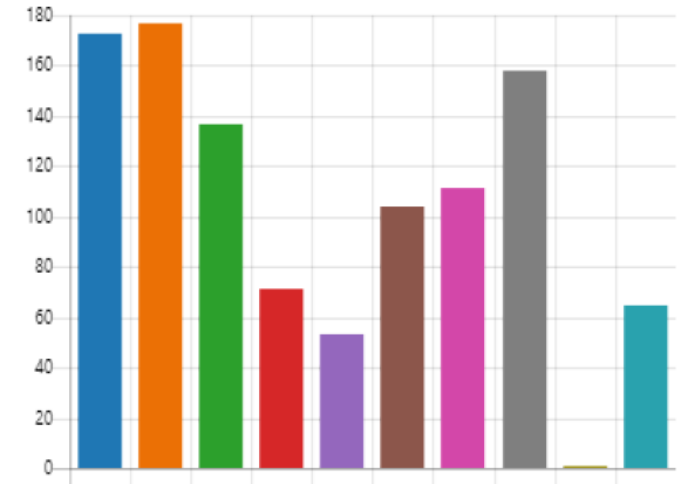
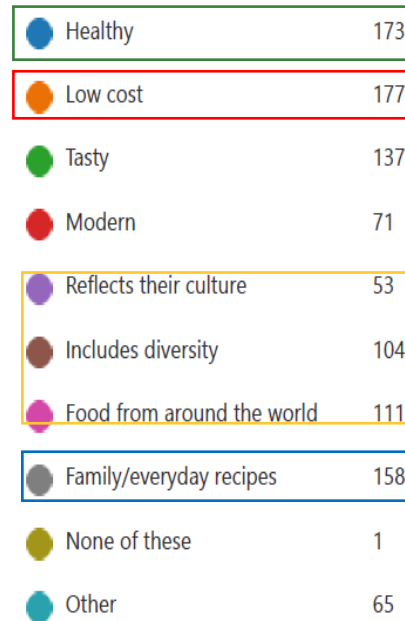
Recipes – what is important?

14. Thinking about recipes you cooked or would like to cook, which of the following are important to you?

[More Details](#)



9. Thinking about the recipes you decide that your pupils cook, which of these inform your decisions?



Pupils

Teachers

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither Agree Strongly agree

Recipes at school are mainly traditional



Recipes at school do not reflect a modern food culture



Recipes are from all around the world



Recipes at school are uninspiring



Pupils

Teachers

In the main recipes are mainly traditional, but they also reflect a modern food culture, are from around the world and are inspiring.



Q14 - Suggest FIVE words that describe your pupils' food learning experience NOW



Same as the pupils



Q15 - Suggest FIVE words that would describe your pupils' food learning experience in the FUTURE

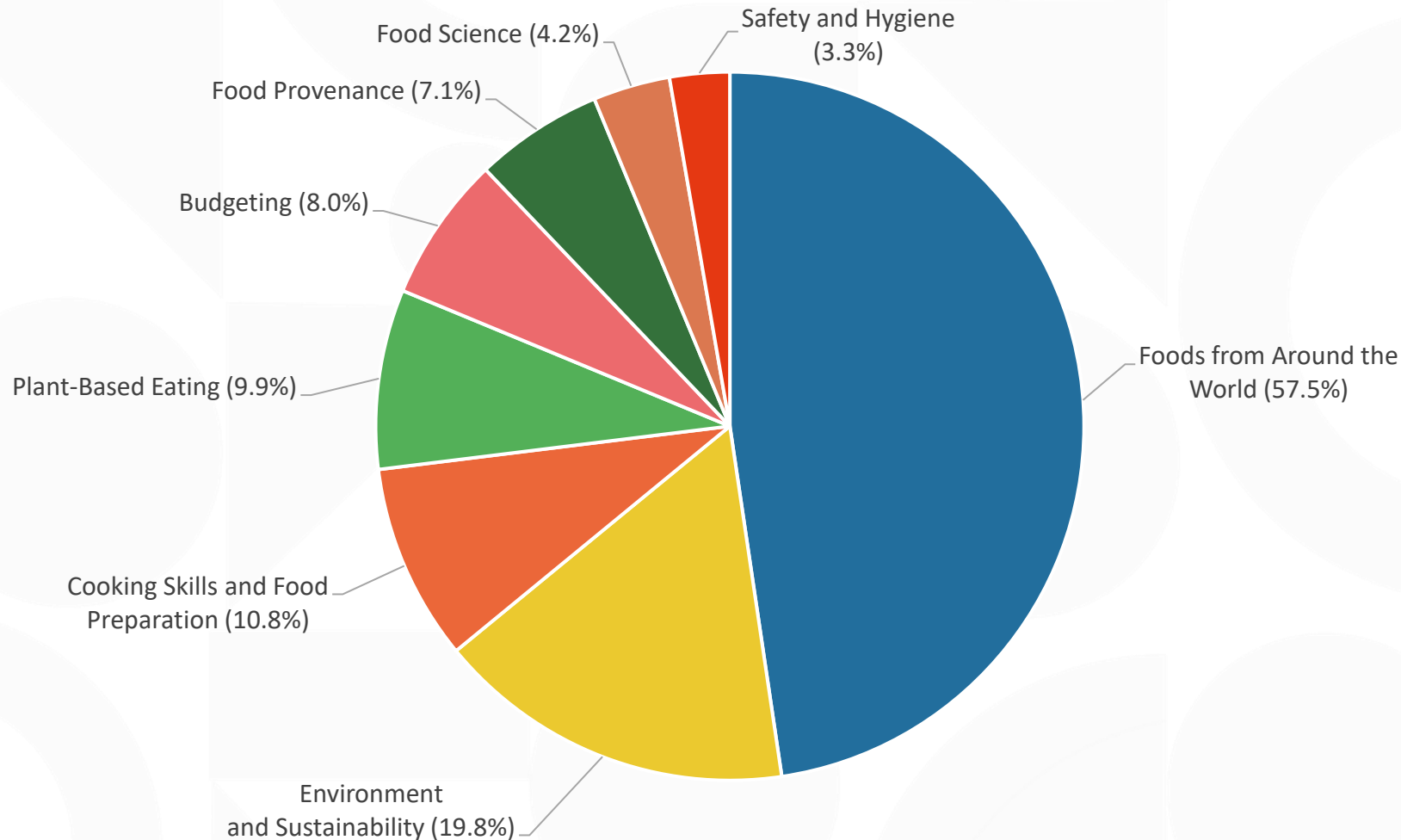


New

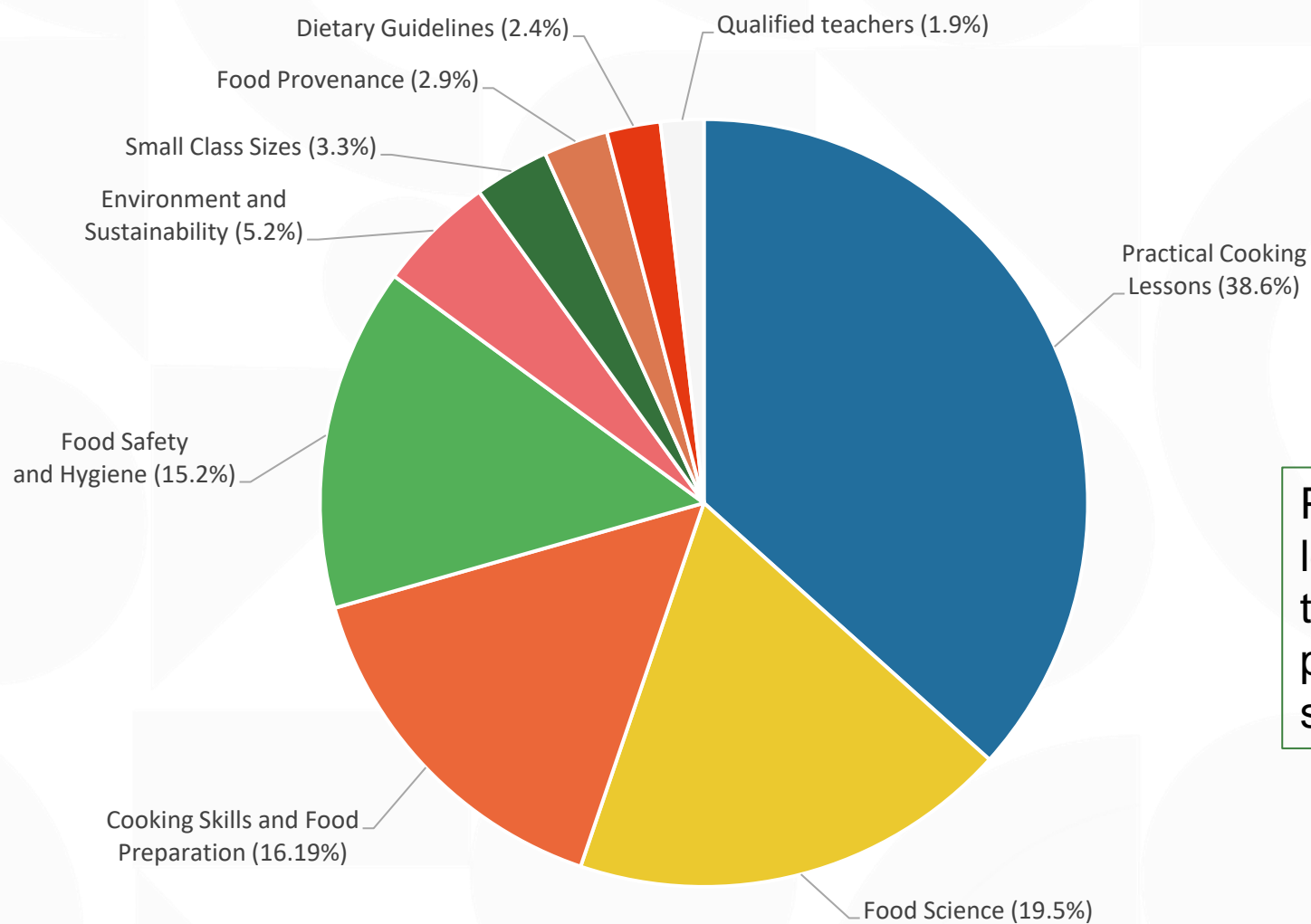
Same as now



Q16 - Considering the future, with respect to inclusion, cultural diversity and modernity, what key food skills, knowledge and experiences should be taught?



Q17 - In your opinion, what should be kept the same in food lessons in schools?

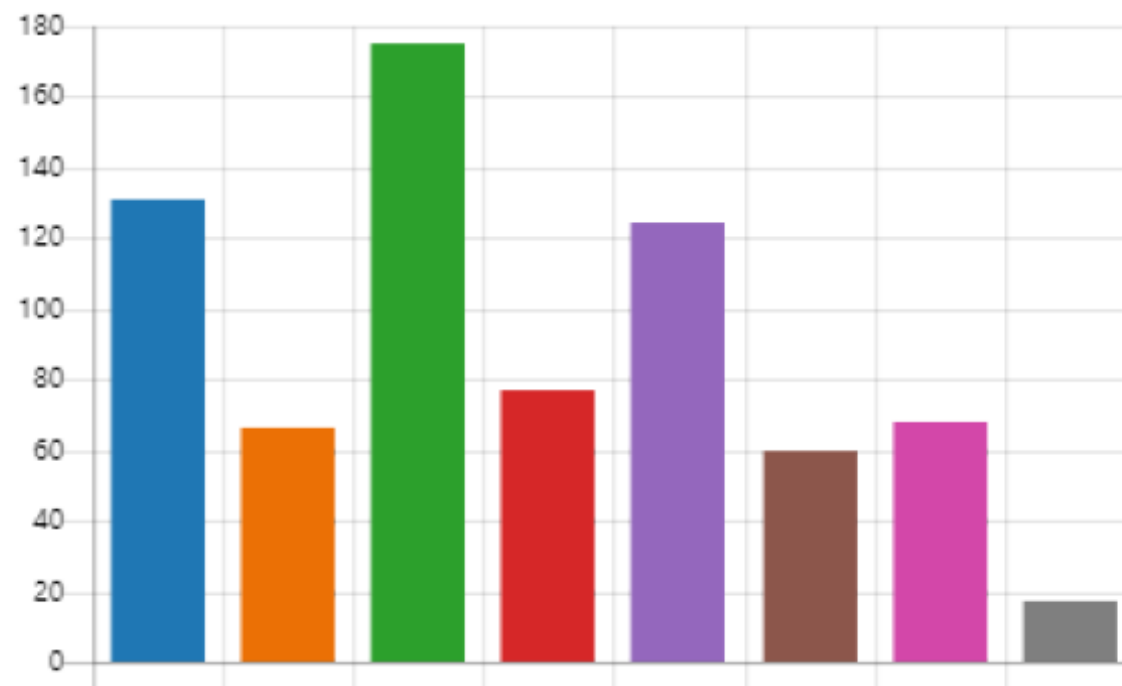


Pupils – practical lessons were also the top response from pupils, along with not sure and everything!

Training and skill development - staff

18. To ensure that future food teaching meets the needs of pupils, what are the priority areas for training and skill development for future staff? Select THREE most important.

● Healthy eating/nutrition	131
● Where food comes from	66
● Practical food skills and cooki...	175
● Food science	77
● Healthy, sustainable diets	124
● Classroom management	60
● Writing Schemes of Work/Lea...	68
● Other	17



Q19 - Finally, our goal is for ‘modern food teaching’ for all pupils in secondary schools across the UK, which reflects our changing society, meets the needs of pupils and ensures the future of the subject. What needs to be done to move the subject forward, e.g. pedagogy, facility, subject content, pupil experience?

Teacher training and support:

“The very real shortage of qualified, knowledgeable food teachers is affecting what can be delivered in the classroom and hindering real learning and enjoyment of this subject.”

Pedagogy and subject content:

“Changes to curriculum and specifications to meet changes in society and industry”

Funding:

“Investment in rooms and equipment to show the subject is valued”

“Ingredients need to be funded by the government / education dept.”

Whole school approach:

“Whole school approach to food education throughout all key stages”

Pupil experience:

“Enhance the pupil experience with visits and speakers”

Class size and lesson length:

“Smaller class sizes and longer lessons need to be made mandatory”

Importance of food and nutrition:

“Raising profile of this subject to our pupils and SLT particularly curriculum and timetable planners”

Improve facilities and technology:

“Food rooms have to be fit for purpose - preparing and cooking food cannot be taught effectively or safely when facilities and equipment are inadequate”



Summary

Key findings - Pupils

- **229 teachers responded** – this potentially represents a large number of schools/classrooms. **405 pupils responded** to the pupil survey. This number is smaller than is ideal, as there could be a large number of pupils per classroom, meaning few schools are represented.
- **Most pupils were younger teenagers**, between 13-15 years, with a small number of 16-18 year olds. **The majority were from England**, with Wales being the least represented area.
- **Most pupils rated their learning experience as ‘good’ or ‘very good’** and pointed to enjoyable practicals and high-quality teaching as the main reasons for this. **Words commonly used to describe their learning experience included: fun, interesting, educational, informative and exciting.** When broken down further, more pupils rated ‘where food comes from’ as fair (when compared to nutrition information and cooking). This is reflected in later questions and indicates that at least in some classrooms there could be more focus on provenance.



Summary

Key findings - Pupils

- A few pupils scored lower for cooking, this was mainly because of COVID restrictions, that limited opportunities for practical lessons. **Over half of pupils said they did less, much less or no cooking at all, due to COVID.**
- In general, pupils consistently enjoyed and asked for more practical cooking sessions. When asked to rate different skills typically learned from practical cooking sessions, **pupils indicated that the areas where some may lack knowledge revolve around food provenance and cooking savoury dishes and main meals.** Healthy eating knowledge and basic food skills (e.g. knife skills) were rated more highly.
- When asked what pupils would like to be taught in addition to their current materials and lessons, 46% indicated that they either did not require anything additional, or were unsure. Of those that indicated they would like something new, many asked for **more practical sessions, a greater focus on baking, a wider variety of recipes and additional nutrition and food science information.**
- **Pupils were asked about foods they typically cooked in schools** and those that they would like to cook. Some foods were asked for significantly more than they had been provided. For example, pasta dishes, Indian dishes, savoury pies, seafood, red meat and pastry.



Summary

Key findings - Teachers

- When asked whether **pupils were engaged in their education**, the vast majority of teachers agreed. However, when asked **whether parents were fully engaged, a larger proportion disagreed**, meaning this may be an important area of focus. Additionally, a small group of teachers felt that they were receiving inadequate support from the SLT in their school, although most did not feel this way.
- Teachers were asked what they might expect to see in a **food lesson in 10 years time**. Answers included: more **advanced technology and equipment**, **an increased focus on sustainable practices**, **additional funding and support for ingredients** and a more diverse range of recipes and options, including more **plant-based recipes and culturally diverse recipes**.



Summary

Key findings - Teachers

- When asked what should remain the same in lessons, teachers largely mentioned practical lessons (in line with pupils desire for additional cooking time), food science education, food preparation and cooking skills and food hygiene and safety.
- The **top 3 areas that teachers thought were most important to meet the needs of pupils were practical food skills, healthy eating and sustainable diets.** Teachers noted the importance of support in their role, whether this be from technicians or from senior leadership within their school. Being able to adopt a whole school approach with support from leadership was considered a key factor in the smooth operation of secondary learning.



Summary

What do pupils and teachers consider most important about a recipe?

- **Pupils rated taste as the most important aspect of a recipe** they cook in school, followed by how healthy it is and whether it is a practical everyday food. They also considered food from around the world to be important for a diverse range of recipes.
- **Teachers, on the other hand, rated low cost as the most important aspect of a recipe**, backing up some concerns around budgets. Teachers also rated whether a recipe is healthy as their second choice – showing an important alignment between themselves and their pupils. Taste was scored highly, but only ranked fourth for teachers.





Thank you

