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The Programme Model

The Food for Life Partnership is led by the Soil Association with support from the Health Education Trust, Garden Organic and Focus on Food Campaign.

A typical school develops the following key areas:

School Food Policy

A food action group coordinates a wide range of food-related activities across the school (Figure 1).

School Catering

Catering staff are supported to improve meal uptake, develop menus that meet nutritional targets and improve the dining area. Meals draw upon more local sourced, unprocessed and organic ingredients.

Food Sourcing

The school and caterers source local, seasonal and organic ingredients from suppliers. Local farms supply food to the school.

Cooking Education

Teaching staff integrate cooking into the curriculum and engage the wider community in cooking activities. Catering staff become increasingly involved on cooking education.

Growing Education

Pupils, parents and the wider community grow fruit and vegetables on school grounds. Pupils learn about organic, fresh and seasonal food through practical gardening. This is linked to the curriculum.

Farm Links and Sustainable Food Education

The school develops long term links with local farms as a basis for project work on local food systems and sustainability. These farms may supply food for school meals.

An England-wide Initiative

Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) Mark Schools work towards Bronze, Silver and Gold standards.

FFLP Flagship Schools act as demonstration projects.

By the end of the five year funding period FFLP aims to have 3600 Mark Schools and 180 Flagship Primary and Secondary Schools distributed across the regions.

The Evaluation

The evaluation adopts mixed methods research⁽¹⁾ to examine outcomes for:

- school meal take-up
- wider school food provisioning
- food sourcing
- local food economies

'Food culture' changes amongst children, parents and the wider school communities are examined with focus on:

- knowledge of healthy and sustainable food
- skills relating to the growing, buying and cooking of healthy food
- access to and consumption of healthy and sustainable food

'Our mission is to reach out through schools to give communities access to seasonal, local and organic food, and to the skills they need to cook and grow fresh food for themselves.

We want a new generation to explore how their food choices impact on their health and that of the planet, and to rediscover the pleasure of taking time to enjoy real food.'

The Food for Life Partnership Mission Statement



Figure 1 The Food for Life Partnership is a multi-level school initiative that aims to bring together food-related education, school catering and local food supply systems



Figure 2 Putting the Evaluation in Theoretical Context

Social Policy ... Public Health ... Sociology ... Social Psychology	
Implementation of complex and whole systems	Diet and social inequalities
Transfer of innovation in health settings	Food, trust and risk
Health communications and children as change agents	Habitus and cultural contexts to eating practices
Public procurement and localised food systems	Social construction of 'healthy' and sustainable foods

Evaluation Methods

The study draws upon literature on the evaluation of comprehensive community-based initiatives⁽²⁾.

Pupil Impact

6,500 pupils are responding to cohort matched before and after questionnaires. Samples of pupils also participate in questionnaires that cover specific aspects of educational work.

School and Community Impact

Programme data is collected from across all Mark and Flagship Schools. 108 Flagship Schools form a study focus. Data is collected at enrolment and 18-month follow-up.

National and Regional Impact

This element explores the wider policy influence. A sample of 48 for interview is to be drawn from leads for public health, young people, education and the environment.

Case Studies

This work focuses on key thematic aspects:

- Sustainable food procurement and local food systems
- Young people's leadership and engagement in the scheme
- The 'take home' messages of the scheme

Theory Context

The research connects with theoretical issues that span sociology, social psychology, social policy and public health (Figure 2).

Evaluation Reports

- Autumn 2009
- Autumn 2010
- Autumn 2011

Further Information

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Sustainable Sustenance in School: organic, seasonal and local food agendas stretch the public health debate