



**SCHOOL
FOOD
MATTERS**

FARM
GATE TO
SCHOOL
PLATE



Hillingdon Primary School Food

School Food Matters

exists to teach children about food and to improve access to healthy, sustainable food during their time at school.



Our vantage point

- ✓ Since 2007, we've worked with 2,750 schools and supported 316,000 students through our food education programmes
- ✓ Our Nourish school food improvement programme has supported 96 schools in seven boroughs to find the points where food can be improved, using a Whole School Approach to Food
- ✓ We're currently working at depth with four LAs
- ✓ We're part of the expert advisory panel for universal breakfast rollout
- ✓ Coordinators for the national Food Education Network and the School Food Review
- ✓ A good mixture of practical, policy, research and nutrition experience



Our work together

We are working together to understand the current picture in Hillingdon primaries, and how schools can best be supported to improve their food offer.

Completed:

- EHO training
- Survey of 45 primaries
- Best practice review
- In-person audit of 12 schools
- Better Breakfast workshop

Yet to come :

- Breakfast, SEND and caterers online workshops
- SBM, SLT and Governor's training
- Further strategic work around next steps





Survey findings recap





**SCHOOL
FOOD
MATTERS**

FARM
GATE TO
SCHOOL
PLATE

Key survey findings (n=45 primaries)

How happy satisfied are schools with the quality of food being served?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively happy, with some schools seriously unhappy
To what extent are schools aware of their statutory responsibilities around school food?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minimally, especially in terms of the entire school day
How are schools managing the universal offer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools are actively promoting the offer, but not all can meet cultural/ religious dietary requirements
What food is being served in wraparound, by schools and external providers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-compliant, largely processed food
What kind of food education is being delivered in schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not enough to meet the requirements of the curriculum
What kind of support do schools want?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy writing, picky eating, teacher training, talking to parents and procurement

Audit findings



Wraparound

Breakfast

- Healthy breakfasts were universally valued, but inconsistently delivered (with some areas of great practice)
- Uncertainty surrounding the upcoming rollout of the universal breakfast offer
- Insufficient or non-existent monitoring of compliance with School Food

After school

- Non-compliant food
- Inconsistent portion sizes





**SCHOOL
FOOD
MATTERS**

FARM
GATE TO
SCHOOL
PLATE

Lunchtime – Universal Offer

Key Findings

- Compliant menus but patchy quality on the plate
- Lack of working/ adequate kitchen space
- Variable rates of uptake of UPFSM
- Too much choice!
- “Child friendly” options
- Schools struggling with catering procurement
- Issues with food waste



Lunchtime – packed lunches

Poor quality packed lunches were prevalent across all schools visited. The key issues observed were:

Over 80% of packed lunches observed were SFS non-compliant

Difficulties monitoring packed lunches

Children eating both packed lunch and school lunch

Unhealthy packed lunches

Case Study 2- Packed lunch observation in school A: Demographics - 40 % SEND children, 230 enrolled (half the capacity), 30% PPP and 10% EHCP, in a deprived area.

Child A

- six mini sausage rolls
- a chocolate cookie
- a Babybell cheese
- four rich tea biscuits
- one Barni chocolate cake

Scenario A- Represents the contents of child B's packed lunch and is likely to be categorised as healthy



Child B

- a pack of crisp
- a cartoon of Squeezy Fruits
- one Cadbury shortcake biscuits
- a pack of Jammie Dodgers
- one Original Pepperoni snack
- one pack of Fridge Riders slow roast chicken bits
- one pack of Dairy Milk chocolate buttons

Scenario B- Represents the contents of child A's lunch, and is likely to be categorised as severely obese.



**SCHOOL
FOOD
MATTERS**

Feeding children with complex needs and requirements

SEND

“We are seeing a high intake of children with complex needs that are better placed in special ed schools.” (Headteacher)

Complex medical needs

“The biggest challenge is that we have eight children with type-1 diabetes, and keeping parents happy is a massive task. We spend about 60 hours a month dealing with issues around special dietary requirements.” (Head Chef)

Allergens

“I have one child who is allergic to eggs, fish, pineapple, soya, sesame, peanut, shellfish and seafood and these are all airborne, and mum wants him to eat a school meal in a dining area.” (kitchen manager)

Decline in basic feeding skills

“There is a decline in pre-nursery skills. As a result, we are opening a pre-nursery unit as of September....” (SENCO)

Impact on catering teams

“We provide 1600 meals, across seven schools with 11 members of staff. Catering for extensive special meals makes me anxious about accidents happening.” (catering manager)

Design Technology in Schools (DT)

Schools are held back from teaching these key parts of the curriculum by a (perceived) lack of facilities and requested resources and funding to support delivery of practical cooking and gardening.

Hesitation in delivering practical food education

“We would love to have a kitchen, but at the moment, unless the children are cooking, it’s difficult for them to see the link between healthy eating and food that is good for their bodies...”. (DT Lead)





What next?



Taking a Whole School Approach to Food (WSAF)

Originally proposed in the School Food Plan (2013), a Whole School Approach to Food (WSAF):

- ✓ understands that schools are complex systems
- ✓ understands that schools occupy a unique space in terms of promoting children's health and nutrition
- ✓ looks not just at the food served and dining experience, but also leadership, school culture, food education, equity/dignity, engagement and sustainability
- ✓ is recommended by both the World Health Organisation and the UK Government as a successful approach
- ✓ is supported by a growing body of evidence. Our overarching recommendation is that Hillingdon wo



What a WSAF might look like in Hillingdon

- A plan that encompasses **all dimensions and actors** within the school food system.
- This means targeting the entire school community **and** providers.
- It also means supporting better provision, **as well as** the implementation of a positive food culture in schools – one without the other tends to be unsustainable.



What's next for schools

- ✓ Attend our free online training in March/ April
- ✓ Access resources for schools
 - ✓ SFS Checklists
 - ✓ Our [resources](#)



**SCHOOL
FOOD
MATTERS**

What's next for Hillingdon

- Hillingdon Council is developing a strategic approach between Education, Public Health and Environment Health, within a WSAF.
- Clear Hillingdon-specific guidelines on what good food looks like in schools to facilitate better conversations with parents and caterers
- Useful templates and trainings on statutory duties around school food, policies, and action plans, plus useful procurement templates
- More consultation and peer learning between schools
- Regular updates via Education Weekly



Thank you!

**HEALTHY
ZONES**

