

Teaching D&T: Food in Primary schools

Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to help primary schools implement the requirements for food within the National Curriculum for Design and Technology (D&T) in England.

The context for teaching D&T: food is underpinned by Government and school commitments to improve the health and well-being of children. For this reason, teaching about food was made compulsory from KS1 to KS3 in 2014. One of the key purposes of teaching food as part of D&T is the 'well-being of the nation' and a key aim is to 'understand and apply the principles of nutrition and learn how to cook'.



These curriculum measures, together with the other action points of the [School Food Plan report](#), seek to promote a 'pro-food' ethos in schools and heighten awareness of the integral part that food plays in children's health, well-being and attainment. School food provision will be monitored by Ofsted as part of the [Education Inspection Framework](#), covered under Personal Development: keeping physically and mentally healthy. Healthy Eating is also included in the Relationships, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education curriculum which will become compulsory for all state funded schools from September 2020.

Teaching food across the school

Changes to the National Curriculum enabled schools to be more flexible with their curriculum planning. In addition, there is a national 'push' to increase children's experience of food – from growing fruit and vegetables in the school garden, through to preparing and cooking simple dishes for whole school events and celebrations. These types of activities help to reinforce learning from D&T: Food, or provide valuable prior learning to be revisited and consolidated in future lessons.

Our children's health is of major concern. According to the [NHS National Child Measurement Programme](#) when children leave primary school around 1 in 5 are overweight or obese (England). To tackle this issue, schools are focusing on prioritising healthy eating through the food they provide and the curriculum children experience – as well as encouraging everyone to be more active.

D&T: Food's contribution is to enable children to understand the issues facing themselves and others, create and modify recipes to meet these needs and to cook and evaluate a variety of dishes. Therefore, consideration should be given to ensuring that the projects and recipes used reflect our national healthy eating priority, facilitating a whole school approach to health, education and creativity.

Food is an engaging focus to be taught across the curriculum, helping to bring together many different subjects, topics and skills. As a key part of this experience, D&T: Food ensures that children learn and apply their knowledge and skills to tackle needs and problems and show their creative flair.

Teachers can be effective role-models for good practice (hygiene, safety, food skills, working practices) and influence children's healthy lifestyle choice.

Equipment and accommodation

Accommodation:

- Most primary schools do not have a dedicated food area or room, although many have been established. Creating a safe and hygienic area in the classroom or hall is important when running tasting or food preparation activities.
- It is good practice to ensure consistent arrangements are made for clean tables, washing-up equipment/facilities, aprons (child-size and wipe-clean), bins and waste (including recycling) and hand-washing.
- Any food needs to be properly stored and used within date – always check the label.

Equipment:

- Focus on what will be required for planned projects and lessons – start small and build up resources over time.
- Ensure that all equipment is stored separately and that it is only used for work with food.
- Equipment should be in good working order and clean.
- Consider purchasing child-size pieces of (plastic) equipment – some pieces may be too big for their hands.
- It is also useful to have equipment for the teacher to use – this may be used for skill demonstrations, such as glass mixing bowls.
- Electrical equipment can also be used, under adult supervision, e.g. blender, rice cooker, toaster. Some schools use mobile hobs and ovens, which help to extend the range of food skills (and recipes) children can demonstrate. These need to be located on tables in a clearly designated area and used under adult supervision.
- Have sets of trays for use to lay equipment and ingredients out for lessons – this helps with classroom and time management issues.

2014 National Curriculum for D&T – what it says, what it means

Food is a compulsory part of the new National Curriculum for Design and Technology. It appears in both strands of the programmes of study for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2:

Strand 1: Designing and making – children should design and make food products using a wide range of ingredients with users and purposes in mind.

Strand 2: Cooking and nutrition – children should understand and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating and learn how to prepare and cook dishes.

The advice of the Design and Technology Association and the British Nutrition Foundation is to link *Cooking and nutrition* with *Designing and making* when carrying out food projects in Design and Technology.

The knowledge, understanding and skills taught in *Cooking and nutrition* underpin high quality *Designing and making* with food. Children's learning about *Cooking and nutrition* may also be reinforced through activities in other subjects, e.g. links to seasonality and nutrition in science, development of accurate weighing skills in mathematics, discussion about healthy eating and living in PSHE, or through after-school activities, e.g. cooking or gardening clubs.

As part of *Cooking and nutrition*, KS1 children create, plan and prepare simple dishes, e.g. fruit or vegetable salads. There is no requirement to use a heat source in KS1. In KS2 children create, plan, prepare and cook predominantly savoury dishes, e.g. bread or soup. At least some of the dishes made in KS2 will require a heat source. This enables children to develop a greater range of skills and techniques, use a wider range of equipment and ingredients, and try new recipes.

Curriculum planning

To ensure coverage of the National Curriculum for Design and Technology, we advise primary schools to adopt the following curriculum planning principles:

1. Teach at least one food project per year through D&T. This will ensure that the requirement to prepare more than one dish in KS1 and a variety of dishes in KS2 is addressed.
2. Ensure that each project incorporates National Curriculum requirements for *Designing and making* and *Cooking and nutrition*.
3. Projects should only include elements of the *Designing and making* strand (e.g. using a range of equipment to perform practical tasks) that are relevant to food.
4. The time allocated to projects can be 'blocked' during a term. For example, projects can be taught for a half-term (one afternoon per week) or for three weeks (two afternoons per week) or for a fortnight (three afternoons per week).
5. During each project children should carry out:
 - a. **Investigative and Evaluative Activities** (IEAs) where they carry out sensory evaluation and research activities
 - b. **Focused Tasks** (FTs) where they learn safe and hygienic food preparation and cooking skills and techniques
 - c. **Design, Make and Evaluate Assignments** (DMEA) where they design and make one or more food dishes with a specific purpose (meal occasion, special event) and user (person or people) in mind.
6. Ensure that the projects children undertake are genuinely design and technological in nature. Each project should address the six D&T principles – user, purpose, functionality, innovation, design decisions and authenticity. Planning projects should also consider progression in learning. Click [here](#) for more guidance.
7. Over the course of both key stages, ensure that food is taught through a range of meaningful contexts such as the home, school, garden, leisure, culture, seasonality or sustainability. Schools may also wish to make cross-curricular links to other subjects, e.g. English, maths or science.
8. Use the D&T Association/Expert Group's Progression Framework for KS1 and KS2 to ensure that what children learn in a food project is appropriate to their age and builds on prior learning, including learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Click [here](#) for more guidance.

Hygiene and safety checklist

Ensure that:

- A letter has been sent home to check whether any children in the class have food allergies, special dietary requirements, religious or cultural beliefs that prevent them handling or tasting certain foods.
 - Classroom furniture is in a safe, practical arrangement.
 - Classroom tables are covered with clean plastic cloths.
 - Equipment is clean and ready for use (count knives and sharp tools out and in).
 - Ingredients are stored appropriately, e.g. in a fridge below 5C. Ingredients containing allergens, are stored separately.
 - Ingredients are ready for use – if necessary, some may be partly prepared or weighed.
 - All jewellery is removed.
 - Nail varnish is removed.
 - Long hair is tied back.
 - Jumpers are removed (if appropriate) and long sleeves rolled up.
 - Hands are clean – washed with soap or handwash and dried properly.
 - Aprons are on.
 - Children know they must wash their hands again if they blow their nose, cough or sneeze into their hands, touch hair, cuts or spots.
 - Children know they must remove their apron if they go to the toilet; wash their hands in the toilet sink when they have used the toilet and re-wash in the classroom sink before they go back to their cooking.
 - Children know how to use the equipment safely (teacher to demonstrate).
 - Additional, trained, adult supervision is used where necessary. Adults act as role-models for good food hygiene and safety practices.
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- **For advice and guidance around good food hygiene and safety practices (primary), go to:**
<https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/professional-development/teaching-and-learning/planning-and-teaching/good-food-hygiene-and-safety-practices/good-food-hygiene-and-safety-practices-primary/>
 - [Food – a fact of life](#) also has a wide range of lesson ideas, resources and activities for teaching and learning about healthy eating, cooking and where food comes from.

What will Ofsted look for?

As part of the [Education Inspection Framework](#), Ofsted inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children. As part of reaching this judgement, inspectors will look at the extent to which schools are successfully supporting children in gaining knowledge of how to keep healthy, including healthy eating. The Cooking and Nutrition strand within the National Curriculum for D&T has a central role to play in developing children's knowledge in this area. If a school is failing to meet its obligations, inspectors will consider this when reaching the personal development judgement.

[Grade descriptors for personal development, behaviour and welfare](#) include expectations of providing informed choices of healthy eating and fitness.

Examples of good practice

During a project where Year 1 children design and make fruit kebabs and vegetable kebabs for a class summer picnic, they learn that everyone should eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and that fruit and vegetables are one of the five food groups needed for a healthy and varied diet. Children talk about where fruit and vegetables come from and that they are grown on farms and in the school garden. They discuss the fruit and vegetables they enjoy and realise that people have preferences for different dishes and ingredients. They taste a range of fruit and vegetables, saying which they like and dislike, and describe their sensory characteristics. Children carry out a class survey in order to decide which combination of ingredients to include in the dishes they design and make for their picnic. Prior to making their kebabs, children learn appropriate food preparation techniques through teacher demonstration and focused tasks.

In response to a letter from the school cook, children in Year 5 design and make a range of healthy, seasonal soups that could be served during school lunchtime. They carry out market research using existing soups to identify the preferences of their target group and find out about the range of ingredients available in the UK at different times of the year. They also carry out web-based research into the soups created by different cultures and countries. Groups of four children write a specification for their soup: the season when it would be served, its intended taste, texture, appearance and aroma, and how it will form part of healthy, varied diet as depicted in [The Eatwell Guide](#). Prior to making their soups, children learn a range of food preparation and cooking techniques through teacher demonstration and focused tasks. The class pitch their healthy, seasonal soups to the school cook and kitchen staff and modify their recipes on the basis of feedback.

As a possible extension task, some children may conduct a nutritional analysis of their soup using a nutritional analysis programme such as [Explore food](#).

Useful links

D&T Association and BNF resources

- [D&T Association – Projects on a Page scheme of work](#)
- [D&T Association – Progression Framework](#)
- [D&T Association – Key messages, advice and explanatory notes for schools](#)
- [D&T Association – primary food resources](#)
- [Food – a fact of life](#)
- [The Eatwell Guide](#)
- [Food teaching in primary schools: a framework of knowledge and skills \(PHE/DfE 2015\)](#)
- [FFL resources to support the RSE and Health Education curriculum 2020](#)
- [Core competences for children and young people aged 5-16 years](#)
- [FFL progression chart of knowledge and skills for pupils aged 5-11](#)

CPD opportunities

- [Food - a fact of life Personal and professional development](#)
- [Primary Teaching Food Safely training](#)
- [Royal Academy of Culinary Arts – Adopt a School](#)

Further information

- [ASDA Kids Kitchen](#)
- [BNF Core competences for children and young people aged 5 to 16 years](#)
- [Change for Life](#)
- [Food for Life Partnership](#)
- [Grow Your Own Potatoes](#)
- [Let's Get Cooking](#)
- [Morrisons Academy of Food \(YouTube\)](#)
- [National Curriculum \(England\)](#)
- [NHS Live Well](#)
- [School Food Plan](#)
- [Tesco Eat Happy Project](#)
- [PHSE programme of study for KS1-5 \(updated 2020\)](#)
- [CLEAPPS primary](#)