

# School Food Champions Programme



## Case Study # 2

### Food teacher professional development

The School Food Champions (SFC) Programme engaged with over 60 food teachers in secondary schools throughout England. Through working on the programme, teachers reported a professional development benefit for being involved, enhancing their profile, role and understanding of whole school issues, as well as developing new skills. Captured throughout their work, this evidence of professional development supported performance management, as well as career progression.

#### Profile

Being involved in the SFC programme resulted in the profile of the food teacher being enhanced throughout the school, especially with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This position gave the food teacher the voice and authority to support the push for better school food. For many food teachers, it allowed them to interact with the wider school community developing new skills as well as being recognised for their food expertise and achievements.

#### Role

SFCs reported that being involved helped them to broaden and develop their role within the school, especially working on whole school issues with management. Others reported better interaction with Governors. This positive collaboration enabled faster change, as SLT was fully on-board, resulting in better impact. Food teachers found their role and remit enhanced, embracing new challenges to raise the profile of food throughout the school. Already being accepted and known in the school as the 'food expert' meant that they were instantly recognised as a food leader, who understood the needs of their school.

#### Understanding

The SFCs told us that being involved helped develop their understanding of a number of key areas. While these changed from individual to individual, they covered:

- school food provision operations – understanding the canteen operations and working with staff to help make a difference;
- curriculum coverage and school food – discovering new opportunities to bring school food to life through KS3 activities and working with the catering manager;
- free school meal entitlement – encouraging take-up and acknowledging existing barriers and how these could be overcome;
- school food standards – developing a thorough understanding of the standards and seeking ways in which to inform the school community and work with the canteen to ensure compliance.

#### What Works Well

- The food teacher can play an important and active role, with SLT, in the development, monitoring and celebration of excellence in school food.
- Getting involved in the SFC programme resulted in positive professional development benefits.
- As the food teacher was already in the school, they understood the needs and were recognised as a lead in food education.

#### A Champion's voice

*Jenny Ruth, from, Brentwood County High School, supported her school with an increase of 9.7% in the first few terms! She launched the programme to parents, initiated surveyed with pupils and created an inter-house competition to design a new lunch!*



## Learning

While the programme showed that having the food teacher actively involved in increasing school meal uptake worked, it also provided opportunities for teacher's professional development. Key learnings included:

- professional development is not just about going on courses, but it also includes being given new challenges and remits within the school;
- greater awareness of the impact of healthy school meals and understanding the challenges faced by caterers;
- teachers being more appreciative of 'pupil voice' and working in collaboration;
- using staff that are already in the school, rather than using outside 'experts', can result in an increase of school meal uptake and enhance teachers professionally;
- teachers need to work in partnership with SLT, other teachers, catering managers and office staff to realise the full potential of the programme – resulting in communication to a wider number of audiences;
- one teacher cannot do everything – but working as a team, all pushing in the same direction, can make a difference.



## How to achieve this in your school

To have this impact in your school, consider the following characteristics of good practice:

- approach the SLT and Governors about school food, become the School Food Champion for your school – you can make a difference;
- get active and make school food your business – link curriculum and food provision together;
- talk to all and work collaboratively – learn new skills and achieve more;
- set goals, monitor progress and reward success – motivate a positive change and be the pro-food expert;
- reflect on your own practice and use the experience to grow professionally.



## Get in touch

For more information, go to: [www.schoolfoodchampions.org.uk](http://www.schoolfoodchampions.org.uk)

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