

Overdale Junior School's Food for Life Journey

Over the past few years our Food for Life work at Overdale Junior School has been an incredibly rewarding and wonderful learning journey for adults and children alike.

We were thrilled to get our FfL Bronze Award back in November 2015 and since then we have been working hard towards both our Silver and Gold Awards, which we hope to achieve in the near future.

We have undertaken large whole school projects like the development of our Sensory Garden (full of edible fruits) and our first ever School Farmers' Market in May which was a huge success. Our aim was to enable the school and wider community to be able to buy fresh, local and organic produce some grown in school by inviting local food organisations to have stalls. Hundreds of people came on a wonderful sunny day and feedback from everyone was very positive.

Our school garden has flourished with hard work from pupils, staff and parents, and we regularly harvest organically produced vegetables, fruit, salad and herbs for our cookery lessons and school kitchen. All younger children take part in gardening lessons and there is an active gardening club.

We have improved our dining room experience by banishing so called 'flight trays' and replacing them with brightly coloured plates and bowls, along with table cloths and an additional salad bar. We have termly meetings with our school cook and caterers to review the menu, suggest changes and help reduce waste. We also invite parents/carers to join us for lunch and this is becoming more popular. We love to promote our healthy school meals.

Staff have taken part in training for teaching cookery, sustainability, gardening and growing and we have hosted visits from other local schools such as Sandfield Close Primary, Marriott and Overdale Infants to celebrate and share our learning.

Every year the youngest children visit a farm and this year they loved helping Farmer Anthony with jobs such as weeding and planting at Whetstone Pastures Farm. In fact, they have been in touch with Anthony and his wife, Sandra, all year round by visits to school and email.

We have a hugely successful healthy Tuck shop called Snackalicious which is run as business by Y6 pupils. In the last two years it has made around £600 profit for the school and helps our children have healthy fruity snacks every day.

All pupils have cookery lessons learning how to prepare and cook simple, predominantly savoury meals, using lots of healthy ingredients, and we have also established a popular after school family cookery club to encourage shared cooking at home.

In fact, right now we have two pupils taking part in the finals of the Leicester City Primary Chef Competition at Leicester College! And on Friday the whole of Year 4 will travel to the East of England Showground in Peterborough to enjoy the amazing **Kids Country Food and Farming Day**.

Our Food for Life journey has effectively transformed our food culture, permeating across the whole school curriculum, backed by an updated Food Policy, and including the wider infant and junior school communities. It continues to be a very rewarding partnership as we head towards Silver and Gold.

Karen Cooper, Food for Life Lead and Food Routes Co-ordinator, Overdale Junior School, June 2017.