

FEEDING OUR CHILDRENS' FUTURE: CASE STUDY ONE

Ashley Primary School, Walton on Thames, Surrey

To fit with their learning enquiry around the Tudors (a period in English history from 1485 until 1603), Year 4 teachers (of children aged 8 to 9 years old) took elements from the *Feeding our Childrens' Future* lesson plans and adapted them as appropriate. They linked the idea of growing and eating local food to what would have been available back in Tudor times. They visited a local organic farm and made organic Tudor buns. They scouted around in the local supermarket to see what kind of food is sold, how it is

packaged and if food miles were on the labels. Then they wrote to the supermarket suggesting they could do better. They held a Tudor style hog roast, courtesy of a local pig, and checked out what was growing in their school vegetable patch in late autumn. They finished the project by making leaflets for the year above them, collecting up their new knowledge about local, seasonal food.



Daniel Cadman, one of the teachers, commented:

"The children have really enjoyed their learning enquiry and learnt a lot!"

Next year, we will most likely change our key learning enquiry question from 'Where does our food come from?' to 'When is food at its best?' as the latter encompasses everything."

Here is the structure of Year 4's half term learning from October to December 2014

Week 1

Where did the Tudors explore? Tasting and smelling spices and looking at maps of where they came from.

Where does our food come from? Shops, farms... the soil.

What does organic mean? Natural and without chemicals.

We visited Bore Place Organic farm in Kent and made organic Tudor buns and explored the garden and dairy farm.

Week 2

What are food miles? The distance our food travels.

What is a carbon footprint? Looked at food miles website

What transport has the biggest impact? Planes are the worst.

Where does our food come from? School lunch menus examined and food miles calculated for each day.

Comparisons made looking at different modes of transport.

How can we represent this data? Maths: data handling and graph drawing.

Week 3

What can we find out from food packaging? Trip to Sainsbury's to examine packaging. What is good? It says if it's organic and where it has come from (the UK flag if British). What could be improved? Food miles and carbon footprint labeled.

More investigations around the distances food travel.

Project: create a healthy meal that is sourced locally.

Calculate the food miles for the recipe and its carbon footprint.



Young bee-keepers at Ashley School

Week 4

How does packaging affect our world? We examined our rubbish bin and asked how long do things take to biodegrade? What can we do to improve packaging? Lessen it and make it more informative.

All the pupils wrote letters to Sainsbury's (a leading UK chain of supermarkets) asking them to adopt the children's new packaging designs using persuasive language.



Week 5

What food is in season right now?

Exploration of school grounds: brussel sprouts, leeks, cabbages, parsnips (all growing at school).

Why is seasonal food best? It is fresher and doesn't have to travel long distances - less food miles.

Seasonal calendars made, linked to fraction work.

Leaflets were created answering the question, "When is food at its best?" and shared with Year Five children.

In the autumn Ashley School invites grandparents in to have a lunch that is cooked by the children, and served by them, made from vegetables grown in the school grounds

Children were asked to devise a healthy meal from locally sourced food, to cook at home and serve to their family. Here is one recipe, transcribed from the children's own work:

British Beef Stew (*Total food miles is 1993*) All ingredients are local (English) unless noted

Ingredients:

Olive oil (Italian) *890 food miles*
Sea salt
1 knob of butter
1 onion, peeled and chopped
1 handful of fresh sage leaves
800g beef stewing steak cut in pieces
Freshly ground black pepper
Flour, to dust
2 parsnips, peeled and chopped
4 carrots, peeled and halved
½ butternut squash, de-seeded and diced
500g small potatoes
2 tablespoons tomato puree (Italian) *890 food miles*
½ bottle of red wine (French) *213 food miles*
285ml beef stock



Method:

The hog roast getting under way, with children wearing Tudor costume

1. Pre-heat oven to 160 degrees centigrade
2. Put oil and butter in pan, add onion and sage leaves and fry for 3 minutes
3. Put beef in seasoned flour then add to pan with all the vegetables, tomato puree, wine, stock and stir together
4. Season and bring to the boil. Put the lid on and cook in oven until meat is tender (3 to 4 hours)
5. Serve in bowls with fresh local bread

Children also drafted persuasive letters to the local Sainsbury's supermarket, following their visit there, to suggest how the concept of food miles could be included on the labels. Note how it starts with an appreciation of what is already being done well:

Dear Mr Meade

Thursday 4 December 2014

My name is and I am eight years old and a pupil at Ashley School in Walton. I am writing to you because this term in my class we have been learning about where our food comes from. We visited your shop to investigate and we found lots of good things like the [traffic light system](#) and the Union flag is on the food that has come from the UK. However, I think you can do even better.

My great idea is that you should include a traffic light system for a carbon footprint and urge you to put braille on your labels, and lastly you should include how many food miles the product has travelled and surely you must agree that will be good and also sell local food to save our stunning planet. I can't wait to hear from you and if you agree with me and my ideas.

Yours sincerely

Name



[Ashley](#) is rated as the best school in Surrey for energy consumption when compared to schools with similar. They produce renewable energy through solar panels and the locally sourced woodchip biomass boiler, and by energy saving.

They have planted a heritage Surrey apple orchard with 32 varieties, potato beds with 26 varieties, 24 varieties of gooseberries and a pear orchard with 21 local varieties. All the vegetables and fruit grown on site go into school lunches or year group learning projects. The kitchen has won awards for its work in closing the loop on food production and sharing its practice with other schools.

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