



Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

Education Scrutiny Performance Panel – 23 November 2023

Cookery in Schools

Purpose:	To brief the Panel on what is being done in schools to provide children and young people with cookery skills.
Content:	An overview of cookery as part of the Curriculum for Wales and what the current offer is across our schools.
Councillors are being asked to:	Consider the information provided and give views.
Lead Councillor:	Cabinet Member for Education & Learning
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Rhodri Jones, Head of Achievement and Partnership Service rhodri.jones@swansea.gov.uk

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Curriculum for Wales states clearly that a headteacher must ensure a curriculum is designed for learning and teaching for all registered learners at the school aged 3 to 16. Amongst these requirements, they must make provision for learning and teaching that encompasses each of the Areas of Learning, including the mandatory elements. A curriculum only does this if it incorporates all the statements of what matters.
- 1.2 The Health and Well-being Area of Learning and Experience provides a holistic structure for understanding health and well-being. It is concerned with developing the capacity of learners to navigate life's opportunities and challenges. The fundamental components of this Area are physical health and development, mental health, and emotional and social well-being. It will support learners to understand and appreciate how the different components of health and well-being are interconnected, and it recognises that good health and well-being are important to enable successful learning.
- 1.3 In the Statements of What Matters for this Area, a mandatory statement is that *developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits*.
- 1.4 This Area can help learners to understand the factors that affect physical health and well-being. This includes health-promoting behaviours such as physical

activity, including but not limited to sport; balanced diet; personal care and hygiene; sleep; and protection from infection. It also includes an understanding of health-harming behaviours.

- 1.5 From this understanding, learners can develop positive, informed behaviours that encourage them both to care for and respect themselves and others. These behaviours support learners' sense of self-worth, their overall mood and energy levels.
- 1.6 Learners will be encouraged to develop the confidence, motivation, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that can help them lead healthy and active lifestyles which promote good physical health and well-being.
- 1.7 As a result, learners should be taught:
 - to explain the importance of a balanced diet and nutrition and the impact my choices have on my physical health and well-being.
 - plan and prepare basic, nutritious meals.
 - apply a range of techniques to prepare meals.

2. Primary Schools in Swansea

- 2.1 At the time of writing and planning for this report members of the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) are taking part in action short of strike meaning that many of our primary headteachers are withdrawing from certain administrative functions. As a result, we have been unable to gather detailed information on cookery in our primary schools.
- 2.2 However, our School Improvement Team have collected anecdotal evidence over time and as a result we are able to provide a brief overview of our understanding of the current offer across our primary schools.
- 2.3 Our School Improvement Team have reported that primary schools in Swansea are building cookery into their curriculum as required. Teachers use it to support various aspects of pupils' learning and skill development. This includes using it to allow the pupils to make various recipes to link with themes, festivals and cultures. We have also seen a number of schools providing additional opportunities via their after-school offer.
- 2.4 A number of our primary schools have looked further than the curriculum and have focused on healthy eating and cookery for their pupils, families and wider communities. A recent example of this has seen Penclawdd Primary School using Welsh Government Community Focussed Schools capital funding to support the redesign and repurpose the school's current staffroom kitchen area to use as an after school healthy eating / cooking club for families and children to benefit the community.
 - 2.4.1 This project will provide enormous benefits to the school and community as part of improving wellbeing by providing enrichment opportunities as an after school healthy eating cooking club for families and children.

- 2.4.2 Working with the support of The Sharing Table - a charity improving the lives of disadvantaged children in Gower and Swansea, the local North Gower food hub and Gorseinon food bank - this project will aim to teach children and families to cook, eat healthily, use vegetables, follow recipes and develop lifelong skills in food preparation, food hygiene, healthy eating choices and cooking on a budget. This project will also support the development of essential skills in Maths and English, positive relationships and encourage time away from the use of social media.
- 2.4.3 The school have their own school allotment and will also use vegetables and herbs grown by pupils in the after-school club.
- 2.5 Urdd Gobaith Cymru offer learners the opportunity to compete in CogUrdd, a competition that sees hundreds of children competing in local and regional heats before a final that's held on the Maes of the Urdd Eisteddfod every year. The competition starts with a simple meal that allows as many learners as possible to take part, with the recipes increasing in complexity as you move through the rounds. The last couple of years have seen an increase in the learners from Swansea schools taking part.
- 2.6 A number of Swansea schools have also started community cafés which not only provide learners with an opportunity to prepare food but also the wider skills of running a business in their local community.

3. Secondary Schools in Swansea

- 3.1 We surveyed all our secondary schools to gather information on how cookery and food technology is taught in years 7,8 and 9, what options are available at key stage 4 and any other ways our schools promote home cooking skills or similar related activities.
- 3.2 Nearly all our schools offer food technology as part of a carousel with other subjects during years 7 and 8 with learners experiencing some practical lessons during that time. The schools that are not able to offer the subject in years 7 and 8 explained that this was due to staff capacity in this subject area.
- 3.3 All Swansea schools offer food technology to their year 9 learners as part of a carousel with other subject areas.
- 3.4 As students move to key stage 4 there are numerous GCSE and vocational courses offered in all Swansea schools These include:
- GCSE in Food and Nutrition
 - BTEC in Home Cooking Skills
 - Vocational courses in Hospitality and Catering
 - Personalised pathway access award in Home Cooking
 - Royal Society of Public Health qualifications in Food Hygiene
- 3.5 Similarly to our primary schools our secondary schools also find other ways of promoting home cooking skills or similar related activities. These include:

- Cooking lessons for eFSM pupil and parents/carers after school
- Year 6 Taster sessions
- Competitions, including Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Rotary, inter-school etc
- Posting recipes on social media for families to try at home
- Cooking for the homeless
- Regular cooking lessons for pupils within STFs and in ACE classes

4. Legal implications

4.1 There are no legal implications within this report.

5. Finance Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications within this report.

6. Equality and Engagement Implications

6.1 The report is for information and not for decision.

Background papers: None

Appendices: None