

FSA

East Midlands What's Cooking? Cookery Clubs

Evaluation Report

Prepared for Food Standards Agency
 COI Communications

Prepared by EdComs

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Executive Summary

1.1 Background and objectives

The Food Standards Agency provided funding and guidance materials to support the set up and implementation of the What's Cooking? programme. What's Cooking? clubs aim to provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about food and develop their skills across four broad food competency areas of: diet and health, consumer awareness, cooking (food preparation and handling skills) and food hygiene and safety.

In 2005/06, the Foods Standards Agency launched the What's Cooking? programme in the North East of England and then rolled it out in the East Midlands in 2008.

This document outlines the findings for the evaluation of the programme in the East Midlands. The objectives of this evaluation were to:

- identify the impact of the What's Cooking? clubs amongst participants and coordinators
- explore barriers to its success
- determine the usefulness of the What's Cooking? guide
- determine ways to further support clubs in their implementation, in terms of resources, and sustainability and evaluation guidance.

1.2 Methodology

The evaluation approach included:

- eight in-depth telephone interviews with local authority representatives
- ten coordinator reviews of the What's Cooking? guide
- nine case study visits, including interviews with coordinators and participants
- two workshops with coordinators, local authority representatives and representatives from the Agency and ContinYou.

1.3 Main findings

Set up

What's cooking? fitted well with a whole school approach to learning and within the areas of the curriculum/skills development. Coordinators used the club as a driver to raise the profile of healthy eating/living in schools.

The What's Cooking guide appealed to coordinators because it provided clear and comprehensive information; it was seen as a real driver to setting up and implementing the programme.

The clubs included a wide range of participants, and included both students and parents. Most clubs took place after school, with one taking place during curriculum time (for boys at risk of exclusion).

Activities

A variety of activities took place during the club sessions to help deliver the knowledge and skills set out in the Agency's food competency framework. The core food competences were mainly delivered via practical cooking sessions, but there were also sharing/tasting experiences, external visits, visitors to the school and 'hands-on activities'. Many activities incorporated more than one competency

Impacts

Outcomes of the club sessions included:

- increases in knowledge, awareness and attitudes towards food
- development of cooking skills
- development of personal skills (e.g. confidence) and relationship building between peers, or between participants and staff
- a broadening of horizons, and changed attitudes towards other aspects of school, including increased attendance
- some evidence of more home cooking, but mainly intentions to cook at home and to help with food shopping.

Success criteria and barriers

In order to achieve success, coordinators felt it was important that:

- the What's Cooking? programme was flexible and adaptable
- there was the opportunity to run a pilot club in school and learn/share those experiences across the school
- there was keen support from the school management and local authority
- there was a suitable venue and equipment to run the sessions
- activities for the clubs included:
 - hands-on/interactive activities
 - opportunities to taste lots of different foods
 - opportunities for families to participate or taste new foods
 - opportunities to gain knowledge in all four competency areas.

Although most of these success criteria had been achieved, there were some barriers to its success:

- Some club sessions were possibly too prescriptive for participants, not allowing flexibility.
- Some activities were de-motivating and not engaging for participants, e.g. the PowerPoint presentations.
- It was difficult for all four competences to be delivered in an engaging and hands-on way for participants, particularly consumer awareness.

- There were problems accessing ingredients, especially with time constraints.

The following ideas were suggested for future support materials to help with the programme set up and delivery:

- Time saving templates.
- Recipes (which were in adaptable formats online).
- A best practice network.
- Interactive activities to cover *all* four competences.

Sustainability and evaluation

There was a general lack of understanding about the need for schools to source their own funds to sustain clubs, and coordinators had little confidence in where to look for funding and how to complete a funding application.

Only a few clubs had formulated ways of continuing the programme, whether by curriculum integration, links to other school/government initiatives (e.g. Healthy Schools, Extended schools), or by partnerships with local businesses.

Coordinators therefore needed:

- guidance on the key objectives that various funders would expect of their programme
- templates for various types of business plan
- key self evaluation measurements which were linked with these key objectives.

Once they realised that sustainability would be the responsibility of schools, they then understood the importance of self evaluation. Only a couple of coordinators had completed formal evaluations with the participants at the end of each session. Coordinators feared that formal evaluations would be too closely related to school work for certain participants, therefore being demotivating for them. It was thought that evaluation therefore needed to be kept simple and fun for participants. Coordinators felt that they needed guidance on appropriate self evaluation mechanisms, as follows:

- Questionnaire templates and banks of questions, so that they could choose questions which best suited their participants.
- Promotion of more informal methods, e.g. graffiti walls, use of coloured stickers, the recording anecdotes from participants or other staff.
- Promotion of evaluation methods involving the analysis of whole school data, e.g. on attendance.

1.4 Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following recommendations have been made and should be considered in the overall development of the programme.

Recommendations for the development of supporting resource materials

- The What's Cooking? guide needs to be made available to schools and local authority representatives before the submission of action plans.
- Awareness of the website link to the downloadable version of the guide and the pdf versions of the appendices should be raised.
- The guide could contain the following templates to assist programme implementation and club delivery:
 - action plans
 - spreadsheets for budgeting
 - risk assessments
- Any promotional images used in the guide/website should be age-relevant to the programme and only include images of pupils Year 6 and upwards.
- There should be an emphasis on the development of support materials which help deliver 'hands-on/ practical activities' to make all food competences 'real'. This should include:
 - Checklists of competence criteria.
 - More recipes, each with additional detail to better enable home cooking and to cover the other competences. For example, recipes could be annotated with information relating to the food competences, equipment required and suggested alternative ingredients.
 - An interactive resource, i.e. a virtual shopping game.
 - Ensure presentations are interactive and child-friendly.
- Provide training opportunities for non-teaching and non food specialists (teaching assistants and external visitors)
- Develop an online platform for sharing best practice, including:
 - case study templates that coordinators can use to share their practice, which should include key prompts for coordinators to outline their tried and tested hands-on activities which address all competences
 - allowing coordinators to upload, or at least send in, their own ideas.
- In addition, best practice from this evaluation should also be promoted, e.g. activities such as:
 - Sharing in the tasting experience
 - Foods being taken home (which could increase impacts on non-attending parents)
 - Giving pupils a menu/choice in sessions, which could increase initial motivation
 - Using ingredients that are locally available so participants can easily source them for home cooking.

Recommendations in supporting the sustainability of the programme and conducting self evaluation

- There should be increased awareness of the future need for coordinators to source their own funding and the importance of self evaluation in relation to this.
- Guidance should be provided to support this, i.e. funding source objectives, business plan templates and self evaluation measurements.
- Self-evaluation should be supported, and the possibility of flexible approaches highlighted. Ideas provided to clubs should include:
 - banks of questions
 - alternate modes, e.g. graffiti walls
 - anecdotal evidence
 - use of whole school data on attendance/behaviour
 - interactive food diaries.
- It is also recommended that any interactive resources link e-learning with assessment, e.g. by using interactive games to record learning and longer term impacts of the clubs.

1. Background

The Food Standards Agency is an independent Government department whose responsibility is to protect the public's health and consumer interests in relation to food. As part of its strategic plan the Agency is working to enable consumers to choose a healthier diet and reduce diet related disease. In order to fulfil this aim, the Agency carries out a range of activities to encourage schools to adopt a 'whole school' approach to food and encourage young people to choose, cook and eat safe healthy food.

In 2005/06 the Agency launched the What's Cooking? programme in the North East of England to address these aims. A total of 92 What's Cooking? clubs took place in primary schools, secondary schools, children's homes and youth clubs. The Agency provided funding and guidance materials to support the set up and implementation of the clubs. The aim of the clubs was to provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about food and develop their skills across four competency areas of: diet and health, consumer awareness, cooking (food preparation and handling skills) and food hygiene and safety. The funding period finished in the North East at the end of the 2007 summer term and many clubs continued into the new academic year.

Following on from the successful roll out of the scheme in the North East, the Agency then launched What's Cooking? in the East Midlands. The scheme operated on the same principles and with the exception of funding, the Agency provided funding, of £1,000, for each of the clubs across seven local authorities. Continyou successfully negotiated provision of additional funds from Regional and Local Healthy Schools and the Regional Public Health Team and the Local Authorities involved. The purpose of this was to explore local sustainability of the clubs through buy in and support from institutions, in the localities of each club, who had a vested interest in policies on healthy eating.

As with the programme in the North East, the Agency and COI again commissioned EdComs to evaluate the programme within the East Midlands. The evaluation was designed to measure the impacts of the What's Cooking? programme and coordinators guide produced by the Agency. As well as looking into what other support materials could be produced to enable coordinators to evaluate their own clubs and deliver the knowledge and skills contained in the Agency's food competency framework across the curriculum.

2. Research objectives

The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- explore how the clubs were set up and implemented
- identify internal and external support used to run the clubs
- identify resources and materials developed by individual clubs
- determine impacts resulting from the programme, including impacts amongst participants, schools, teachers and the wider community
- examine the usefulness of, and improvements to, the What's Cooking? guide
- assess awareness of, and engagement in, other related programmes
- identify improvements for the What's Cooking? programme overall
- explore plans for sustaining the clubs
- explore how the core food competences fit with the wider curriculum
- inform development of ideas for materials to support schools in delivering the clubs, evaluating the programme's impact and sustaining clubs in the future.

This document outlines EdComs' approach and findings for the evaluation.

3. Methodology

A qualitative approach was used to evaluate the programme. All methods are outlined below.

In depth telephone interviews with local authority representatives

A telephone interview was conducted with each of seven local authority representatives from participating local authorities before the clubs were due to commence. Each interview lasted around 30 minutes.

Coordinator reviews of the What's Cooking? guide

Ten What's Cooking? coordinators were recruited to complete in-depth reviews of the What's Cooking? guide (*What's Cooking? A guide to setting up and running community and school food clubs*). Coordinators were asked about their views of the guide's content, design and appropriateness.

Case study visits

A total of nine case study visits took place in participating schools. Visits took place in the following East Midlands local authorities:

- Two visits in Rutland.
- Two visits in Nottinghamshire.
- Two visits in Lincolnshire.
- One visit in Nottingham City.
- One visit in Leicester City.
- One visit in Northamptonshire.

The types of schools visited were as follows:

- One primary school.
- Seven secondary schools.
- One Personalised Learning Unit within a secondary school, for those pupils at risk of exclusion.

The following activities were undertaken during each case study visit:

- Observation of the cookery club in operation.
- One-to-one interviews with the coordinator and individuals running the club.
- A group interview with participants of the cookery club.
- One to one interview with the head teacher or a representative of the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- One to one interview with an external representative, where applicable, for example, a visiting Environmental Health officer from the local authority or a representative from a local supermarket.

Please see the appendix for a copy of the case study visit summaries.

Developmental workshops with a variety of stakeholders

Two workshops were held in Nottingham & Leicester and included participation from coordinators, local authority representatives and representatives from the Food Standards Agency and ContinYou. The workshops were run to discuss the overall impacts of the programme, success criteria and to inform the development of support materials and self evaluation ideas for a sustainable wider programme.

Data collection and timings

The following table provides an overview of the data collection and timings for each element.

Table 1: Data collection and key timings

Research element	Key timings
Telephone depth interviews with local authority leads	March to April, 2008
Coordinator reviews of the What's Cooking? guide	April to May, 2008
Case study visits	April to June, 2008
Workshops with coordinators and local authority representatives	June, 2008

4. Main findings

4.1 Club set up and delivery

4.1.1 Motivations for becoming involved

Local authority representatives, club coordinators and senior management wanted their school to be involved with the What's Cooking? programme mainly because they hoped the programme would provide new opportunities for children and young people to interact with food, predominantly through their own practical cooking. Many wanted to use this new experience as a driver to raise awareness and increase knowledge about healthy eating and living across the wider school.

'We wanted to get children interested in new tastes and smells, introduced to things they wouldn't normally have picked up'

[Coordinator]

'I wanted the children to learn about food. The healthier aspect and the different ways of enjoying food'

[Coordinator]

The programme was also seen to tie in very well with current whole school approaches, such as: Healthy Schools, Every Child Matters, Extended services, New School Meals legislation, five hour sports targets and parental involvement strategies. There were also appropriate links with other healthy eating/living initiatives which meant that the programme could run neatly alongside others in the school (i.e. License to Cook and Sainsbury's Active Kids).

'The What's Cooking? programme fits fantastically. It can contribute to Extended Schools. This school has designed the programme really well, we're really pleased that they're focusing on food safety side of things as well as eating well'

[Headteacher]

'I thought it would enhance the work we're already doing. I thought it would sit alongside our whole school approach and Every Child Matters. I wanted to develop a whole school approach to food. Because we're a business and enterprise college we develop businesses around that. Generally youngsters want to sign up for food. We want to offer hospitality and catering. We've got very good links with local businesses and the farming community which link to the activities we want to do with the What's Cooking? project'

[Headteacher]

As well as the programme fitting well with wider school approaches and other initiatives, the programme also fitted well with the wider curriculum of Food Technology, PSHE, and elements of Maths and Geography. It especially fitted in well with the new secondary curriculum and its focus on skill development.

'We were very keen with getting involved with the programme because it fits so well with Healthy Schools, PSHE, attitudes towards body image and health'

[Coordinator]

'I'd like the What's Cooking? club to have an overall impact on the curriculum and I think it could. Already, there is a change occurring to the Key Stage 3 curriculum to make things healthier. It seems to make sense that if the activities have worked well in the club these could be transferred into the curriculum to try and broaden it'

[Assistant Headteacher]

Coordinators envisaged that the new experience of food and cooking would also provide the opportunity not only to develop food related skills such as food preparation and handling, dietary knowledge, food hygiene and safety, but also personal skills (i.e. self confidence and team working).

Where the club was open for any children/young people to volunteer, participants said the skills development opportunity had encouraged them and appealed to their parents as a valid reason to take part.

'The What's Cooking? club is great. We have learnt how to cook because you don't want to have to live off of Pot Noodles or McDonalds when you're older. This is helping us to know how to cook for our future'

[Participant]

'My dad said it would be a good idea for me to do the club because when I'm older I'll have to do lots of my own cooking and I thought it was a good idea'

[Participant]

4.1.2 Who was involved?

The What's Cooking? programme involved a wide range of deliverers and participants who supported each other in the set up and implementation of the clubs.

The majority of coordinators reported feeling well supported. They valued the communication they had with ContinYou and the regular support from their local authority, other school staff and parents throughout the What's Cooking?

programme. Quite a few local authorities had run network meetings and training for club coordinators. These were used to support the coordinators in the planning process and as a way of exchanging information and best practice ideas.

The following table shows the different roles held by the clubs' main coordinators and the roles of those assisting.

Table 2: The roles of club coordinators and those assisting

The role of club coordinators/leaders	The role of those assisting
Food Technology teacher	Food Technology teacher
Teaching Assistant	Teaching Assistant
Catering Manager	Catering Manager
Healthy Schools coordinator	Healthy Schools coordinator
Extended Schools coordinator	Extended Schools coordinator
	School kitchen staff
	Library Assistant
	Local Authority representative (helped with set up/ran network meetings)
	Senior Management Team
	Parents
	Other outside visitors: Women's Institute, local catering college, Environmental Health officers, etc

There were also many different groups of participants at the What's Cooking? clubs in the East Midlands. Coordinators had either run the clubs for any participant who wanted to be involved, on a first-come-first-served basis, (including being open to participants' families) or they targeted a specific group. The following groups of participants were targeted:

- Year groups 7-9
- Students who received free school meals
- A young peoples' Healthy School team
- Transition Year 6 children
- Gifted & Talented students
- Those with behaviour issues/at risk of exclusion
- Disaffected/low ability students
- Those sharing an interest in food/cooking.

4.1.3 Activities undertaken

A variety of activities took place during What's Cooking? clubs to help deliver the four Agency competences. Many of the session activities incorporated more than one competency. Activities ranged from practical cooking to those which were more theoretically based.

Practical cooking and sharing in the tasting experience

There was an element of practical cooking in all clubs. This was a main focus for most clubs, who made a different recipe each week. Others limited practical cooking to just a third of the programme.

The clubs that did a lot of practical cooking used the food technology rooms at their school and/or school kitchens. A variety of recipes were used during the sessions.

Popular recipes used included:

- tortilla wraps with healthy fillings
- minced meat recipes (chili con carne/ shepherds pie/ lasagne)
- healthy take-away recipes (healthy burgers, fish fingers and pizzas)
- healthy baking (scones, muffins, etc)
- healthy snacks (smoothies and fruit kebabs)
- healthy lunches (vegetable pittas, creative sandwiches, etc).

Some clubs emphasised the importance of participants choosing their own ingredients and adapting these to meet personal needs, while others asked participants to choose from a menu of recipe options. A few of the clubs aimed for participants to cook meals for family members, staff in the school and/or an event at the final What's Cooking? session (i.e. a BBQ or a three course meal).

Alongside the practical cooking experience, many coordinators highlighted the importance of tasting foods. Participants were encouraged to share in the tasting of different foods/ingredients and sample different foods they had made during sessions. The tasting of different foods was either carried out in whole sessions or as part of a tasting and evaluating activity at the end of the club session. A couple of the clubs learnt how to set a table and all sat down together to eat the foods they had prepared. Other participants took what they had made home to share with family members.

Visits outside of the What's Cooking? club and visitors invited to What's Cooking? sessions

Most clubs planned at least one visit outside of the school setting during their What's Cooking? programme. Many of these visits took place to broaden participants' knowledge and awareness of food, particularly within local food businesses. As an example, What's Cooking? clubs visited the following types of places: local hotels, restaurants (to have a meal), farm shops, butchers, fish farms and a further education college.

Only a few clubs invited visitors to the club sessions. These visitors included:

- Environmental Health officers and local supermarket representatives, who gave presentations to participants
- A parent/teacher who ran multicultural cooking demonstrations and sessions.

The visitors were invited in to provide food-related information, whilst bringing a different outside experience and perspective to the club.

Other activities

Other activities that were taken on by the clubs to illustrate the competences were a mixture of hands-on and theoretically based activities.

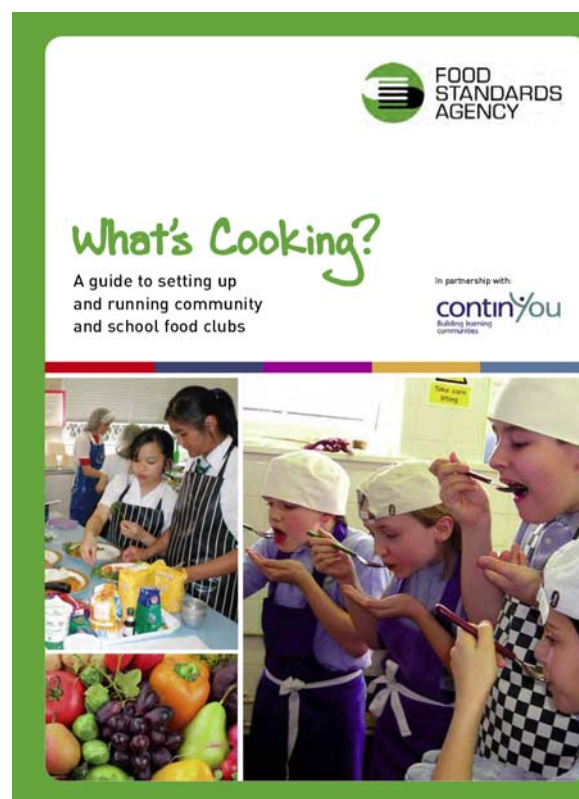
Hands-on approach to competences

- Combined cooking and physical activity sessions where participants would prepare and cook a snack, take part in a physical activity such as a dance session and after exercising, eat the snack they had made
- Comparing foods and suggestions for healthy/dietary alternatives.
- Cutting techniques and knife skills.
- Food miles activities i.e. 'Where do strawberries grow?' (a large world map was used to plot different countries in the world from which the UK sourced fruits and vegetables).
- Hand washing exercises (the use of the UV hand rub).

More theoretical information sharing: presentations and discussions

- A discussion about kitchen rules – food hygiene and food safety (i.e. hand washing, knife handling, how to store food).
- A presentation about healthy eating and a balanced diet (the Eatwell plate, 'Five-a-day', the importance of drinking water, fat and salt content and the importance of eating three meals a day).

4.2 Response to the What's Cooking? guide



The guide strongly appealed to What's Cooking? coordinators. Many compared it favourably to the original guide, seeing it as having a clearer and more coherent structure.

'The first guide wasn't set out as clearly. This What's Cooking? guide is a tool or handbook to lead you in the right direction, to reassure you with the right information'

[Coordinator]

'The guide has been very useful and includes all the information which initially we needed for the set up of the programme. I would certainly recommend this to anyone setting up a new programme needing the start'

[Coordinator]

The design of the guide particularly appealed, and coordinators liked its durable format. Coordinators liked the layout of the guide with the page dividers and the colour coded sections; this helped them to easily find the different sections. The language was easy to understand, with no jargon being used. The fonts appealed as they were clear and bright. The photos used throughout were inspirational because they showed the young people 'in action', so helped make the programme feel real and achievable. However, some of the images were regarded as not age-relevant, as pictures of children younger than those mainly targeted in the What's Cooking? programme were included throughout the guide.

'An excellent, bright, colourful design. Images are eye catching and give an impression of what your club might look like. Cheerful children who look like they are enjoying themselves all helps to sell the idea and makes you want to organise your own club'

[Coordinator]

'The page divider with labels and the colour coding is a good idea. The guide looks modern and attractive'

[Coordinator]

The guide was used in different ways: as an aid for writing schemes of work, as a working document to dip in and out of, to gain snippets of information to improve delivery and as a general reminder and reference guide.

The guide contained lots of clear digestible information which supported coordinators in their set-up and implementation of the What's Cooking? programme. The information was viewed as well structured, concise and presented the aims of the programme in an achievable and inspiring way. For example, one coordinator revealed that they had used the information to produce their own leaflets about the club to inform teachers, parents and children/young people. Another used it as an aid to discussion when gaining support from Senior Management Team staff.

'The What's Cooking guide is a one-stop point of reference which can be used by anyone'

[Coordinator]

Coordinators also said that the guide appealed because its content was suitable to help equip a wide audience with information for programme set-up and delivery. This was important because so many different people with different roles, ranging from Food Technology teachers to non-teaching staff and parent volunteers, were running and assisting in the What's Cooking? programme.

'An excellent helpful starting point for anyone interested in setting up a club. It's an aid memoir for experienced food teachers and a useful checklist and helpful tips for all. It comes

across with just the right degree of authority. Not over bearing or unduly technical or complicated'

[Coordinator]

'I found the guide very useful. I am not a teacher and so it was really useful to have reassurance that the lessons and activities I had planned were following the right structure and path. I also picked up a few extra details that alone I might not have thought of'

[Coordinator]

The following elements of the guide particularly appealed:

- 'Getting Ready' section which contained the target ideas, funding and staffing information.
- The checklist for set-up and implementation.
- The simple recipes and session ideas. However, it was thought that this section could have contained more detail about the logistics of the session, for example whether participants should all cook the same recipes, and whether or not they should take food home.
- Top tips which featured throughout the guide.
- The useful resources section containing website links.
- Case studies to find out what had worked well in other clubs.

However, many coordinators did not receive the guide until after they had completed their action plans. Coordinators felt that the guide would have been useful for planning during the early stages of the programme development.

'I had already written my plan of action for the club long before I received the guide – a shame as it contains lots of useful information that would have helped shape the club set up'

[Coordinator]

Coordinators would also have appreciated more information on the background to the programme within the guide, i.e. how it was developed and where it was piloted.

Unfortunately, very few coordinators reported being aware of the What's Cooking? section of the ContinYou website and that elements of the guide were available to download in an electronic format. Many coordinators therefore suggested that the guide should contain a clear link to/information about this website.

Encouragingly, many coordinators said that they would use the What's Cooking? guide in the future for other purposes outside of the club. They said the information would support curriculum delivery and other programmes, such as a Healthy Eating day. They also said they were likely to recommend the guide to other staff to use in school and in out-of-school organisations, such as youth clubs, Scouts and an adult skills development programme.

4.3 Outcomes and achievements from the What's Cooking? programme

The outcomes and achievements of the What's Cooking? programme were seen to be clear from the beginning and shared by a wide audience: children/young people, coordinators and other staff, parents and local authority representatives.

The following main outcomes discussed were all interconnected, with some outcomes leading on from others. The outcomes can be summarised as follows:

- Experiences within the What's Cooking? clubs increased awareness of food, which in turn provided knowledge/skills and changed attitudes towards food and the importance of healthy eating.
- This change in attitude and increased awareness opened up further opportunities, and broadened horizons, for participants/staff.
- This resulted in changes to behaviour in relation food choices (how they were consumed and cooked) and the extent to which food-related issues were discussed.

The following sections outline these outcomes in detail.

4.3.1 Increase in awareness and changes to attitudes towards food

The What's Cooking? programme provided a wide audience with the opportunity of a new food-related experience which helped increase awareness about food and aid knowledge and attitude change. The club sessions involved many different food-related activities such as: practical cooking, food tasting, the discussion of information related to the food competences and the opportunity to go on visits outside of the club setting to local food businesses. Participation in these activities provided opportunities and 'eye openers' for everyone involved.

'It's great that we've had the funding and this opportunity to build up the kids' experiences and cooking skills. It's not just about cooking; it's about developing an interest in food'

[Coordinator]

The What's Cooking? club provided opportunities to conduct food related activities and cooking; some participants were not allowed to engage in these activities at home and most had a limited opportunity to do so within the primary and secondary curriculum.

'You can see the enjoyment the children are getting from it. It's given them the hands-on experience of food which a lot of children don't get in primary school and some don't even get it in secondary. They're having the opportunity to look at where

foods come from, touching natural products, comparing manufactured burgers to processed, it's really good'

[Coordinator]

'The What's Cooking? club is really good. You get to learn how to cook and it's great fun'

[Participant]

'The best bit of What's Cooking? has been making things yourself, rather than just watching people cook. The teachers show you how to do it and then you can get stuck in and do it yourself'

[Participant]

The practical cooking opportunity at the What's Cooking? clubs also provided a different environment in which to cook, when compared with in-school cooking opportunities. Participants said that cooking at the clubs was much more enjoyable because there was more space, it was more relaxed, there was more support available and the opportunity to make different recipes and be more creative with what they could make.

'It's different from cooking in lessons. In lessons we don't really get to use the cookers. We've never made anything special like at the club'

'I thought it was going to be really strict but it's not and it's actually a really good way to work'

[Participant]

The opportunity of going on visits to local food businesses appealed and increased awareness, which in turn provided knowledge and helped change attitudes.

'It's really good because we get to go on trips. Last week we went down to the butchers and we saw how they get their meat from the cows and lambs. They got the meat out and showed us all the different parts'

[Participant]

'We went to Asda and we went in the warehouse and freezer. We had a guided tour and went up to the staff place and had something to eat and drink. I thought it was fun because everyone was restricted to just the shop but we could see everywhere'

[Participant]

The experience of the club and discussing information in relation to the food competences aided knowledge and increased awareness about the importance of healthy eating.

'We've learnt about having a balanced diet and how eating the right things can really help you. Something like chocolate, if you eat too much it could affect you'

[Participant]

All coordinators, staff, parents and participants said that the opportunity to try new foods had had a huge impact on attitudes towards foods. All clubs emphasised the importance of trying foods and encouraged participants and staff to do so (even if few practical cooking sessions took place).

'It's cooking one week and tasting the next. We've been able to taste so many different things'

[Participant]

'When we made the smoothies we were experimenting with lots of different fruits'

[Participant]

'The "try something new" bit was great. For instance, they first said "Hummus, no way." And at the end, they were saying "Actually, hummus is ok".'

[Coordinator]

'Ours has enabled them to try new things. When we started they wouldn't try anything, but towards the end they were eating things'

[Coordinator]

The experience of all the different food-related activities increased knowledge and awareness of food, which changed general attitudes towards food. The knowledge and awareness of food provided the opportunity to be able to make different food choices and understand the importance of different dietary choices.

'When our students leave, they're eating the food they have made, they can't wait until they get home'

[Coordinator]

'Everyone likes chocolate muffins but when we made muffins we put different fruits in them and if I was to make muffins again at home I'd make banana muffins instead of chocolate'

[Participant]

Most participants openly admitted that they liked the taste of the new foods. Where there was one negative comment, this was down to more of a rebellious nature of one of the participants. This participant was observed saying to the teacher

'Miss, I didn't like the meatballs last week'

[Participant 1]

Another participant in the group then replied:

'Yeah right, so that was why you were scoffing them for half an hour afterwards.'

[Participant 2]

4.3.2 Skills and relationship development

Participants, coordinators and other staff had the hands-on experience of food and therefore gained lots of food-related knowledge, skills and personal self development from taking part in the clubs. All skills achieved were identified as those that would help in the future.

'It's a life skill. If you leave home and you can't even open a can of beans that's a problem. The club is a good starting point'

[Participant]

The food competency framework appealed to coordinators because it provided a flexible structure on which to base the sessions and an indication of the skills areas participants should be learning.

'What underpins all learning is the four competencies - the issue is always that they've learnt the four competencies. I think the structure has been excellent as a vehicle for what I want to achieve'

[Coordinator]

The practical sessions increased participants' knowledge and skills in relation to food preparation, such as cutting techniques.

'When I made the smoothies and I had to chop all the fruit up it was hard and I threw loads of fruit away because I couldn't cut it properly but now I feel like I can use a knife a lot better. It gets a lot easier and quicker'

[Participant]

'I always used to help my mum make something but now I can do it myself. I've learnt how to prepare things and how long things should be in the oven for without the help'

[Participant]

The practical sessions also increased participants' knowledge and skills of the whole cooking process (how to follow a recipe, measure ingredients, using different tools/equipment and cooking methods).

'I learnt how to follow a recipe'

[Participant]

'How to use a food blender and where everything is in the food rooms'

[Participant]

By following the competency framework, clubs were also encouraged to run sessions based on learning about food hygiene and safety. Participants said they had increased their knowledge and awareness of food hygiene and safety, which was identified as a skill for life.

'We learnt the importance of always washing hands, to wash food, to wear an apron, gloves and to use different coloured chopping boards'

[Participant]

'They're learning skills for life. Food safety, hand washing and cross contamination. This knowledge will then just become second nature. The younger they do it the better. They also help to educate the parents. So it's a fantastic way to transport the information to parents'

[Club volunteer]

As well as the development of food-related skills the club had also had an impact on personal skill development, particularly in relation to self confidence and working in a team. Coordinators reported that participants' confidence had increased hugely from participating in the clubs. The club had given many young people a degree of ownership over something they felt enthusiastic about. Gaining an insight into a new experience and learning skills which would benefit them for the rest of their lives meant that children and young people started to conduct themselves in a different way during club sessions and at other times in school, i.e. they were better behaved and more focused.

'The first couple of times they came, they put their heads down, now they are much more confident in the kitchen, knowing their way around, and using the utensils. They have grown as individuals'

[Coordinator]

Most importantly they had developed the confidence to be able to try something new to them, which in turn would have an overall impact on the choice they made about which foods to eat. They also had the confidence to cook more at home, and parents had more confidence in their abilities.

'They can make decisions; they have the confidence to make the dish. When their parent goes to the supermarket they can say 'I can make this dish'

[Coordinator]

'I can now do things on my own. Things my mum would have never let me do'

[Participant]

'I cook a lot more. My dad always has cooked and now he trusts me. He might say can you watch the lamb for me. Or, I might make my own tea. I feel more independent'

[Participant]

They also had the confidence to share the knowledge and skills they had learnt with other peers and family members.

'Oi, you got to remember to turn the handle on you pan around'

[Participant addressing a fellow participant]

'When we go shopping for food, I tell my mum to look at the label at the fat content and stuff like that'

[Participant]

During a case study visit, after the club, a parent also revealed that some participants had tried to share their knowledge about food by informing parents about diet and health and different cooking methods.

'We have lots of interesting conversations about food now. Talking about different types of foods and different cooking methods. She is also questioning how I cook things and comparing it to how they do it at the club!'

[Parent]

The confidence of coordinators and other staff also increased both in relation to their food-related knowledge and their ability to work with young people. This was particularly the case for those coordinators and staff who had non-teaching roles, such as Extended Schools coordinators.

'With the money for What's Cooking? we've been able to train teaching assistants, and they now can take people out from the Learning Support Unit. They wouldn't have had the confidence or knowledge before. It's not just the children this has impacted on, it's the whole school. Everyone has had a go at leading this and developing it. It's given everyone confidence'

[Coordinator]

The other personal skill that participants, coordinators and other staff had developed from participating in the programme was the ability to work well in a team by developing or making new relationships with a variety of different people. The club was described by participants as being linked to having a strong community feel.

'I like it how we've got a small group and you can communicate easily with everyone in the room and get to use the cookers. When you're doing it as a lesson there's 20 plus people and there's no space. But at the club everyone helps each other out with the washing up and things, it's like one family'

[Participant]

The wide audience involved in the programme meant that everyone was able to experience working with different ages (students of different ages, family members and staff).

'I think it's great because there's varied ages in the group. I'm the oldest. It's a different group of friends, a different community. It doesn't necessarily relate to school'

[Participant]

'It's a family activity where they were working alongside each other, it could be role reversal, where it turned out that the child was a very natural cook. The parent was not, so they learned from each other... They could have fun as a family as well, all contributing'

[Coordinator]

At some clubs, outside visitors ran or took part in What's Cooking? sessions. This resulted in participants and staff being able to form new relationships with others who would normally be outside of the school setting, such as local supermarket and council representatives.

Coordinators particularly noticed how the clubs had impacted on their relationships with participants. The informal setting had meant that they had been able to develop a new kind of relationship with students.

'The What's Cooking? club is great and building up relationships between students and staff. I've had lots of students coming up to me during the week to talk to me about the club, what we're doing the next session and what they have tried making at home'

[Coordinator]

4.3.4 Broadening of horizons

Many coordinators and members of the senior management team described the What's Cooking? programme and the club experience as a 'vehicle for change' which provided new opportunities for participants, coordinators, other staff and the wider school environment.

'It's broadening experience... It's not just about the doing. It's about getting everyone moving to a higher level of thought process, 'if I do this, this will happen'. That's what you want to achieve...its developing things they can bring into everyday life. It's a vehicle into other things. It's about how you use the skills. That's when the real education happens'

[Coordinator]

Broadening horizons for participants

The What's Cooking? programme equipped participants with knowledge and awareness of foods and cooking which would prepare them when they made future subject choices within education (i.e. Year 9 subject choices/GCSE and further education subject choices) and other life choices in relation to careers. A couple of participants reported that the What's Cooking? club had made them consider being chefs when they were older. Other coordinators who had targeted Year 6 students commented on the success and the impact the club had had on providing an opportunity for those students, and therefore encouraging a smooth transition to secondary school for them.

'The club has really supported them from the transition from primary to secondary school, getting them out of their lone environment into a new strange environment in a safe way'

[Coordinator]

Coordinators from clubs, particularly the clubs attended by disaffected students, revealed that participating in the What's Cooking? club had had a positive affect on participants' general attitudes towards school, how they behaved during school time and their general school attendance.

'I've got a group of naughty boys, and they have attended every session, behaviour has improved, and the kids with special needs are improving. It has had an impact on their attitude towards school'

[Coordinator]

'I have got one child who is renowned for bad behaviour and he is just like a completely different student'

[Coordinator]

Broadening horizons for coordinators, other staff and the wider school environment

The programme not only had an impact on participants' take up of future opportunities. Coordinators and other staff also commented that running the sessions had broadened their knowledge and skills which would impact on their own future career opportunities and role responsibilities. This experience, knowledge and new skills was transferrable and could be used within the wider school in relation to the curriculum and other programmes.

The What's Cooking? funding had provided schools with new equipment which could also be used in the future by the wider school. Resources and recipes had also been tried and tested and could be recommended and shared with others.

'Apart from impacting on the children and everybody within the club, it is actually filtering out through the rest of my year groups. We all use the equipment that I bought. That really helps everybody'

[Coordinator]

4.3.5 Intentions to cook at home and to help with food shopping

It was difficult to measure the impact of What's Cooking? on the amount of cooking participants did at home or the amount of food shopping they did, because these are more likely to be longer term impacts of the programme which would occur outside the time frame of the evaluation. However, at this stage, some participants claimed to be cooking more at home, and most intended to do so, as well as intending to help more with food shopping. Coordinators and other staff also said that they had noticed a change in participants' intentions to cook at home and to help with food shopping.

During the club sessions, most participants were given copies of the recipes they had made during the What's Cooking? club sessions. This meant that participants were given a record of what they had done and the opportunity to extend the food/cooking experience into the home.

During case study visits some participants said that the experience of the club had increased their confidence to make their own food at home. Some had repeated the recipes they had already made at the club, adapted recipes and/or made foods for their families at home. Others spoke of having the confidence to help family members in the kitchen at home to make meals, something which they had not done prior to taking part in the club.

'I never knew how to use a cooker and now I can use it quite a lot and I can use it at home. I can help cook the tea at home and help out so it's good for them too as well as for me'

[Participant]

'Before the club when I was at home and my Aunty would cook I wouldn't be that interested. But now my Aunt might make something like spaghetti bolognaise and I now normally help her'

[Participant]

'When we made the smoothies I went home and got loads of fruits and made smoothies at home which I hadn't done before. We were given a bit of homework and I got a recipe off the internet and changed the recipe. I used orange juice instead of milk'

[Participant]

'I liked cooking the pasta salad. That night after the club my dad was staying away for work and my mum worked late. Most Tuesdays I get take-out food but that time I had made the pasta. Making pasta and having that was better than getting greasy chips'

[Participant]

Participants and their parents also highlighted that participants were talking more about different foods, recipes and food choices at home and with their friends. During and after participating at the clubs, coordinators said that participants were more likely to ask questions about foods, i.e. about costs or where to buy certain foods. For some participants, this enquiry about food had extended to asking parents to buy different foods.

'Since when we visited the local butchers and I told my mum about it, every Friday now my mum tries to go to the butchers to buy her meat'

[Participant]

4.4 The future of What's Cooking?

A key objective of the research evaluation was to explore attitudes towards the future of the programme and how sustainable the What's Cooking? programme was in its current form in the East Midlands. This section of the report outlines:

- the factors required to set up of a successful club, and barriers to this success
- ideas for the development of resource materials to support future clubs
- attitudes towards the sustainability of the clubs and the self evaluation necessary to apply to other sources of funding.

4.4.1 The ideal set-up for success verses barriers to success

Through discussing the sustainability issue with What's Cooking? coordinators, senior management team staff and local authority representatives, a number of points were identified as key elements to a successful and sustainable club.

The following elements were those which many clubs felt were key to a club's success and were elements which were quite easy to implement:

- The fact that the What's Cooking? programme was flexible and adaptable.
- The use of hands-on/interactive activities, which motivated the participants.
- The opportunity to run a pilot club in school and learn/share those experiences across the wider school.
- The opportunities for participants to taste lots of different foods
- Keen support from within the setting and local authority.
- A suitable venue and equipment to run the club sessions.

However, in the process of highlighting the criteria of a successful club, What's Cooking? deliverers were also able to identify those issues which could be seen as possible barriers to a club's success.

Barrier 1 – Too prescriptive sessions

The club sessions which had been run in a very structured way, similar to a lesson during school, had been less appealing for some participants. Participants needed to be given ownership over the content of the sessions and given the opportunity of choosing how they wanted the next sessions to run, i.e. the recipes they would make and who they would work with in the sessions. Indeed, those participants who had been provided with a recipe choice at the start of a session felt that they were inclined to attend the sessions as they anticipated that they would have more chance to make food that they enjoyed. At the same time, these participants had the opportunities to taste the foods made by other participants, thereby raising their awareness of different foods.

Barrier 2 - De-motivating/unengaging activities

The activities that were more theoretically focused were less successful, as participants found them de-motivating. Coordinators found it more difficult to engage participants and think of creative ways to deliver the food hygiene and safety and consumer awareness competences. Some clubs had visitors attend the sessions and presenting to the club. These presentations were least successful when they were more lecture-style and involved less interaction with the participants:

'When they were doing the presentation it was a bit boring because we come here to cook and we also had the same presentation on the first week. We'd already seen it. What's the point?'

Barrier 3 - Limited delivery of all four competences

As mentioned above, some clubs struggled to deliver all food competences, as it was difficult to do so in an engaging and stimulating way. This caused a barrier for the participants in accessing a fully comprehensive approach to food, cooking and healthy eating.

Barrier 4 - Problems with ingredients

Coordinators found it very time-consuming purchasing ingredients to use during club sessions, especially with all the pressures associated with their usual teaching roles. Some supermarkets would only deliver food ordered online at a certain time, and some would not deliver to schools at all.

Coordinators also considered that although it was important to give the participants new taste experiences, some of the ingredients were not always available in local supermarkets. In order to ensure that longer term impacts were achievable, i.e. an increase in cooking in the home, it was thought important to ensure that recipes included ingredients that could be sourced locally.

When thinking about sustainability of the clubs, a couple of coordinators had tried to get funding for ingredients, by liaising with local food businesses to ask for a donation/vouchers. This activity had been successful in one case, but unsuccessful in another.

Barrier 5 – Family involvement in What’s Cooking?

Some clubs had tried to focus on involving families in the cooking/food process. Unfortunately, some were unsuccessful because parents either could not attend due to other commitments such as work or had not wanted to attend.

‘Coming straight after school, the parents are often not at home and the siblings are at different schools - the family approach has not worked very well’

[Coordinator]

Although the clubs opened up many new opportunities for participants to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to food, coordinators felt that barriers existed outside of the programme in relation to parents’ own food choices and habits.

‘The idea of food in school and the government re-launching food related things and realising they let go of what was good in terms of teaching cookery, is good. The only problem is getting through the barrier, not the child but the parent. Because we’ve now got a generation of parents that don’t shop for fresh foods and whose lifestyle is at such a fast pace with so much going on that they can’t think of cooking’

[Coordinator]

'The parents are the ones with the money, they are the ones who are going to do the shopping. We want to educate the parents to help the child, so they can do something together'

[Coordinator]

One coordinator felt that in order to change parental attitudes to food, it was important that food prepared during the sessions was taken home to share with families. However, this was not achieved in all clubs.

4.4.2 Ideas for future support materials

During the development workshops with coordinators and local authority representatives, respondents were asked to suggest ideas for future support materials that could be developed to aid the set up and delivery of the What's Cooking? programme.

The following ideas were suggested and are outlined below.

Time-saving templates

Coordinators suggested that the guide could contain a number of different templates, available in both hard copy and available online in an adaptable electronic format, which could be modified to suit schools' own needs.

Examples of templates were:

- a template action plan to help inform club set up aims and objectives
- a wall chart containing all the food competences; this could be adapted to fit alongside each session activity
- a costing spreadsheet to keep a track of how the club's budget is spent
- a risk assessment form to use during club sessions and visits.

It was suggested that information leaflets explaining the aims of the What's Cooking? programme, examples of what activities other clubs had run and the impacts of the programme could all be developed so that they could be handed to participants, staff and parents.

Coordinators felt that the least developed section of the guide was the self evaluation section. To support self evaluation a template could be provided containing relevant questions/questionnaire to ask participants at the end of each session.

'If you have a basic template you can adapt it and personalise it, maybe put your own club logo onto it...It saves time'

[Coordinator]

It was also thought useful to have a bank of questions so that coordinators could select the most ideal questions for their participants to go into the template [see section 4.4.4 on self evaluation].

Recipes

The inclusion of recipe ideas in the guide appealed to coordinators. However, they suggested that more recipes could be developed and made available online. These recipes could be in a format that meant they could be adapted to suit the needs of the participants. In addition, to enable more learning across all competences and in order to ease the transition to cooking at home, it was suggested that the recipes could also contain equipment lists and annotations providing diet and health information and suggested alternative ingredients.

Some also felt that recipes could be themed, e.g. recipes for sports activity could be developed to try and target and appeal more to boys.

Best practice network

The case studies in the back of the guide appealed because coordinators and assisting staff liked the opportunity to read about how other clubs had implemented the What's Cooking? programme. Similarly to findings from other research we have conducted, the development workshops revealed that teachers and non-teaching staff leading and assisting in the implementation of the What's Cooking? programme would benefit from the opportunity to share best practice. This best practice could be delivered online via a platform containing tried and tested resources/recipes, success criteria, local contacts and food-focused training providers. It was thought useful for coordinators to be able to post their own ideas onto the website, by perhaps entering information into a template case study form.

'All the people around this table are really busy, so we need to know what is out there that you can link with. We all have knowledge that is important to the areas we are working in, but we don't know what knowledge we all have because we don't have time to ask each other'

[Coordinator]

Interactive elements

Coordinators identified that the main way to make the food competences real and appealing to participants would be to ensure that they were delivered in a hands-on and interactive way. Coordinators suggested that videos containing animations, slogans and catchy tunes could be developed to help deliver the diet and health and food hygiene and safety competences.

4.4.3 Sustainability

All What's Cooking? stakeholders had good intentions for continuing the club at their setting, and schools were enthusiastic about doing so.

'It would be great to keep a cooking club going in school. The time has gone so quick so it would be good to have it again with

maybe two clubs running a week. It's a really good subject for after school'

[Participant]

However, there was a general lack of understanding about the need for schools to source their own funds in order to sustain clubs; they found it difficult to look beyond the initial funding period. However, most were able to eventually acknowledge that sustainability was possible via the following routes:

- Through curriculum integration, e.g. within the Food Technology curriculum and Licence to Cook
- By linking the club into a whole school approach or government initiative, and its associated funding (e.g. Healthy Schools, Extended schools)

'It's something we really want to continue. We wanted to run the first one as a bit of a tester and then use the positive things that came out of it as a driver to continue and to give the rest of the school a positive image of the club and what's involved in it'

[Coordinator]

- By forming partnerships with local businesses and organisations (i.e. local further education providers, small food businesses and local supermarkets)

'What we'll try to do from this is link into local forums and businesses to see how the What's Cooking? programme can be supported... We could try to do more classroom visits to butchers, supermarkets. See what we have locally, tap into that and do a joint delivery'

[Coordinator]

- By asking participants to make financial contribution to practical cookery sessions (e.g. £2 a session). However, most clubs were in low income areas, where it was acknowledged that this would be impossible.

Most coordinators had little confidence in applying for further funding and said that they did not have enough time in their role to complete funding applications.

Therefore, in order for club leaders to apply for funding, they needed guidance on various objectives of different funding sources, and templates of various business plans to help guide them through the funding process.

Once coordinators and local authority representatives were aware that the future funding of the programme was the schools' responsibility, they realised the importance of self evaluation to demonstrate the impacts of the programme in their setting. However, they needed guidance on the particular

self evaluation measurements that were necessary in order to meet the objectives of the various funding sources.

The next section outlines the self evaluation that had already taken place and further support needed in relation to this.

4.4.4 Self evaluation

Self evaluation of the What's Cooking? clubs had been conducted in an inexplicit way. Only a few clubs completed formal evaluations with club participants at the end of each session, or at the end of the programme. These evaluations were in the form of a feedback form/questionnaire that asked questions based on the appeal of the session and participants' knowledge of what was covered in the session.

'They have a little book and they write down roughly what we are going to do at the start of the lesson, with any equipment we are going to use, then we do the activities and then they have to write down what they have learned. At the end of it they have an exam... We always talk about the club sessions and go through it so I know where I am with them'

[Coordinator]

Most clubs used more informal adhoc ways of evaluating the success of the club, such as talking to staff and participants and personally reflecting on the success of the sessions. However, few coordinators noted down these informal evaluations.

Generally, coordinators saw evaluation as something that needed to be conducted in a formal manner. This formal evaluation process was seen as being linked to formal schools' inspections and theory-based school work. Therefore, many coordinators thought that participants would view a formal evaluation as a school-type activity, which would be de-motivating for them. A formal evaluation was therefore thought inappropriate for an after-school club, and some feared that, if implemented, it would have a negative impact on What's Cooking?:

'It's subliminal learning, as long as they're having fun they might not know it but they're practising it. If you over evaluate you will kill that'

[Coordinator]

Although many coordinators were skeptical about a formal evaluation of What's Cooking? they were able to understand why the programme needed to be evaluated, particularly in relation to the future success of the programme in their setting. Coordinators and local authority representatives were therefore

able to suggest a number of different ideas the Agency could promote in order to encourage evaluation of the programme.

It was agreed that self evaluation needed to be kept simple and fun for participants and at the same time focused towards appropriate success criteria that could be used as advocacy for funding. This could be done by providing a checklist of criteria within core competences, to be used alongside original action plans and wider funding objectives, and against which to assess achievements.

It was thought that evaluation templates for coordinators and participants to complete should also be provided. The following types of templates were given as examples of what could be included:

- Questionnaires (for all stakeholders to complete).
- Bank of evaluation questions (open/closed questions) for coordinators to create their own questionnaire or to inform coordinators on how to ask questions (e.g. questions to ask participants and parents at parents evening).
- Mini test questions for multiple choice quizzes to be conducted prior to and after club sessions (based on measuring knowledge of the four competences).
- The promotion of alternative approaches for pupils to record their opinions, e.g.
 - voting electronic pads
 - graffiti walls (whereby young people write or draw comments on wall charts)
 - use of coloured stickers on wall charts to indicate their level of enjoyment or intention to cook at home
 - interactive food diaries in school to record longer term impacts on participants diets:

'You could do this with the children. You have a series of food items, pictures of a range of foods; salad, chips, new potatoes, and then the kids could group that together. You could take a picture so they could show visually what their food diary was, without having to bring anything from home or writing anything down, which can be very challenging for some people'

[Coordinator]

It was suggested that in the initial set up process, the Agency should make What's Cooking? coordinators and local authority representatives aware:

- of their sustainability responsibilities
- of the importance of self evaluation
- that evaluation does not necessary have to be conducted in a formal way, and indeed, does not have to involve additional work from participants
- that evaluation does not necessarily need to measure actual increases in cooking at home (in case there are barriers to this at home), but can measure intentions for increased cooking activity or a healthier diet.

The following ideas were presented as ways clubs could conduct more informal evaluations which did not involve additional work from participants:

- Record anecdotes (what participants have told them about their enthusiasm for cooking, cooking at home and any comments from parents).
- Note down quotes from other members of staff about the participants' behaviour or work ethic.
- Document any questions participants asked about food/cooking.
- Observe participants' body language/happiness indicators (smiling, laughing, etc).
- Log any examples of when participants gave their peers instructions, providing indirect evidence of learning.
- Use of photos/video diaries of responses

'They are always very interested in photos, if I go in with a camera. They want to see the digital memory straight away, they are proud of what they have done. They are checking up on me making sure I have taken a proper photograph'

[Coordinator]

Finally, an alternative way to support self evaluation would be to encourage the analysis of existing school data, such as: attendance records, reports on behaviour, reading scores and any electronic data available in school e.g. the use of electronic data from swipe cards and thumb analysis scanning in canteens to monitor food choices.

'At our school, we have an electronic system for going through school meals; they have a thumb-in system for ordering it. There is a data base that says exactly who has bought what, and when, you can then reduce this to just the students who are on your course. You can then analyse them, and say, these are the choices they were making before and rate them on a health basis. These are the ones that they are making now. That is taking their knowledge and their consumer understanding into a different environment and seeing whether it makes any difference or not'

[Coordinator]

5. Appendix

Case Study visits

Walton Girls' High School, Lincolnshire

Background

This single sex secondary school ran the What's Cooking? club with two different groups of girls. The club run for a total of eight weeks with each group. The first group targeted students aged 11 to 16 who were receiving free school meals and the second, for students already involved in the young people's Healthy Schools Team (also a mixed year group).

Setting up the club

The club was set up and run by the school's catering manager and the Healthy Schools coordinator and assisted by a parent. The coordinators developed relationships with the wider community, involving a representative from a local supermarket and the head of the catering faculty from a local further education college.

Running the club

The club took place one day a week after school. The sessions were held in the school's main kitchen. At the beginning of each session participants were involved in discussion and activities based on the four food competences, which were then supplemented by practical cookery.

Activities:

- Introduction session to learn about kitchen rules, basic food hygiene and safety (cross contamination, how to store food safely, knife skills) and healthy eating i.e. 5-a-day and unusual fruits
- Discussion about diet and health (salt and fat content) and consumer awareness (analyzing food packets, cost comparisons of home made and shop prepared foods, budgeting, the power of advertising and logos)
- Practical cooking: Smoothies, pizzas, pasta, fruit muffins, healthier packed lunches
- Visit and presentation given from a local supermarket representative about food labeling, sell-by/use-by dates, healthy food labeling, food origins and unusual fruit and vegetables.
- Visit to a local further education college to watch a cooking demonstration given by the head of catering faculty. Ordered and sat down to eat a three course meal at the training restaurant.
- Participants completed a formal evaluation feedback form at the end of each session (questions asked participants about the appeal of the session and the knowledge they had gained).

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

The coordinators identified that the participants had changed over the weeks in their willingness to try and taste different foods. During the last session at the training restaurant, participants had gained confidence from a new experience of using silver service and eating mussels and venison.

The Catering Manager's involvement in the clubs had also meant that she had gained more confidence and developed her relationships with the students.

John Spendluffe Technology College, Lincolnshire

Background

This secondary school specializing in technology ran a What's Cooking? club for young people aged 12 to 13 and their parents. Eight to ten students and four to five of their parents attended each week.

Setting up the club

The club was set up by a Food Technology teacher who was assisted by two teaching assistants and supported by the senior management team. The What's Cooking? club was set up to fit with a wider school approach focused on healthy eating and parental involvement. The school currently took part in other initiatives e.g. growing an allotment for Year of Food and Farming and was soon to set up Licence to Cook.

Running the club

The club runs once a week after school for one and a half hours. Ingredients for each session were purchased locally. They bought smoothie makers from the local chemist, fruit and vegetables from the local market stall and supermarket and flour from a working windmill.

Each session involved talking about food nutrition alongside practical cooking activities. The participants brought a container in from home so they could take home the foods they had made during the sessions.

Recipes used in the sessions:

- Tortilla wraps with healthy fillings
- Chili con carne (Quorn and meat free alternatives)
- Japanese cookery
- Shepherds pie
- Smoothies
- Sauces

Other activities:

- Tasting session and comparing fresh foods with prepackaged shop bought
- A supermarket survey (comparing prices and fat content)
- A family barbeque was planned for the last session.

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

The Assistant Headteacher wanted to fit the successful activities from the What's Cooking? club into the technology curriculum.

'I'd like the What's Cooking? club to have an overall impact on the curriculum and I think it could. Already, there is a change occurring to the Key Stage 3 curriculum to make things healthier. It seems to make sense that if the activities have worked well in the club. Could these be transferred into the curriculum to try and broaden it'

[Assistant headteacher]

The children and young people enjoyed taking part in What's Cooking? and had been surprised about the opportunity they had to taste so many new foods.

'It's cooking one week and tasting the next. We've been able to taste so many different things'

[Participant]

Children and young people also recalled that they had learnt many 'skills for life', such as food preparation and food hygiene. A few of the children and young people liked that the club had raised their awareness of food and cooking, which would help their year 9 subject choices.

Cotgrave Candleby Lane School, Nottinghamshire

Background

This What's Cooking? club was set up after school once a week at a primary school with seventeen children aged 10 to 11.

Setting up the club

The club was run by two teaching assistants and depending on activities was assisted by a member of staff from the school kitchen and a student doing a local catering course.

All staff shared a love of cooking and wanted to offer the new opportunity of a food/cooking club to Year 6 children. The key aim of the club was to learn to cook from scratch.

'I want What's Cooking? to get children interested in new tastes and smells, introduced to things they wouldn't normally have picked up'

[Coordinator]

The school already had previous contact with the local council's Health Development Officer through their involvement in other initiatives, such as Adopt a Chef. The coordinators also felt well supported by local authority representatives and school staff.

Running the club

The school is in a new building and the club sessions took place in a 'demonstration area' where there was a small mini cooking space with tables. The space is centrally located with the school kitchens near by and the ovens in the school kitchen used to cook the What's Cooking? food.

The club combined mainly practical cookery with competency activities and visits. All recipes used had a healthy focus towards what children usually like to eat.

- Healthy muffins
- Healthy burgers
- Fish fingers
- Fruit kebabs (including exotic fruits and learning about where fruits come from)

Other activities:

- Preparation for a final meal in the last session. This involved making table decorations (fruit centre pieces and table cloths)
- A final meal where visitors were invited to attend (teaching staff, friends, parents, children and young people asked to invite two adults)
- Visited a supermarket to buy the ingredients
- Visited a local butchers
- Visits into school from Environmental Health officers
- Self evaluation sheet completed at the end of each session (marks out of ten for taste, appeal, cost, etc).

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Coordinators felt that the main achievements children and young people gained from the programme were; an insight into a practical cooking experience which would prepare Year 6 pupils for when they do more cooking at secondary school, skills development from planning and making a meal for an event and the opportunity to taste and evaluate food children and young people had made themselves.

'I thought the visit to the local butcher was really interesting because you got to see where your meat comes from, you know what you're eating. It didn't put me off it'

[Participant]

'They're learning skills for life. Food safety; hand washing and cross contamination. This knowledge will then just become second nature. The younger they do it the better. They also help to educate the parents. So it's a fantastic vector to transport the information to parents'

[Visitor from the local authority]

Parents also commented that they felt the club experience had a positive impact on the children and young people. Participants had become more involved in food shopping and talking about different types of foods whilst shopping and at home during meal times.

Weston Favell School, Northamptonshire

Background

The club was set up to run once a week after school for two groups of students. The first group was with Gifted & Talented students, from a mix of year groups and the second, Year 6 transition students aged 10 to 11 years.

Setting up the club

The club was lead by a Food Technology teacher (also a trained chef) and the Head of Design Technology. Each session was assisted by a member of the Women's Institute, a Teaching Assistant and a school library assistant. During each session other staff and students in the school dropped in to 'muck in' and/or taste the recipes.

Gifted & Talented students, from a variety of year groups, were targeted to be food champions who would then encourage their peers to be more creative in what they made during Food Technology lessons.

'We chose Gifted & Talented pupils because we wanted to get students on board to help their skills so that when they come to do cooking in school time they can choose more creative dishes, rather than the simple ones we usually do. So we would go into more detail and then others will catch on to making the more elaborative dishes'

[Coordinator]

Running the club

Practical cooking was the main focus of each session. Before the children and young people cooked, one of the coordinators ran a demonstration. Throughout the demonstrations, hints & tips were discussed and information linked to diet and health, consumer awareness and food hygiene and safety. Each session, participants were encouraged to make choices about what alternative ingredients they were going to use in their recipes.

Recipes:

- Fresh fruit smoothies
- Fruit crumble
- Lasagne
- Pizza
- Cottage Pie

Participants were given a dish to take foods home in.

'The participants were given a Pyrex dish. This dish they can take what they've made home with them and it encourages them to bring it back in and to return the next week'

[Coordinator]

At the end of the sessions children and young people completed a simple evaluation that covered the appeal of the food, likes/dislikes, what everyone thought about the session, the design, ingredients used, taste, and smell.

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

The club was seen to heighten awareness about food throughout the school. The school had also raised its profile by featuring in an article in the local press.

Club staff and children and young people had the opportunity to try new tastes. The process of children and young people being given a dish worked well. Children and young people evaluated their own dishes and then asked someone at home to evaluate it too. This meant that food related knowledge was being discussed at home and families were sharing in the food/cooking experience.

Uppingham Community College, Rutland

Background

The club was coordinated by a non-teaching member of staff and run after school at this secondary school with fifteen Year 7 students aged 11 to 12 years, who had volunteered to take part.

Setting up the club

Primarily set up by the Extended Schools coordinator and assisted by two school catering staff and two teaching assistants.

Children and young people volunteered to take part. Many did so because cooking was something they were interested in and their parents encouraged taking part in the club because of the skills development opportunity.

'My mum said it was a good opportunity so that I will know how to cook when I'm older because if I don't I will be a bit stuck because there are no parents to do it for you'

[Participant]

The flexible aims of the programme appealed because they fitted in well with other initiatives run in school.

'We were very keen with getting involved with the programme because it fits so well with Healthy Schools, PSHE and attitudes towards body image and health'

[Headteacher]

Running the club

The club, during practice cooking sessions, used the Food Technology classroom. Sessions varied from one, to one and half hours.

Activities:

- Smoothies
- Visit into the school kitchens. This involved a guided tour, a food hygiene discussion, vegetable preparation (knife handling) and a comparison of dips and a tasting session
- Visit to a local supermarket

'We went to Asda and we went in the warehouse and freezer. We had a guided tour and went up to the staff place and had something to eat and drink. I thought it was fun because everyone was restricted to just the shop but we could see everywhere'

[Coordinator]

- Consumer awareness discussion. This involved fruit and vegetable labels and linking them to a world map. Discussion of where strawberries come from
- Preparation and cooking of a three course meal
- The final session involved children and young people preparing and making a three course meal for guests

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Involvement in the club had given the coordinator, who was a non-teaching member of staff and the volunteers who worked in school catering, increased confidence and skills to work with young people.

Children and young people had also increased their confidence and had more awareness of food/diet and health issues. They had grasped the opportunity to use different equipment and make more creative dishes than they usually do in curriculum time.

Casterton Business and Enterprise College, Rutland

Background

The club was set up at this secondary school that specialised in business and enterprise and involved a mix of students from Year 7 to 9. The club was run by the Extended Schools coordinator and Food Technology teacher.

Setting up the club

The club was set up in school because it sat well alongside their whole school approach. There were lots of emphasis on school food and a variety of initiatives had been run and ideas tested (to include cashless lunch menus i.e. finger printing and swipe cards). The club also presented the opportunity for

students to do more complicated recipes and work in small mixed aged groups. To target students, the coordinators used data from an annual questionnaire completed by students about their school life, what they enjoy and what extended schools activities they would be interested taking part in. Overall, students who had expressed a desire to cook or that they were interested in cookery were targeted to take part.

The club was run by a Food Technology teacher and supported by the Extended School coordinators, the Headteacher, who is also a trained Food Technology teacher, and a Technology Technician helped buy the ingredients for the practical sessions.

Running the club

The What's Cooking? sessions were a mix of theory and cooking and food competences had been fitted into the weekly activities.

Activities:

- Basic hygiene (the club borrowed a UV gel hand washing kit from the local authority)
- Planned and made a meal for a chosen member of staff
- Supermarket visit to see how supermarkets buy in their fresh fruit and vegetables
- Visit to a local fish farm and shop
- Practical cooking: Healthy snacks for after school (muffins, peanut butter cookies, jam squares, scones, smoothies), vegetable pittas, salads

The impact of the What's Cooking? club

Staff felt that the club had positive impacts on their relationships with students.

'The What's Cooking? club is great and building up relationships between students and staff. I've had lots of students coming up to me during the week to talk to me about the club, what we're doing the next session and what they have tried making at

home'

[Coordinator]

Children and young people were enthused by the amount of different skills they had gained, they had noticed a change in attitudes towards food.

'I've learnt that different things that look absolutely disgusting actually taste really nice. I'm not the person that would go for vegetables but when I made the vegetable pittas they actually tasted really nice'

[Participant]

'My mum thinks it's great. It builds up your confidence for cooking at home for people'.

[Participant]

Babington Community Technology College, Leicester City

Background

This mixed secondary school ran the What's Cooking? club with volunteer students and parents across year groups 8 to 11. The school is situated in a multicultural area, in which over 40 different mother tongues are spoken.

Setting up the club

The club was set up and run by the Head of Design and Technology (Food Technology teacher). The club was pitched as a 'Family Club'; both pupils and parents were invited from the local community. The club took place one day a week after school in the Food Technology classroom, and mainly concentrated on practical cooking. Support at each session was provided by two teaching assistants and a school technician.

The lead coordinator had kept a register of attendance and reported that one parent and over 10 students had signed up to the club, most of whom were from low ability, disaffected groups who had poor school attendance records. On the day of the visit, one parent and five students were in attendance. All teachers in the school had helped with recruitment during tutor group sessions, but it had been difficult to encourage parents to come along. The coordinator was going to concentrate more on targeting parents in the following year, although it was acknowledged that this would take up time as the best way to encourage them would be via telephone calls.

Running the club

The sessions were based primarily around practical cooking; the coordinator had not arranged any other activities, such as visits out, as participants preferred to have the practical cooking. At the end of each of the sessions, the food was then shared by all participants, with any leftovers being taken home. A range of different recipes were cooked, which mainly included the use of vegetables. At the start of the programme, all participants had been given a folder of all the recipes to be cooked in the sessions.

At the beginning of each session participants were provided with a choice of four menu options; they could choose one to cook in that session. The options were displayed, with images of the food, at the interactive whiteboard. On the visit, the coordinator had a discussion with the participants about the food in relation to the four competences, including consumer awareness, diet and health and health and safety. She provided information but also asked them questions to check learning from previous sessions.

Although all these food competences were integrated within the programme, the coordinator considered that it was difficult to fully cover the theory-based competences, such as Consumer awareness and Diet and health, as participants were less motivated by non-practical work. She suggested that an interactive resource to cover these competences would help to motivate them.

The impact of the What's Cooking? Club

When participants were being observed preparing and cooking the food, they demonstrated that they had previously learnt correct knife skills. They also demonstrated that they had learnt about health and safety. For example, participants automatically started cleaning up after the session.

Participants were observed to very much enjoy the session, and were on task at all times.

'I like it cos I can do things on my own – my mum doesn't let me do this at home' [Student participant]

At the end of the session, they all shared the food that had been prepared. Participants said that they appreciated being given the choice of what to prepare, and this choice had motivated them in attending the sessions. However, it was evident that the sharing of meals at the end also provided new taste sensations. At the beginning of the session, a couple of participants declared that they did not like ingredients such as hummus or peppers. However, after tasting the recipes, their eyes had been opened, which also stimulated their consumer awareness, some wanting to buy the ingredients:

'That honey was yummy, miss. How much is that honey at Tesco's? I'm going to get some and put it in my yogurt' [Student participant]

'I like the cheaper Philadelphia [shop home brand], miss – it tastes better' [Student participant]

They also demonstrated that they wanted to share the food with people at home:

'Miss, can I take this samosa home for my Dad' [student participant]

'Mum, can we have a picnic with the samosas in or garden'

The coordinator also considered that the sessions had increased their social skills and confidence. She thought that the sharing of food at the end of the sessions had also helped to develop their social skills, and evoked a sense of sharing in other activities, such as the cleaning up process.

The observed session had only been the third What's Cooking session, so it was difficult for her to comment on whether the pupils had started to cook more at home. However, student participants showed willing in this regard:

'I would like to do more of it at home'

[students participant]

The coordinator was not conducting a formal evaluation for the club to measure impacts, as she was conscious that any written work, i.e. the

introduction of questionnaires, would be de-motivating for the type of participants she had in the club, as it would be too associated with school. However she said that she would think about collecting anecdotes from students in the future, as part of an informal evaluation.

Club H

Background

This What's Cooking? club was run with boys within a pre-exclusion unit of the school. This unit had been set up for those at risk of exclusion due to severe behaviour difficulties. These Year 9 and Year 10 boys (aged 13 to 15 years) received a different curriculum outside the mainstream programme, which concentrated on the building of key skills and life skills. The coordinator considered that the What's Cooking programme was ideal for inclusion within this curriculum. These boys therefore received a What's Cooking session once a week during the school day. There were six boys in this unit, and the majority came from very deprived backgrounds. Indeed, the coordinator mentioned that there was no oven in one of the student's homes.

Setting up the club

The programme had been set up and was run by a Food technology teacher. Support at each session was provided by two teaching assistants. The coordinator only wanted to concentrate on practical cooking in these sessions; she had tried to engage the boys in some written/discussion work to cover the other competences, but this had been highly demotivating for them, and had therefore resulted in poor behaviour. She therefore welcomed having any interactive materials which would cover the other food competences.

This teacher was also reticent to arrange for external visits for the boys. Some of them were diagnosed with an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and this meant that detailed risk assessments needed to be conducted before visits could take place.

Running the lessons

Each lesson, the boys were provided with a recipe and ingredients, and were expected to follow the recipe as far as possible. The teacher provided demonstrations where necessary, and would remind the boys of any health and safety issues throughout the lesson. Health and safety was considered to be a particular concern with these types of boys:

'You have to have eyes in the back of your head here.'

[Coordinator]

The quantities within the recipes were enough in order for them to take home the food they had cooked to provide their families with a meal.

The lesson that was observed was the fifth lesson for the boys. Three of the boys attended this lesson.

The impact of the What's Cooking? lessons

It was observed that the boys were very well behaved during the lesson, and were on task at all times. This was acknowledged by the teacher as being the one major and significant impact of the club, i.e. the practical nature of these lessons had the ability to motivate these types of students, and therefore give them greater access to learning. She considered that for at least one of the boys What's Cooking? had resulted in an increase in overall attendance in school. However, she pointed out that there were too many external variables which would also affect these students' school attendance, such as any violent or gang-related activity that was happening at any one time:

'If there's anything like that going on in the area, these kids will make themselves scarce'

[Coordinator]

When the boys were being observed preparing and cooking the food, they demonstrated that they had previously learnt correct knife skills. They also demonstrated that they had learnt about health and safety. Indeed, one boy automatically reminded another to turn his pan handle around when it was on the hob.

There were also signs that the boys were demonstrating good teamwork. One boy did not like slicing onions, so another offered to give him some of the onions he had already sliced.

The boys very much seemed to enjoy the lesson, and reported that this was because the lesson was practical. One boy had liked the lessons so much that he had decided that he wanted to become a chef.

When interviewed, the boys said that they had been able to try new foods during the sessions. A couple reported that they had liked the new tastes. Although another claimed that he had not enjoyed the meatballs that had been prepared in the previous week, there was evidence from another boy that this had been a rebellious comment, and in fact was not true:

'Yeah right, so that was why you were scoffing them for half an hour afterwards.'

[Participant]

All the boys reported that they and their families had enjoyed the meals that they had cooked. These boys also claimed that they had cooked at home, and one reported that they had bought new foods after having tried them in the lessons. Indeed, at the end of the observed session, one of the boys actually asked their teacher for the recipe to take home.

Their teacher was cynical about whether there had indeed been more cooking done at home, and indeed whether their parents actually did any cooking themselves at home. However, this teacher felt that if the boys were sharing

food with their families, this could help to change their families' attitudes towards new foods:

'If they [families] like the food, they might then ask their children if they would cook the meal for them again'

[Coordinator]

Dayncourt School Specialist Sports College, Nottinghamshire

Background and set up of the club

The What's Cooking? programme has been conducted separately with students from Years 7, 8 and Year 9 (aged 11 to 14 years). Each year group received a total of six after-school sessions. These sessions included:

- Two visits to local farms or supermarkets
- Two practical cooking sessions
- One presentation from the Environmental Health Officer within the local authority
- One tasting sessions.

Around 15 pupils for each year group were selected for the programme; the school targeted those pupils who had a particular interest in cooking, or those who were not already taking part in extra-curricular activities.

The programme had been set up by the Healthy Schools coordinator, and the sessions were run by a Food technology teacher.

Each of the programmes began with the presentation from the Environmental Health Officer. This presentation included exploration of the Eat Well plate and health and safety aspects in relation to personal hygiene, food storage and food contamination. The teacher considered that this presentation was an important introduction for the children and young people, as it provided the necessary grounding in knowledge for them.

The teacher reported that the practical cooking sessions had involved healthier baking; she had promoted the use of healthier ingredients in baking. The children and young people then took the products home to share with family members. Within these practical sessions, the teacher had also covered the Consumer Awareness and Diet and Health food competences by discussing the merits of healthier baking as opposed shop-bought products.

At the end of the programme, the teacher had asked the children and young people to complete a feedback form. At the time of the interview, both Years 8 and 9 had already received the programme. These participants had fed back that they had enjoyed all aspects of the programme, but that they felt it could be improved by introducing more practical cooking sessions. The teacher felt that this feedback would be taken on board when organising future programmes.

Observed session

The researcher observed the Year 7 group having their first session of the programme, i.e. the presentation for the Environmental Health Officer. Five children and young people attended this session. This session clashed with a High School musical production rehearsal, and the teacher reported that all 15 students had attended in previous weeks.

The children and young people were attentive throughout the session, and readily answered questions posed to them about the types of foods they currently ate. They were particularly enthusiastic when they were using a Ultraviolet (UV) hand rub device to test how well they had cleaned their hands.

The impact of the What's Cooking? lessons

Although the researcher was not able to speak to students who had received the full programme, the teacher reported that these students had very much enjoyed the activities.

Impacts from the programme had included:

- learning about healthier ingredients in practical cooking;
- knowledge gained in relation to all food competences;
- new taste experiences which they had enjoyed.

The teacher believed that the Year 9 group were cooking more at home. She was also convinced that the children and young people would have good intentions in relation to healthy foods consumed at home. However, it was acknowledged that healthier eating at home may not always be possible due to parental influence. Dietary advice given to students in the past had actually resulted in parental complaints to the school.