



**Information  
Update  
September  
2009**

**Welcome back!**

September 2009 is a significant month for all of us involved in school food. It is the month in which the final step in the government regulations for improved school food come into force – **nutrition based standards for lunch in secondary and special schools** (see page 3). Working with the National Governors Association we will be distributing advice to **all school governors** (see page 6) about how they can improve their school food service in a special edition of the NGA magazine.

September is also the most significant month for attracting and retaining new customers. Time and again we find that early school lunch experiences for children affects their inclination to become a regular customer. The School Food Trust recently undertook research into the attitudes of parents' whose children are due to start school. We found they wanted information and reassurance about how and what their child will be fed. To help address these concerns, and showcase all the fantastic work schools, local authorities and caterers are undertaking, we have produced a guide called the **Little Book of Goodness** - which will be given to the parent of every child starting school this September (see page 2).

New entrants to secondary school also need to feel positive about school food and our **Million Meals** programme (see page 5+6) continues to offer many ideas for improving the meal experience. Much of this can be done by engaging pupils and our school council pack has proved very popular. Now that lunch take up is a school **well being indicator** we anticipate that more school leadership teams will be keen to track what's happening in the dining room and will utilise the tools offered through million meals.

We are also planning to roll out a **Twitter** service which Somerset are piloting to help parents keep abreast of what is on their child's lunch menu (see page 2). And watch out for future plans – the **Really Good School Dinner** (see page 2) in January is a great opportunity for school wide activity around food – the new joining pack will include curriculum and menu ideas.

Good luck for the new school year.

Judy Hargadon, Chief Executive

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## A Little Book of Goodness

A brand new guide produced for all parents of children starting reception class this September will shortly be distributed to all infant and primary schools. The Little Book of Goodness dispels any myths and preconceptions parents may have about school food and the dining room experiences from their own school days. It also highlights just how good today's school food really is.

The booklets arrive in schools from 14 September, so please check that your headteacher is giving copies to all new reception class children to take home. A copy will also be sent to all catering leads and a PDF version will be downloadable from the Trust's website.



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## Schools urged to share lunch worldwide

Hungry children overseas can look forward to nutritious lunches when children from schools in this country sign up to the *Really Good School Dinner* campaign. The campaign aims to support local activity to increase school lunch take up and we hope all local authorities will encourage as many schools as possible to participate.

In partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP), the *Really Good School Dinner* asks children to buy a school lunch but pay an extra 10p. Each 10p goes to the WFP and covers the cost of a whole meal for a child in a poorer country, where families can't always afford food.

Schools are urged to sign up from late September at [www.getreal.uk.com/really-good-school-dinner](http://www.getreal.uk.com/really-good-school-dinner) where there will be an exciting range of activities and information. Participating schools receive a comprehensive pack of resources including important information and lesson plans focusing on hunger and poverty overseas. The campaign aims to build on its previous success, which secured more than 100,000 school lunches bought and given free to hungry children overseas via the World Food Programme.



Please contact [ruth.coulthard@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ruth.coulthard@sft.gsi.gov.uk) for more information.

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## Tweet Tweet

From the start of the autumn term parents across Somerset will be able to subscribe to a daily 'school menu' update, listing what their child will be eating for lunch. Somerset County Services (SCS), who provide healthy school lunches to 88 school sites across the county, are working with the School Food Trust to trial the service as an easy way to keep in touch with parents.

Every morning parents who are subscribed to Twitter/SCSSchoolMeals will receive a tweet showing what's on the menu. Any parent, grandparent or carer can sign up, whether their child currently eats school meals or not, and keep up to date with the range of seasonal food on offer. The feed will also be used to update parents on special theme days, taster sessions and how to apply for free school meals.

Parents who would like to sign up for the daily menu tweets will need to sign up for a free Twitter account (if they don't have one already) and start following: <http://www.twitter.com/SCSSchoolmeals>

Karen Rafferty, Marketing, Somerset County Services commented: "We are always looking for new ways to get information to parents, so using a social network like Twitter is the next logical step. The service is very popular with adults across the UK, so we think this is a great extra way for us to send out menus. We're keen to get feedback from as many parents in Somerset as possible."

The trial has been very well received and we will be looking to work with another handful of Local Authorities so we can test the model in different settings.

From this week you will also be able to follow the School Food Trust on our own Twitter - <http://twitter.com/schoolfoodtrust> Follow us to get regular updates on all things school food!

twitter



## Support for the nutrient-based standards in secondary schools

As we are sure you know, from this September, secondary and special schools are now required to meet the final food-based and nutrient-based standards for school lunches. The Trust has developed the resources below to help support schools and their catering providers successfully implement these standards.

**Case studies:** in addition to the three case studies published in the guide to the nutrient-based standards, there are now six more case studies available on our website. These are available to download from: [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/nutrientstandards/casestudies](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/nutrientstandards/casestudies) and include how a school promoted hot meal deals, replaced dishes low in iron with higher iron recipes, and used iron-rich ingredients to meet the nutrient-based standards and increase their take up of hot meals.

**Conference calls:** the Trust held two conference calls in June to answer questions and share good practice in relation to interpreting, introducing and implementing the nutrient-based standards. The questions and answers from these conference calls are available from our website: [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/faqs](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/faqs). To register for future conference calls please send your email contact details to [info@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@sft.gsi.gov.uk).

**Example menus:** there are now 7 compliant secondary school menu cycles (with associated recipes) available to download from the Trust's website: [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/compliantmenus](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/compliantmenus). We have recently published a compliant secondary school menu cycle that was successfully developed and tested by Manchester Fayre. The Trust is very keen to celebrate the success of any catering providers who have successfully developed a compliant secondary or special school menu, and to share recipes that have been popular with pupils in secondary schools. Congratulations Manchester Fayre! If you are interested in sharing your compliant menu cycle, and some of the associated recipes, and would like this to be published on the Trust's website, please contact us at [info@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@sft.gsi.gov.uk).

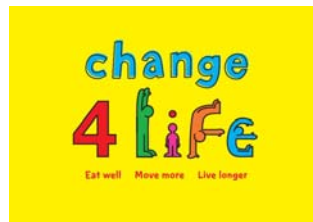
**Menu flexibility:** we will be carrying out work in the next few months to look at flexibility within compliant menu cycles, and how schools and catering providers can "tweak" compliant menus to suit an individual school's demographic profile. We will be publishing further information, and details of how this is done by various catering providers on the Trust's website in October 2009. If you have experience of demonstrating flexibility within compliant menus send your ideas to [info@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@sft.gsi.gov.uk)

Finally, don't forget we have our new **nutrient standards posters** on our website designed to provide an easily digestible guide to the key nutrients and what they are for. A version is available for cooks and caterers, parents and carers, and children and young people [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/resources/nutrientstandardposters](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/resources/nutrientstandardposters)

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## Change4Life

Change4Life have developed a range of toolkits to help Local Supporters engage children and families. They are based around the 8 habits we are trying to help families adopt and include information on how to talk to families about Change4Life, as well as ideas on getting kids to eat breakfast, cycle and walk.



Change4Life is also working with the School Food Trust and Local Authority Catering Association (LACA) to help deliver Change4Life and to promote school lunches. Eating school lunch is an easy way to have a regular, nutritious meal with at least two of the recommended five-a-day fruit and vegetable portions. So, school lunches are at the heart of the Change4Life campaign.

## What can you do TODAY?

People working with school food could support Change4Life by putting up displays, passing on information and chatting to families about healthy eating and physical activity. So register as a Change4Life Local Supporter – it's easy to do and will only take a minute or two.

Once you are registered you will receive a regular newsletter keeping you up-to-date on any Change4Life developments.

Register now at [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) visit the 'Partners and Supporters' area.

## Fourth annual survey of school food take up

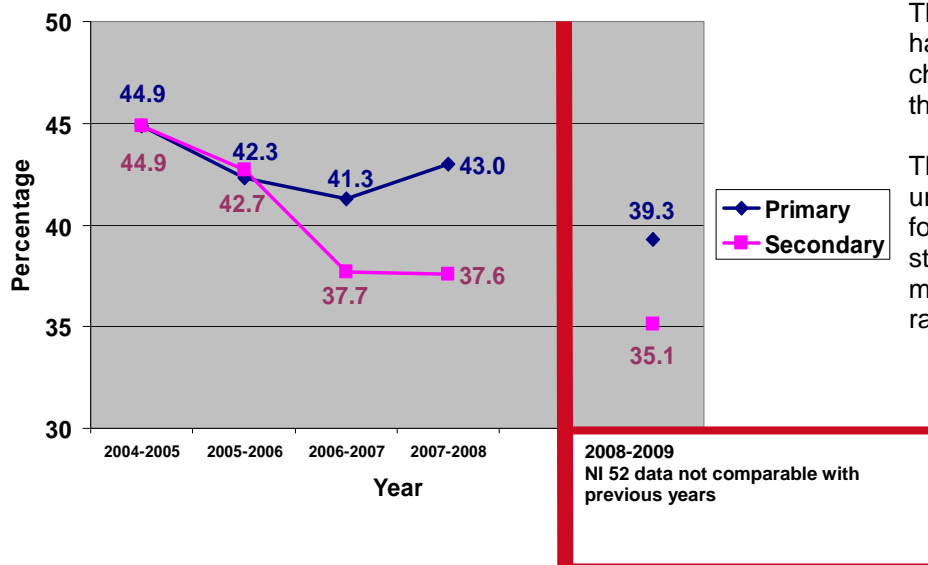
For the fourth year running, the Trust has worked with LACA, our survey partner, to measure take up of school lunches across England. All 150 LAs in England responded to the survey, and almost everyone was able to provide data on take up and the factors that affect the school meals service in 2008-2009.

This year has seen the introduction of NI 52, the National Indicator for measuring take up. NI 52 is a standardised measure which has helped to iron out the variations in the way take up was reported in previous years. The Trust has worked closely with LACA as well as private and in-school caterers to make sure that the data we now have on take up represents the best picture that we have ever had.

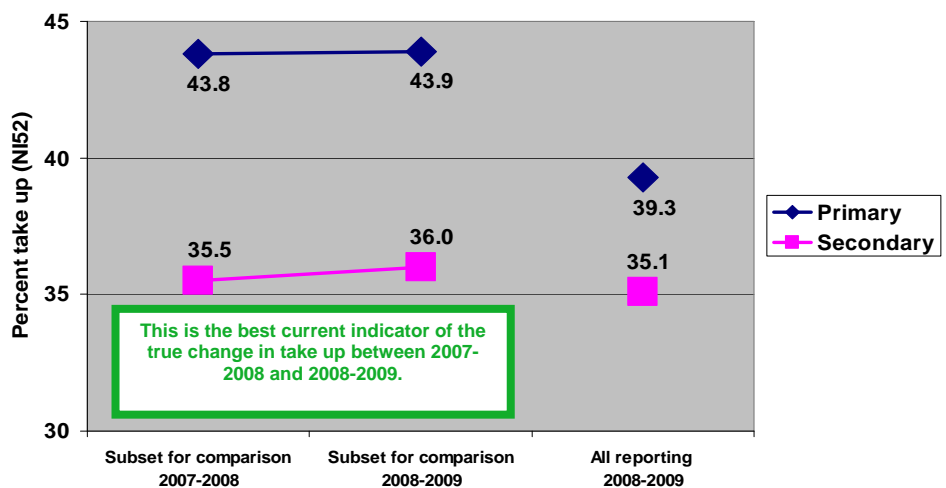
The key message is that take up is holding steady in the face of the changes in provision demanded by the standards and a challenging economic environment.

This is a real tribute to caterers who have worked so hard to market the changes in catering in schools across the country.

The graph to the left shows how measured take up has changed over the last four years. Because NI 52 introduced a standardised measure, the latest estimates of take up are not directly comparable with previous years.



82 LAs provided comparable NI 52 data for primary catering services last year and this year, and 81 LAs provided comparable data for secondary catering services. The results are summarised in the graph on the right. This shows that in primary services, take up held steady following the introduction of nutrient-based standards in September 2008. The slight up-turn in take up in secondary schools followed the introduction of food-based standards across the school day in 2007.



## Could your school become our next *School of the Month* and win £5,000?

The King's School in Grantham, Lincolnshire, recently won the Million meals School of the Month competition in recognition of the innovative ways they improved their meal service and raised the profile of healthy eating across the school to achieve an incredible 100% increase in meal take up.

Faced with low school meal take up, The King's School decided to improve the school meal service by investing in better kitchen and dining room equipment. This was as well as making the dining room more attractive to students by installing a new cashless payment system to reduce queuing times. The school improved the quality of food and installed new furniture and artwork – which is based on a science theme to pay tribute to their most famous pupil, Sir Isaac Newton - and worked with the School Council to develop a healthy eating concept within the school.



As a result of these changes, meal take up has significantly increased and they are also proud to be able to deliver their good quality hot food to 4 other schools in the area every day.

Peter Kirkbride, Bursar at The King's School, said " We are all delighted that the hard work of the pupils, staff and governors in improving the whole dining experience at The King's School has been recognised and rewarded. With the £5,000 prize money we will extend our cashless catering provision and purchase a cash loader and two further cashless tills which will reduce queues, help improve school meal take-up and create a calmer atmosphere in the dining areas."

Our School of the Month initiative acknowledges effective and innovative work and gives schools a chance to win £5,000 worth of dining room or kitchen equipment.

To sign up now or for more information on Million Meals visit [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals) or email the team at [million.meals@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:million.meals@sft.gsi.gov.uk). Don't forget to nominate your school to be in with a chance of winning our School of the Month competition – further details are on the Million Meals website.

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## Primary Curriculum Pack – coming soon!

All Primary Schools that are signed up to Million Meals will soon be able to request our great new Primary Curriculum pack. This pack is for Teachers to use, and it meets elements of the National Curriculum to help educate pupils about the benefits of healthy eating.

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## Meal Deals

The Trust's Meal Deal Project was set up to research if Meal Deals can assist secondary schools in reaching the final food-based and nutrient-based standards. The schools in the pilot adopted a whole school approach with a particular emphasis of engaging students in the menu development and marketing.

We are delighted that one school has seen their take up increase by 20% since the start of the project. The Trust is working on a broad spectrum of pilots to test theories and approaches and transfer the learning to caterers and schools. To view the latest results from the pilots please follow the link to the "Million Meals" website and click Meal Deals: <http://millionmeals.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/meal-deals/>

To view case studies of schools that already operate Meal Deals please click this link.

<http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/casestudy-search.asp>

## Helping Million Meals Schools to track their meal take-up

As you will know, the Million Meals campaign is designed to support schools that are committed to improving school food and the lunchtime experience. To assist schools with monitoring how their meal take-up is progressing we have designed an easy to use on-line tool. All schools have to do is enter some simple data about the numbers eating school lunch and the system will calculate their take-up percentage and track their progress. It even plots the data in a graph which is easily printed for use in reports and presentations. We have made the software simple to use and anyone within a school can enter the data as often as they wish. It is user friendly and all the graphs are done for you automatically. It will help to keep all those involved, focused and motivated and it is a great way of helping catering teams plan for future activities.

## Governors engagement

The School Food Trust knows all too well how vital support and involvement from the school leadership team is, which is why the September edition of Matters Arising, the NGA newsletter is a special food issue. This partnership is especially timely as from this month Ofsted will be monitoring take up of school lunches as one of the sources of evidence of pupil wellbeing. The bumper Matters Arising will have a larger than normal circulation to ensure all schools get a copy.



## The school day...the Million Meals way!

The Trust has released a new Million Meals film which illustrates how staff and pupils are using the campaign's resources to make effective improvements to their meal service. The Million Meals campaign is designed to provide advice and support to help schools increase their lunch take-up and aims to have a million more children eating school dinners by 2010.

The new film features Sprowston Community High School, a Million Meals School of the Month winner, and shows how the different elements of the campaign can be used throughout the school day. It includes footage of:

- Teachers using the "What's Going Down?" curriculum pack in the classroom which has lesson plans and resource activities across 9 subjects
- The school council discussing how to improve their meal service using the "Work up an appetite for change" pack, constructed to lead school council members through a process of debate, fellow students research and action
- Catering staff preparing food and talking about how much they value pupil's feedback about their meal service
- The deputy head discussing how useful the campaign is and why he encourages others to sign up

It also highlights the vast range of effective resources available to schools and shows how Million Meals can help schools track the take up of school meals, very important now that the take up of school food is school well-being indicator.

Have a look at the film on the Million Meals log-in page here:

[www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/millionmeals)



*The countdown to our marketing event starts here - less than four weeks to go - and very few places left. Please go to the Trust website for details on how to register!*



### MADGe

The Marketing and Design Generator (MADGe) is an online resource that local authorities, private caterers and schools can use to market school meals. Users can download and design their own posters, letters, stickers and even online advertisements with fun, exciting themes and designs tailor-made for use in schools.

MADGe will be officially launched at a special marketing training event on the 29<sup>th</sup> September in Birmingham. The event will engage with key decision makers associated with the provision of school food and will be interactive with seminars and a motivational keynote speaker.

An Olympic theme will transcend throughout the day. Delegates will also leave the day with their own Olympic toolkit, full of fun ideas and materials which they can use to help promote school meals and involve pupils, reinforced with marketing templates, on MADGe, for them to use.

## Rising school food standards drive trainees to School FEAST



Cooks, lunchtime supervisors and caterers around the country are signing up to training courses at the new School FEAST centres and partnerships.

As the quality of school food continues to rise in line with government requirements, so does the need to update providers' specialist skills. Local authority and private sector employers along with senior leadership teams in schools are increasingly prioritising School FEAST training for their food workforce.

The School FEAST (Food Excellence and Skills Training) network, dedicated to meeting this need, comprises 29 training centres and partnerships across the regions, with the most recent three centres launching in London earlier this year.

Each offering a core menu of qualifications alongside other training options tailored to local need, the School FEAST centres aim to be as flexible as possible. Courses range from full time National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) to on-the-job training lasting just a few hours. For some staff, providing attractive, healthy and legally compliant school lunches for their pupils might simply mean using School FEAST to refresh and update their skills. For others, School FEAST presents an inspirational introduction to professional development and training.

For more information and to find out your local School FEAST centre or partnership offer, visit [www.schoolfeast.co.uk](http://www.schoolfeast.co.uk) or call 0844 800 9048.

New research has shown that people are eating healthier food after taking part in "Let's Get Cooking". The first round of the Let's Get Cooking evaluation is complete and is helping to show that club members are learning new cooking skills (which they are using at home), teaching cooking skills to others and eating a healthier diet.



Club members, from a sample of 300 clubs, are asked to complete a short questionnaire, once at the beginning of their involvement with the club and again at the end of a cycle of club activities. Overall, the results from this first round of evaluation are encouraging and we hope that children around the country are benefiting in similar ways. Further results from the second round of evaluation will be available in the autumn term 2009.

## Improving Kitchen and Dining Spaces, New Web Pages

This month sees the launch of a new section on the School Food Trust web site, focussed specifically on assisting anyone considering or currently improving school kitchen and dining spaces. This site is designed to share best practice, lessons learnt and to show case innovative and inspirational ideas on Kitchen and Dining spaces, both through Capital Programmes (Building Schools for the Future, Academies, Primary Capital Programmes and Targeted Capital Fund) and innovative school funded/school driven initiatives. Visit the site at: <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/content.asp?Contentid=835> to see a raft of case studies, visuals, support tools and documentation developed both within the School Food Trust and across a range of Partners.

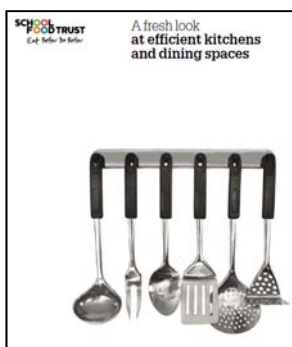
Creating effective, efficient and inspirational kitchen and dining spaces requires careful planning and design. Early planning and engagement of all key players in this process is vital to ensure a successful outcome. But just how do you go about creating that vision and what are the considerations? The School Food Trust has been working with a number of Local Authorities, Heads of Catering, Senior Leadership Teams and Designers and Architects who have gone through the design, planning and implementation of new and refurbished kitchen and dining spaces and have put together a series of checklists to guide you through the process. We are looking for feedback on the checklists from those who are currently going through or have just completed a refurbishment or new build. Please e-mail [iti\\_feedback@gsi.gov.uk](mailto:iti_feedback@gsi.gov.uk) with any comments you may have.



Do you know of a new or refurbished school kitchen and/or dining space that is innovative and inspirational and you would like to tell others about it? If so, we would like to hear from you. Please e-mail us at the following address, [iti\\_feedback@gsi.gov.uk](mailto:iti_feedback@gsi.gov.uk) to include your name, contact number and outline of the work undertaken.

## A fresh look at efficient kitchens and dining spaces

September sees the launch of the latest in the "fresh look guide" series from the School Food Trust. This guide looks at how meal service efficiency and dining hall experience can be improved by using small amounts of capital funding. The guide will help providers improve the customer experience and increase school meal take up.



This guide has been developed to assist all those involved in the school meal service, whether they are a headteacher, cook, caterer, business manager or lunchtime supervisor, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the lunchtime service.

Printed copies of the guide will be distributed to all local authorities, catering providers and School Food Ambassadors.

Other partners can order a hard copy, while in stock, by writing to [information.requests@sft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:information.requests@sft.gsi.gov.uk) stating their full postal address and the number of copies required. On line copies for download are available from our [website](#) as are a range of additional resources.

## Get in touch

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