

CASE STUDY

PARK ACADEMY, BOSTON

INCREASING SCHOOL MEAL TAKE UP BY UNIFYING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY



Park Academy in Boston struggled with a fragmented school community and low school meal uptake, due in part to over 62% of pupils coming from migrant backgrounds, including Polish, Latvian, Russian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Indian, Burmese and Vietnamese pupils.

As a member of the Lincolnshire commission, Park Academy focused on two aspects of the Food for Life criteria to bring this diverse group together: the first was to give their pupils a voice and the second was to involve the parents and wider community in school activities.

The SNAG group includes a wide cross-section of pupils, including EAL students (English as an Additional Language). The group collated feedback from pupils' families as well as peers. Working closely with their food provider, Gold Catering Mark accredited Food 4 Thought, they ensured that meals from around the world are on the menu and parents are regularly invited into school to see first-hand the quality of the food and that it is nutritious, freshly prepared and locally sourced. As a result, school meal uptake increased from 16.2% to 30.4% over the first two years as a Food for Life school. The increased meal take up figures are even more impressive considering the school roll has increased by over 60%

Pupils' families also participate in wider school activities: The Breakfast Club is open to pupils and parents; families and the wider community join the Gardening Club every Monday; and the school ensures that traditional produce from other countries is grown where possible.

As parent Laura Spicer said:

"My three children attend Park Academy, and since the school has joined with Food for Life it has greatly impacted on the whole family! The children often bring home seeds to grow and nurture for the Community Garden. It gives them a great sense of pride to look after them and see the end results. The children's grandmother, their great-grandfather and I have all helped in the Community Garden – planting, watering and weeding the produce."