

Food for Life Partnership at Batley Girls' High School

Helping schools to transform their food culture

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This case study forms part of the Big Lottery Fund national Well-being Evaluation. CLES Consulting was commissioned in 2008 with the New Economics Foundation (nef) to undertake the evaluation. The case study is one of 19 that will be completed throughout the lifetime of the evaluation, which runs from December 2008 to September 2013. For more information about the evaluation, please see the [well-being pages of the CLES Consulting website](#).

The case study focuses on activities aiming to transform the food culture at Batley Girls' High School (BGHS) in West Yorkshire, undertaken as part of the wider Food for Life Partnership (FFLP) portfolio.

Background to the project

Before becoming involved in FFLP, BGHS was already strongly committed to sustainability and environmental practices. It was involved in the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) Sustainable Schools initiative and the national Healthy Schools programme, had received Green Flag and Yorkshire in Bloom Awards, and set up an eco-committee with local feeder primary schools. The school has also been awarded Rural Dimension status by SSAT, in recognition of its commitment to increasing student awareness and understanding of the countryside and the environment.

BGHS decided to sign up to FFLP in late 2009 in order to further its aims around sustainability and well-being, and to help bring together the different initiatives it was undertaking. Furthermore, in becoming a FFLP Flagship School in April 2010, BGHS committed to working with other local schools and the local community in Batley to support wider moves to enhance food sustainability.

As a Flagship School, BGHS benefited from support provided by the various partner organisations involved in FFLP: the Soil Association; Focus on Food Campaign; Health Education Trust; and Garden Organic. FFLP activity within the school has been spearheaded by the Assistant Head for Extended Schools, supported by other committed staff and Kirklees Catering Service personnel.

KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

The initial drive to change the food culture at BGHS came from the school Catering Manager, who was concerned about the unhealthy nature of the school dinners, and saw the opportunity that involvement with FFLP might bring to accelerate and embed the changes she was in the process of making. In addition to addressing poor dietary habits, FFLP seeks to bring about more sustainable food systems by looking at food sourcing, and addressing a lack of skills and knowledge around cooking and a lack of understanding about where food comes from. Wider research undertaken for the School Food Trust, as reported in a FFLP impact report, found that *'lunch time was the key period that governed whether or not a child felt "happy" in school'*;¹ one of the issues identified as a priority for FFLP activity at BGHS was to improve the lunchtime experience, particularly for the younger year groups.

The BGHS Food Policy was developed by the FFLP SNAG (School Nutrition Action Group) in November 2010. It outlines a mission statement *'to influence and improve the health of the whole school community by equipping pupils and their families with ways to establish and maintain lifelong healthy and sustainable eating habits. This shall be accomplished by providing high quality food education skills and food service and by ensuring consistency in food messages throughout the school day.'*² Underlying this are four key aims:

- ❑ **food leadership and school food culture** – ensuring that the school plays an important role, as part of the larger community, in promoting family health and sustainable food and farming practices;
- ❑ **food quality and provenance** – ensuring that pupils and staff receive tasty, nutritious, affordable and safe food during the school day, and have easy access to a water supply;
- ❑ **food education** – enabling pupils to make informed choices about the food they eat, and developing core skills to do so by providing relevant curricular, cross-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities;

¹ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.4

² *Whole School Food Policy* (Batley Girls' High School, 2010), p.1

- **community and partnerships** – sharing learning and best practice with stakeholders, the community and school partners, including BGHS feeder primary schools.

These aims, and the activities undertaken to achieve them, contribute to the wider ambitions of BGHS, as encapsulated in its strap-line, 'Achievement, Respect, Transformation.'

ACTIVITIES

The four programme partners deliver different aspects of the overall FFLP offer:

- **Soil Association** – a Soil Association Farm Links Officer visits Flagship Schools to discuss how they might use visits to local working farms as an educational resource. BGHS' first trip took place in Summer 2010, to Swillington Organic Farm near Leeds, and provided the opportunity for pupils to understand where food comes from and connect with the production process. BGHS has its own farm within the school grounds, with poultry and goats alongside a range of produce; the goats came from Swillington, following the initial visit, and have helped to cement a strong link between farm and school that will include ongoing visits to ensure that every pupil has the opportunity to visit the farm during their time at the school.



Flagship Schools also receive support from a Soil Association Food Sourcing Co-ordinator, who works with them to help source local and ethical food for school meals. BGHS has achieved the FFLP Bronze Award, the criteria for which includes ensuring that at least three quarters of dishes on the menu are freshly prepared, that farm-assured meat and free range eggs are used, and menus are seasonal. BGHS also meets several of the food provenance criteria for the Silver Award, such as including a range of locally sourced items on its menu, and ensuring that some products meet Fair-trade standards. A considerable amount of organic produce is grown at the school and used in the kitchen, with labels used in the dining room to identify salad and other items on the delicatessen bar that were grown on site.

- **Focus on Food Campaign** – each Flagship School receives a visit from the Focus on Food Campaign Cooking Bus, an articulated lorry that opens out into a cooking classroom. It visited BGHS for a week in early 2011, with cookery sessions provided for pupils at BGHS and its feeder primary schools. The main priority, however, is to provide training to staff around teaching food technology/cookery and using healthy ingredients; Cooking Bus sessions were held for staff from BGHS, local primary schools and Kirklees Catering Service. In addition to the Cooking Bus visit, a Focus on Food Campaign representative visits Flagship Schools to help them develop their food technology and cooking curriculum, and (for the Silver Award) to support the setting up of a school cookery class for pupils, families and members of the wider community.
- **Health Education Trust** – the Health Education Trust provides expert input on school food policy, and works with Flagship Schools to set up a SNAG; this acts as a steering group to set up and embed the FFLP culture in the school, and involves staff, pupils, the school catering team, and members of the local community. At BGHS, the Health Education Trust Policy Officer helped to facilitate the first three SNAG meetings held during the school's initial term of Flagship status, and supported the development of the new BGHS Whole School Food Strategy.

The Health Education Trust also organised a regional seminar for Flagship Schools across Yorkshire and Humber, held in November 2010 and attended by BGHS. This provided an opportunity for BGHS staff and pupils to network with other participating schools and share learning from their individual experiences.

- **Garden Organic** – the Garden Education Officer at Garden Organic visits Flagship Schools to assess their needs and provide training and support around growing skills and composting. She also took part in the BGHS Green Fair event, to which feeder and other local schools and community members were invited in order to learn about approaches to growing produce. Other work at BGHS in which Garden Organic has been involved includes a wormery workshop for pupils and staff, and an Apple Day attended by pupils from local primary schools. BGHS also benefited from the support of Garden Organic in developing an annual growing rota, aimed at ensuring a predictable year-round supply of produce, and avoiding over-supply during the school summer holidays.

The work of the four partners is closely inter-linked, in order that a holistic, whole school approach is adopted: *'it's about the whole food culture ... from planting to plate.'* The work of the FFLP Regional Co-ordinator is important in this respect; other aspects of this role include helping Flagship Schools to reach out to other local schools and the local community, and wider stakeholder engagement and partnership development.

In practice, FFLP activities vary considerably from school to school, and are driven by the identified needs and ambitions of staff and pupils, alongside considerations of the cost and workload implications of planned activities. BGHS undertook a survey of pupils, particularly to find out their thoughts on how the lunchtime experience at the school might be improved. Following this, FFLP helped to support the implementation of new arrangements in the dining hall, including queue barriers to rationalise and speed up the previous system, a new dining area for Year 7 children, colourful displays featuring both the daily menu and information on healthy eating, and a top table.³

The BGHS Farm Manager has been active in working with local feeder primary schools to encourage their gardening and growing activity. This has involved visits from the schools to BGHS, and return visits in which BGHS pupils have helped to lead activities with the primary schoolchildren. Much of this work has drawn on BGHS' status as a Visual Arts College, with its commitment to sustainability expressed in creative activity such as making robots out of recycled materials, and developing new gardens focused on curriculum areas such as science and maths. The school is keen to ensure that sustainability issues cross-cut its curriculum, and has built FFLP activities and themes into its Citizenship GCSE and the broader PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education) curriculum.



Flagship status also involves giving advice to other schools interested in achieving FFLP awards. BGHS has been approached for assistance from a number of schools, particularly to seek help and support in arranging farm visits: *'they do a lot of outreach work, and are well known as a hub of best practice.'* Outreach activities also extend to the local community, who have access to a community garden at the front of the school, and some of whom benefit from allotment plots within the school grounds.

In March 2011, BGHS hosted an awards event for other West Yorkshire schools that had successfully met the FFLP Bronze Award criteria.

FFLP also works closely with local authority catering providers. The Kirklees Catering Service achieved the Bronze Catering Mark in July 2011; it is responsible for school meals at BGHS, and has been instrumental in helping to drive the initiative forward within the school.

OUTCOMES

As part of the case study research, we spoke to BGHS staff and schoolchildren, the FFLP Regional Co-ordinator, and local partners including representatives from Field Lane Primary School (a BGHS feeder school), Kirklees Catering Service and Kirklees Council. The discussions highlighted the range of positive outcomes resulting from involvement with FFLP, as detailed below.

Healthy eating knowledge and practice

Findings from the wider national evaluation of the Well-Being programme show that before taking part in FFLP, two-thirds (66%) of BGHS students who responded to the initial survey questionnaire were eating fewer than five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. The drive to improve nutritional standards at BGHS has helped to embed knowledge around healthy eating, and raised awareness amongst pupils of the '5 a day' message and the need to reduce intake of salt, sugars and hydrogenated fats and oils. The school has banned sweets, crisps and other unhealthy snacks, alongside fizzy drinks, and there has been a noticeable improvement in the nutritional content of lunchboxes. In general, pupils are encouraged *'to become more rounded consumers'*, and to take these messages home to their families:

'I now eat about three fruit a day – it used to be about three a week;'

'my family tries to buy its eggs at school now, or get free range.'

³ Note that initiation of some of these developments (most notably the Year 7 dining area) preceded BGHS becoming a Flagship School.

Around 10-15% of food used in school meals is grown on site, and water is on offer at more points around the school. There is greater variety in the menus on offer, and pupils felt the quality had improved:

'there's different healthy food, and plenty to choose from – nice curry, fish pie, pasta bar, sandwich bar, jacket potatoes, salads, [and] fruit.'

Pupils have also gained knowledge around food sourcing, derived both from growing activities at BGHS and the visit to Swillington Organic Farm:

'none of us have had much contact with the countryside ... I'm now more aware of where our food comes from, and think about what I eat.'

Awareness of the wider food cycle had increased, with one pupil commenting that she now understood how composting can contribute to growing further produce:

'the process doesn't stop with eating the food.'

FFLP has also provided a platform to explore cultural issues relating to food – for example, a discussion about whether the school goats could be eaten or not broadened out to consider wider issues such as Halal meat and vegetarianism. A presentation at the regional seminar for Flagship Schools on battery hens led to the issue being covered in a BGHS assembly, which evidently had a significant impact on pupils:

'the assembly affected a lot of people in the school ... it was disgraceful to look at. All animals should be treated the same, have freedom.'

Learning new skills



One of the principal desired outcomes from FFLP is to encourage cooking skills, both through direct engagement with pupils, and through work with school staff to embed approaches to teaching cooking and food technology. According to a Kirklees Catering Service staff member:

'preparation of food in-school has become much more popular, the children are getting involved, and the adults too ... the whole thing is fantastic.'

For a teacher from Field Lane Primary School who attended a Cooking Bus session at BGHS:

'the visit helped us to sort out our food technology curriculum ... they showed us how you can set up to teach 12-15 children at one time, even with less good facilities.'

Subsequently, Field Lane decided to employ a teaching assistant every afternoon to lead food technology work with Key Stage 2 children, and to embed this focus into other curriculum areas such as maths (for example, weighing ingredients) and geography (exploring where food comes from). Similarly, FFLP activity at BGHS is embedded in other areas of the school curriculum, most notably citizenship, science, maths and geography.

Pupils also learnt new skills around growing and animal husbandry:

'I learnt a lot about looking after animals – what they eat, and how to look after them. ... I'd never been to a farm before.'

In addition to the 'hard' skills discussed above, pupils also gained 'softer' skills in such areas as leadership, team working and communication. For example, one pupil member of the SNAG:

'realised I could make a difference. It made me think it might be a future option – being a good leader.'

Increased confidence and self-esteem

Pupils who had been involved in visits to feeder primary schools had obviously derived considerable benefit. BGHS students who visited Field Lane Primary School to do art work and planting *'got a lot out of it, and were praised for their skills with the little children.'* For one of the pupils involved:

'I was happy that I could help the little kids, other people ... you feel good.'

Pupils involved in the SNAG contributed to a presentation on FFLP activities at the regional seminar for Flagship Schools, and had talked about FFLP in school assemblies:

'I gained so much confidence from standing up in assembly – I've enough confidence to go and speak to the whole school.'

Enhanced attainment

The Assistant Head at BGHS was clear that involvement with FFLP had contributed to positive outcomes around increased engagement in school life and work, improved behaviour and attendance, and ultimately enhanced educational attainment:

'involvement can have a transformational impact ... it can be a real turning point.'

The school farm was an important asset in this regard, with staff using the chance to spend time with the animals as a reward for good behaviour. One pupil, who was given an Assistant Farm Manager role, became much more engaged and motivated as a result: *'she really settled down with the animals.'* Another pupil benefited so much from her involvement with the farm that she progressed from being an almost certain candidate for permanent exclusion to being chosen as the school's own Modern Apprentice, due to start work on the farm in September 2011. BGHS is working alongside Leeds City College on the apprenticeship scheme, with the College providing the NVQ, technical certificate and key skills components.

Two pupils who had been largely disengaged from school undertook work experience in the BGHS kitchens. One of them, who had initially not been interested in cooking, *'got really fired up'*, and is now attending catering college.

Findings outlined in the FFLP Impact Report show that the Ofsted ratings of secondary schools involved with FFLP improved significantly: *'secondary schools started with average attainment levels 3.3% below the national average and managed to close this gap to 0.6%.'*⁴ Although other factors may well have played a role in bringing about such a change,⁵ evidence suggests that *'the opportunities for experiential learning through the FFLP were particularly effective at helping engage or re-engage pupils with learning issues and challenges.'*⁶

Improved school environment and community links

Pupils clearly valued the improvements to the dining area, and to the wider lunchtime experience:

'it used to be very stressful, a real rush not to be late for your next lesson. Now there's time to relax.'

Furthermore, FFLP has provided the school with a further opportunity to promote its community liaison activity. The community garden is maintained by the school, and has given retired people living opposite the school somewhere to visit, walk and hold events. Plans to extend the farm and increase the extent to which the local community are involved are well advanced; a coffee morning was held so that local people could come and discuss the ideas. Community members who tend allotment plots within the school grounds have helped with the school's own growing activities during the holidays, and have brought produce to the school kitchen to see if it could be used:

'after we got involved with the community allotments, it brought everyone together ... it helped us get to know each other.'

Children in the feeder primary schools that have engaged in FFLP benefit from an eased transition when they move to BGHS. They may have visited BGHS on several occasions, and are therefore more used to the school environment; they are also likely to have interacted with BGHS pupils when these pupils visited primary school. Strong relationships have also been cemented between the staff involved, with these connections contributing to improved transition processes.

Wider impacts

The FFLP Impact Report provides evidence that some of the outcomes experienced by schoolchildren involved in FFLP activities have had a wider impact on their families: *'the Partnership's strong focus on community participation has also led to healthy behaviours travelling home, with 45% of parents reporting eating more fruit and vegetables as a result of FFLP and 43% changing their food buying habits.'*⁷

Pupils at BGHS confirmed that involvement in FFLP activities was having a wider impact on their families:

⁴ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.3

⁵ The report makes it clear that the data show an association, but that no causal inference can be drawn.

⁶ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.6

⁷ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.4

'now my mum uses more salad, and we've cut down on fizzy drinks ... I nagged them to do this;'

'my little brother is aware of the things we buy too.'

Kirklees Catering Service attends parents' evenings and puts on themed events in local schools in order to encourage parents/carers to get involved in healthy eating activities alongside their children. It sets up a stand, with information disseminated through tasters, cooking tips, handouts, recipes, games and tick charts. FFLP encourages schools to set up a cooking club involving staff, pupils, parents/carers and other family and community members; cooking clubs represent a key mechanism to embed healthy eating outcomes by bringing about behavioural change in families and local communities, and to extend the programme's reach to a wider audience. BGHS is working towards setting up a cooking club, in order to cement its commitment to improving well-being amongst its students, their families and the local community:

'it's about the school coming together – not just the kitchen staff and students, but everyone. ... The whole attitude to eating is changing, feeding back into pupil's homes and families;'

'the whole food culture is very much part of the school. Children talk about healthy eating, and so do the parents. Initial feedback is very positive ... it's happening, although there's some way to go.'

Although the March 2009 Ofsted report for BGHS predates the school's involvement with FFLP, it pays testament to the ethos that encouraged the school to become a Flagship: *'their award-winning work on horticultural and environmental projects is a direct result of the school's excellent enrichment provision which helps to promote community links.'*⁸

WHY THE PROJECT WORKS

As outlined below, the case study research identified a number of reasons why the FFLP approach has proved successful, both at BGHS and more widely.

An holistic approach

FFLP adopts an holistic approach to healthy eating and sustainability, drawing together different approaches and linking these to school and community needs:

'there are some fantastic projects working with schools, especially around cooking. ... But there's nothing that brings everything together in the way that Food for Life does – that's what makes it unique.'

BGHS was strongly committed to healthy eating and sustainability before becoming involved in FFLP. However, FFLP enabled the school to consolidate its work and move forward in a way that would otherwise not have been possible:

'[Food for Life] came along at just the right time. It offered us a way to draw together a number of issues that we were concerned about for our students and the community they come from. ... It provided practical guidance on how to set and achieve goals, putting a structure in place that we could relate to and use. It also provided valuable contacts, so we could learn from other people's experience;'

'with Food for Life, students became directly involved – it really brought us together, opened up new doors, by bringing students into it.'

Findings from wider FFLP evaluation activity confirm the added value generated by the programme through this holistic approach. The main (quantitative) evaluation report states that *'the majority of studies have focused on individual components of food in school health promotion: meal reform, practical cooking skills, gardening or developing links with farms. Few studies have explored the potential impact of combining these areas to help young people develop knowledge and skills related to food production and healthy eating.'*⁹ The qualitative impact evaluation found that *'the Healthy Schools programme had helped pave the way for the FFLP. However, interviewees felt that the FFLP enabled them to take the next step in implementing a more holistic, integrated and sophisticated programme of food education. It provided both a framework and provided some with a central focus for school development.'*¹⁰

⁸ *Inspection Report: Batley Girls' High School, 4-5 March 2009* (Ofsted, 2009), p.5

⁹ *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.22

¹⁰ *Qualitative Impact Evaluation of the Food for Life Partnership Programme* (National Foundation for Educational Research, 2011), p.25

A sustainable model



FFLP aims to embed an approach to food culture within schools that will prove sustainable into the future, without the need for ongoing support. It is a flexible programme, tailored to school needs, but beyond this seeking to build enduring relationships between like-minded schools and other partners, sharing resources, learning and experience to mutual benefit. FFLP is strongly focused on providing a legacy in terms of up-skilled teachers and catering staff, with the Cooking Bus training sessions and the growing support offered by Garden Organic proving particularly useful. Furthermore, in facilitating the establishment of the SNAG at BGHS, and its subsequent work to draw up the Whole School Food Policy, the school is clear over the priorities it wants to pursue and the activities it needs to undertake to address these priorities.

For the future, the BGHS farm is about to be extended to increase the school's animal and food yield. During 2011-12, BGHS plans to set up a social enterprise with Howden Clough Tenants and Residents Association to deliver food grown on the farm to the local community. This will enable further curriculum links to be made, in such areas as business studies and land-based studies.

Future sustainability is also enhanced by Kirklees Catering's commitment as a recipient of the Bronze Catering Mark, which makes it easier to make changes in school menus and encourages the interest of other schools in changing their food cultures.

Partnership working

Effective partnership working has evidently been an important factor in helping to secure the success of the FFLP programme in Kirklees:

'it's really about little steps – once one school comes [on board], the message goes elsewhere.'

BGHS has played a central role in building local partnerships: it has developed strong links with some of its feeder primary schools, and hosted a number of FFLP activities including the March 2011 awards event. More widely, it has been involved in other local initiatives with an environmental/sustainability theme, including a climate change conference and a sustainable schools celebration event. Kirklees Catering Service has also been important in cementing local FFLP partnerships, and in encouraging schools in the borough to sign up to the programme.

Buy-in and commitment

For FFLP to maximise its potential, it demands significant commitment and time from the individual school leads, and particularly so if that school is a Flagship. It is clear that FFLP would not have achieved the success it has had at BGHS without the buy-in it enjoyed from the Head Teacher, and without the energy of the Assistant Head for Extended Schools in driving activities forward.

A dependence on key individuals is perhaps inevitable, but also represents something of a challenge to the success of initiatives of this sort. This is confirmed by wider findings reported in the FFLP qualitative impact evaluation: *'it is essential to have someone driving the programme forward in each school. But some FFLP coordinators pointed out that there was a danger of the programme becoming too dependent on their personal input, commitment and championing.'*¹¹

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Big Lottery Fund support for FFLP under the national Well-being Programme will end in December 2011. FFLP is currently exploring options for the future, including the longer-term potential to gain support from local commissioning bodies once new models of public health and well-being provision have been established. In the meantime, FFLP activities in BGHS are likely to continue developing, with Flagship status having helped the school to put enduring structures in place, and to establish itself at the centre of a sustainable food network in the Batley area.

¹¹ *ibid*, p.v

The recommendations outlined below are intended as learning points for other similar initiatives focused on promoting local well-being. In particular, they focus on the success of FFLP in establishing itself as a sustainable model, and draw out some findings from the evaluations of the wider FFLP programme.

- The FFLP approach is a sustainable one, based upon a period of initial facilitation and support that seeks to build knowledge and skills, generate aspirations, and broker partnerships and networks with appropriate schools, farms and partner organisations. At Flagship Schools, one of the principal mechanisms through which the future sustainability of the model is encouraged is the SNAG, which takes responsibility for engaging representatives from the different communities involved in the ongoing development of FFLP activities. This approach provides transferable learning for other interventions that look to bring together a range of different interests to pursue common objectives and outcomes, and for which clarity of vision and strategic leadership will be required.
- It is inevitable that the success of initiatives like FFLP will be dependent on the skills, energy and commitment of particular individuals who are driving them forward. BGHS has benefited from the efforts of the Assistant Head for Extended Schools in leading FFLP and establishing strong links with a number of feeder primary schools. Although she is retiring in July 2011, other colleagues share her commitment to food sustainability, and it is likely that ongoing activity will continue with minimal disruption. More generally, to avoid problems of over-dependence on particular individuals, it is valuable to ensure structures are in place to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge and best practice. FFLP seeks to do so both internally within schools, through the SNAG, and externally via its regional conferences and other events, and the resources available on its website.
- The main FFLP evaluation found that healthy eating messages had been taken home by pupils and had subsequently informed dietary behaviour at home. However, it commented that *'no clear methodology was developed to shape or support productive communication across home-school boundaries.'*¹² In moving FFLP forward at BGHS, including plans to develop a cooking club to which pupils, parents/carers, family members and the local community will be invited, it could prove fruitful to think through how the in-school approach could be promoted and disseminated externally, helping to maximise the impact of FFLP for the local community.
- A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study found that for every £1 spent on a Food for Life school menu, more than £3 was generated in wider social, economic and environmental value.¹³ In continuing its commitment to food sustainability, and seeking to address the remaining criteria for the FFLP Silver Award, BGHS will need to increase the proportion of its food that it sources from local suppliers. In doing so, it will contribute to the increased sustainability of local farms and other providers, as well as reducing the environmental damage caused by excessive food miles. If a co-ordinated approach was taken at local authority level, the impact would be scaled up and could prove of significant benefit to the local economy.
- One of the principal barriers to implementing some of the measures advocated by FFLP is concern over resources; this is particularly so in terms of sourcing more school food from the local area, and using a greater proportion of organic, farm assured and MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) certified produce. In comparison to bulk sourcing from large providers, such approaches tend to be more expensive, and raise concerns that the cost of school dinners may have to rise. However, the FFLP Impact Report highlights a five percentage point increase in the uptake of school dinners in FFLP schools over two years, and a 20 percentage point increase in free school meal take-up in secondary schools.¹⁴ Increased take-up will help to make school dinners more cost effective, and could effectively outweigh any increased spend on ingredients.

¹² *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.147

¹³ *The Benefits of Procuring School Meals through the Food for Life Partnership: an Economic Analysis* (new economics foundation, 2011), p.30

¹⁴ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.3

APPENDIX 1: HOW THE PROJECT WORKS

About the Food for Life Partnership portfolio

FFLP commenced delivery in 2007, and will run for five years through to December 2011. It benefits from £17 million in funding from the Big Lottery Fund national Well-being programme, and is delivered to schools and communities throughout England. The portfolio brings together four food-focused charities: the Soil Association, which acts as the lead organisation; Focus on Food Campaign; Health Education Trust; and Garden Organic.

The FFLP mission is *'to reach out through schools to give communities access to quality local and organic food, and to the skills they need to cook and grow fresh food for themselves. We want all young people and their families to rediscover the pleasure of taking time out to enjoy good food that makes them feel healthy and connected to the changing seasons.'*¹⁵ There are a number of underlying programme goals:

- to promote healthier eating habits amongst pupils;
- to improve pupil awareness of food sustainability issues;
- to influence food habits at home and in the wider community;
- to improve pupil attainment and behaviour;
- to increase school meal take-up;
- to build the market for local and organic food producers.¹⁶

The FFLP portfolio is contributing primarily to the Well-being programme outcome, *'children, parents and the wider community eat more healthily.'*¹⁷ There are 3,800 schools enrolled on FFLP, of which 180 are Flagship Schools, 20 in each of the nine English regions. 150,000 people in the wider school community have benefited from FFLP activities, with 300,000 schoolchildren eating FFLP-accredited meals every day.¹⁸

Project inputs

Costs

FFLP is a flexible programme, and as such the amount of money expended in different school settings varies. Schools only receive substantive FFLP funding if they are successful in achieving Flagship status.

Although precise data on FFLP expenditure at BGHS were not available for this case study, some £1,250 was used for improvements to the dining hall, with other funding used to support farm visits by BGHS and its feeder schools, growing activities, and events hosted by the school. In total, Flagship schools typically receive around £3,250 from FFLP, supplemented with contributions from the schools themselves and (potentially) support from other external sources.

Staffing

FFLP activity at BGHS has been led by the Assistant Head for Extended Schools. She has been supported at strategic level by the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head, Transformation, who has been instrumental in prioritising the environmental and sustainability agenda at the school. In terms of delivery, the BGHS Farm Manager is responsible for the school's animals and produce, and undertakes externally-facing work in visiting local primary schools to develop links and lead growing and similar activities.

BGHS staff receive support from the FFLP Regional Co-ordinator (a Soil Association employee), particularly around network development and partnerships in relation to other local schools and the local community. More practically, personnel from the four FFLP partners support different aspects of FFLP delivery, as detailed in the 'Activities' section of the case study report.

Outputs

As with BGHS project expenditure, only limited data on output achievement were available for the case study. The visit of the Cooking Bus to BGHS in January 2011 involved 123 pupils and 40 adults, and the November 2010 Apple Day for primary schools benefited 100 pupils and ten adults. The wormery training led by Garden Organic in June 2010 was delivered to 30 pupils and nine adults. 23 BGHS pupils have passed their Level 1 NVQ in Horticulture.

¹⁵ *Food for Life Partnership Evaluation: Full Report* (University of the West of England and University of Cardiff, 2011), p.24

¹⁶ *ibid*, p.23

¹⁷ *Well-being: an introduction to our new programme* (Big Lottery Fund, 2006), p.3

¹⁸ *Good Food for All: the Impact of the Food for Life Partnership* (Food for Life Partnership, 2011), p.11