

Evaluation of FOOD AND FUN School Improvement Programme

Impact report

Arad Research

February 2023

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Contents

1. Introduction	2
1.1 Background	2
1.2 The evaluation	3
1.3 Methodology	3
2. Findings	4
2.1 Improved mental health and emotional well-being	5
2.2 School engagement and educational attainment.....	10
2.3 Improved aspirations.....	14
2.4 Improved physical activity	16
2.5 Improved dietary behaviour.....	21
2.6 Other impacts	27
3. Case studies	29
4. Conclusions.....	39
4.1 Summary key findings.....	39
4.2 Future considerations	40
Annex A: Methodology.....	42

1. Introduction

Food and Fun is a school-based holiday enrichment programme delivered by school staff and partners. It provides food and nutrition education, physical activity, enrichment sessions and healthy meals to children during the school summer holidays.

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the Food and Fun 2022 programme, which aims to promote healthy living, support positive well-being and improve engagement with education and the school during the summer holidays.

The evaluation included interviews with partners, staff, children and families to assess the programme's impact. Overall, the results of the evaluation suggest that the Food and Fun 2022 was successful in its aim of supporting school engagement and aspirations and positive impacts were observed on children's physical activity, diet and emotional well-being during the summer holidays.

1.1 Background

The ethos of the Food and Fun programme is “*working together to promote healthy living, positive well-being and improve engagement with education and the school during the summer holidays.*”¹ This is delivered as full-day play schemes for children that take place during the school summer holidays for a minimum of 12 days in participating schools. The Food and Fun programme was first implemented in 2015 as a pilot project in Cardiff when it was developed in response to growing concerns about food poverty and summer learning loss among children in the region. Then called the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP), the programme was developed and piloted by the Food Cardiff partnership². The pilot project was successful in providing nutritious meals and engaging activities to participating children. In 2016, the programme was expanded nationally by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) with 10 schools five local authorities and three local health boards.

Based on the positive outcomes of the pilot project (as noted in previous evaluations)³, the Food and Fun programme continued to expand to more schools in Wales in 2017. Since then, the Food programme has been delivered nationally, administered by WLGA and principally funded by Welsh Government – match funded until 2019 and fully funded from 2020. Over this period, the programme has continued to grow and reach more children, becoming one of the largest summer programmes in Wales. In 2019, the programme was revised to include new activities and incorporate feedback from participating schools and children.

Delivery and administration in 2022

In 2022, the Food and Fun programme served thousands of children in schools across Wales, providing them with healthy meals and engaging activities during the summer holidays.

¹ (page 5 [Microsoft Word - 210222 SHEP Evaluation Report \(wlga.wales\)](#))’

² [About Food Cardiff | Food Cardiff](#)

³ Available here: ['Food and Fun' School Holiday Enrichment Programme - WLGA](#)

During the school summer holidays of 2022, 139 schools ran schemes providing 8,000 places for children each day with £4.85m allocated for the programme.

The WLGA is responsible for administering this funding and continues to coordinate the programme. The WLGA coordinates the programme on behalf of Welsh Government and provides guidance to local authorities to help them plan the programme for each school. Local authorities are then responsible for enrolling schools in the programme and ensuring that it is run effectively.

As part of the programme, there is also a Community Food and Nutrition Skills Course that provides accredited nutrition training. These courses are delivered by dieticians and are mandatory for all Food and Fun schemes ensuring that consistent, evidence-based messages about nutrition are disseminated through the programme.

1.2 The evaluation

The WLGA commissioned Arad Research to evaluate the Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme. This report sets out the impact findings, demonstrating how the Food and Fun Programme has made a difference. The evaluation had the following objectives:

- Using the existing logic model as a benchmark, explore to what degree schemes are achieving the intended outcomes.
- Consult with stakeholders to understand what would have taken place without the provision and where possible, assess any change in participating children' well-being, school engagement, aspirations, physical activity and dietary behaviour after taking part.
- Where required, make suggested amends to the logic model to strengthen the change indicators across the intended outcome areas and inform future evaluation.

1.3 Methodology

For the evaluation of the Food and Fun programme, the evaluation team utilised a number of different methods to gather data. This included the following:

- Review of the logic model
- Desk-based review of programme documentation and previous evaluations
- Interviews with a sample of local authority leads and local health board dieticians
- Visits to a sample of schools across Wales delivering Food and Fun with discussions held with scheme staff, parents and children
- Collection of feedback from children via a graffiti wall approach
- Virtual group discussions the local authority leads.

2. Findings

A logic model for the Food and Fun programme has been created⁴. A logic model is a tool used to describe and plan the activities and outcomes of an intervention, including information about the resources needed, the activities being undertaken, the outputs or immediate results of those activities, and the intended outcomes. The logic model sets out a series of initial change indicators and lasting change indicators which are set out under five intended outcome areas (see list below).

These outcomes and indicators have informed the research design for this evaluation. The outcomes and indicators were reviewed during the scoping phase of the evaluation and were used to shape the questions and prompts used during the fieldwork.

The rest of this section discusses the evaluation findings relating to impact of the Food and Fun programme. Findings are presented under the five outcomes detailed in the programme logic model, which are as follows:

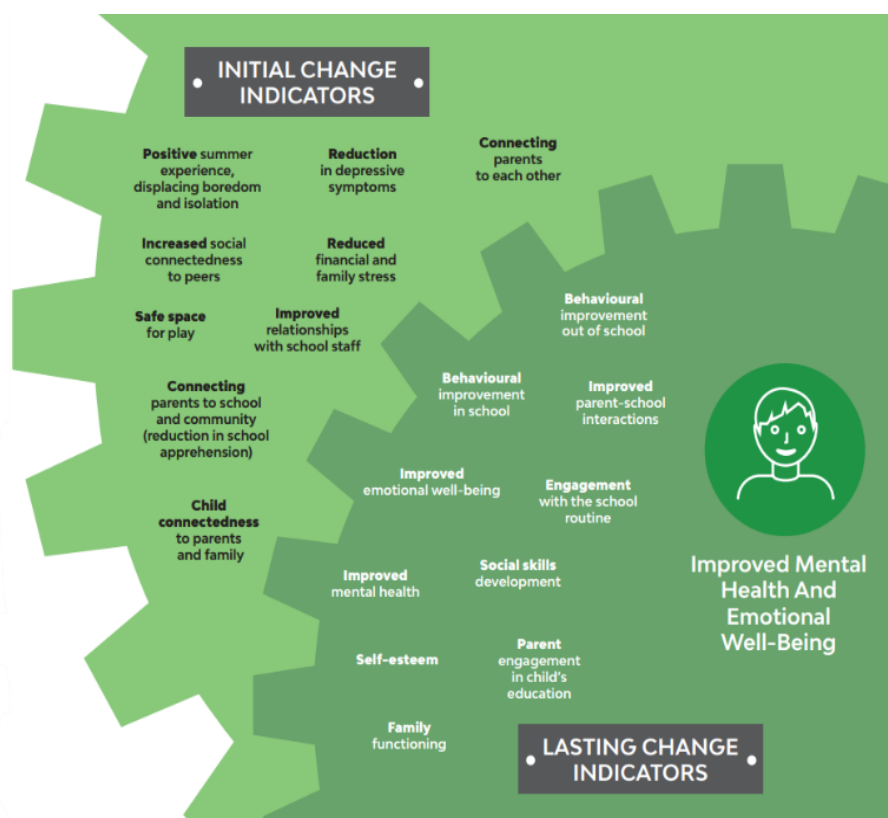
- Improved mental health and emotional well-being
- School engagement and educational attainment
- Improved aspirations
- Improved physical activity
- Improved dietary behaviour

The section then concludes with a discussion of any other additional impacts identified through the research.

⁴ [Download.aspx \(wlga.wales\)](#)

2.1 Improved mental health and emotional well-being

Improved mental health and emotional well-being is one of the intended outcomes of Food and Fun. The programme logic model explains that this outcome includes the following indicators: positive summer experience; displacing boredom and isolation; reduction in depressive symptoms; connecting parents to each other; increased social connectedness to peers; connecting parents to school and community (reduction in school apprehension); improved relationships with school staff; reduced financial and family stress; safe space for play; and child connectedness to parents and family. Feedback collected and observations made during interviews and school visits as part of this evaluation found evidence to suggest that Food and Fun has helped to improve the mental health and well-being of many children attending.



While dieticians and other stakeholders felt that the main aim of the Food and Fun programme was to improve nutritional knowledge and dietary behaviour, and to increase physical activity, it was also recognised how important the schemes are to the mental health and emotional well-being of the children involved. A small number of school staff and stakeholders felt that this has actually become the most important outcome of the programme. This was emphasised as especially important after the Covid-19 pandemic where children missed out on important socialisation, having a detrimental impact on their mental health and well-being. During a school visit, one staff member spoke of a child who had been suffering from lockdown trauma, however being able to socialise in a safe and familiar environment has brought them out of their shell. Many others also gave examples of children gaining confidence and improving their social skills, positively contributing towards their mental health and well-being. One local authority has tried to tie the food element directly into this outcome of the logic model by delivering sessions on food and mood which ties into mental and emotional well-being. Another example of helping to achieve this indicator was that one child had lost their mother recently and were able to spend time doing a memory box to help with their grief during the scheme.

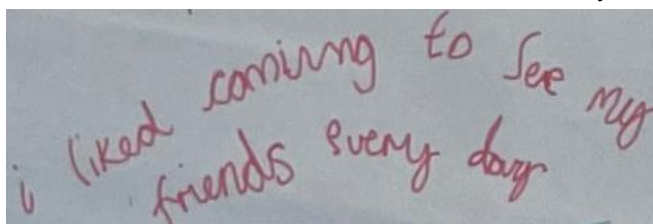
Evidence collected for the evaluation suggests that many children had a **positive summer experience, displacing boredom and isolation**. Many parents and staff said that the Food and Fun programme has given children something to do over the holidays. Some parents mentioned that it is better for their children to be socialising with friends in this setting rather than virtually on their phone or by playing video games. In-person socialising was particularly welcomed after the pandemic. The children in some of the school visits said that they “*would be bored at home*” so they have had fun coming to the scheme and playing with their friends. One dietician spoke of the

importance of the programme in more rural communities where children can often become isolated during the holidays. This has given them the opportunity to interact with their peers and have fun.

“These sessions are great for my kids, who are usually so bored in the summer holidays! It’s great because it helps break up the long summer.” Parent

Feedback and evidence collected suggests that the Food and Fun programme has provided an opportunity for **increased social connectedness to peers**. One dietician observed new friendships being made on their visits to the school. This was echoed by many staff members, parents and children during the school visits. Some children at schemes said that they had made new friends with children they would not usually get to spend time with in school. It has also allowed children of different year groups to mix together, which staff felt has helped the older children feel more responsible and independent as they have been helping out with the younger children. Many of the children said that their favourite thing about coming to Food and Fun was seeing their friends during the holidays and if it were not for the programme they would not see their friends over the summer. A parent at a school visit as part of the evaluation said that having contact with the school and her peers during the holidays has been good for her daughters mental health. As a disabled parent with a chronic illness it can be difficult to arrange things with her daughters friends during the holidays so this scheme was very important to them as a family.

Graffiti wall feedback from children: What did you like?



Evidence collected suggests that the Food and Fun programme has helped to **connect parents to school and community**. One local authority lead believed that it was good for parents to have the opportunity to have conversations with teachers during these schemes. It was felt that these conversations are a lot more difficult to have during term time, so this was a welcomed opportunity to develop relationships with the staff and school. One school felt that they have been able to interact with parents better than they ever would have been able to before. There were some parents they did not have any communication with at all, but the programme has acted as a networking group for these parents. A local authority lead observed that this connection between the school and parents is even more important in deprived communities and so the Food and Fun programme helps to achieve this; the parent lunches have been particularly helpful for this. This was demonstrated further by feedback collected from parents where many commented on how much they had enjoyed the opportunity to come in and spend time in the school. It has made many feel more connected to the school and more in touch with what their children do in school. As one parent explained *“it is nice to come and see first-hand what they are doing”*.

During school visits, one school also spoke of the rapport they have built with the local community though the visits by the police and other providers, and walks they have been doing to the local hospice which has been beneficial to the children and the wider community. They also post on their

Facebook all of the activities and this acts as a form of advertisement for providers which has been positive. Several other schools also spoke of the opportunity the Food and Fun programme has provided them with to connect with local businesses and providers to create working relationships that would not have existed were not for the programme.

Feedback suggests that there has also been some **improved relationships between school staff** through the Food and Fun programme with several noting that it was nice to spend time with other staff members during the holidays. Staff also felt that Food and Fun has provided them with the opportunity to get to know the children in a smaller setting and build up relationships with them.

“Normally in school time, you don’t have time to sit down and just play with the children – this has been nice.” **Staff member**

Evidence collected as part of the evaluation suggests that the Food and Fun programme helped to **reduce financial and family stress**. One local authority lead noted that this is particularly important in more deprived areas as it is these children who could potentially be having less frequent healthy meals, but this provision enables regular meals and contact to be kept with these children over the six week period. Staff from one school spoke of the Food and Fun programme as being a “*lifeline*” for some families during the cost of living crisis. Not only does it provide meals to children, but also provides activities and entertainment that the family then do not have to pay for themselves in the holidays and easing a lot of burden on families. Staff and parents from one school commented that children have been able to fill their holidays with fun activities without putting pressure on families to provide this, saving families money while giving positive experiences to the children. It also reduces some of the stress for families concerned about the cost of feeding children during the holidays. One disabled parent also spoke of how important the programme was in helping to keep costs down during the holidays:

“The cost of living for disabled people is higher than the average persons and to have the free meals and activities provided really helped to keep costs down.”
Parent

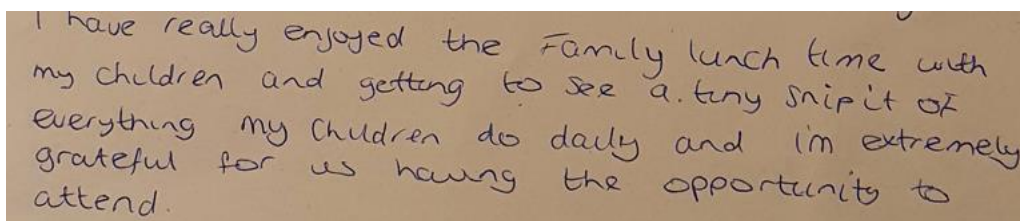
The Food and Fun programme has proved helpful for many families: one parent spoke about how herself and her partner both work full-time, so this has provided them with more flexibility during the holidays, “*If I didn’t have this, I’d be lost.*” This view was shared by many parents spoken to during the school visits. A local authority lead also spoke of how this can be especially important to families living in rural communities, who can often rely on tourism during the summer. Making arrangements for childcare can be a struggle for parents who work in the tourist sector during the summer holidays. This provides some support and flexibility to these families. One parent also said how they feel less guilty knowing their children are doing things in the Food and Fun programme while they are working. Several parents also noted that they found it nice for their older children to attend the programme and for them to be able to spend quality time with the younger children at home.

A dietician used an example of looked after children in the area who have been able to attend the scheme, providing respite to carers. They noted that these children may have needed to go back

into the care system if it were not for the programme. One local authority staff explained that they worked with social services who refer children to the scheme. An example was also shared of a child on the child protection register, who was frequently moved from school to school, which highlighted how the scheme allowed for continuity of contact between the school and that child. Another local authority lead also commented on how beneficial it can be for families supported by social care to have this break during the holidays. It was also felt that for looked after children it can help them to become more embedded in the school.

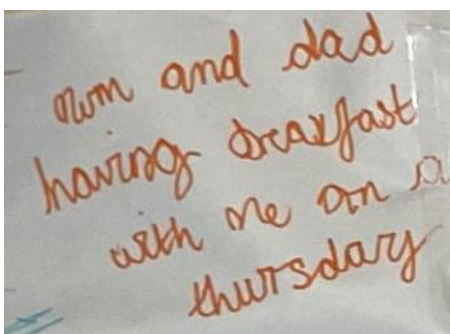
As one dietician pointed out, safeguarding can be a challenge during the holidays, but the Food and Fun programme provides a **safe space to play** for children and keeps them in a familiar and regular routine during the holidays. Parents also appreciated having a safe space for their children to play. It also keeps staff in contact with children during the holidays – this is invaluable. One school staff also felt that providing children the opportunity to come to their school and socialise with classmates, helps to prevent them from being negatively influenced during the holidays, for example interacting with older children in their area.

Evidence collected suggests that the programme has helped with **child connectedness to parents and family**. Several school staff members commented on the impact of seeing families sit down and eat a meal together at the scheme which is something that may not happen very often at home. Parents were also grateful for the opportunity to come and eat a meal with their children and spend time in the school as can be demonstrated by written feedback from a parent below.



I have really enjoyed the Family lunch time with my children and getting to see a tiny snippet of everything my children do daily and I'm extremely grateful for us having the opportunity to attend.

Some children from the school visits also said they liked it when their parents came in for lunch or breakfast. This is demonstrated by some feedback below from children where they were asked as part of the graffiti wall "What did you like?".



mom and dad having breakfast with me on a thursday

Although long term impacts of this years' Food and Fun programme was out of the scope of the evaluation, the evidence demonstrated against the initial change indicator outcomes, and general observations suggest that there is some evidence that the programme contributes to the lasting change indicators. The anecdotal evidence from stakeholders, schools, families and children suggests positive **improvements to mental health and emotional well-being** as a result of

coming to the scheme. There was also some feedback suggesting some evidence of **behavioural improvement in and out of school**. As can be seen in Case Study 1 in Section 3, one parent noticed that their child was more relaxed when they came home from the scheme and were less likely to fight with siblings. Another school also had feedback from parents that their children were coming home better behaved and were not fighting with siblings as much. Several staff members commented on improved behaviour of children taking part in the scheme compared to during term time in school and during one visit, staff spoke of the improvement in behaviour from those who had displayed challenging behaviour during term time.

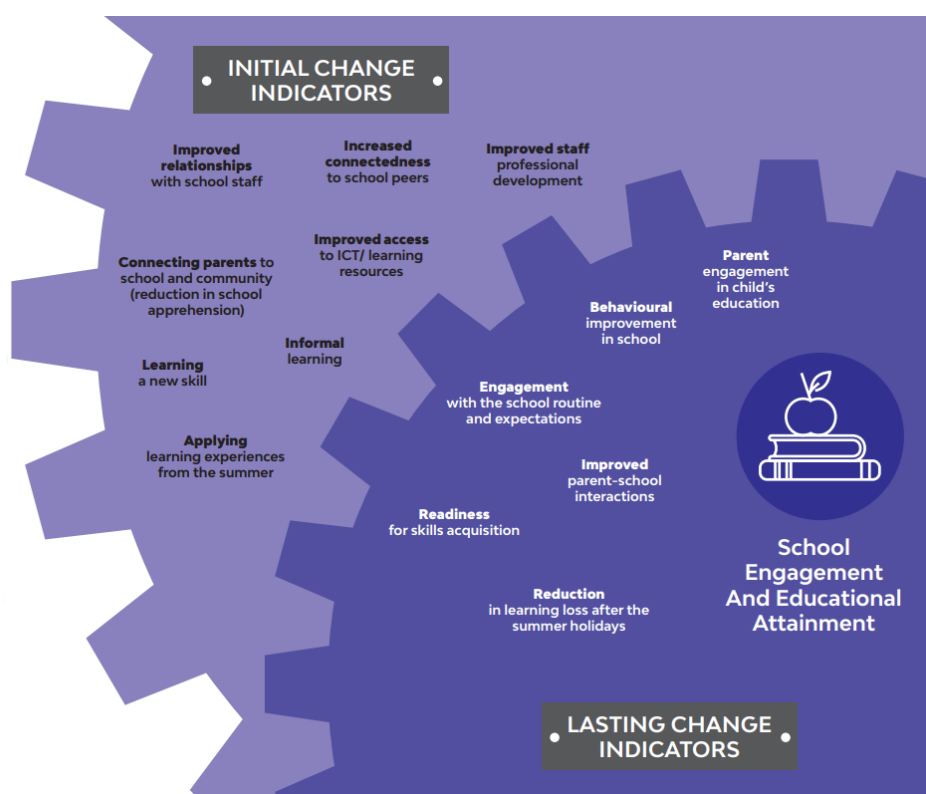
The **self-esteem** lasting change indicator can be linked to evidence collected that some of the children attending the schemes displayed signs of improved confidence, coming out of their shells, and improving their social skills. An observation one dietician made from a visit to one school delivering the programme was that there was one child who never talks in class, but in the smaller group settings this child has changed completely and became **more confident**. Another local authority lead observed a non-verbal child who started talking while attending the scheme. There were also other examples of children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) who were able to join in more than they would in school and gain confidence. Other school staff also commented on how some children have improved their social skills from coming to the scheme. One provider of activities noted that the children were increasing in their confidence as they were delivering the scheme. They were becoming more chatty and happy to talk and enjoying what they were doing.

Though direct evidence has not been collected to suggest **family functioning** has been improved, anecdotal evidence suggest that the Food and Fun programme has helped and provided relief to families. The positive comments from staff, parents and children around parents coming to the school also provide some evidence towards the lasting change indicator of **parent engagement in their child's education**. However, it is important to note that several schools and local authority leads mentioned that parental engagement is low in some areas or schools and this is something they want to work on in future.

To conclude much evidence has been collected for the intended outcome of improved mental health and emotional well-being. Children have had the opportunity to have a positive summer experience, connecting them to friends, the school, their families and the wider community in a safe and familiar space. It has also provided a relief to families in the form of childcare, indirect financial relief, and easing the burden of entertaining children during the holidays. It is important to note that evidence was not found against the initial change indicators of a reduction in depressive symptoms and connecting parents to each other. However, it was observed during school visits that parents attending the lunches were able to interact with each other. Further evidence would need to be collected to demonstrate these indicators.

2.2 School engagement and educational attainment

School engagement and educational attainment is one of the intended outcomes of the Food and Fun programme. The programme logic model explains that this outcome includes the following indicators: improved staff professional development; improved access to ICT/learning resources; informal learning; applying learning experience from the summer; learning a new skill; improved relationships with school staff; connecting parents to school and community (reduction in school apprehension); and increased social connectedness to peers. Feedback collected and observations made during interviews and school visits as part of this evaluation found



evidence to suggest that the programme has supported improvements to school engagement and education attainment. To note, several of the indicators listed above overlap with indicators listed as part of the mental health and emotional well-being outcome in the previous section, however where these indicators are discussed in this section it is based on additional evidence more closely related to school engagement and education attainment.

In discussions with local authority leads, dieticians and other stakeholders, school engagement and education attainment was seen as an important outcome of the Food and Fun programme. One dietician noted that although they feel the main priority of the programme is the nutrition side, and ensuring children get a good meal during the holidays, another priority is to keep children engaged during the holidays, and helping with their academic achievement. It was recognised by many that six weeks is a long time to go without routine, structure and learning for children. The Food and Fun programme bridges this gap and helps to maintain a connection with the school, staff and peers.

Evidence collected for the evaluation suggests that there was some **improved staff professional development** through the Food and Fun programme. Some local authority leads commented on the schemes being good experience for some staff members such as Teaching Assistants. Several schools also offered opportunities for those wanting to become teachers to gain experience by volunteering at the schemes. It also provided an opportunity for some staff who were not senior members of the school to lead and coordinate the project. This offered a learning experience they may not have been able to have if it were not for the programme. Many staff members were also positive about what they had learnt on the nutrition courses. They found the training effective and informative. This knowledge is something they have not only been able to pass on to the children attending the programme, but is knowledge they are able to convey through the whole school year.

One staff member noted that they will try and take forward the behaviours learnt at the scheme themselves, for example taking their food to sit and eat with the children at lunch time.

Evidence collected relating to the indicator of **improved access to ICT/learning resources** as part of the evaluation was low. However, it was observed during school visits that some children were able to use laptops and tablets. Staff were also positive about the learning resources they received from dieticians through the nutrition training. Schools were provided with nutrition packs which they found very useful. These packs were important in creating effective and interactive ways of getting messages about nutrition across to children. One child said that this was her favourite part of the scheme.

“Tuesday is my favourite day to come here because we get to learn about nutrition and food which is fun.” Pupil

Evidence collected relating to the indicator of **informal learning** as part of the evaluation was also low. However, comments from staff, parents and children suggested that the more flexible and informal structure of the scheme allowed children to learn about nutrition in an effective way. During one of the school visits all of the children went out to the field to play, but some children were invited to sit with the teacher on the field and take part in activities about nutrition. Children appeared to be engaging well with the content during this relaxed session outside of the classroom.

Evidence and feedback collected suggests that some have or will be able to **apply learning experiences from the summer**. One stakeholder felt that the programme is important in embedding positive behaviours around food and nutrition beyond the 12-day scheme. The Food and Fun programme offers a great start in the process of this and it is hoped that it will continue through the school year. A staff member also felt that the programme will help the children with the new curriculum in September.

“It has been the best start to the new curriculum and should help them in September.” Staff member

The Food and Fun programme was also thought to be helpful for those in transition year groups. Several of the schools visited as part of the evaluation tried to target year two and year six to take part in the scheme, this was said to be beneficial for the transition period moving up to juniors and comprehensive school. Some school staff who have been involved in the programme said that they have seen previously that children who have come back to school in September have continued to use the knowledge learnt in the summer. It has also given children something to talk about to their peers when they come back to school about what they did during the holidays.

Evidence collected relating to the indicator of **learning a skill** closely relates to the physical activities and improved dietary behaviour intended outcomes. The Food and Fun programme has provided children many opportunities to learn new skills relating to physical activities such as playing a new sport for the first time, learning new sporting skills and taking part in other new

activities such as orienteering. Children have also had the opportunity to learn new skills in the form of knowledge about nutrition which they are able to use to change or better inform their eating habits. One local authority lead felt that an important part of the programme is to improve aspirations of children by giving them the opportunity to learn and try new things.

Evidence suggests that the Food and Fun programme has helped **improved relationships between staff and children**. Staff from one school said that nurturing is important in their school and the programme has allowed the staff the opportunity to build relationships and strengthen bonds with the children. Their emphasis is on well-being, they know that if children have good relationships, then they engage better in the school. It has also given staff the opportunity to identify more vulnerable children, and maintain good relationships with them, helping them become more aware of their needs. One staff member said part of the reason they wanted to be part of the programme was to get to know the children she would be teaching from September as she would be getting a new class. She now feels much better about what to expect in September. Some children also reflected on positive relationships with the staff at the schemes.



Evidence collected as part of the evaluation suggests that the Food and Fun programme has helped with **connecting parents to school and community (reduction in school apprehension)**. The school apprehension aspect of this indicator is especially relevant when thinking about school engagement and educational attainment. One dietician noted that the programme had helped with the school readiness of children, ensuring they are not afraid to go back to school in September. An example was noted of a child saying that they are normally anxious coming back to school in September, but having less of a gap in the holidays had helped with that anxiety. This is something that was echoed by other staff members, parents and children who felt that school anxiety has reduced as a result of the programme. As can be seen in Case Study 3, one parent noted that her daughter can get overwhelmed attending school, but being able to maintain the connection to the school and friends during the holidays has been good for her and should help her return to school in September. One staff member noted an example of a child who hated coming to school but had been enjoying coming to school in the holidays and seemed more positive about returning to school in September. Parents also felt that it was helpful for children to maintain a structure to their days during the holidays to make it easier when going back to school in September. One parent whose son was awaiting an Autism diagnosis felt that the routine and structure of the programme had helped a lot during the holidays. One local authority lead gave an example of a school who had Ukrainian children housed in a hotel near to the school, so the school organised a walking bus during the programme so that these children could join in for six days of the programme. This enabled them to make friends, practice their English and get familiar with the school before starting there in September.

During the school visits, most children spoken to at the schemes said that they were looking forward to coming back to school in September, especially to see their friends again who they had played with during the programme. This also relates to the indicator of **increased social connectedness to peers**, children were excited to return to school as a result of seeing friends at the programme and enjoyed time spent with them, promoting engagement with the return to school in the new term. An example shown in Case Study 5 shows the impact the Food and Fun programme has had on a child with Autism who was previously having problems at school and may have had to go to alternative schooling. However, since coming to Food and Fun they have been able to integrate better with the school and other children, and they no longer are looking at alternative schooling.

Although long term impacts of this year's Food and Fun programme was beyond the scope of the evaluation, the evidence demonstrated against the initial change indicator outcomes, and general observations suggests that there is some evidence that the Food and Fun programme contributes to the lasting change indicators. The anecdotal evidence from stakeholders, schools, families and children suggests that the programme will contribute to **behavioural improvement in school**. Some school staff from one local authority area found that the behaviour of children attending the scheme had slightly improved on returning to school in September because there had not been as big a gap in attending school. Some school staff were also anticipating some differences in those who attended this year's Food and Fun programme who can sometimes be challenging in term time. There is also some feedback suggesting that **parent engagement in their child's education** has improved a result of the Food and Fun programme, this can be seen in parents attending the school and wanting to see their children in a school environment as part of the family lunches. Some feedback suggests that this is an area that needs further improvement.

Comments suggest that there have been improvements to **engagement with the school routine and expectations** with anecdotal evidence that the scheme has helped to keep children in a structure and routine which should help when returning to school in September. There was also suggestion of **improved parent-school interactions** with some examples of parents being able to speak to teachers more than they would have usually, and the opportunity to come to the family lunches. There was no direct evidence that there is a **reduction in learning loss after the summer holidays**, however suggestions that the programme helps school engagement more widely points towards an assumption that this may help to prevent learning loss over the holiday period, though more evidence would need to be collected on this. Finally, **readiness for skills acquisition** can be evidenced by the children learning new skills and adapting to new information given to them (i.e. nutrition information).

To conclude, much evidence has been collected for the intended outcome of improved school engagement and educational attainment. Staff have had the opportunity to improve their professional development through the programme and improve relationships amongst themselves, and with parents and children. Children have had the opportunity to access new learning resources and informal learning, learn new skills and increase connectedness to their peers. There is also evidence to suggest these learning experiences can be applied beyond the programme and that there is a reduction in school apprehension. There is also some anecdotal evidence towards some lasting change outcomes in relation to school engagement and education attainment, however further evidence would need to be collected to draw conclusions.

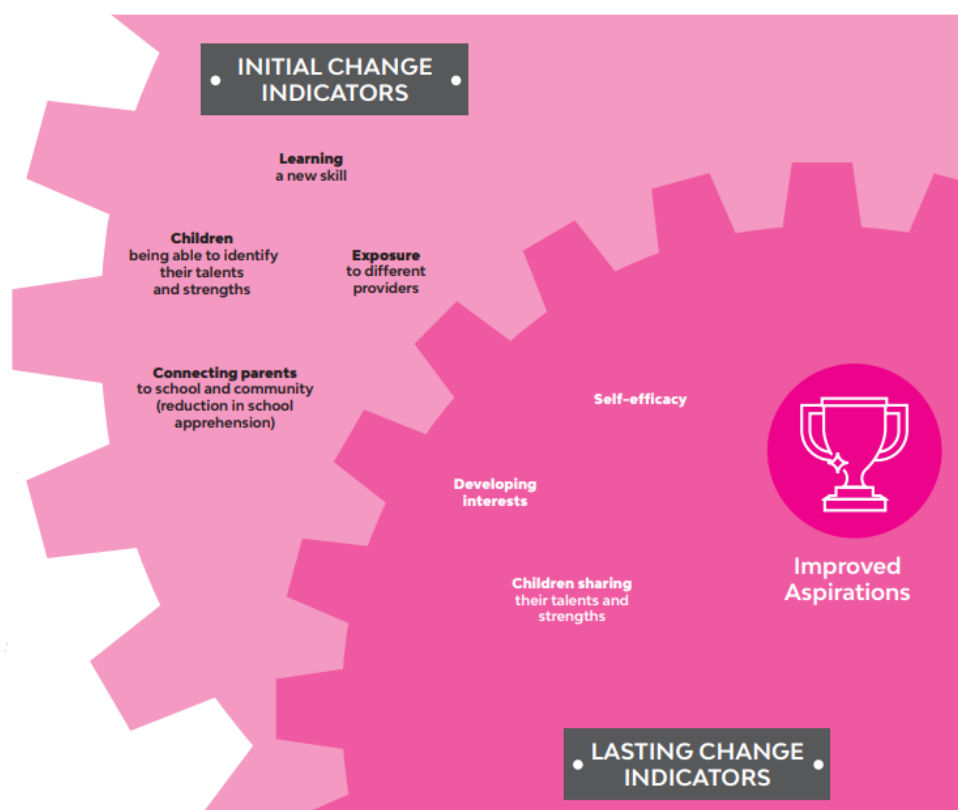
2.3 Improved aspirations

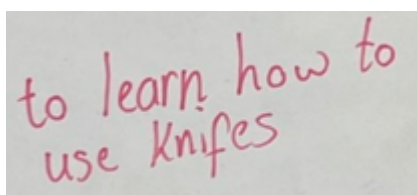
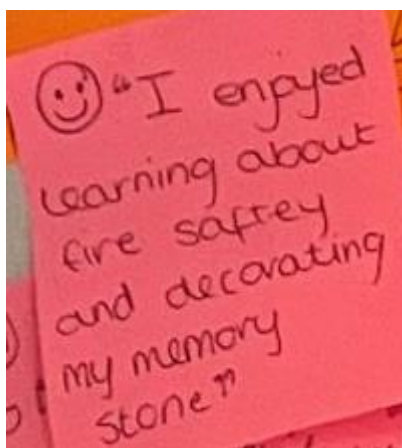
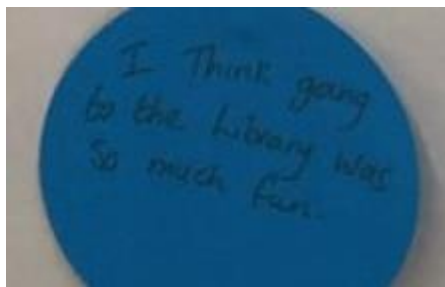
The scheme sets out to improve the aspiration of children. This chapter presents the findings related to the impact of the Food and Fun programme on the aspirations of participating children (and their parents/carers).

Although the evaluation did not include specific data collection, there was some evidence of improved aspirations among participating children, based on anecdotal evidence and observations. The rest of this section discusses the evidence of improved aspirations against the logic

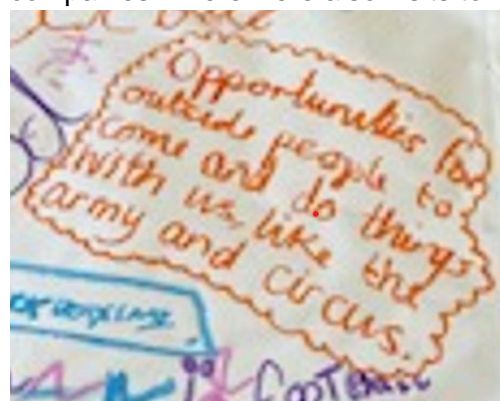
model's initial change indicators of: exposure to different providers; children being able to identify their talents and strengths; learning a new skill; and connecting parents to school and community.

Examples of improved aspirations were provided in the discussions with local authority leads, dietitians and other stakeholders. Through the Food and Fun programme, children have the opportunity to learn a variety of **new skills**. For example, all children attending the programme receive interactive food and nutrition sessions and can use games and resources to learn about healthy eating. During the case study visits several of the children referred to learning about healthy food, and comments relating to trying new food was a key part of that written on the graffiti walls. The children also referred to trying new sports and activities and trying and improving different crafts (for example painting, candle-making, papier mâché). The case study visits included observations about the development of soft skills such as communication and social skills. Coordinators noted that these skills help children identify their talents and strengths, which in turn can boost their confidence.





Several external providers were invited into schools to provide sports-related activities. Local authority leisure departments were one of the main providers, and in some areas there was input from the Urdd, local sports clubs, Royal Navy and private companies. There were also visits to some groups from the police and fire service. Exposure to different activity providers can benefit children in many ways. Some local authorities observed that there was increased take-up local sport e.g. football teams, although they were unable to provide data. Exposure to different activity providers can broaden children's horizons and help them discover new interests that their parents wouldn't have otherwise be able to afford according to some local authority staff interviewed.



Graffiti wall comment

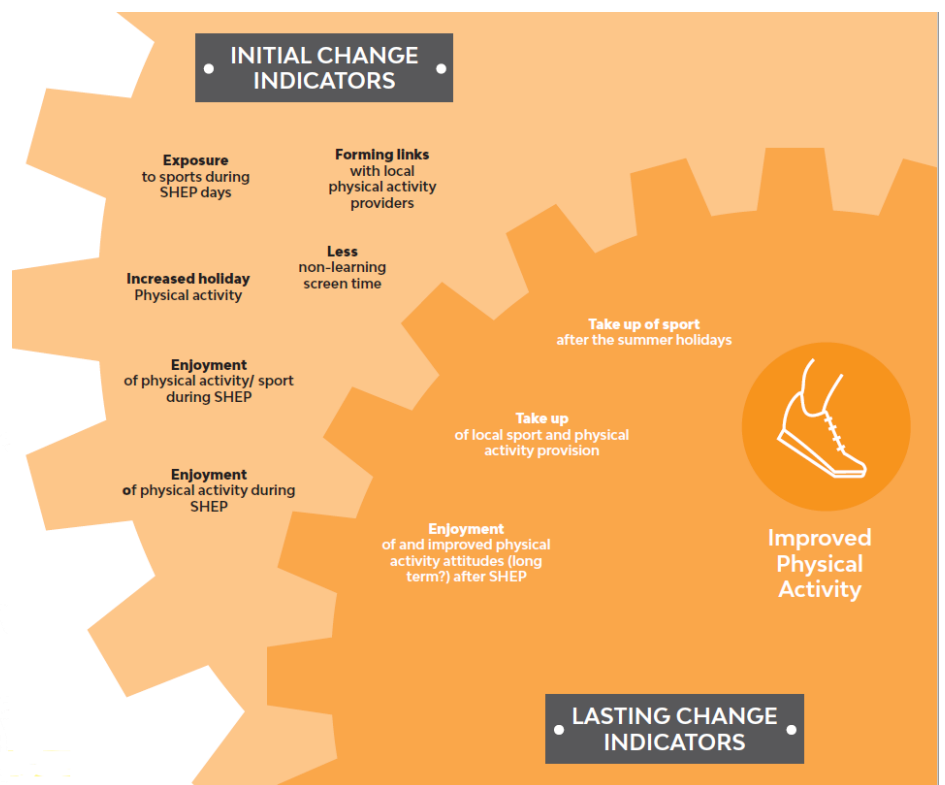
Stakeholders, school staff and parents themselves shared examples of how the programme **connected parents to the school** and community. The school invited parents to visit the scheme once a week **to share a meal** with their children. This helped to build a sense of community and connection between parents and children, and also provided an opportunity for parents to see what their children were eating and learning about nutrition, to see what they were learning but also to become more familiar with the staff, other children and the actual school site. One coordinator explained that, for **some parents who have had negative school experiences themselves**, visiting the school site can be daunting. As a result, the informal visit which centred around sharing a meal was an effective way to connect with these parents.

To further strengthen the links between the school and community, some local authorities and school coordinators interviewed as part of the case studies explained that there was a degree of **targeting certain children** in some schools, with the school staff making sure that so they make sure that those parents are asked or that the child is at the top of the list because they knew that they would benefit because of their home background.

The Food and Fun coordinators reported that they saw children become **more willing to participate in group activities**, such as games and crafts as the two weeks of their participation in the programme progressed. Most parents interviewed reported that their children had been willing to try new foods. This observation of the children becoming more engaged and enthusiastic about trying new food and new activities could be viewed as developing self-efficacy, although no data was collected against this potential indicator.

2.4 Improved physical activity

Improved physical activity is one of the intended outcomes of the Food and Fun programme. The programme logic model explains that this outcome includes the following indicators: exposure to sports during Food and Fun days; forming links with local physical activity providers; less non-learning screen time; increased holiday physical activity; and enjoyment of physical activity during the programme. Feedback collected and observations made during interviews and school visits as part of this evaluation found evidence to suggest that the Food and Fun programme has supported improved physical activity for many children attending.



Physical activities were a key part of the Food and Fun programme and featured heavily in schools' timetable of activities. During one school visit, a staff member explained that although their starting point was to aim to provide at least one hour of physical activity per day, some days they did a considerable amount more than this. This was supported during consultations with the local authority lead. One local authority lead described how all the days they had visited with their schools mostly consisted of some form of physical exercise and the only time children were not taking part in these activities was when they were sitting down to eat food. For example, at one school session visited, children and staff went on their daily mile walk followed by an hour of tennis, dodgeball, badminton and then riding on scooters. Furthermore, all case studies presented in Section 3, illustrate the significant amount of physical activity children took part in during Food and Fun programme sessions.

The **wide range of opportunities for children to take part in physical activities**, has led to some children, who ordinarily would be less physically active, to be more active. For example, one

local authority lead explained how one pupil, who was born with a visual impairment, was initially reluctant to take part in activities. Then towards the end of the Food and Fun programme, following exposure to many physical activities and encouragement from staff to take part, the pupil was more likely to join in.

“There were some children who were reluctant to try the foods and join in on the fitness side initially – but they are now joining in and loving it.” **Staff member**

During school visits, staff also reflected on how the activities they delivered have been successful in **engaging less sport-orientated children in physical activity**. Furthermore, some children said they did not think they would like certain activities, but have found some of the sports and games “*really fun*”. This shows that exposure to physical activities during the programme has changed some children’s perceptions of these activities, suggesting that they might be more likely to take part in these activities in the future.

Due to **access to facilities and equipment**, some schools were in a better position to offer certain physical activities than others. One local authority lead described how it tended to be easier for schools that have a big/bigger sports hall to facilitate a wide range of physical sports activities. Whereas other schools lacking these facilities may rely on dry weather to deliver certain sports activities outside or adapt their activity so it is suitable for them to do inside. Therefore, this local authority lead noted that “*it’s different for each school, but they do get a lot of activities done.*”

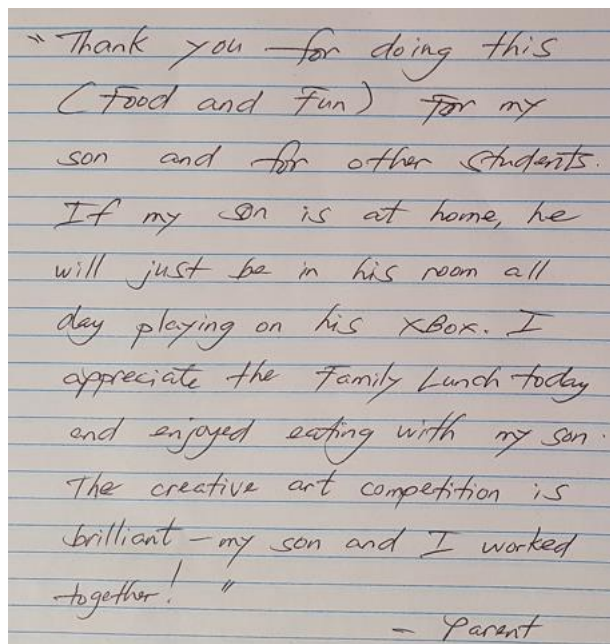
During one school visit, staff explained that they had chosen mostly local or on-site activities. For example, the school had bikes on-site so they had bike riding sessions – children consulted noted “[We’ve] been doing lots of cycling and walking [in the local area]”. This school also took their children to a nearby outdoor pursuit centre where took part in high ropes, orienteering, raft building and other team building exercises. Another school was able to offer children the opportunity to participate in water sports, such as kayaking and rowing. Staff acknowledged that this is an instance of where the Food and Fun programme can provide children with the **chance to do physical activities that they may not have been able to do otherwise** as it can be unaffordable for parents.

Across the schools visited, in some cases physical activities were delivered by school staff, but in many cases an **external organisation/individual** was engaged to deliver these activities. Inviting local physical activity providers to deliver not only offers extra support to school staff through helping to ensure the activities are expertly facilitated, but it is also advantageous in that it helps **schools form links with local physical activity providers**. Although some schools had existing connections with some local providers, for many others it was the first time the school had engaged with local providers. Establishing these links creates further opportunities for these providers to deliver more sessions in the schools in the future (e.g. during term time). This offers the potential for schools to present children with **more opportunities to take part in physical activities**. However, whilst the evaluation found that links with local physical activity providers were developed during the programme, longer term impacts of these partnerships on children improved physical activity was outside the scope of the evaluation.

Evidence collected for the evaluation suggests that the Food and Fun programme helped to **reduce the children' exposure to non-learning screen time** during the summer holidays. Specific comments from parents suggested that their children may have spent a considerable amount of time using electronic devices and "staring at a screen" if they were at home during the summer holidays. For these parents, the programme had helped to reduce the amount of screen time their children were exposed to through offering a wide range of activities, many of which ensured children were physically active.

"I'd rather my child was here than spending too much time on electronic devices." Parent

"It's so good having the children off the screens as well while they are here. The activities are so varied as well, which is good." Parent



"Thank you for doing this (Food and Fun) for my son and for other students. If my son is at home, he will just be in his room all day playing on his Xbox. I appreciate the Family Lunch today and enjoyed eating with my son. The creative art competition is brilliant - my son and I worked together!"
- Parent

In addition to reducing children' exposure to non-learning screen time, evidence collected for the evaluation indicates that the Food and Fun programme helped to **increase the amount of physical activity children take part in during the school holidays**. For one parent, the amount of physical activity that was planned for the programme was the main motivation for registering their child to attend. This parent was conscious that their child normally enjoys activities that "do not require much movement and are very still activities", such as colouring. They therefore explained that they saw the programme as a "brilliant opportunity to get my daughter out of the house and get moving" and was further pleased to learn that their daughter had enjoyed being active as they felt this was "good for her mindset".

Other parents reiterated how they appreciated the level of physical activity their children were exposed to through the Food and Fun programme because it meant they would be **more physically active than they might otherwise be during the school holidays**. One parent explained how they felt this was particularly beneficial for their child, who is "very active" and how they would normally find it difficult to tire them out. However, this parent reflected that their child had participated in all the sports activities during the programme and was tired when he came home. For another parent, they thought the physical activity delivered during the programme was particularly important for children who may not be likely to be very physically active over the summer holidays. This was echoed by one local authority lead consulted who stated that "lots of the kids would be sitting at home not being active otherwise."

"It is good to have these activities during the holidays. It has stopped the children being lazy in the holidays." Parent

Some sports clubs are only facilitated during term time. Therefore, the Food and Fun programme was seen by some parents as a **good substitute for term time only sports clubs** for their children. These parents would worry that their children would not be as physically active during the summer holidays if it was not for the opportunities available through the programme.

“I was happy to see that there was such a focus on physical activities as other clubs that [child] would normally participate in, do not run over the school holidays.” Parent

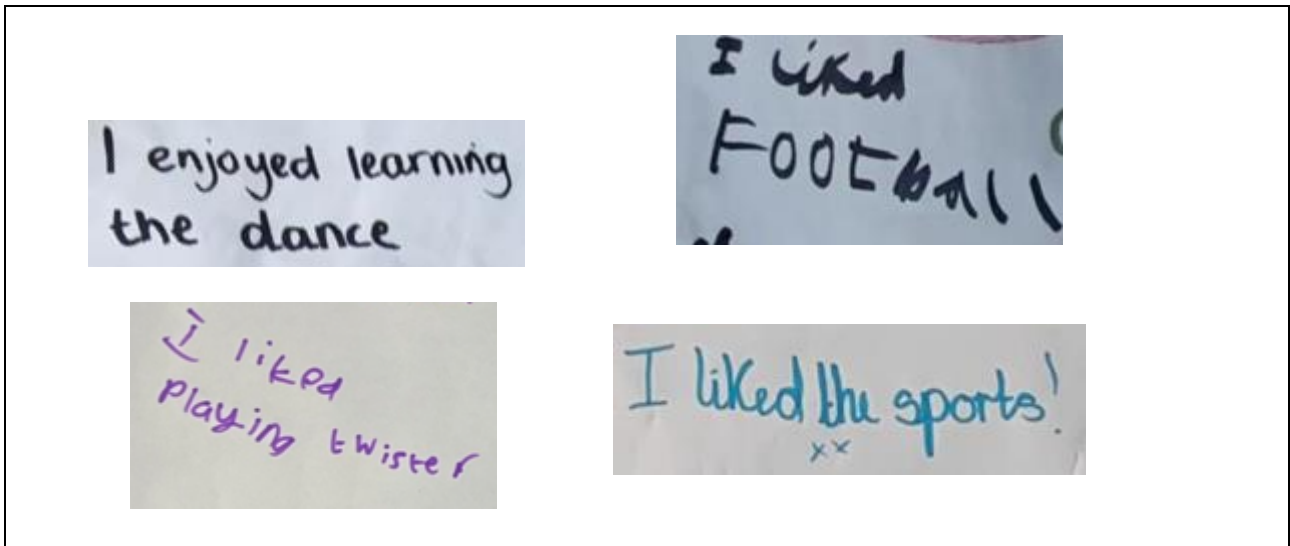
In addition to increasing holiday physical activity, the Food and Fun programme delivered more, and a **wider variety of physical activities** to children than they would have been exposed to during term time. This was acknowledged by at least one parent consulted who noted that the programme provided their children with the opportunity to take part in physical activities that they would not normally be able to during term time.

“It’s been good that children have been out for walks and played in the park, which they wouldn’t get much chance to do during school time. It’s been nice for them to actually get out and do stuff like that.” Parent

Many of the physical activities delivered appeared to be popular with the children. In some schools, staff acknowledged that children seemed to have **enjoyed the sports activities** the most. This was further supported by children themselves who, when asked what they had enjoyed the most, commented they had enjoyed particular sports. For example, in one school, karate and gymnastics were favourites amongst many children and in another school, football and dodgeball were favourites for some children. At one school visit, it was observed that children particularly enjoyed walking to, and playing in the park and were excited to be walking through the woods on the way.

Similarly, feedback children provided via the graffiti walls suggested that many had enjoyed the physical activities the most. A collection of examples is presented below:





Graffiti wall comments

Feedback from children was echoed by several parents consulted who noted that their children had enjoyed the various sports activities and had been “*really excited*” to attend the Food and Fun programme because of the sports activities.

Although most children appeared to enjoy the physical activities, a few children said they **did not like playing certain sports** or did not enjoy some of the physical activities because they found them tiring or they did not like being outside for these activities.

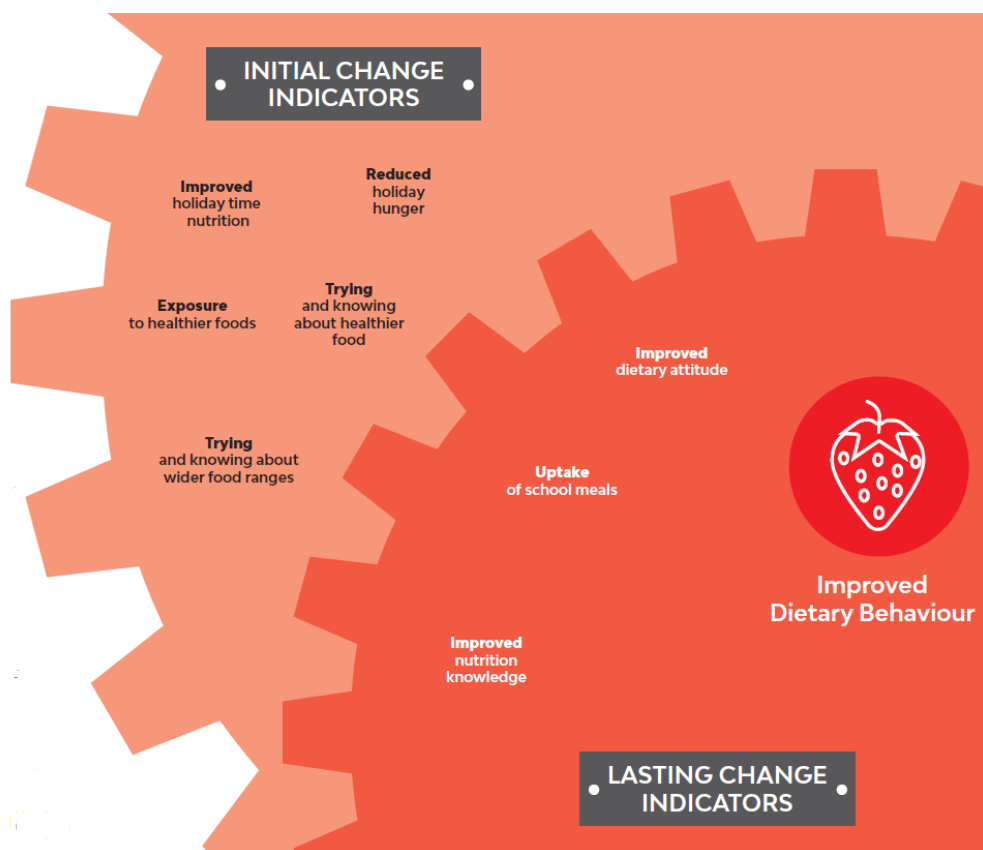
Although some children had participated in some of the sports delivered previously, often **children had never tried some of the sports**. This indicates that the Food and Fun programme was successful in exposing children to new sports, as well as sports they may have been more familiar with. As one member of staff explained, it “*has given [children] the opportunity to try different sports they may not have otherwise experienced.*”

Although the evaluation did not cover the long-term effects of this year's Food and Fun programme, there are anecdotal reports indicating that some children may continue participating in sports or physical activities that they were introduced to during the programme, activities they may not have otherwise taken part in. For example, one local authority lead commented how they were aware that following attendance in previous years, **some children went on to participate in certain sports** they had tried there for the first time.

In conclusion, the evaluation findings indicate that the Food and Fun programme has helped to improve physical activity for children during the school holidays. Evidence collected suggests that children had a high level of exposure to sports activities during Food and Fun, which increased children's participation in physical activity during the school holidays. Furthermore, it reduced children's non-learning screen time and, in some cases, introduced children to new sports they had never tried before. In most cases, children enjoyed the sports activities and often these were their favourite activities.

2.5 Improved dietary behaviour

Improved dietary behaviour is one of the intended outcomes of the Food and Fun programme. The programme logic model explains that this outcome includes the following indicators: improved holiday time nutrition; reduced holiday hunger; exposure to healthier foods; trying and knowing about healthier food; and trying and knowing about wider food ranges. Feedback collected and observations made during interviews and school visits as part of this evaluation found evidence to suggest that the Food and Fun programme has resulted in some improved dietary behaviours for children attending.



Anecdotal evidence received from consultations with local authority leads indicated that the programme helps to **reduce holiday hunger**. It was acknowledged that for some children, they would not have much food that day if they had not attended the programme because it would not be as readily available to them at home. Furthermore, for some children, the meal they received each day during the programme may have been the only meal they would eat that day.

“For some of the kids, this is the only meal they’re having in the day which in turn makes them not fussy so they clear the plate.” **Local authority lead**

“So I think that’s the beneficial side of it – the food intake from the kids, because some of them are going up for foods [during Food and Fun] because they’re just not getting the food at home.” **Local authority lead**

One local authority lead explained that some families may struggle to afford healthy foods. For these families, the Food and Fun programme has a considerable impact on ensuring children have a **nutritional meal during the school holidays**.

“It comes down to the cost of living – healthy foods are not always financially accessible. Families can’t control this. But at least for 3 weeks during the holiday they’re having a nutritional meal.” **Local authority lead**

To help **overcome cost of living** issues, there were examples of the programme exposing children and parents to relatively affordable healthy foods and ideas of meals that could be cooked at home. For instance, many of the schools visited had delivered cooking sessions with the children. Some of the meals cooked included stir fry (see Case Study 4) and pizza (a favourite for many children in several schools). In some schools, children were provided with packs containing ingredients to take home to make a meal. This again sought to overcome cost of living issues and reduce holiday hunger.

From the case study visits, it was evident that children were **exposed to and tried new foods**. One member of staff explained how they encouraged children who were less keen to try certain foods to just put it on their lip first. In some cases, this then successfully resulted in children tasting foods they might have previously been reluctant to try. Furthermore, the opportunity to taste a wide range of foods meant that children were able to try foods they may not have been introduced to otherwise.

“Some of the children had never tried houmous before and it was a really fun experience getting them to try it for the first time, a food they would never normally have tried.” **Staff member**

The food tasting sessions appear to have had a particularly positive **impact on children who are fussy with food**. Staff and dieticians consulted reported on how these food tasting sessions had successfully encouraged ‘fussy eaters’ to try foods they would not have been expected to.

“We have so many positive stories about kids that are very fussy eaters coming to Food and Fun. And the taste test is a great example where normally they wouldn’t try anything and suddenly, they’ve eaten these fruit and vegetables or even if they’ve just licked it and spat it out.” **Dietician**

Parents consulted appreciated the new foods their children had been exposed to, with some noting that they had been **more willing to try certain foods** during the programme than they would ordinarily have been at home. For example, one parent explained how their child is fussy and they did not think would be interested in trying certain foods, but they did.

“She seems more willing to do stuff in this environment than she is with us...She hasn’t liked much, but she’s tried it, which she won’t do with us. And that’s all we ever wanted her to do.” **Parent**

Several staff members reflected on how children trying foods they may not be keen to do so at home was possibly because of the programme environment, in particular being with their peers: *“seeing their peers try different foods makes them more likely to want to try it too.”*

“This programme gets the kids active and well fed. There were some children who wouldn’t try some foods but they are eating them more now. Some have found it fun to have these experiences together – they see their friends trying things and it makes them want to try it. Even if they are all pulling faces and don’t like what they are trying – it all adds to the fun and experience of it.” **Staff member**

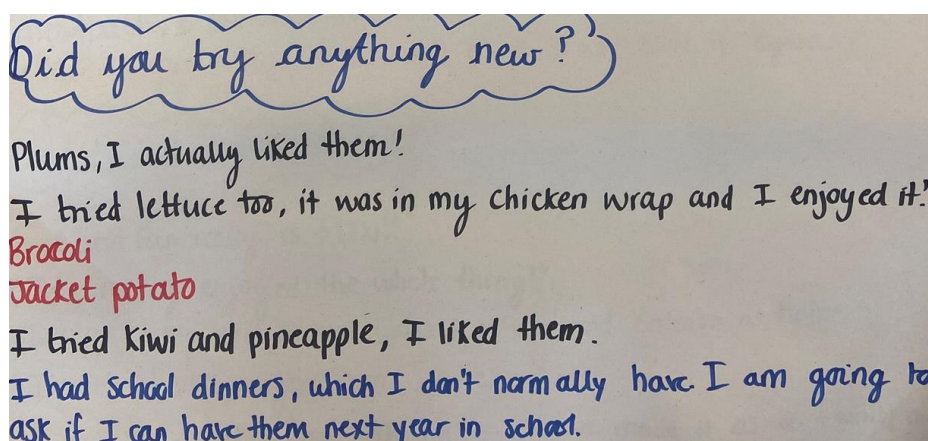
Parents concurred with this notion – one parent explained how their child, who experienced difficulties with textures, including food textures, has benefited from seeing their peers eating certain foods as it helped reassure them that the foods are ok to try.

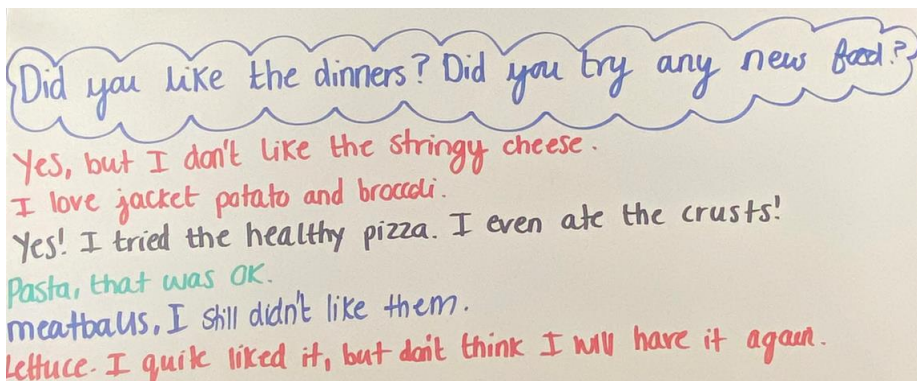
For some parents consulted, they had noticed their children have been more willing to try a wider range of food at home since attending the Food and Fun programme. This improved willingness to try foods has led to some of these children liking, and therefore **eating a greater variety of foods at home**.

“I think it’s absolutely brilliant. The stuff they come home with, the food – stuff that we’ve tried with [daughter] before that she’s refused to taste. Now she’s coming home saying ‘Mum I love hummus!’ It has been really good.” **Parent**

“The children have really enjoyed it. It has even opened up their pallet with trying different foods which is brilliant.” **Parent**

Almost all children consulted at each of the schools visited said they had **tried new foods**. Most said they liked the new foods they had tried, and some said they did not like some of the foods. One example can be seen in Case Study 1 where one pupil proudly announced, *“I had a yoghurt for the first time, and I opened it myself.”* The feedback provided by children on the graffiti walls also suggested that many had enjoyed trying new foods.





Graffiti wall comments

Whilst children were introduced to a wide range of new foods, this specifically included encouraging them to **try healthier foods**. In doing so, children had the opportunity to try fruits and/or vegetables that they would not normally. This included, for example, honeydew melon, dragon fruit (see Case Study 1) and gooseberries (see Case Study 7). Pupils tended to like some of the fruits/vegetables and not others. However, as it appeared that some children did not know many fruits and vegetables prior to the programme, staff felt these food tasting sessions were successful in **raising children's awareness of these healthier foods**, regardless of how much of them they liked. Moreover, feedback from children via the graffiti walls suggests that children enjoyed trying new fruits and/or vegetables:

Fruit tasting
because I tried
new yummy
fruits for the
first time

I have tried
19 different
fruit & veg!

"I liked doing the fruit
tasting"

Graffiti wall comments

In discussions with local authority leads, dieticians and other stakeholders, improving children's nutritional knowledge and dietary behaviour was seen as a key outcome for the Food and Fun programme.

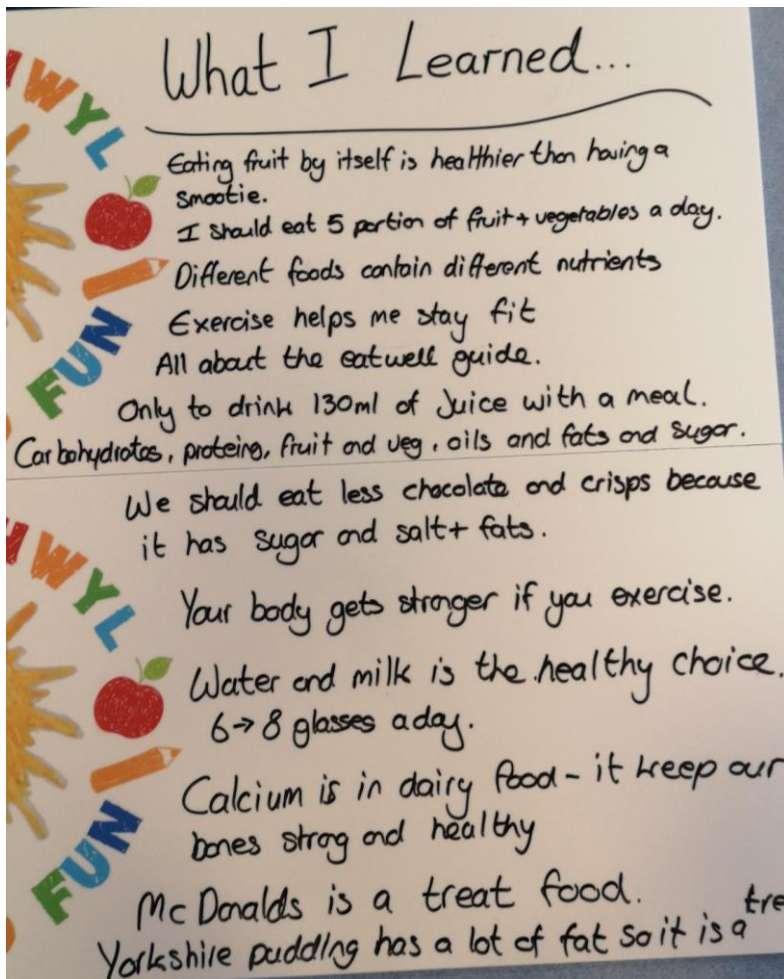
"For me, I'd like it to be the main focus because it might help with the obesity problem. If you can get the message to kids, then hopefully it'll filter through as they grow up." **Dietician**

To address the outcome of improving nutritional knowledge and dietary behaviour, the local health board provided schools with a **pack of nutrition activities** for staff to deliver during the Food and Fun programme. Many of the activities contained within the packs were games related to nutrition and healthy eating for the children to play whilst they learn. As one dietician explained: *"If the activities are delivered in a fun way, they might not realise it's learning."*

Evidence collected for the evaluation suggested that the **nutrition sessions**, which aimed to deliver fun activities and increase children knowledge about nutrition and healthy eating, had been well received by most children. Staff were of the view that nutrition sessions were most successful due to the visuals and the interactive methods used to engage with their children. Consequently, staff explained that most children were receptive to the messages being delivered about healthy foods.

“The nutrition sessions are very informative and beneficial to the children to learn these surprising facts which stick with them.” **Staff member**

Furthermore, some children consulted during case study visits said they “loved” the nutrition sessions and feedback provided via graffiti walls suggests that children had **improved nutrition knowledge** as a result of these sessions.



Graffiti wall comments

The observations of many parents consulted confirmed that their children understood and remembered key messages from the nutrition sessions and that this was starting to have an impact on their dietary behaviours.

“They have also demonstrated that they are absorbing the nutrition knowledge and picking up the messages – they are telling me facts that they have learned and making different choices when it comes to food”. **Parent**

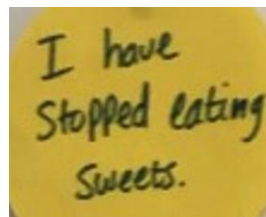
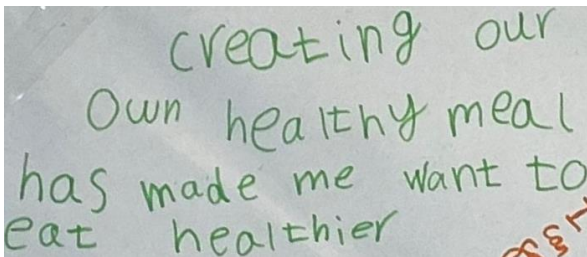
“They are trying more healthy foods and being more conscious when it comes to things like sweets, telling me that they shouldn’t eat certain things, it makes them think twice.” **Parent**

Changes in children’s dietary behaviours was acknowledged by staff and parents. One member of staff who said they had noticed small changes in the dietary behaviour of children, explained that children seemed less likely to eat sweets following a session focused on improving children’s awareness of the amount of sugar in certain foods.

“At the start of the scheme they were bringing sweets every day but they’re not doing that anymore. Maybe this is because of the session I delivered on sugar, where they were all surprised by how much sugar was in certain foods.” **Staff member**

This change in dietary behaviour was also acknowledged by parents. For example, a few parents consulted said they had noticed their children eating more healthily since attending the programme, with some particularly eating more fruit and vegetables. Furthermore, one parent described how their child has come home from Food and Fun and prepared healthy meals for themselves and the rest of the family.

Similarly, feedback children provided via the graffiti walls suggested that some had improved dietary attitudes and/or behaviours as a result of the Food and Fun programme:



Graffiti wall comments

In conclusion, the evaluation findings indicate that the Food and Fun programme has been particularly successful in exposing children to a wide variety of healthy foods. In doing so, children had the opportunity to try foods they would not have done so otherwise and received encouragement to do so, which has been particularly beneficial for those that would normally be fussier with food. Through the nutrition sessions, key messages relating to nutrition and healthy eating were delivered to children, who demonstrated that they have absorbed and retained them. Furthermore, in some cases this had led to positive changes in children’s dietary behaviours.

2.6 Other impacts

This section outlines several impacts that are not covered under the five intended outcomes in the sections above. Evidence set out below shows that the outcomes of the Food and Fun programme for schools and families extend beyond the intended outcomes, further demonstrating the positive impact the programme has had, and can have in future.

The Food and Fun programme appeared to impact children who were not direct recipients of the scheme in some schools. For example, in several schools older children or young adults volunteered to help during the programme. This was reported to have worked well and enabled these older children/young adults to gain experience and independence, as well as providing them with volunteering hours for Duke of Edinburgh or any other scheme they were involved in. A few parents also noted that they were able to bring their younger child, not yet school age, into school for Food and Fun family mealtimes, which was really beneficial in preparing their child to start school in September.

As can be seen in Case Study 1, some staff noted that the Food and Fun programme also had an impact on their own mental health. They felt it has been helpful to spend time with colleagues and children during the holidays. One staff member felt that they would have been bored during the six weeks if it were not for the Food and Fun programme. A further staff member also noted that she had lost weight herself through trying healthy foods. Several parents spoken to at the school visits also noted that they had learnt more about nutrition through their children and had started to change some of their eating habits as a result.

“If I was just at home, I wouldn’t have tried most of these healthy foods.” **Staff member**

A further benefit reported by some school staff was how they had been able to bring their own children to the scheme. If they had not been able to do this then they would have been unlikely to have been able to sign up to work in the programme. These staff reported that this meant they could earn extra money during the holidays and their children also had fun attending.

As is touched upon in section 2.3, some children were reported to have benefitted in terms of improved school engagement. Local authorities, staff, stakeholders and dieticians reported that the programme allowed staff members to keep in touch with more vulnerable children over the school holidays. Some parents and carers provided examples of their child appreciating being in a smaller group during the scheme and engaging better with staff as a result of this. It was widely recognised by staff that it can be a concern that children who may be classed as vulnerable could go “*off the radar*” for six weeks. It appears that the Food and Fun programme helped address some of these issues and improved engagement with some children.

“We also are aware that some of the children here are on the child protection register, being able to come to this provision ensures they get good meals and socialisation and fun with their friends. It means they can be kept an eye on during the holidays as 6 weeks is a long time to lose contact with these children”.

Staff member

There has also been a benefit to providers and organisations commissioned by the schools to deliver activities or provide food services. Some of these organisations considered there to be potential benefits to them in terms of increased interest, engagement and take-up of their activities or services by schools and families they'd worked with. For example, one provider of an orienteering session felt it was good to give children the opportunity to try new activities which may lead to an interest in joining their club in future. One food servicing company who had delivered a workshop at one school felt it helped them promote their company's values by teaching children about local sustainability when it comes to food. They also felt it provided an opportunity to build up client relationships by providing the schools with a free service for the holidays, with the hope that it raises schools and families' awareness of what is available locally which could lead to further business in the future. One head teacher explained that their school posted updates about the Food and Fun programme on social media which could potentially help raise awareness of providers or companies that they use over the sessions.

“Doing these kinds of workshops allows schools to put a face to the name and helps to establish good relationships with their clients.” **Food servicing client**

In conclusion, the Food and Fun programme had a variety of positive impacts beyond the intended outcomes, including positive impacts on volunteers, school staff, and local providers. Overall, the Food and Fun programme demonstrated a wide range of positive impacts on individuals and the community.

3. Case studies

This section presents the case studies developed from the school visits conducted for the evaluation. These case studies summarise the qualitative evidence collected from discussions with various individuals during the school visits, including staff, parents and children. Below is summary of these case studies.

Case study 1: This was the first year this school had participated in the Food and Fun programme. They organised a range of different activities for the sessions including nutrition sessions, cooking and food tasting sessions, karate, gymnastics and walks in the park. Staff were positive about the nutrition activities and packs provided to them and found that the children had enjoyed the planned activities. Impacts noted by staff, parents and children included new friendships being made by children, new food being tried, better behaviour after taking part and improvements to some staff members' mental health and dietary behaviour.

Case study 2: This school organised a range of different activities including fencing, cheerleading, table tennis, nutrition activities, and activities organised by external organisations such as the army. Staff were positive about the organisation of the programme this year and the activities that children could take part in. The children were also positive and enjoyed the sessions and trying new foods. Impacts noted by staff, parents and children included improved nutritional knowledge and behaviour, increased confidence, being able to stay in touch with vulnerable children over the holidays, and helping families offer activities to their children.

Case study 3: This school organised a range of different activities including rounders, tennis, crafts, drama games, nutrition activities and orienteering. Staff felt the Food and Fun programme had gone well and commented on children being able to spend time with their friends during the holidays. Impacts noted by staff, parents and children included reducing the pressure on families to provide activities and entertainment during the holidays, helping children with social skills and improvements to children's dietary behaviours.

Case study 4: This was a secondary school where year seven and eight children were offered to take part in the programme. The school organised a range of different activities including nutrition activities, football, dodgeball, squash, family lunches, photography, drama and survival training. Staff were positive about the fact students could choose the sports they took part in and that parents were invited to lunch once a week. Staff felt that the most successful activities were those that were interactive. Impacts noted by staff, parents and students included an improvement to student behaviour, students coming out of their shell and improvement to staff mental health.

Case study 5: This school prioritised year two and year six children taking part in the programme. The school organised a range of different activities including football, swing ball, board games, crafts, nutrition activities, and visits to the local hospice. Staff and parents felt the Food and Fun programme had been a good opportunity for children to have continued contact over the holidays, learn new things and try new foods. The children enjoyed coming to the scheme, seeing their friends and trying new things. Impacts noted by staff, parents and children included families having the opportunity to eat a meal together, helping with the transition for these year groups to juniors and comprehensive school, reducing school anxiety, making new friends and having more knowledge about nutrition.

Case study 6: The Food and Fun programme had been run in this primary school for several years by the same coordinator. Although the team was experienced in running the programme, they found that preparing for it requires a significant time investment in the weeks leading up to the school summer break. They planned a range of activities and were able to use an outside garden

space. During the case study visit a Police Community Support Officer visited as they had done several mornings, and the parents were invited in to share a meal during the day.

Case study 7: The scheme was being run for children in years two to five in this school. A variety of activities were being run including dance, music and dental hygiene sessions. Staff, parents and children had positive views on the scheme and activities. All children who applied had been able to secure places on the programme. Parents were not invited to attend sessions because staff were worried that some children could become upset if their parents chose not to attend, but activity packs were provided for home use instead. Parents commented on the financial savings of not paying for activities for their child and felt the scheme had an impact on their child's social skills and a few reported impacts on healthy eating.

Case study 8: This school was delivering the programme for the first time, having seen a significant increase in the number of learners eligible for free school meals in recent years. Places were oversubscribed, and some children had been placed on a waiting list for places. Children, staff and parents had positive views on the programme, reporting benefits in terms of children's confidence and engagement in activities such as cycling and outdoor pursuits. Staff felt children had benefitted from being in smaller groups than those they would typically be in when attending school. Parents interviewed felt their children's mental health and well-being had benefitted from taking part in activities which they themselves could not have provided.

School Case Study 1

Background

It's the first year the school has participated. Seven members of staff delivered the scheme. 36 children have attended over the 12 days, with an average of 20-25 children per day, ranging in age from five to 10 years old.

A variety of activities were delivered including:

- Nutrition activities – packs were provided to staff by the health board – staff thought the packs were great.
- Cooking and food tasting sessions.
- Physical activities with external organisations (e.g., karate, gymnastics).
- Mornings start with breakfast, followed by a walk in the local park.



“The training was excellent. Probably one of the best training I’ve been on, and I go on a lot of training.” [Staff]

Views on Food and Fun

Staff found the training on how to deliver the nutrition activities very good and thought the nutrition packs were “*amazing*” and “*very organised*”. One member of staff noted “*Everything you could possibly want was in the packs.*”. Staff noted that it would have taken them a long time to put the packs together themselves, time which they wouldn’t have had during the school day and so they would have had to do it after school.

Staff thought the planned activities have been fun for the children, particularly the sports activities delivered by external organisations. Staff also enjoyed the 12 days, but found it tiring towards the end.

Parents thought it’s good that children have been out for walks and played in the park, which they wouldn’t get much chance to do during school time.

“She hasn’t liked much [of the food], but she’s tried it, which she won’t do with us. And that’s all we ever wanted her to do.” [Parent]

“My two boys have really loved it. And I’ve loved it. It’s given me time at home with my youngest and a bit of a break.” [Parent]

Impact of Food and Fun

Staff felt children have enjoyed the scheme. It helped them build friendship with children in different year groups, which has been beneficial particularly after Covid where children weren’t allowed to mix year groups.

Children have tried foods they wouldn’t normally e.g. honeydew melon and dragon fruit. “*I had a yoghurt for the first time, and I opened it myself.*”

Parents reflected on how their children have been more willing to try different foods at home that they didn’t want to try before and that the physical activities have had a positive impact on their child(ren).

One parent had noticed that their child is more relaxed when they come home from Food and Fun and less likely to fight with siblings.

Staff noted an impact on their own mental health - good to spend time with colleagues and children, particular children in different classes that they wouldn’t normally see. One member of staff noted that she had lost weight. “*If I was just at home, I wouldn’t have tried most of these healthy foods.*”



“When they are home, they’ve been less fussy because they’ve had nice things to do [at Food and Fun].” [Parent]


“I think it’s absolutely brilliant. The stuff they come home with, the food – stuff that we’ve tried with [daughter] before that she’s refused to taste. Now she’s coming home saying ‘Mum I love hummus!’ It has been really good.” [Parent]


School Case Study 2


Background

All families of children aged seven to 10 were offered the opportunity to take part this year. Only the children able to take part for the full 12 days were selected. Selection was then done on a first come first serve basis, however more vulnerable children were seen as a priority.

A variety of activities have been delivered including:

 Rotation of physical activities – fencing, cheerleading, table tennis, cricket, gymnastics, dancing.

 Nutrition activities – packs were provided to staff by the health board.

 External organisations delivered sessions – e.g. council multi-sports, the army.

“This programme gets the kids active and well fed. There were some children who wouldn’t try some foods but they are eating them more now.” [Staff]

“It has made a huge difference to the children who come here – it is a safe and fun environment for them to see their friends, be active and learn about nutrition.” [Staff]

Views on Food and Fun

Staff felt that the scheme has gone very well this year. *“Everything has been spot on and run smoothly”*. The partnership working with providers had worked well and ensured a wide variety of activities that the children could take part in. Staff found the nutrition training good and informative, and they felt well supported throughout.

The children spoken to at the visit said that they loved coming to the scheme during the holidays. When asked what their least favourite thing was, they all said *“nothing”*. All said they had tried new foods such as peppers, watermelon, jacket potato and chicken soup, and that they are now more excited to come back to school in September.



“This has been amazing. My son is autistic and it has been a great setting for him.” [Parent]

“It’s lovely for the children to be able to come to this. The summer is so long so it is a real benefit to them. The children don’t get so bored anymore.” [Parent]

Staff felt the programme was important in helping to stay in touch with some vulnerable children and it ensures they are getting healthy meals over the school holidays.



Impact of Food and Fun

Staff have seen long term impacts on the children who attended Food and Fun during 2021 – when they came back to school in September, they were more knowledgeable about food and nutrition. Many parents also commented on how much their children have learnt through the nutrition aspect and that these behaviours have continued into the home.

One child had a brother with severe disabilities, the parent of this child spoke of how helpful these sessions have been to them as a family during the holidays. It meant her daughter was able to have a break away from the home and also helped with her confidence and talking to adults.

Parents were positive about the programme, with many commenting on the benefits to them as a family – help with childcare, cutting costs during holidays, pressure to do activities; as well as benefits to their children – increased confidence, seeing friends, improved behaviour, improved nutrition knowledge.



“My kids have made friends, been welcomed by the other children. They have also demonstrated that they are absorbing the nutrition knowledge and picking up the messages – they are telling me facts that they have learned and making different choices when it comes to food.” [Parent]

“My daughter doesn’t like big group settings and has struggled a lot socially since covid, but this has given her an opportunity to be in school and interact with other pupils and teachers etc. but on a much smaller scale, this is so much better for her and her confidence has really increased.” [Parent]

School Case Study 3

Background

All primary school age children (four -11 years) were invited to take part in the scheme, with an average of 26 children attending the scheme each day.

A variety of activities have been delivered including:



Variety of physical and creative activities – rounders, tennis, playing on scooters, football, arts and crafts, drama games.



Nutrition activities – packs were provided to staff by the health board.

External organisations delivered activities– e.g. orienteering.

“All the children were smiling constantly and enjoying it, you did not see one sad face the entire time”. [Provider]

“It’s fun being able to hang out with my friends when I wouldn’t normally be able to see them much in the holidays.” [Pupil]



Views on Food and Fun

Staff felt that this year of Food and Fun has gone well. The children loved being able to attend the scheme and see their friends during the holidays whilst trying new activities. Staff felt that the nutrition aspect worked well, and the cooks were able to cater to a range of different diets while creating healthy foods for the children.

Staff commented that engagement with children and parents had increased as time had gone on – word got out about how good the scheme was and more children turned up as a result.

“The food part has been great and children have tried things for the first time. They have also increased in their social skills from coming here.” [Staff]

Impact of Food and Fun

Staff and parents commented on the difference made to families during the holidays. Children have been able to fill their holidays with fun activities without putting pressure on families to provide this. It has also given families a break for part of the days and allowed them to work from home with ease.

Staff felt that some children had increased their social skills through the programme. One parent felt that coming to school during the holidays was going to help their child return to school in September – something which is usually overwhelming.

All the children spoken to were enjoying the scheme and were excited to come back to school in September.

Some children said they wished they could come to the scheme for more days during the holidays.

Parents spoke of the difference the scheme has made to their children’s eating – with many children trying new food and learning about nutrition.



“It has been good for my daughter to see her friends in the holidays and maintain that connection with friends and the school, she can sometimes get overwhelmed by school, but this seems to have been really good for her and it’s reassuring for when she returns in September it won’t be so overwhelming.” [Parent]

“The children have really enjoyed, it has even opened up their pallet with trying different foods which is brilliant. The activities are also brilliant and it has been nice to come to the parents’ sessions. It is a good opportunity to see the children in school.” [Parent]

School Case Study 4

Background

All pupils in year seven and eight were offered the opportunity to take part this year, and vulnerable children were considered a priority. Five members of staff (including the coordinator) volunteered to deliver the scheme and external organisations delivered some of the activities.

Activities delivered over the 12 days on a rotation basis included:

- Nutrition activities: learning about healthy eating and cooking sessions e.g. stir fry, banana bread
- Sports: football, hockey, dodgeball, squash
- Families attended for lunch once a week.
- Other activities: photography, drama, drones, model car building, street dancing, survival training



"I learnt how much sugar is in orange juice and it is a lot more than I thought."
[Pupil]

"I enjoyed cooking the stir fry. I've had it before, but I've never cooked it" [Pupil]

Views on Food and Fun

Staff acknowledged that students have *"loved the sports"* and they particularly enjoyed the street dancing. It was also noted that it's been good that students could choose the sports activities they took part in.

Staff thought it was good to invite parents in for lunch once a week.

Most students had enjoyed cooking different foods.

The activities that were the most successful were those that were interactive. Staff thought the students would have found some of the nutrition sessions more interesting and fun if they were more *"hands on"*.

Staff thought the content of the nutrition sessions were *"really good"* and the students really enjoyed the activities.



"I think it's been good that we've all been eating together, all the staff and the pupils. And also for parents to come in and join us for lunch." [Staff]

"It's been good that fruit has been available to pupils from the kitchen counter throughout the day." [Staff]

"Students that are more insular in school have been more sociable in Food and Fun."
[Staff]

"It's been good to spend more time with the students and build those relationships." [Staff]

"I've loved it and I'd definitely sign up to do it again next year"
[Staff]

Impact of Food and Fun

Staff acknowledge that students' behaviour had improved, particularly those who displayed challenging behaviour during school term. They also noticed some of the shyer students came out of their shell during certain activities.

School Case Study 5

Background

All pupils were invited to take part in the programme. The school then selected pupils who they felt needed the provision most, for example those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Those who could commit to the full 12 days were also prioritised. 60 pupils took part from year two and year six – these year groups were chosen to support the transition period for those moving to juniors and secondary school.

A variety of activities have been delivered including:



Variety of indoor and outdoor activities – football, swing ball, table tennis, board games, crafts etc.



Nutrition activities – packs were provided to staff by the health board.



External organisations – e.g. police visit to the school, visits to the local hospice.

Views on Food and Fun

Staff commented that it was a straightforward process organising Food and Fun this year, especially as they had done it previously. Staff felt that the scheme is a good opportunity for children to have continued contact and a chance over the holidays to play and see their friends. It is also a chance for children to learn new things, participate in different activities and try new foods etc. It is also reassuring to staff to know that some of the more vulnerable children are getting a guaranteed meal during the holidays on the days they attend.

Most parents felt it was a good opportunity for their children to attend and spend time with their friends and have fun during the holidays and it also provided some childcare for working parents.

“I only wish it was on every day, all the time – I want it to be longer days and on weekends too because I love coming here so much!!” [Pupil]



One pupil who had Autism was having problems in school – they were looking at alternative schooling. However since coming to the scheme there had been a complete transformation and they were able to integrate more with the other children.

Another pupil was suffering from lockdown trauma and the programme had brought them out of their shell and allowed them to socialise in a safe and familiar environment.

Most of the children spoken said they “loved” attending the scheme.

There were a variety of things the children loved most: seeing their friends during the holidays, trying new activities, eating different foods, learning about nutrition. Some said that would not have been able to do these things at home.

Impact of Food and Fun

Staff felt that the parents’ sessions had a huge impact as it had been great to see families sitting down together enjoying a meal when this does not happen very often at home.

One staff member noted that the programme is particularly helpful for those in the transition from year two to year three and helped with social skills and embeddedness with the school. They also felt that the mixing of year groups worked well – with children from year six helping out with the children from year two – making them feel more responsible and independent.

Several children said that the mixing of the different classes meant that they had been able to make new friends.

Some parents noted how their children had come home after the sessions relaying some of the nutrition facts they have learnt and continuing with their healthy eating and trying new foods at home.

“This has had a huge impact on us as a family. It provides childcare and a relief from having to entertain the children for 6 weeks. The days at home can be very long and this breaks it up.” [Parent]

“The nutrition sessions are also very informative and beneficial to the children to learn these surprising facts which stick with them.” [Staff]

“For us it’s the dream to be able to offer this provision to these pupils who need it the most”. [Staff]

“My child even sleeps better after coming to these sessions – they come in a good mood and more stimulated”. [Parent]

School Case Study 6



Background

The primary school has been running Food and Fun for several years. All parents of pupils were informed of the scheme through the school newsletter and social media, however the staff drew it to the attention to those families who they engage and support during the term.

The location has access to a garden and a sports hall and all kinds of activities have been delivered including:

Local PCSOs regularly visit,
Yoga,
Various crafts,
Bouncy castle and trampoline,
Gardening on site.



The catering staff liked working with fresh produce. They also shared that, *'as a chef, I prefer this approach to working with frozen food during term-time'* and explained that when cooking from scratch, it's easier to make adjustments to recipes to accommodate allergies. They believed that the children enjoy the food, and following taking part in Food and Fun schemes, they now incorporate more fresh food and fruit into their term-time menu.

Views on Food and Fun

Setting up the scheme had been straightforward. However, despite the school's extensive experience of several years running the scheme, the coordinator still found the process very time-consuming during the weeks preceding the school holidays. They also carried out the tasks associated with setting up the scheme and organising activities in their own time outside of the daily job at the school. Nevertheless they—and the school—were committed to the scheme and believed that it was needed in their area and very beneficial to the children and families in their community.

The feedback received from parents was overwhelmingly positive. The evaluators' visit coincided with a day when parents were invited to join in a meal, and the parents who attended that day expressed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the scheme. They were happy that their children were trying out new activities and not bored at home. Similarly, the children who attended the project also reported that they enjoyed it.

There were some small negatives, and one parent mentioned that their older child stopped attending after the first day. The reason was that the child didn't like the food and felt that they had no control over whether or not to eat it.. Another parent explained that while the group was great for her younger children, the year 6 child had preferred not to attend.



According to the children, there "lush food"; "my favourite is broccoli". "I tried avocado and kiwi for the first time".

Impact of Food and Fun

The Food and Fun holiday play scheme has had a positive impact on both parents and children, as evidenced by feedback from participants. For instance, one parent reported that the scheme had helped to alleviate their child's school anxiety, and another child mentioned that she felt better about school in September after having been at the scheme. Another parent, a single parent of young children, had initially struggled to find suitable arrangements for activities for her children during the school holidays. However, they were approached by the school's family liaison officer, and the scheme's flexibility meant that one child could attend for four days a week, while another could attend on one day, fitting around the family's needs. This also allowed the parent to continue working these days, which would otherwise have been difficult.

"For the first two weeks of Food and Fun I was finishing coursework for the final part of [degree], and feeling less guilty about the children not doing stuff because I was busy" [Parent]

School Case Study 7

Background

Sessions have been run for pupils in years two to five at the school. The school promoted the scheme through social media. All parents/carers and all families who applied got a place. Only a small percentage of the children who attended the scheme were eligible for free school meals.

A variety of activities were delivered including:

Dawns i Bawb (Dance for All) sessions, which were arranged once a week



'Junk Percussion' sessions, using waste items to create instruments -



Dental hygiene lessons, which were connected to learning about sugar.



"I've made a new friend here... I don't usually see them... ..because they're not in my class." [Pupil]

"I'd much rather they were here, socialising, than looking at a screen or hanging around with older kids. 'The kids are getting up early anyway, so there's not much difference – it's just like taking them to school'." [Parent]

Views on Food and Fun

Staff had positive views on the nutrition course and described it as being "easy to understand" and "delivered in a practical way". One staff member commented that the course could have included more focus on how to make the information relevant and accessible to children of different ages. Staff reported they had spent time adapting some of the games to suit different ages and felt that some more support with this would have been helpful to them.

Staff, parents, and children had positive views on the activities delivered. Parents interviewed at 'drop off' and 'pick up' times commented on how helpful the scheme was in terms of providing opportunities to socialise and a greater variety of activities over the holidays. Parents commented that the scheme had enabled their children to take part in activities which they would otherwise not have been able to afford.

Staff had decided not to invite parents to attend the scheme; this was because staff were worried that some children could become upset if their parents did not attend. Activity packs were provided for home use instead.



"The food part has been great and children have tried things for the first time. They have also increased in their social skills from coming here." [Staff]

Impact of Food and Fun

Parents appreciated the opportunities offered to their children to participate in more activities and commented on their impact. One parent felt the **financial savings** they had made from having food provided through the scheme had been a significant benefit to them.

The impact on **socialisation** was mentioned by some parents, with some noting that their children had felt less bored during the holidays because of the scheme. Parents also commented that their child had benefitted socially from spending less time on electronic devices.

One parent reported that their children had been **eating more healthily** since attending the scheme, while another noted that they had found the 'food plate' poster sent home with the children to be useful.

All the children spoken with were enjoying the scheme and were excited to go back to school. All gave the scheme nine or ten out of ten.

A few children reported that they had **tried foods for the first time** (e.g. peppers, watermelon and gooseberries). Some children said they wished they could come to the scheme for more days during the holidays.

"These sessions are great for my kids, who are usually so bored in the summer holidays! It's great because it helps break up the long summer" [Parent]

"I must have saved hundreds of pounds by sending my kids here" [Parent]

School Case Study 8

Background

The school has seen a significant increase in the proportion of learners eligible for free school meals over the last 10 years. Staff reported that there had been **high demand for places** at the Food and Fun scheme and this, coupled with staff shortages, meant there was a waiting list for places. Many of the children attending the scheme had ALN and this also placed some additional **pressures on staff capacity**. Staff noted that many children were reluctant or refused to eat certain foods at school, which they hoped that the scheme would contribute to helping.



The school engaged with their local authority and other local schools to gather ideas about what type of activities to deliver during the scheme. Staff had found this helpful when planning activities.

"It's brilliant for the social life of the kids." [Parent]

Most activities were delivered on-site or in the local area at an outdoor activity centre. These included **cycling** and **rugby** sessions at the school and off-site **outdoor pursuit** sessions including, high ropes, orienteering, raft building and a team building session. Dancing sessions were also arranged through an external partner.

Views on Food and Fun

Children, staff and parents had positive views on the programme. Children commented that they enjoyed attending the sessions and **trying new foods**. Some children commented that they were now looking forward to returning to school in September, more so than they had been, as a result of taking part in the scheme.

Staff felt that the scheme was beneficial to children in terms of their **confidence**, particularly those who were struggling socially after the pandemic. They also felt the scheme helped to **keep children engaged** with education over the holidays, and commented that this could potentially be of benefit when they returned to school.

Staff reported that they were becoming more aware of vulnerable children and their needs because they were spending more time with children in **smaller groups** during the scheme. As a result, staff reported that they were developing **stronger relationships** with some children.

"I'm very happy with the school. I can't fault the scheme at all." [Parent]

Impact of Food and Fun

Having their child take part in **activities which they themselves could not have provided** was appreciated by parents interviewed. One parent gave an example of an outdoor walk to a nearby beauty spot which they would have been unable to attend themselves as they did not have a car.

Some parents felt their children's **mental health** and **well-being** had benefitted from continued contact with the school during the holidays, and one parent felt their child's **behaviour** at home had improved because they were less bored after taking part in the scheme. Parents also valued the opportunity to attend a lunch as part of the scheme and praised the **supportive social network** which was provided by Food and Fun.

Staff described examples of **increased engagement** from children who wouldn't typically take part in activities e.g. dancing, socialising with children outside of their social group.



"Him coming back to school [for the Food and Fun scheme] is actually helping it [child's behaviour] at home" [Parent]

"If I didn't have this, I'd be lost" [Parent]

5. Conclusions

The aim of the evaluation was to evaluate the impact of Food and Fun 2022. Evidence was gathered using mixed approaches: qualitative research was carried out with the WLGA, local authority leads, dietetic partners, school Food and Fun programme staff, parents and children. This chapter presents a summary of the findings and conclusions.

5.1 Summary key findings

Overall, the evaluation found that the Food and Fun programme made significant progress towards achieving its stated goals and objectives. In terms of the intended outcomes set out in its logic model the programme was successful in the following ways:

Improved mental health and emotional well-being: The Food and Fun programme aims to improve mental health and emotional well-being in children. Staff, parents and some children themselves provided evidence that, in their view, it helped to improve the mental health and well-being of many children attending. School staff and stakeholders recognised the importance of the programme in improving mental health, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic disrupted opportunities for socialisation. The programme has provided children with a positive summer experience, a safe space for play displacing boredom and isolation, and increased social connectedness to peers. It has also reduced financial and family stress. One local authority even linked the food element of the programme directly to mental and emotional well-being by delivering sessions on 'food and mood.' Examples were provided showing how attending the scheme had also helped children cope with grief and loss, and had allowed older children to feel more responsible and independent as they have helped out with younger children.

School engagement and educational attainment: Evaluation of the programme found evidence that it has supported improvements in these areas. The programme provided opportunities for improved staff professional development and for staff who are not senior managers to lead and coordinate the project, offering a learning experience. It also provided schools with nutrition packs, which have been useful in creating interactive ways to teach children about nutrition. The flexible and informal structure of the programme has allowed children to learn about nutrition in an effective way and has encouraged them to apply their learning experience from the summer to the term-time. The programme has also provided children with the opportunity to learn new skills and has improved relationships with school staff. It has connected parents to school and community and has increased social connectedness to peers.

Improved aspirations: Evaluation of the programme found some evidence of improved aspirations based on anecdotal evidence and observations. Through the programme, children have had the opportunity to learn new skills including healthy eating, new sports and craft activities helping them recognise their talents and strengths and raise their confidence. The programme also exposed children to different activity providers from their local area, broaden their horizons and help them discover new interests. The programme connected parents to the school and community by inviting them to visit and share a meal with their children, and by targeting certain children and their parents to strengthen links between the school and the community. The programme has also encouraged children to share their talents and strengths with others and has helped to improve self-efficacy.

Improved Physical Activity: Evaluation of the programme found evidence that it has supported improved physical activity for many children attending. Physical activities were a key part of the

programme, and many children participated in a significant amount of physical activity during the scheme. The programme exposed children to a wide range of sports and activities, leading to some children, who were reported to be less physically active, becoming more active. The programme also changed some children's perceptions of physical activities, with some reporting that this would make them more likely to participate in these activities in the future. The programme also formed links with local sports and activity providers and several parents/carers commented that taking part had reduced the amount of 'screen time' their children were having. Many children reported enjoying new or increased physical activity during their participation.

Improved Dietary Behaviour: The programme exposed children to healthier foods and led to an increased willingness to try new foods. It also resulted in increased knowledge about healthy eating and a wider range of foods. Staff and parents reported that children who were described as 'picky eaters' were particularly receptive to trying new foods during the scheme. Some parents also reported an increased willingness of their children to try new foods at home following participation in the Food and Fun programme. The programme also successfully encouraged children to eat more vegetables. Some children reported a change in their eating habits outside of the programme, such as eating breakfast and packing a lunch for school. The programme has also resulted in a reduction in food waste; some children were reported to be more likely to finish their meals because of the interactive and enjoyable nature of the food-related activities. Several local coordinators and programme staff referred to the programme's role in helping to alleviate holiday hunger.

Unintended outcomes: The Food and Fun programme had a variety of positive impacts beyond the intended outcomes, including positive impacts on volunteers, school staff, and local providers. The programme provided opportunities for older children and young adults to volunteer and gain experience and independence, and also allowed school staff to bring their own children along, providing them with childcare and earning opportunities. It also helped school staff to keep in touch with vulnerable children during the school holidays, and provided opportunities for local providers to build relationships with schools and teach children about local sustainability. Overall, the Food and Fun programme demonstrated a wide range of positive impacts on individuals and the community.

5.2 Future considerations

Overall, the evaluation found that the Food and Fun programme made significant progress towards achieving its stated goals and objectives, including its primary objective of improving nutrition and physical activity among participating children.

Based on the evidence gathered during this evaluation, it is recommended that the Welsh Government and WLGA continue to fund and support the Food and Fun programme.

Although the Food and Fun programme achieved its goals, its reach is limited to children in schools that have participated in the programme. Many of the individuals interviewed during the evaluation expressed the belief that more schools could benefit from the programme and that it would be beneficial if a larger number of schools and children could participate. However, there were challenges in engaging additional schools for summer 2022, as outlined in this evaluation's separate process report for the WLGA. Many of those interviewed for this evaluation were

interested in expanding the programme and recognised its' benefits, but noted there are several issues that need to be addressed before expansion can occur. These include securing earlier confirmation of funding and providing clearer guidance to schools to enable them to take more ownership of the programme. Once these issues have been addressed the programme could continue to grow.

Annex A: Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation comprised of the following:

- Review of the logic model
- Desk-based review of programme documentation and previous evaluations
- Interviews with a sample of local authority leads and local health boards
- Visits to a sample of schools delivering Food and Fun across Wales
- Collection of feedback from children via a graffiti wall approach
- Virtual group discussions the local authority leads

Review logic model

The Food and Fun programme has a logic model that outlines the programme's goals, objectives, activities, and intended outcomes, as well as the assumptions and underlying theories that guide the programme's design and implementation. The original logic model was created in 2017, and was revised in 2019 to reflect changes in the programme's design and implementation, as well as new insights and data from previous years of implementation. The revised logic model provides a clear overview of the programme's goals, objectives, and activities, setting out the intended outcomes and possible indicators under five main headings:

- Improved mental health and emotional well-being
- School engagement and educational attainment
- Improved aspirations
- Improved physical activity
- Improved dietary behaviour

It was also used to inform the topic guides for consultations and case study visits.

Arad also evaluated the effectiveness and practicality of the Food and Fun programme's logic model. The results of this review, including its suitability and usefulness, are documented in a separate process evaluation report..

Desk-based review of programme documentation

In addition to the logic model, Arad reviewed other programme documentation relating to Food and Fun, which included previous evaluations of the programme, local authority guidance documentation and the funding application form. Review of these documents was used to inform the development of topic guides for consultations and case study visits.

Interviews with local authority leads and local health boards

A sample of 10 local authorities were selected and invited to take part in interviews to discuss the Food and Fun programme. Local authorities were selected to include a mix of urban and rural areas; a geographical spread across Wales; and an area with a relatively high proportion of Welsh speakers. The rationale for this approach was to ensure that the sample of local authorities was as representative of Wales as possible. The purpose of these interviews was to offer the opportunity for local authority leads to provide a reflective view on the process of getting school on board with delivering Food and Fun; support from WLGA; the process of setting up and managing the schemes; and the impact of Food and Fun on children and families.

Fieldwork: school visits

In-depth qualitative research was undertaken with eight schools, each from different local authorities. In all but one school, a case study visit took place during the delivery of Food and Fun.

In-depth research with each of the eight schools was structured around the tasks and key areas of exploration detailed in the table below.

Phase	Issues 55e explored
Interviews with the coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale and background to taking part in Food and Fun • Views on the potential benefits/impacts of the programme • Approach to selecting/targeting children (where applicable) • How the provision was planned (and any issues around staffing, the site; catering, informing parents etc) • Nature of the activities planned/delivered
Interviews with staff associated with delivering the Food and Fun scheme (teaching staff, catering staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on the aims and objectives of the programme overall and the school schemes • Views on the appropriateness of activities and delivery methods chosen • Views on recruitment, promotion/marketing of activities, audience targeting • Views on the effectiveness of delivery, partnership working, content of sessions • Perceived outcomes for participants (perceptual, attitudinal, behavioural) • Views on the project management
Discussions with children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General views on Food and Fun – favourite / least favourite part • Dietary changes (have they tried new foods, do they eat differently during this school holiday) • Changes to physical activity (new physical activity, favourite / least favourite) • School aspirations and views about school more generally and any changes in views.
Interviews with parents of children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivations for child attending • Views on the sessions, including their knowledge and understanding of the activities and food delivered. • How Food and Fun has been communicated to parents • Impact on family routine / work / food habits. • Observed impact on their child
Engagement with other partners/stakeholders (e.g. organisations involved in delivery after-school clubs impacted)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement of other partners in supporting activity • Benefits/challenges in supporting schools • Displacement effects/disruption to other after-school provision

Overall, across the eight schools, fieldwork was conducted with eight primary schools and one secondary school. Interviews were undertaken with 36 members of staff involved in the delivery of Food and Fun schemes, including the coordinator and catering staff. A total of 77 children and 44 parents were consulted and provided their feedback during case study visits to the schools.

Graffiti wall

Schools delivering Food and Fun were provided with instructions to facilitate a graffiti wall approach to collect feedback from their children. These instructions are detailed in the box below. Staff were asked to write two questions to prompt children to provide their feedback on a large sheet of paper or whiteboard:

- “What did you like?”
- “What did you not like?”

Then in a graffiti wall style, children were to be provided with the opportunity to write or sketch their responses to these questions. Once completed, staff were asked to take photos of the graffiti walls and share them with Arad Research. A total of 55 schools shared their graffiti walls to be analysed for the evaluation.

Graffiti Wall instructions

What is a graffiti wall?

A sheet of paper (or whiteboard, flipchart paper) where the children can write or sketch their responses to a specific prompt or question.

Why use the graffiti wall?

The responses on the graffiti wall will be shared with the *Food and Fun* evaluators at Arad Research to help us understand the children’s views of taking part in a *Food and Fun* scheme.

In previous years, the children’s views have been collected using surveys, but this was sometimes time-consuming. We hope that using this graffiti wall will be easier and quicker way of gathering children’s views for the evaluation.

The evaluation is being carried out by Arad Research on behalf of the WLGA and they can be contacted through sioned@arad.wales if you have any queries.

Step-by-step instructions

- Choose a suitable space and find a large sheet(s) of paper (e.g. drawing paper roll, a few sheets of A3 paper, flipchart paper, whiteboard).
- Write the following question prompts on the ‘wall’:
 - One side: What did you **like**? 😊
 - Other side: What did you **not like**? 😞
- Make available pens or markers, so that the children can write or draw their response. You could place these on a nearby table, or attach pens by string to the wall.
- **Recommendation:** While the ‘wall’ can be up for the duration of the scheme and available for children to add their comments when they wish, it is recommended that you set aside time towards the end of each day / towards the end of each week (as you prefer) to gather around the wall in small groups and prompt the children to add their views. During these sessions you could ask them to think about
 - *How do you feel about taking part – what made you feel good / What about the scheme do you not feel good about?*

- *How do you feel about school and starting back in September now that you've taken part in Food and Fun?*
 - *Have you learnt new skills?*
 - *Did you try any new activities?*
 - *Have you made new friends?*
 - *What did you think of the food – have you tried new foods?*
- Collect the responses: When finished, take a photo of the wall and send the photo(s) to Sioned Lewis of the evaluation team at sioned@arad.wales. You may need to take a few photos to fit all the sheets and please try to make sure that the pictures and text can be read. You're welcome to send a few notes to accompany the photo to help explain some background or context, but this is optional.

Virtual group discussions with local authority leads

All local authority leads were invited to take part in an online group discussion and provide feedback on Food and Fun. Two virtual group discussions were facilitated with local authorities being given the choice of attending one of these two sessions.

Case study analysis

Individual case studies for each school visited are presented in Section 3. These case studies summarise the evidence collected from discussions with various individuals during the school visits. Schools are presented anonymous within the case studies.