

Nursery Food

Incy Wincy's
Bedale, North Yorkshire



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– judge

At the beginning of each term a small group of children at Incy Wincy's pop on aprons and accept the Star Baker challenge, to cook a new recipe every week. Money raised from selling their wares to parents is invested back into ingredients, baking equipment and books chosen by them. For these hard-working children, gaining a Star Baker badge is a real source of achievement.

It is these kinds of fun ideas that have succeeded in embedding a vibrant food culture across all areas of Incy Wincy's practice. The starting point is the menus, which impressed our judges for being well-balanced and creative, using ingredients that are sourced locally to ensure seasonality

and the best quality. The links to the rural community in which the nursery is situated are strong, with visits to the bakery, butcher and farms. Children also learn where food comes from in their well-tended garden and greenhouse, and staff have benefited from the support and resources of the Royal Horticultural Society.

The nursery is particularly proud of its well-designed kitchen, which opens onto a dining area where children bake and access their own cupboard for ingredients and bowls. The chef used to be a sous chef in a Michelin restaurant but is thoroughly enjoying working in a nursery. He prepares take-home meals for parents that can be ordered in advance, and these are properly chilled, labelled and packaged.

As a day nursery for funded children, working with parents is key to ensuring that healthy eating is fully embraced. Strong communication begins with pre-registration home visits where dietary details are shared, while a parent forum helps to maintain menus on an ongoing basis. Information about meals and snacks is also shared with families through open evenings, daily conversations and the website.

Incy Wincy's also scored top marks when it came to staff training and knowledge of nutrition and hygiene. Staff meetings focus on portion sizes with visual demonstrations, and staff enjoy participating in the bake-offs. It is this passion for food, which is evident from the manager through to all staff, children and families, that makes Incy Wincy's such a worthy winner.



HIGHLY COMMENDED New Beginnings Day Nursery, Essex

Fresh food is the order of the day at New Beginnings, where staff follow Soil Association guidelines. Meat comes from farms which satisfy animal welfare standards, and fish from sustainable sources. Its eggs come from free-range hens. During snack times children are encouraged to prepare and cut fruit

and vegetables themselves, using chopping boards, small cutters, pincers and bowls.

Learning about food is integrated into all areas of the EYFS and children participate in the Tiny Task Force, where they become a lunch or snack-helper. A parent says, 'Every day the staff tell me how well my daughter has eaten all her meals, which is a sure sign she loves the dishes at New Beginnings.'

FINALISTS

Blue Grass Purple Cow Nursery,
Stockport
Holmsdale Manor Nursery, Ibstock

CRITERION

Open to early years settings whose approach to and provision of nutritious food promotes children's health and well-being