

# Nursery Food

## Elmscot Day Nursery, Altrincham



**'Children are given lots of opportunity to learn about food. The nursery's rolling menu is exceptionally varied and helps support children to eat a well-balanced diet'**  
Judge

### Criterion

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

**A**t Elmscot Day Nursery, mealtimes are valued as a learning opportunity for children, who are provided with high-quality, well-balanced meals.

During lunch and snack time, staff discuss with children the ingredients used within the dishes they are eating and talk about making healthy choices.

The nursery's 10-week rolling menus, which are regularly checked by a qualified dietician, provide children with a variety of foods reflecting a diversity of cultures and tastes.

Devised by chef Mark Brooke and kitchen assistant Rebecca Heywood, dishes are very colourful and feature lots of different tastes and textures. Where possible, the nursery uses seasonal fruit and vegetables, and locally sourced produce. A local butcher supplies most

of the setting's meat, including sausages made especially for the nursery. Vegetables and fruit are purchased from a greengrocer.

The nursery chef goes to great lengths to ensure that children with special dietary requirements, including those with allergies or who are vegetarian, have meals that resemble what the other children are eating to ensure they feel included. Staff also attend allergy and intolerance training, and educate parents about allergens in food.

The nursery has comprehensive food and nutrition policies in place, including detailed information on fussy eating, oral health, breast-feeding, weaning and activities involving food – such as cooking and baking, which all staff are familiar with.

During British Pie Week, chef Mark Brooke

taught the children how to make apple pies from scratch.

The nursery recently introduced a 'Seed to Plate' project to support children in recognising and understanding the process of where food comes from. As part of this, children have planted seeds to grow their own vegetables, which will be used in the nursery's food.

The nursery plays an important role in educating parents about healthy eating. Every year, it runs workshops, delivered by a dietician, to teach them about diet and nutrition, and give advice on introducing new foods.

Elmscot, which was the first setting within its area to receive Trafford Council's 'Healthy Setting Award', has also developed its own recipe book for parents so they can recreate meals served at the setting at home.

### Highly commended Kidzone Cranwell, Sleaford

The nursery, based at RAF College Cranwell in Lincolnshire, places an emphasis on introducing new and exciting meals, often taking inspiration from meals enjoyed by staff.

Kidzone's non-UK families are also encouraged to share their food culture. For example, on one occasion an Australian family brought in lamington cakes and Anzac cookies, traditional baked goods, to the setting for everyone to enjoy.

### Meadows Children's Nursery, Newcastle upon Tyne

Children are heavily involved in the nursery's food preparation, with Playroom and Schoolroom children making a tea each week. Schoolroom children look through cookbooks, write shopping lists and recipes for the nursery's chef to follow, and provide a helping hand in the kitchen.

The setting's early years children are given the opportunity to learn about food by exploring the texture, taste and smell of different foods in tactile trays.

### Little Green Rascals Organic Day Nursery, York

Little Green Rascals places an importance on ensuring children eat nutritious food both inside and outside the setting.

The nursery, which uses only locally sourced organic food, has provided meals to families in times of need, who otherwise may not have had a wholesome meal.

Children are involved in the development of menus and recipes for each meal, and fill out tasting cards for new meals. The nursery holds the Food for Life Gold Award.