

Suzanne Martin

Atwood

Primary School



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My name is Suzanne Martin, I work for Eden Food Services and I am the cook at Atwood Primary School in Croydon. Before Atwood I worked at Ashburton Primary, for 6 ½ years. I enjoyed my time there, but I was ready for a change. So when I got offered this job, I jumped at the chance.

When I joined in 2009 it was all new for me, a new school, new staff, a new headteacher, new project – the flagship school for the Food For Life Partnership in Croydon!

It was an exciting challenge to get the children to try new and different types and styles of food and gradually increase the meal numbers. I was very nervous going to a new school, but it has been good, working not only with the kitchen staff, but with the headteacher, the teachers and of course not forgetting the children. I have enjoyed learning about the different criteria for the Food for Life Partnership award scheme and in June I got the opportunity to go to Ashlyns training kitchen in Essex for a 2 day course, which was very interesting and useful.

In the summer we had a BBQ at Atwood which was a great success. Nearly the whole school came and it was great to see all the children

enjoying themselves. Some of the salad came from the school garden, which the children loved. It is amazing how much more food is taken when the children have actually grown it themselves!

I have been visiting the children in their classrooms while they have been cooking, it is great to see them getting so involved and excited. Their cooking skills are improving all the time!

Fiona White is my Food for Life Partnership regional coordinator, she always brings a lot of useful information to our SNAG meetings, not forgetting lots of fun games! I enjoy SNAG meetings - it's nice to see everyone together, all trying to improve the way the children see and think about food. After the meetings I take all the information back to the kitchen staff and tell them what has been said and what the next step is, so we all can learn and work together.

The highlight of the day is service, talking to the children, finding out what they have been up to, what has happened at play time, whose house they are going to after school. Its funny what some children tell you!

In November I spoke about the Food for Life Partnership to other Eden staff at our yearly conference to explain

what we do as a Partnership school. I was so nervous, I was shaking like a leaf, I never thought I would be able to do anything like that, getting up and telling people about something they didn't know about. I was so proud of myself for getting up there and doing it! Eden have got 10 schools recently signed up for the Food for Life Partnership and I'm looking forward to helping them progress.

I am really enjoying my job, it has given me so much more confidence meeting and working with lots of different people, also working with the school to get the children to be interested in food and where it comes from and the importance of the Food For Life Partnership.

Meeting Jeanette Orrey has inspired me to help spread the word around the country! If this is the start of the journey I don't want to get off the train.