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I first joined Shropshire County Meals Service (Shire services) 10 years ago. I was a lunchtime supervisor at a local village school but after I had been there a year the school cook left and I decided to apply for the job. It meant cooking for 50-60 children daily. I say cook but it was really just warming food. Although I enjoyed my job that was it, it was just a job.

After being there for two years I got a job at St Peters in Wem, the school that my two children attended. When I first started I found it really quite hard to begin with. Shire Services started to improve the quality of the food being served to the children banning Turkey Twizzlers, fish ship shapes, smiley faces etc. These were all foods that the kids loved eating and my staff loved cooking! I was faced with a new school, new staff, new children and now new menus!

A few months after being at Wem I attended a training day for cooks organised by Shire services to promote the new healthier menus and get us cooks on board. It was here where I first heard Jeanette talk about what she was doing and I think this was where my first real desire to change things started.

I felt as though I had really started to find my feet. Staff were warming to the new changes and children were becoming a little less resistant to trying new foods. I had been made to feel very welcome and very much part of the school. With this confidence I decided to start an after school cookery club. Children at that time did very little cookery in school which I thought was a shame as it was something I loved to do as a child. The first cookery club was all about cooking cakes and biscuits but they loved it and I loved doing it! The children were so proud of whatever they took home and would often tell me that they had cooked the same cakes at home with their mum.

Cookery club has now moved on. We have two sessions a week and the children now cook healthier dishes using local and fresh ingredients. At the end of each half term parents come along and cook with the children. I have also done parent only cookery sessions which were successful. I really can't get over how many parents can't or don't cook

I heard Jeanette speak again not long after the launch of Ashlyns training kitchen. I was really inspired hearing about it and wanted to go. After telling my deputy headteacher Fiona at school about it, she and Ian, the head, decided that the school would fund me to go. I think after going to Ashlyns my interest grew and grew. I became a lot more involved in the school. Talking to children in assemblies about our new menus and why we were changing them and to classes about nutrition and the importance of eating a well balanced diet. As I became more involved with the children they became very aware of who I was. The children looked up to me and I was helping them to learn and understand about food. This made me feel really happy.

We were delighted to become one of the first Food for Life Partnership flagship schools. We are very lucky at St Peters that we have such enthusiastic staff and have created a very strong SNAG. Everyone was keen to get involved and things really started to escalate. The first thing to be created was our school garden. It gave life to a very underused area of the school. Each year group has its own raised bed and I can't tell you how much pride those children have when they bring me their first harvest to cook in the kitchen. Some produce was not much cop – carrots and parsnips as big as your little finger! But it didn't matter because the children had grown them themselves.

I also became involved with organising the farm visits for the children. I live

on a dairy farm and had really taken it for granted that all children and teachers knew about animals so it was a shock for me to find out how little some people know. After just a short space of time most if not all of the children at St Peters have been lucky enough to visit a farm or had visits from local farmers one of them being my husband! It is a really funny sight when you see 'cool' year 6 kids running across the playground to go and stroke some baby lambs or calves that have been brought into school.

The other highlight was to have the cooking bus visit. It caused such excitement in school. We used the cooking bus as a training resource for staff so that they could then confidently teach cookery as part of the curriculum. We let the cookery club children have a session as well and I remember one of the boys who is not the most academic of children thoroughly enjoying his time on the bus. He came to me a couple of days later and said that he and his mum were writing a letter to the bus to come back!

I am so very proud of St Peters now being awarded Gold. I feel so privileged that I am a part of something so important to our children's future. It has been a really hard journey but I have gained so much from it all. I really feel as though I am part of the team. I now feel proud to be serving good quality fresh, local and organic food to my children and feel good to be able to have the confidence to tell them where it is coming from.

The Food for Life Partnership is not just for those children who are good at maths and English it is for everyone. When a child comes up to you and says they enjoyed their lunch it was the best they have ever had that is priceless!