

Food for Life Leicestershire Impact Report



June 2025-
May 2026

Food for Life has been commissioned by Leicestershire County Council to work closely with up to 20 schools to champion healthy and sustainable food as part of the Healthy Weight Strategy. These target primary schools have been identified as having high levels of obesity or underweight, using NCMP school level data.

Additionally, access to the Food for Life Schools Award is funded for all primary and SEN schools in the county.

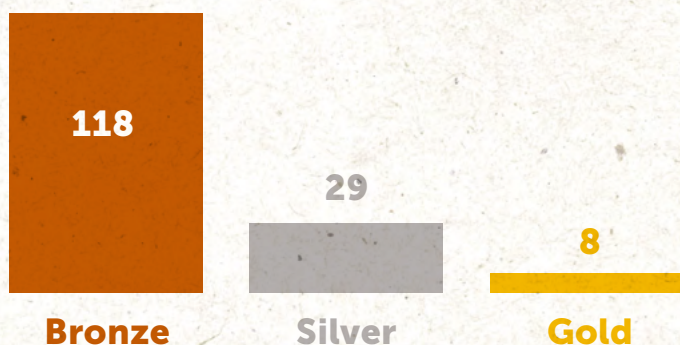
In Numbers

Across Leicestershire:

180 schools
enrolled,
including 4 new
enrolments this year

Over 40,000
children benefitting from a healthy and
sustainable food culture in their school

Total awards to date



Awards this year



Environmental change to support an increase in healthy behaviour in Leicestershire schools

151

Award actions to transform the food environment completed this year, positively shaping pupils' relationship with healthy and sustainable food

2

2 month-long nationwide Food for Life campaigns; 'Cook and Share' and 'Plant and Share' promoted across Leicestershire, raising awareness across the county

“ (Food for Life) has raised awareness amongst pupils, staff and parents around everything food! ”

Leicestershire school,
May 2026

38

actions completed to improve the food culture in schools, supported by senior leadership

29

actions have been completed to evidence the quality of school meals

“

Staff actively encourage children to make healthier choices in line with the School Food Standards. They prompt pupils to select vegetables, salad, or fruit alongside their main meal, and praise children who choose a balanced plate. ”

Leicestershire school,
September 2025

Increased Knowledge, skills and confidence in Leicestershire school staff in delivering food education

100%

100% of attendees reporting increased confidence and knowledge about their role in school food

105

people attended staff support and training sessions, building knowledge, skills and capacity

“ Some of our non-verbal/autistic children refuse to eat at school so it is important to educate staff on ways to encourage play/exploration/tasting of foods ”

Leicestershire school, October 2025

2 School Governor and Senior Leadership training sessions

As a result of FFL training I will...

“ Check that the school food provider is using the schools food standards and is aware that these are changing. ”

Leicestershire School
Governor, April 2026

Increased level of food education in Leicestershire schools

39

Food Education actions completed, meaning children have more opportunities to cook, grow and learn about healthy and sustainable food and its benefits.

Two assemblies and presentations have been held so far on sustainability and promoting healthy eating/ lifestyles- these were delivered by our Year 5 sustainability ambassadors

Leicestershire school, June 2025

"I have taken strawberry plants, tomato plants and pepper plants home, because I have enjoyed growing them in school."

Pupil at Leicestershire school

We now have vegetable beds which are being used! They had been built but were not being used. Now we are set up, the children are engaged and enthused and it is constantly being updated and maintained

Leicestershire school, January 2026

3

schools received grants to improve the growing areas in school enabling them to devote more time to growing and learning about food



Leicestershire families and local community are involved in healthy and sustainable food activities

20

actions completed by schools to engage families and the local community with activities around healthy and sustainable food and its benefits.



We have asked for volunteers to come in and share their knowledge with staff and children. Once we start producing produce this will be shared with pupil premium and disadvantages families, and the local community

**Leicestershire School,
June 2025**



(we are) Working with other agencies and businesses to promote a culture of change around Healthy Eating, Sustainability and growing your own.

**Leicestershire School,
October 2025**

As a result of FFL training I will..



create better/healthier packed lunches. It was good to do this alongside my child

**Leicestershire Parent,
June 2025**

36

Parents, carers and school staff have attended packed lunch workshops, raising awareness of healthy food in families and the community



Our pupils have shared and celebrated their food for life learning with their families by taking home pea plants that we have grown together

Leicestershire School, July 2025

Getting to stand in front of the school and talk about our trip

Getting to stand in front of the school and talk about our trip

Sunflowers

Sunflowers

Growing potatoes

Growing Potatoes

Growing Potatoes

I've been part of a SNAG group

I've been part of a SNAG group

Seeing a cow

Seeing a cow

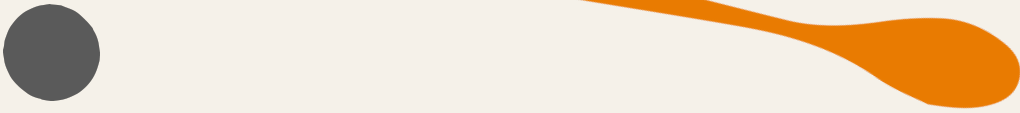
Leicestershire pupils' Food for Life Highlights

Fossebrook Community Primary School are leading the way in improving their Food Leadership and Culture

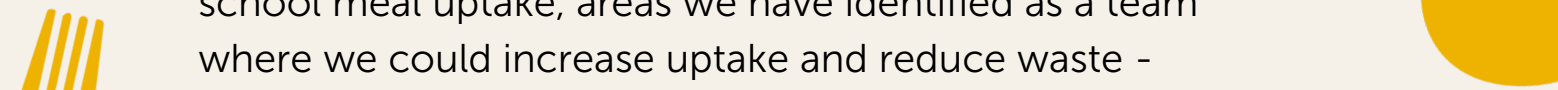


A critical action as part of the Food for Life School Award framework is the creation of a School Nutrition Action Group, or SNAG, that take responsibility for embedding a positive school food culture. Its purpose is to facilitate and amplify a collective voice around the food decisions that are made in schools, and under the committed leadership of the Kate Leith, the schools' Food for Life lead, Fossebrook has truly exemplified this ethos. The school have implemented a SNAG that wholly represents the interest of their school community at every level: a mix of pupils from every year group, a school governor, the Food for Life lead, the Sustainability lead and the main school caterer! Having such a thorough mix of voices contributing to the development of the school's food culture truly creates a sense of ownership and agency over food.

Food for Life's aim in requiring a SNAG is that schools put real value on healthy and sustainable food as an important part of a child's development, and that staff value their own role in shaping a child's relationship with it. Fossebrook's commendable SNAG are ensuring decisions about food and food culture are supported by leadership and through policy, and pupils are given the opportunity to input. The whole team at Fossebrook have been instrumental in developing the school's packed-lunch policy, which will be shared with families to ensure all of their pupils are getting access to healthy food. They are also leading by example by growing vegetables in the school gardens and delivering assemblies on the importance of healthy eating and sustainability.

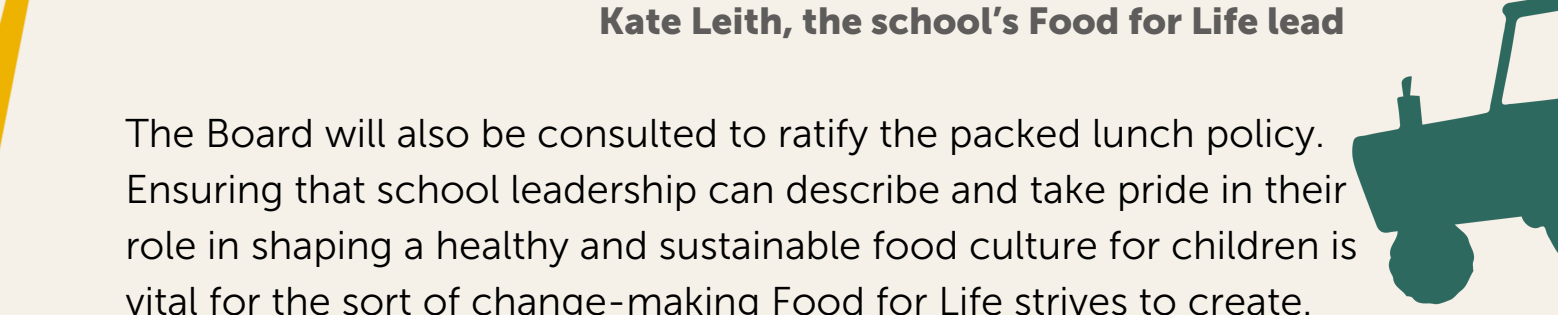


Beyond already having an active governor in the team, Fossebrook's SNAG have been in dialogue with the whole School Advisory Board, which ensures governors are well briefed on their responsibilities.



"[The governors] were asked questions and gave feedback on the current seasonal food available in school. They also provided an overview of their own children's thoughts on the menu, portion sizes etc. ... [they] were told about the school meal uptake, areas we have identified as a team where we could increase uptake and reduce waste - adding in different seasonal fruits, using spread for jacket potatoes, and adding more fresh veg into the salad - as some examples."

Kate Leith, the school's Food for Life lead



The Board will also be consulted to ratify the packed lunch policy. Ensuring that school leadership can describe and take pride in their role in shaping a healthy and sustainable food culture for children is vital for the sort of change-making Food for Life strives to create. By working through the Food for Life Schools Award action points, Fossebrook are implementing policies that support more children to eat and enjoy healthy and sustainable food at school. The long-term aim is that these policies will impact on the school's procurement framework, enabling Fossebrook to have more agency to demand high quality and sustainably produced food for their pupils. Having school leadership that are supportive of a whole school approach to food, like Fossebrook does, ensures that pupils know more about healthy and sustainable food and its benefits.



Kate has worked hard over many years to develop a strong network around food, sustainability and local community including; reducing food waste initiatives, participating in food banks, clothing recycling programme, and a whole school composting initiative. Many of the actions that form the Food for Life School Award framework have been achieved through Mrs Leith's ongoing dedicated efforts.

Healthy Packed Lunch Workshops



The Food For Life Schools Award Framework - and by extension, the School Food Standards - considers the food quality and food culture of every meal eaten in schools. This means the hot dinners provided by schools but also the packed lunches. All children should have access to good and healthy food.

The Local Programme Officer in Leicestershire has been on the ground delivering workshops to support schools who reported a growing need to address the quality of food in packed lunches.

The aim of the workshops is not only to raise the standard of food provision for all children but to embed a positive food culture for the whole community.



Parents are invited to attend along with their child to learn about what constitutes a healthy and balanced meal, to try cost effective alternatives to highly processed, sugary snacks and drinks, and to explore some new foods in a safe and pressure-free environment.

"The cous cous went down well with my daughter – will definitely have to try it at home."



"We're going to try making flavoured water."

"I'm going to encourage more exposure to fruit & veg, and we're going to make the popcorn!"

By delivering to both parent and child, the same message can be taken away and shared at home, and parents can see and encourage their child when trying new things in a different context.

Schools that asked for a packed lunch workshop to be delivered understand the role of healthy and sustainable food in a child's development but often need more support for their families and stakeholders to get on-board.

They each had different motives for running a workshop - including parental pushback on instituting a packed lunch policy as a school, a general slipping of lunchbox standards over time, an increase in reported 'fussy' eaters, and as part of a holistic push to increase parental engagement.

"My boy is very fussy and he even tried touching and smelling some new vegetables."

"We couldn't believe how much sugar was in milkshakes!"



"We could use the materials to help parents make healthier choices when making food."

The direct result of the packed lunch workshops is that schools can complete two actions on their journey to Bronze Food For Life Schools Award: reaching out to families to inform them about and include them in their food activities, and instituting policies to support a healthy and sustainable food culture. But the potential benefits are much longer reaching, too.

After the session, staff are left with the know-how to be able to run their own workshops in future years that can be tailored the needs of the cohort and foster supportive relationships with parents, which in the long-term will help positively shape children's relationship with their food.

The workshops are just one way that Food For Life supports schools to achieve their food goals. They endorse school leaderships' position on how policies like a packed lunch policy strengthen a healthy and sustainable food culture in school, and help schools advocate for positive food cultures beyond their own setting, too.

Because of this work, children and their community know more about healthy and sustainable food and its benefits, and thus can experience the health and wellbeing benefits of eating healthier food.



Progression with a Whole School Approach



By the end of November 2025, Blaby Stokes C of E had completed four actions since enrolling in June 2025. With targeted one-to-one support delivered from the Local Programme Officer, they have been able to complete a further six actions towards the Bronze Schools Award framework by the end of February.

In January, the Local Programme Officer visited the school. They sat down with the Assistant Head and Food For Life lead; Emily Ballard, to work through four of the five Food Education actions: assessing the cooking curriculum; assessing the growing activities; ensuring that pupils learn about farming and food production; and ensuring that staff feel confident in delivering cooking and growing education. Completing these actions means that children know more about healthy and sustainable food and its benefits.



On their visit, they were also able to speak with the Miquill catering team to review the school menu against school food standards, completing one of the Food Quality actions. The school also learnt about the benefits of using cutlery and crockery, completing their third Leadership & Culture action.

As part of embedding a positive food culture, Food For Life believe that school timetables should devote time to cooking and growing, and to learning about a range of healthy and sustainable food topics across the curriculum – a belief that Blaby Stokes are clearly acting on with enthusiasm.

In October, Blaby Stokes was awarded a £250 grant through Food For Life funded by the Earthsong Foundation. They put this money towards gardening tools and seeds.



Large, raised beds have been built as part of site improvements. The staff were keen to use these as brand new growing spaces for the children to learn about food production and take ownership of their own site.

Using the grant resources, the Local Programme Officer spent a day in February preparing their beds and making their garden ready for growing, giving children practical skills for life that will benefit their health and the health of the planet.



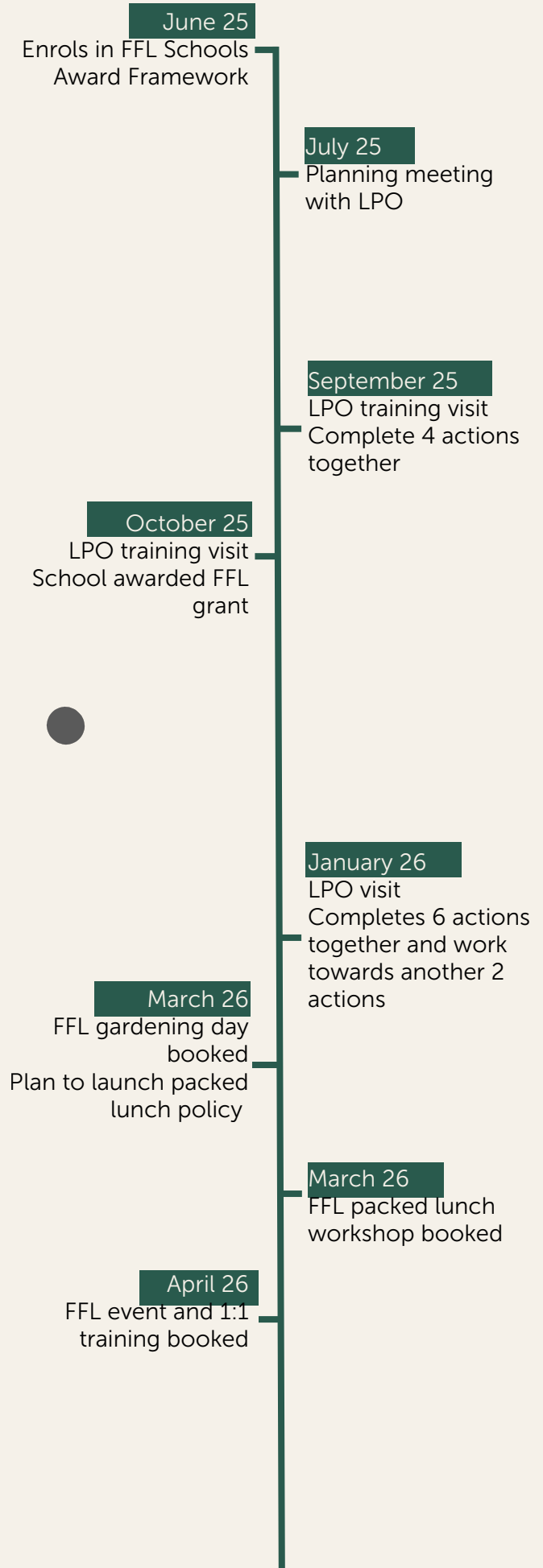
Blaby Stokes C of E teaches healthy and sustainable food across the curriculum

It celebrates its history as a site of a war-time tomato farm. The rediscovered 'Blaby Special' breed are still being grown on-site and every year, the school community engages in a tomato growing competition.

By connecting with its local history, they're raising awareness and teaching their pupils about food production and sustainable food.

They will enter their fourth enrolled quarter with a solid action plan to complete the final bronze award actions, by receiving Food For Life training and hosting a Food For Life day at the school. The aim will be to launch their healthy packed lunch policy to parents, pupils and governors with a healthy and sustainable food assembly led by the pupil-run SNAG.

Through organising this day, Blaby Stokes C of E are proving that not only are decisions about food and food culture supported by leadership and reinforced through policy, but most importantly pupils are given the opportunity to input on their food culture too.



Leicestershire Schools Get Stuck In with Plant and Share!



In March and April we ran our Plant & Share campaign for schools. The Food for Life team used this as an opportunity to engage with target schools that were not enrolled with Food for Life. Sometimes schools can find the idea of working through an awards framework daunting alongside all of their other commitments, so this provided a good way to introduce these schools to food growing in an accessible way.

Local Programme Officer Katie delivered packs to target schools containing seed potatoes along with information on how they could book a potato growing session with her. Four target schools who had not worked with Food for Life before jumped at the chance of Katie coming in to deliver a fun and educational session with pupils. Katie took along compost and planting bags and linked the growing activities to the science and maths, helping teaching staff to see how they can embed food education across the curriculum.

The sessions were really well received by staff and pupils, with one headteacher commenting that **"The children were just full of enthusiasm!"**

Following the campaign two of the schools; St Edward's and Long Clawson have enrolled on the Food for Life awards programme and are keen to devote more time to growing and cooking and learning about a range of healthy and sustainable food topics across the curriculum.

Each school has its own needs and challenges. Katie's adaptive engagement approach acknowledged this and gave these schools the kind of bespoke one to one support that would work for them. As a result more children in Leicestershire are having the opportunity to learn about food and gain skills for life that will benefit their health, and the health of the planet.

