

Oak – Food curriculum to classroom

Curriculum planning guide

The Oak Cooking & nutrition curriculum presents a powerful opportunity to give pupils the skills, knowledge, and confidence to make informed, healthy food choices while developing practical food skill (cooking) competence. The Oak curriculum is based on the statutory requirements in the National Curriculum D&T: Cooking and nutrition.

From Key Stage 1 through to Key Stage 3, pupils explore:

- health and wellbeing
- where food comes from
- how to prepare and cook safely
- the role of food in culture, sustainability, and health.

The Oak National Academy, in partnership with the British Nutrition Foundation, has produced comprehensive, ready-to-use teaching sequences for each key stage. This guide explains how to integrate these resources into existing school plans, ensuring:

- coherent progression
- cross-curricular links
- efficient use of existing lesson time and resources
- engagement from pupils.

The benefits to your school include:

- skills for life - pupils leave with confidence in cooking and nutrition
- health impact - supports school health and wellbeing initiatives
- engagement - practical lessons increase participation, especially for kinaesthetic learners
- inclusivity - culturally responsive curriculum embedding diversity
- Ofsted alignment - supports Personal Development and cross-curricular breadth.

To support, a range of Oak related training is available to support you embedding the curriculum into your school plans.

To participate, follow this link: <https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/professional-development/oak-food-curriculum-to-classroom/>

Step-by-step plan

Step 1: Understand the curriculum

Familiarise yourself with the Oak curriculum, units and lessons:

Primary (KS1 & KS2) – [Curriculum overview](#)

- Covers basic hygiene, food groups, seasonal produce, simple cooking methods, and cultural dishes.
- Designed to be accessible without specialist kitchens (can be taught in classrooms with minimal equipment).
- Structured to revisit key knowledge each year while introducing new concepts and practical tasks.

Secondary (KS3) – [Curriculum units](#)

- Builds on primary foundations with more advanced cooking techniques, nutrition, food science, sustainability, and independent recipe planning.
- Supports development of practical food skills alongside food ‘theory’.

CPD Opportunity – sign-up for the free training to support, including course 1 (Getting started with Oak: What the new food curriculum offers you), 2 (Map your own path: Planning CPD that works for you and your team), 3 (Inside the curriculum: Unpacking Oak’s approach to food), 4 (Primary food teaching made easy with Oak) or 5 (Bringing Oak to life in secondary food lessons), 6 (Making Oak work in primary: Practical tips for the classroom) or 7 (Making Oak work in secondary: Strategies for success). [Click here.](#)

Step 2: Audit your current curriculum

- List the current subject content in your schemes of learning.
- Identify overlaps with Oak units to avoid duplication.
- Highlight any gaps in subject content and progression.

Use the Oak audit grid to support your work - Key Stage 1 and 2, Key Stage 3.

These highlight the lessons, outcomes and key learning across Key Stages. This content can be used by you with your audit.

Depending on your school circumstances, such as curriculum time and resources available, you may need to reduce or merge lessons, helping to preserve learning.

For audit and planning tools, [click here.](#)

For a more in depth audit, you could also use the [Food – a fact of life ‘Road maps’](#) for Key stages 1 to 3 to review the progression in your curriculum in a visual way.

Step 3: Map units and lessons into your plans

- Based on your audit, embed units or lessons into your curriculum plans.
- You may wish to 'borrow' elements from the Oak curriculum to enhance your plans, such as a recipe or slides from a presentation.
- Consider the amount of time dedicated to food education, such as number of hours per year, and lesson length.
- Use Oak's lesson-by-lesson structure and ready-made resources to save planning time, but adapt to your local context.

CPD Opportunity – sign-up for the free training to support, including course 4 (Primary food teaching made easy with Oak) or 5 (Bringing Oak to life in secondary food lessons), and 8 (Designing a modern food curriculum with Oak as your foundation). [Click here.](#)

Step 4: Adapt and personalise

- Use Oak's slides, videos, and quizzes as a starting point, then add:
 - school values
 - local relevance
 - cross-curricular links
 - cultural representation.
- Adjust for practical constraints, such as:
 - KS1 & KS2: focus on no-cook recipes or group cooking activities
 - KS3: incorporate more complex cooking and independent work

Step 5: Ensure progression remains

- The Oak Cooking and nutrition curriculum has been designed with progression in mind, within each Year Group, and well as across Key Stages.
- Using the Oak units, it builds from basic to complex.
- Revisit core vocabulary annually to reinforce understanding.

CPD Opportunity – sign-up for the free training to support, including course 6 (Making Oak work in primary: Practical tips for the classroom) or 7 (Making Oak work in secondary: Strategies for success), and 9 (Inclusive food education: Adapting Oak for learners with additional needs). [Click here.](#)

Step 6: Build in assessment

- Use Oak's starter quizzes to check prior knowledge.
- Use exit quizzes or practical evaluations of cooking activities to assess progress.
- Keep a simple skills checklist for each pupil to track competency growth.

CPD Opportunity – sign-up for the free training to support, including course 10 (Empowering pupils: Using Oak for independent and home learning). [Click here.](#)

Step 7: Embed cross-curricular learning

The cooking and nutrition curriculum naturally supports:

- Science: digestion, nutrition, food preservation
- Geography: climate and crops, global food systems
- Maths: measurement, ratios, scaling recipes
- History: traditional dishes and their origins
- PSHE: healthy lifestyles, sustainability
- English: recipe reading and writing, food labels
- RE: religion and food customs

Step 8: Prepare resources and manage logistics

- Ensure the recipes you want to make, because of the learning they facilitate, can be made with the resources available.
- Conduct a 'kitchen resource' audit (e.g. knives, chopping boards, utensils, cooking appliances).
- Undertake risk-assessment for allergy management and food hygiene. See the Oak 'additional information' sheets for support.
- Plan for ingredient sourcing.

Next steps

Integrating Oak's *Cooking & nutrition* resources offers a complete, progressive pathway from KS1 to KS3 that can be mapped into your existing curriculum without overloading staff. The step-by-step plan ensures content is relevant, engaging, and sustainable in the long term.

1. Download relevant Oak units, or lessons, for each year group.
2. Audit your current curriculum and note overlaps and gaps.
3. Map units into your annual curriculum plan for each key stage.
4. Check out the CPD available to support your curriculum work.
5. Adapt lessons with local and cultural relevance.
6. Set up resources and risk assessments for practical work.
7. Introduce tracking and assessment tools to monitor progression.
8. Review annually to refine sequencing, adapt to new guidance, and celebrate pupil achievements.