

THE DOVECOTE CENTRE

The Dovecote Centre received £11,286 from Well Together to provide healthy hot lunches and snacks at their holiday playschemes.



The Dovecote Centre in Blackbird Leys provides healthy food to the young people who attend their holiday playschemes. They provide warm lunches as well as healthy snacks throughout the day. Some children have not had much fruit or vegetables in their lives and are hesitant to try food they have not come across before, so to entice even the most reluctant, the staff enable them to make their own food, such as pizzas and fruit kebabs. They also play food games with them and have special ‘Superfood’ days.

FOOD SWAPS

The staff are realistic that children’s eating habits cannot be changed overnight, so they often make some food “swaps”, such as lower-fat sausages with mash and green beans and soya-mince Bolognese and spaghetti. They offer a choice of two lunches each day, knowing that children like a choice, and are more likely to eat food they have chosen.



“The funding has enabled us to buy more items and provide more choice for the children.”



THE 3 FS – FOOD, FUN AND FRIENDS



Each week, the Dovecote Centre had a healthy food theme, and organised “Superfood Days” – tasting sessions with a huge range of fruit and vegetables – including strawberries, beetroot, mango, spinach, blueberries, celery, tomatoes, peppers, avocado, kiwi fruit and kale. The children chose ingredients to make smoothies, which encouraged them to taste before they chose. All children were encouraged to taste all the smoothies to see which ones they liked best – fun with food and friends!



Healthy snacks were provided, and they also had treat snacks available, such as biscuits. As the manager said, “You have to be realistic about what they will eat and what they are used to eating. You have to get the balance.” Water was always available, encouraging healthy habits.

Games including ‘Guess the Food’ were played – some children had never seen or tasted a strawberry before. They also played ‘Food From Around the World’ and eating food hanging from strings without using your hands – as well as the normal doughnuts for this game, they also had pieces of apple, orange and prunes!

**“Children tried fruit and vegetables they had never had before.
Often they liked it and wanted more!”**

“We give every parent/carers our Healthy Eating Policy so they understand that we encourage children to learn about healthy eating issues and gain appropriate skills to make informed decisions. Hopefully this means we are all working together.”

