

National School  
Breakfast Programme

# Food for Thought



Building  
stronger  
families



Delivering the National School Breakfast Programme

“

It is making a huge difference in school. The teachers have already begun to recognise more academic progress being made in some of our most vulnerable pupils. Cannot thank the NSBP enough.

”

— *Inclusion Officer at a NSBP School*

# Welcome



**T**he numbers are breathtaking. Every school day, as a result of the National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP), an estimated 280,000 children are now enjoying a nutritious breakfast with all of the benefits that brings. As a result they are able to concentrate in class and learn.

As this Year One Progress Report shows, the NSBP is not only working, it has exceeded all expectations. It is a Government-funded Programme that is hugely popular with schools, pupils and teachers and that is making a profound difference to children and young people across England.

Family Action is proud to lead the NSBP with our excellent partners Magic Breakfast. We are grateful to the Government for funding the Programme and we are equally grateful to every school that has so enthusiastically embraced the aims of the Programme by signing up to it and making it a reality.

In England in 2019 it is shocking that some children are too hungry to learn, but this is a solvable problem – and we are solving it. We know that there is still unmet demand and there is both room and a real need for the Programme to expand further.

This Year One Progress Report describes the difference the NSBP is making. I want everyone who reads this Year One Progress Report to think about what it must be like to go to school hungry and what a relief it must be to know that that problem has now been taken away.

Please read this report, talk about it to your friends and colleagues and make it your personal mission to see that this Programme is extended.

We have a success story on our hands with this Programme. Let's recognise and celebrate it and together ensure that no child is too hungry to learn.

Let's make this a national priority.

**David Holmes CBE**  
Chief Executive  
Family Action



**O**ur Programme is founded on a belief in every child and our desire for them to achieve their potential. If we as a society want to see good educational outcomes for every child, regardless of their family circumstances, we need to support

and learn from the National School Breakfast Programme, which has brought together the strengths of Family Action and Magic Breakfast to support each hungry child.

If we believe that education and access to work offers the best route out of poverty - the best chance of a better life - how shocking is it that so many children might be being excluded from their best future, simply because they lack something as basic as a healthy breakfast?

Children tell us that they cannot listen to the words of their teacher because they can only hear their tummies grumbling, empty. If you or I tried to attempt hours of serious learning without any nutrition whatsoever how do you think we'd do? Put yourself in the shoes of a hungry seven-year-old facing double maths and perhaps it will be clear why breakfast really matters.

Teachers tell us that the most important lessons are taught in the morning and that a hungry child

simply cannot be expected to concentrate. Unless we want to accept massive learning loss in every hunger hit school community we have to find a way to solve this problem, right now.

Fortunately, a way does exist. We know from independent research carried out on the Magic Breakfast model in 2016 that children who attended a school with a breakfast club made an average of 2 months additional progress in reading, writing and maths. These benefits were felt throughout the whole school population... Even extending to those who didn't actually eat breakfast!

This model, combined with the strengths of Family Action, has been scaled up and accelerated through the National School Breakfast Programme.

If we can just continue the good work of the NSBP and deliver a healthy school breakfast to every child at risk of hunger, without price barrier or stigma, in a way that works for the unique needs of each individual school we will create a step change and provide an evidenced route to better educational outcomes.

That is an incredible outcome for a very small investment!

**Carmel McConnell MBE**  
Founder  
Magic Breakfast

## Arlies Primary Tackling persistent absence



Early mornings at Arlies primary school are a hive of activity.

Wherever you look at the school in Stalybridge you'll find members of staff with a tray of bagels, serving in the canteen or gently nudging children into class with a bagel in hand.

And, in case you're in any doubt, this collective effort extends all the way to the top!

Head Teacher, Lucy Hughes said: "There's no hierarchy – senior leaders, teachers, TA's and the School Business Manager are toasting, buttering and serving bagels each morning. It is a whole-school team effort to try and improve pupil attendance, latecomers and provision for our vulnerable pupils. I'll often be out in the playground with a tray of bagels meeting and greeting pupils ensuring that they have had a good breakfast to start the day!"

This whole team approach is necessary due to the school's geography, which has parents entering the premises from different directions and also because they wanted to trial playground, classroom and canteen-based methods of breakfast delivery simultaneously.

Bagels are served in the hall, playground, at 3 entrances and in the school's early years foundation stage Department – with the school saying that by doing so at least 95 per cent of the school's 256 children pass a breakfast pick up point somewhere on site.

Children can also take their bagel into class which promotes a welcoming entrance to school; this service has definitely made mornings more appealing for all pupils including those who have previously found the start of the school day a difficult one and for those who were habitually late.

**For those who were persistently absent, we needed something big to get the children here and on time**

Mrs Hughes added: "We realised that there was not a real reason for not eating in the classroom; it's a complete change of culture but it promotes a nice class environment and has been a change for the better. Across school, it promotes social interaction and communication, especially in the EYFS department where communication and language and personal and social skills form a huge strand within the framework."

Before joining the NSBP, the school's level of persistent lates sat at double the national average and they were actively trying to address the problem through innovative approaches such as a walking bus service to get children into school as well as a chargeable toast service, but they found the latter wasn't reaching the children who really needed it.

Mrs Hughes added: "For those who were persistently absent, we needed something big to get the children here and on time. We tried offering ICT club, opening the doors earlier and closing the registers earlier but these routine changes didn't work. We needed these pupils and our most vulnerable pupils here in school."

That's why when the school worked with the NSBP, it decided to make breakfast the focal point of delivery instead, which has paid dividends for the school, who say it's had a marked effect on attendance in general, persistent absence, latecomers, the happiness of vulnerable pupils and the eagerness to get into school!

# What we do

## Programme overview

The National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) is designed to ensure children in the most disadvantaged areas of England have access to a healthy breakfast at school, without barrier or stigma.

We passionately believe no child in these schools should sit in their morning lessons too hungry or malnourished to learn.

We know a healthy breakfast at school helps provide children with the energy and nutrients they need to thrive – improving concentration, behaviour, attendance, punctuality, wellbeing and educational attainment.

The NSBP is setting up sustainable breakfast clubs in schools that either had no breakfast provision when they applied to the Programme, or breakfast provision with scope for improvement.

The Government is funding the Programme to kick start this provision in over 1,770 schools, including primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs).

We are proud to say that following the Programme's rapid recruitment of our target schools an estimated 280,000 children are being fed in schools supported by the NSBP (according to reports from our schools).

## Sustainability

The NSBP is committed to helping schools to have in place high quality breakfast provision that is sustainable beyond the life of the Programme. To this end we gather and share learning from across our network of schools at best practice events and through our School Partners, who work closely with each school to develop and embed their breakfast provision. To do this we:

- Provide strategies and learnings to schools to support them in maintaining their improved provision without long term dependence on the Programme
- Enable schools to share the innovative solutions they have created in response to issues such as staffing, sourcing food, delivery models and sponsorship, which can be shared with our wider school network.

These findings will be distributed back out through our communication channels such as the e-newsletter and breakfast visits to benefit all schools. The NSBP is also identifying and working with external partners to try and develop new opportunities to reduce or alleviate the cost to schools.

## Eligibility

Schools are eligible for the Programme if at least 50% of pupils fall within IDACI bands A-F (the most disadvantaged categories in the Government's 'Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index') and where there is no existing provision or the provision has scope for improvement.

## The NSBP offer

Most participating schools are receiving:

- Free, healthy breakfast food delivered direct to the door.
- Support from a dedicated member of NSBP staff.
- A detailed resource pack.
- Invitations to regional best practice events.
- A £500 start-up grant to buy necessary equipment such as toasters or a freezer.

In schools with good existing breakfast provision, funding for additional free places is offered in order to be able to reach more children at risk of hunger.

## Our food

The NSBP breakfast offering consists of a selection of cereals and porridge, as well as special recipe low fat bagels (Vitamin D enhanced, with wholemeal flour) crafted specifically for us by our supplier to enhance our provision.

All breakfast products meet School Food Standards and regulations in England.

Schools supply their own milk and spreads, although the NSBP offers guidance on portion size and the amount of spread that is appropriate for school age children to consume.

They are also given, and signposted to, information on possible allergens.

## Our support

Once a school is eligible for NSBP support, they are assigned a local member of NSBP staff who visits to assess their existing breakfast provision or give advice on how to set up breakfast provision in order to reach as many children at risk of hunger as possible.

The number of visits each school receives depends on individual circumstances, but is based on the following:

- Recruitment meeting
- Planning/launch
- New breakfast visit
- Optimisation/sustainability meeting

## The different types of school breakfast provision

No two schools are the same so breakfast provision is created to fit the need of each school, where there may be restrictions due to space, time, staff capacity or the needs of the pupils themselves.

These solutions are bespoke, but based on proven Magic Breakfast models developed with



schools over the last eighteen years.

The following options for breakfast are discussed with schools, who may choose to adopt just one option, or a combination of options, to suit their individual circumstances:

### 1. Traditional Breakfast Club

A traditional breakfast club setting means pupils benefit from a nurturing family-style breakfast – involving sitting at a table, learning fine motor skills through using cutlery, socialising with a range of ages, where they may pour their own milk or spread their own bagels.

### 2. Classroom breakfast

Offering breakfast in the classroom, often as part of what is known as a ‘soft start’, is a simple solution for schools wishing to make food available to very large numbers of children due to the high levels of hunger/need in the school, without incurring significant staff costs.

### 3. Playground bagels

A tray of warm bagels greeting children as they arrive in the playground every morning is ideal for schools with high numbers of hungry children, limited staff capacity and dining space restrictions. For low staff cost, it is possible to ensure that every child in the school has the chance to access healthy food before the start of lessons.

### 4. Bagel Bar – ‘Grab and Go’

This solution is ideal for schools wishing to maximise a small dining space and provides a flexible option for attracting students who wouldn’t engage with a traditional breakfast club.

### 5. Provision for ‘Lates’

All schools are encouraged to be mindful that latecomers may be arriving hungry, through no fault of their own, and that food should be available and offered to these children as a matter of course, so that it is not seen as something of which to be ashamed.

These baseline models are flexible and NSBP schools are encouraged to come up with ingenious solutions for delivering breakfasts to their pupils.

We have already seen numerous innovations shared over social media and in local newspapers, radio and TV, including a ‘bagel bus’, a school in Derby’s famous ‘Pot of Porridge’ and a ‘bagel shack’ which was declared open by the Warrington Wolves rugby-playing mascot Wolfie!

## Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy Breakfast in a relaxed environment

Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy were very enthusiastic following initial discussions with their School Partner and planned a week's promotional campaign to support the launch of their NSBP breakfast.

This campaign involved the production of an eye-catching pop up banner, scheduled posts on a range of social media and the school's website and adverts on the school's internal TV channel.

To maximize the uptake in the school Media and Marketing Manager Wayne Trevor also enlisted the assistance of the Heads of Years to deliver promotional assemblies for each year group at the large school, which has 1066 pupils on the roll, of which 47 per cent are pupil premium.

Students were informed about the importance of starting the day with a healthy breakfast as fuel for learning and that a free breakfast would be available every day.

The school serves breakfast in the dining hall

in a relaxed environment with the radio playing and pastoral staff on hand to create a supportive atmosphere half an hour before the school day starts.

Staff say they're confident that in the two months since provision launched attendance and punctuality have improved.

However, the school also appreciates there are some students who have a more challenging start to their day, from young carers to students travelling long distances to get to school.

Therefore, bagels are made available at the late-gate to ensure that the students have the option to have breakfast on their way to class, which is also proving to be successful.

Teachers are able to cite specific examples of students where their wellbeing and behaviour have significantly improved and referrals to the behaviour breakout room (a space where low level disruptive pupils are sent) have decreased since offering the free school breakfast.

### Food and deliveries

Schools are provided with as much food as is needed to ensure every child at risk of hunger has access to something to eat before lessons

To be cost effective deliveries of food to schools take place either each week, or once every two weeks, depending on the needs of the school.

### The School Partner role

Each school's NSBP School Partner keeps in touch throughout the NSBP contract to give guidance and ensure best practice. Advice is offered in a whole range of areas, including:

- Extending breakfast provision and improving targeting
- Bringing in 'difficult to reach' children
- Adding value to breakfast time
- Reducing costs and getting the most from the provision
- Meeting School Food Standards
- Assessing the level of hunger in the school
- Monitoring the benefits breakfast provision delivers

This personalised approach means the NSBP can offer ideas and support that are tailored to each school's situation, based on what the experienced NSBP staff know works well in other schools. It

is this tailored approach that enables us to share innovation and learning, with the ultimate goal of ensuring more children are fed in each school.

Schools are given a comprehensive range of written resources detailing how they can maximise and optimise their breakfast provision and how they can publicise it to pupils and parents. This includes posters and 'Quick Guides' eg: the Quick Guide to Classroom Breakfast or the Quick Guide to Playground Bagels.

### Best practice

The NSBP's best practice goal is for schools to make food free to all in order to ensure that vulnerable children who do not have access to food at home can get a healthy breakfast at school without money being a barrier, or without having to worry about the stigma that comes with being poor.

A key part of the NSBP's success in reaching Pupil Premium children, and others at risk of hunger, is helping school staff to identify and target children who would benefit most from a free breakfast, and periodically review how successful this is.

Helping to ensure no hungry child slips through the net helps to ensure the whole school has a calm and productive morning of lessons.

An important means of doing so is the sharing of best practice between schools and so, to this end,



representatives from all NSBP schools are invited to regional events to hear from leading NSBP staff and share their successes with their peers.

The first round of events took place in seven locations across England in early 2019 and were received enthusiastically by schools, with 57 per cent saying the events were “extremely useful”. A further 30 per cent said they were “very useful”.

One attendee at the Bolton events said: “Meeting such a rich variety of talented, resourceful, committed people who shared their stories was really uplifting”.

Great care is taken to ensure each NSBP school feels supported and sees the benefits of breakfast provision across the school, so that breakfast becomes permanently embedded into the school day.

### In a typical week we deliver to schools...



**624k**  
bagels



**7,224**  
boxes of cereal



**260kg**  
of oats



## St Andrew's Church of England Primary Addressing hunger without stigma

St Andrew's Church of England Primary has around 48 per cent Pupil Premium children, but Head Teacher Lisa Thompson believes that even this figure doesn't capture the full scale of need at the school.

She said: "It's potentially the majority of our children who benefit as even the ones who aren't eligible for pupil premium are on very low incomes".

A key indicator of this is the high take up of universal free school meals at around 90 per cent.

Because of the scale of need the school, based in Wolverhampton, implemented a classroom model of breakfast delivery where bagels are prepared in a kitchen used to teach life skills and distributed to classrooms in bags that keep them warm.

Mrs Thompson added: "We want to make sure that we give as many children as possible access to the bagels and have them available for the late arrivals when they come in as they're often the ones who are most at risk of not eating".

She notes, however, that although the bagels are available to everyone, discussions with children by her staff have highlighted an interesting trend.

"The children that choose not to have a bagel are the ones who've had breakfast at home".

"The majority of these are not our Pupil Premium children – which means it's reaching the kids that need it".

In the case of St Andrew's, the preparation of breakfast is handled by two lunchtime supervisors who come in early.

Breakfast Club Assistant Kerry Hand is a local resident and single parent whose children have both attended the school.

She said: "I think it's a brilliant idea - as a single parent I know how difficult it is to manage your budget. I've lived round here for 17 years so I've seen how disadvantaged some children are."



**"For the first time since I've worked here we've been above the national average for attendance."**

The school believes universal delivery has allowed the school to address hunger without stigma, that morning lessons have improved due to better focus, and that attendance has improved.

Ms Thompson added: "For the first time since I've worked here we've been above the national average for attendance. I think that could be linked to the fact that children are better nourished and not getting poorly."

**"Since the NSBP started I have had no students complaining of hunger, feeling sick or having headaches.**

**The impact on the children has been amazing. I have even had students tell me that they don't need to see me anymore as they're having breakfast in school."**

*A member of the medical staff at a NSBP School*

# NSBP at a glance

Schools we operate in...

**59**

All through

**1,384**

Primary

**332**

Secondary



Special Educational Needs (SEN) **61** Pupil Referral Units (PRU) **24**

For schools that **had an existing** breakfast provision they were feeding, on average,

**9%** of their school roll

Now as part of the **National School Breakfast Programme** they are reaching

**53%** of their school roll

Demand for support has been high with over **3,200 expressions of interest** for the Programme submitted. We continue to receive EOI forms from schools in need.

An evaluation found that supporting schools to run a free of charge, universal breakfast club before school delivered an average of

**two months' additional progress for pupils\***

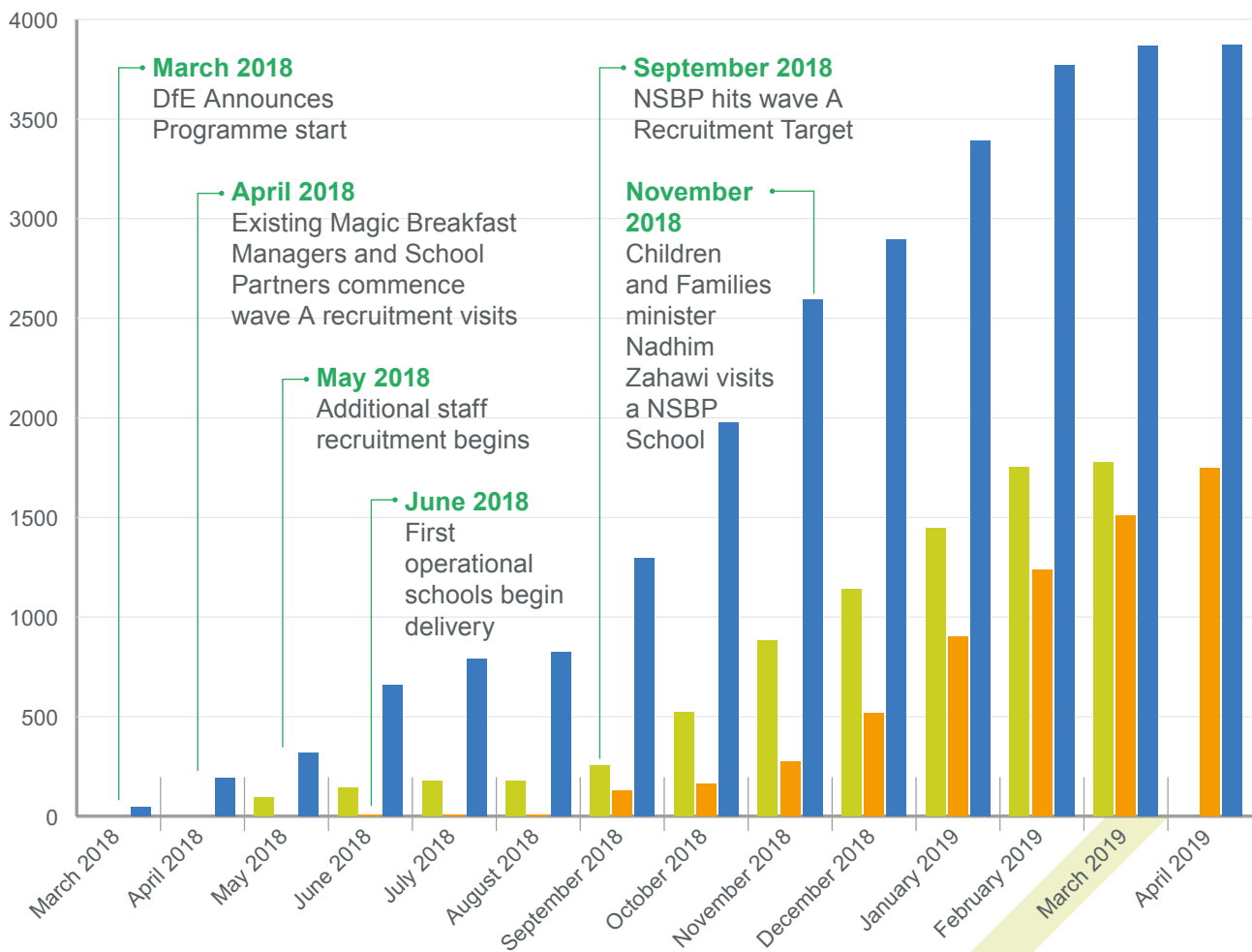
— Education Endowment Foundation evaluation of the Magic Breakfast model in 2016

## How our first year developed...

■ Expressions of interest to date

■ Schools recruited

■ Schools operational



**March 2019** NSBP hits overall recruitment Target of 1,775 schools

An estimated

**280,000**

children are eating breakfast in a NSBP partner school **every school day**

**115,000**

pupil premium pupils are having breakfast in a NSBP school on average **every school day**

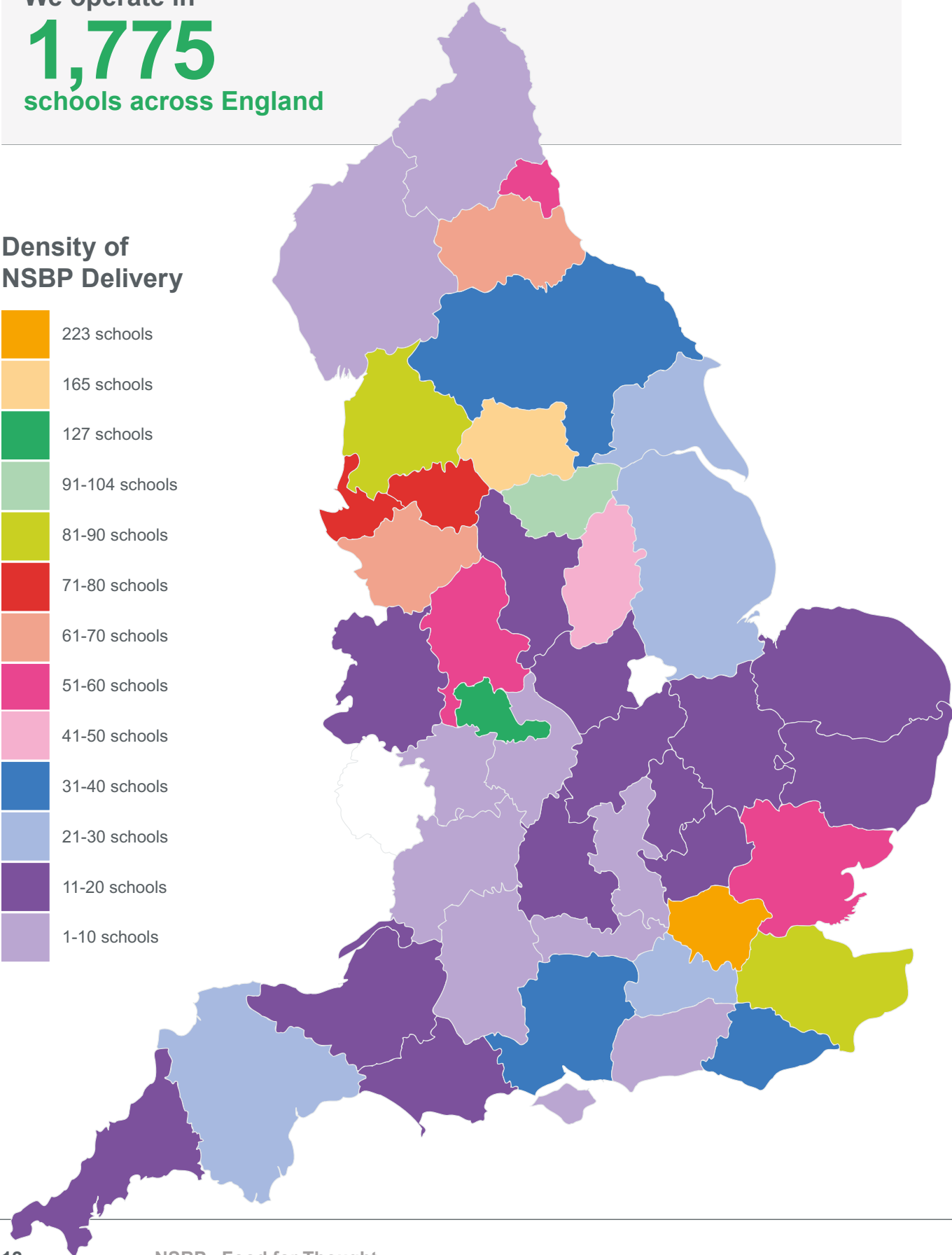
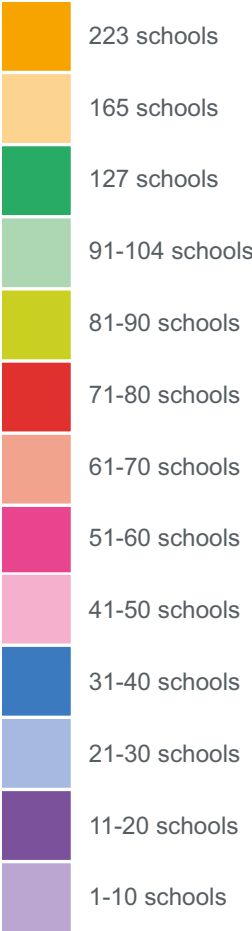
# Where we operate

We operate in

**1,775**

**schools across England**

## Density of NSBP Delivery



## Rockmount Primary Discussing nutrition and wellbeing

For Rockmount Primary providing a healthy breakfast allowed them to continue a discussion around nutrition and general wellbeing that they were already working hard to establish.

The Crystal Palace-based school used breakfast provision to work toward the National Children's Bureau's "Award Place" (which they've now achieved).

Interestingly the school looked at the five ways to wellbeing – developed by the New Economics Foundation – and found that each tied neatly into the NSBP's breakfast provision, as comments from schoolchildren and staff below highlight:

- Connect – "Normally when you're at home eating breakfast by yourself you don't talk. When you're with your friends you can talk and connect while you're eating your bagels".
- Be Active – "We've been doing skipping and playing during breakfast. My favourite thing to do is play dodgeball and breakfast gives you energy to play".
- Take Notice – "You can try and see how people are feeling and notice if they have breakfast or not. If you're at home and eating breakfast really fast you might not notice how it tastes. You need to eat it slowly!"
- Keep Learning – "Because we've been talking about different areas of wellbeing during breakfast we're more confident about them".
- Give – "The NSBP is giving us this food with help from the Government"

For Healthy Schools Coordinator Hayley Gorman breakfasts and wellbeing are intrinsically linked.

She said: "As part of my role I've been looking at food and mood and how the two interlink so we've been speaking to the children about how different foods affect the way that you're feeling and the importance of having breakfast".

The school draws on a very diverse catchment area – featuring both large owner-occupied houses and a sizeable local housing estate – and as such decided to run a classroom based provision to ensure there was no stigma attached to having a



**"We've been speaking to the children about how different foods affect the way that you're feeling and the importance of having breakfast."**

bagel in the mornings for those most in need.

Once in the classrooms, teachers use their discretion as to how to deliver sessions during this period – from "curious question" sessions, to free flow sessions where children sit and talk about topics they've set, to Year Two classes where children choose the activities they want to do.

The result has been nearly universal take up of the breakfast bagel provision.

Staff say that in general the NSBP has had a real impact on behaviour at the school.

Hayley added: "In my class I've noticed that they come in and they've got their bagel and they're eating and talking at the same time and I think it helps to make a positive start to the school day".

**"I have noticed increased engagement in early morning learning and that there are a greater percentage of children arriving punctually (closer to 8.30), which means they are increasingly ready to learn come 9am. Also, behaviour and willingness to contribute answers in lessons, and children not looking tired with sloped body language at tables, have also improved."**

*Year 5 Teacher, Marine Academy, Plymouth*

# Vision for the future

**T**his report clearly highlights the impact that the National School Breakfast Programme has already achieved as a cost-effective intervention to support the educational outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The feedback from schools shows the value they see first-hand in having a supported breakfast provision. As a result of this positive impact many schools are making significant changes to the start of the school day in order to prioritise a free, healthy breakfast for all pupils. The benefits reported by schools include improved behaviour, attendance and attainment and they are eager to sustain their provision to enable these benefits to continue and increase.

We estimate that 280,000 pupils each day are being fed in schools supported by the National School Breakfast Programme, but there is a lot more to be done!

Our ambition is to reach the many more children who are arriving at school hungry, who would benefit from receiving a nutritious breakfast, without barrier or stigma, before they start their school day.

We work with every NSBP school to help identify and develop sustainability plans because we believe that continuing this essential provision will ensure children start every day of their school life on the front foot. By helping to bridge the attainment gap that so many disadvantaged children unfairly face we are investing in the next generation and their future potential, benefitting local families, local communities and the country as a whole.

A child living in poverty has many obstacles to face...being too hungry to learn does not need to be one of them. The National School Breakfast Programme can help to equip schools with the ability to ensure vulnerable children have access to a healthy breakfast, allowing them to start their school day fed and ready to learn.



“

It's fantastic news that hundreds of thousands of children are now enjoying a nutritious breakfast every school day through this ground-breaking programme, and I look forward to seeing it go from strength to strength as we work towards our ambition to ensure every child has the best possible start in life – which means getting the best possible start to their day.

“We are delighted to be investing up to £26 million in breakfast clubs, working with our delivery partners Family Action and Magic Breakfast. This builds on the strides we've already made, including supporting more than a million of the most disadvantaged children with free school meals. We are also investing £9 million in holiday clubs so thousands more children can benefit from free meals and activities this summer

”

— *Nadhim Zahawi MP,  
Minister for Children and Families*



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stronger  
families



Delivering the National School Breakfast Programme

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