

## CASE STUDY

# HOB MOOR COMMUNITY PRIMARY AND HOB MOOR OAKS SPECIAL SCHOOL

WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE DINING EXPERIENCE



Hob Moor Community Primary School and Hob Moor Oaks Special School share a purpose built kitchen for lunches but conversations with the school SNAG Group highlighted to staff that lunchtimes were becoming stressful for the children – especially those in Hob Moor Oaks. Increased demand for school lunches was resulting in longer queuing times, which in turn caused more disruptive behaviour.

A Food for Life Local Programme Manager worked with the school cook to develop an alternative way of organising mealtimes. A decision was made to seat the children on their arrival in the lunch-hall and provide them with bowls of fresh vegetable fingers and bread, before calling them up, table-by-table, to the serving hatch.

This small act has already had a noticeable impact and all children are now enjoying a more peaceful lunchtime whilst also normalising raw vegetables as a part of every child's lunchtime experience. This change has demonstrated the new focus on healthy eating to the whole school community. It has also shown the children that their voice has been heard, and involved all layers of the school in finding a healthy solution to a common problem.

Bringing both schools together also reduces the stigma surrounding special education needs:

*"It's so nice to have a project that stretches across both schools, because so often they're aimed at one or the other – and food is such a universal thing! 99% of our children eat lunch together – it's one of the things that can really tie us together. We can all gain life experience." (Head teacher, Kayleigh Chambers)*