

School FEAST is a national network of 29 centres and partnerships dedicated to training the school food workforce.

For more information, please visit [www.schoolfeast.co.uk](http://www.schoolfeast.co.uk)

## School FEAST entices catering expert back to the classroom

With many school cooks already having significant catering experience, some are understandably sceptical about the merits of School FEAST training.



This was certainly Linda Dickinson's view. As catering manager at Lytham St Anne's College in Lancashire, she already had decades of experience under her belt and wasn't sure what more she could learn.

Nevertheless, Linda's recent experience of School FEAST training has transformed her whole approach and, as a result, her catering service. "I thoroughly enjoyed the Professional Catering Skills course," she admits. "No one knows it all and I realise now you can get complacent and stale."

Linda passes on her training to her team, which in turn, benefits the pupils.

"Pupils chat to us about the food, asking what is in the meals, and teachers say pupils are more attentive in the afternoons since the school meals improved."

School FEAST's Support Workers in Schools (SWiS) course has given Linda a completely new insight into the school as a whole, its function as an organisation and how her role fits in. It explored the role of all non-teaching staff such as the school nurse, the community police officer, those who come in to support children with special needs or problems, the sign language teacher, and the office staff.

Linda acknowledges the experience has broadened her horizon "I hadn't really stopped before then to think about how a school was actually run," she says. "The SWiS course has opened my eyes to this and enabled me to care better for the pupils. It's about more than just the food on the plate."

Headteacher, Philip Wood said: "Provision of school meals has been transformed at our school. Children and staff enjoy high quality food served in a first class environment and much credit for this is due to Linda and her team.

"We were delighted to support Linda through her School FEAST training. It has helped improve quality of provision for our students and shown the enormous contribution Linda and the catering team are making here."