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PRESS RELEASE

TV CHEF COOKED UP A STORM ON THE STREETS OF BIRMINGHAM.

Fabulous chef Atul Kochhar - the first Indian chef to be awarded a Michelin star - joined pupils from local schools on board the Food Standards Agency sponsored Cooking Bus at the annual Local Government Association Conference in Birmingham.

Atul, who runs his won acclaimed Restaurant Benares in Mayfair, shared his skills with children from Conway Primary School, Sparkbrook, in Birmingham.

He taught them some basic cooking techniques and showed them how to make Saag Aloo Tikki, deliciously spiced potato and spinach cakes and an Indian dessert Bhapa Doi, a milky pudding infused with cardamoms and incorporating pistachio nuts, raisins and strawberries with a fruit coulis.

Then the pupils made the dishes themselves with help from the Cooking Bus teacher Michaela Bowles and Atul himself.

It was the first time Atul had been aboard a Cooking Bus. "I really enjoyed it," he said. "I think it is a fantastic idea. It gets youngsters involved in food - not just food bought from the supermarket."

Atul, who is 37, married and has two young children, said cooking had been his family business for a long time but he knew it was a something not all people learned at home.



"It is a skill that should be taught. We teach children to swim in this country and we should teach people to cook. Cooking should be as normal as walking and talking."

The pupils were delighted at having a celebrity teach them to cook and were able to take home all the delicious food they had prepared.

Atul admitted they were a demanding audience. "They ask all the unexpected questions," he said. "The children are tougher than some of the most critical journalists I have seen in London!"

Atul Kochhar was at the conference as a guest and supporter of the Food Standards Agency. Having made a selection of food at the conference centre, including Chicken Tikka, Chilled Pea Soup and Coconut Fish Curry, with the help of a team of chefs visitors to the Food Standards Agency stand were able to sample his cooking and find out more about the work of the FSA, including the Cooking Bus run by the *Focus on Food* Campaign.