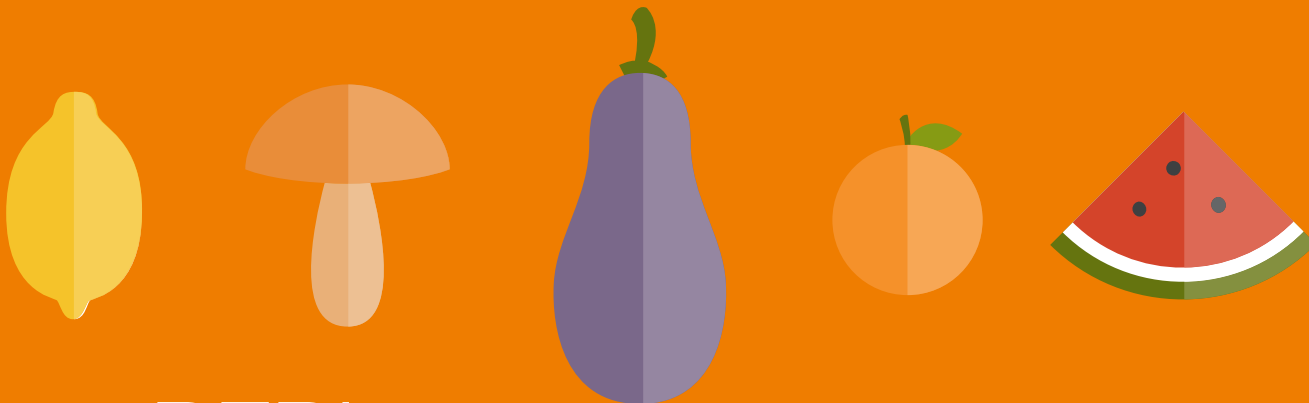




Better Eating, Better Learning

A guide for children and young people to assess school food



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What has happened so far?

Better Eating, Better Learning, or BEBL for short, is a unique and exciting project.

Children and young people have been able to decide things like:

What is working and what needs improved about school food?

How could the school dining hall be changed to encourage more pupils to eat there?

What needs changed about what you learn about food in school?

Six schools accepted a challenge to work on one or two main themes. They chose what was most important to their own school.

The themes were:

Communications and Engagement

School food and drink provision

Staff Development

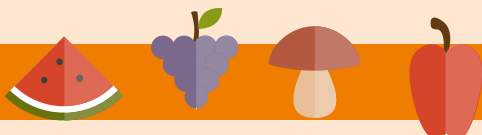
Sustainability

Outside catering or school lunches

Food and Learning

Find out more about what these mean when you read the schools' stories.

They have also each produced a 'tool' or resource to help other schools get started.





How can you and your school **begin your own BEBL project?**

This guide might help you work together to tackle what you think needs improved in your school, by using the experiences of the six schools as a starting point.

Each story, and the resource that has been made, will give you ideas and will also let you know what has worked and some of the problems you might face.

Questions to start you **thinking and talking...**

Do you want to do something about the amount of food that is wasted in your school?

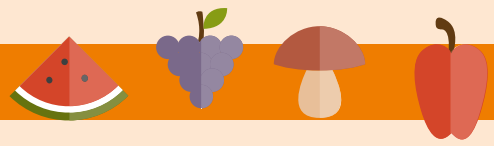
Would you like to be more involved in making decisions about the food that is on offer in your school?

Would you like to improve your school dining experience?

Do you think the learning you do in school helps you make good choices for your own health and wellbeing?

Do you think that people, including parents and carers, should know more about school food?

Do you think school food could compete better against food offers outside of school?





Kirn Primary School's story...

You will find
Kirn Primary
in Dunoon
in Argyll and
Bute.

**Length of
project:**
August
2014-April
2015

The BEBL team was a Primary 6 class — and their class teacher helped them.

The theme they worked on was '**Communication and Engagement**'. They decided to work with their school cook to learn more about school food and they wanted to involve their parents and carers.

What did the Kirn team do?

The group started by creating a team identity and designed badges that were worn on lanyards when doing their BEBL project work.

They made graffiti boards with all their ideas after thinking about some big questions:

'How can we influence school meals?'

'What do we know about the food we get in the dining hall?'

'What could we do to improve school food?'

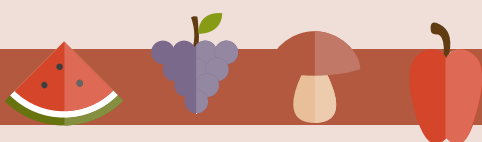
'How could we inform pupils and families about healthier food choices?'


They started a wallboard that followed their progress from Week 1 to let the whole school know what they were doing.

They could see some simple changes that would immediately improve the choices pupils could make.

- The BEBL team visited classes each week to tell them what was going to be on the menu
- They created a board outside the dining hall that featured interesting facts about food on the menu. They did their own research and also talked to the school cook

The team then thought about ways it could influence change and involve parents and carers more.





'I think it is important to do this because it inspires children to change school meals and eat healthy.'

- P6 pupil

The group decided to plan towards cooking and serving a meal of their choice to their families at a special event.

- They had meetings with the school cook
- They designed different three course meals and decided on the winning menu
- They learned about foods that fitted with school meals rules
- They were given an amount of money to work with (a budget) and had to keep their costs within this
- They learned about food and hand hygiene
- They worked in groups to learn how to cook one course of the meal
- They planned the event: making invitations, decorations and a BEBL banner
- They cooked and served the meal to a large group of parents and families with help from the school cook and their teacher

What were their successes?

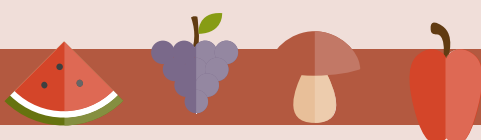
- They learned more about what cooks can include on the menus
- The BEBL team helped parents and carers to understand more about school food
- They learned to cook a meal
- They were able to see their meals included in the school menus

Top tips to solve problems

- You will need the support of the school cook
- You will need support from the Senior Management team.

Self Evaluation Tool

(Powerpoint)





Dunoon Grammar's story...

You will find
Dunoon Grammar in Dunoon in Argyll and Bute

Length of project:
November 2014-June 2015

The BEBL team was a group of S1 pupils, helped by their Home Economics teacher

The themes they worked on were '**School Food and Drink Provision**' and '**Staff Development**'

They decided to work with the school catering staff and Senior Management Team to improve school menus and try to encourage more pupils to eat school food

What did the Dunoon team do?

The group thought about food and drink in their own school and made a survey that was given to S2 and S5/6 pupils.

The survey covered all areas of school food and drink, including:

- what choices they had
- what pupils knew about the food and drink on offer
- how costs compared with buying food out of school
- the dining environment and experience.

The group gathered the results of all the completed surveys and found the big messages. They aim to share the results on the school website to make sure the whole school knows what is happening.

The pupils plan to interview the catering staff with a view to looking at any improvements that can be made.





Some ideas the BEBL group has for the future:

Start a food club and make dips and dressings as a special offer one day a week

Have theme days to encourage pupils to eat different food and learn about food from different countries

Have tastings of new foods

Arrange quiz type surveys to keep gathering opinions on food and drink in school

Their successes

- Pupils have had a say in what happens in their school
- The BEBL team plans to continue working on the improvements next school year and to measure its success

Top tips to solve problems

- Make sure you can find times to work together and have support from a teacher
- Suggest that the project becomes part of the curriculum or
- Suggest that the BEBL team meets in the same way as Pupil Councils or Committees

Self evaluation tools

(Prezi - opens as PDF)





Knightswood Primary School's story...

You will find
Knightswood
Primary School
in Glasgow

**Length of
project:**
September
2014-March
2015

The BEBL team was a group of eight P7 House and Vice Captains, supported by the P7 Ambassadors. The Headteacher supported this team.

Their theme was '**Sustainability**', and the team decided to focus on food waste at lunchtime, particularly fruit, and investigating ways to reduce this

What did the Knightswood team do?

The group decided to focus on increasing the number of children who will eat fruit and to find ways of reducing and reusing the waste fruit in the dinner hall.

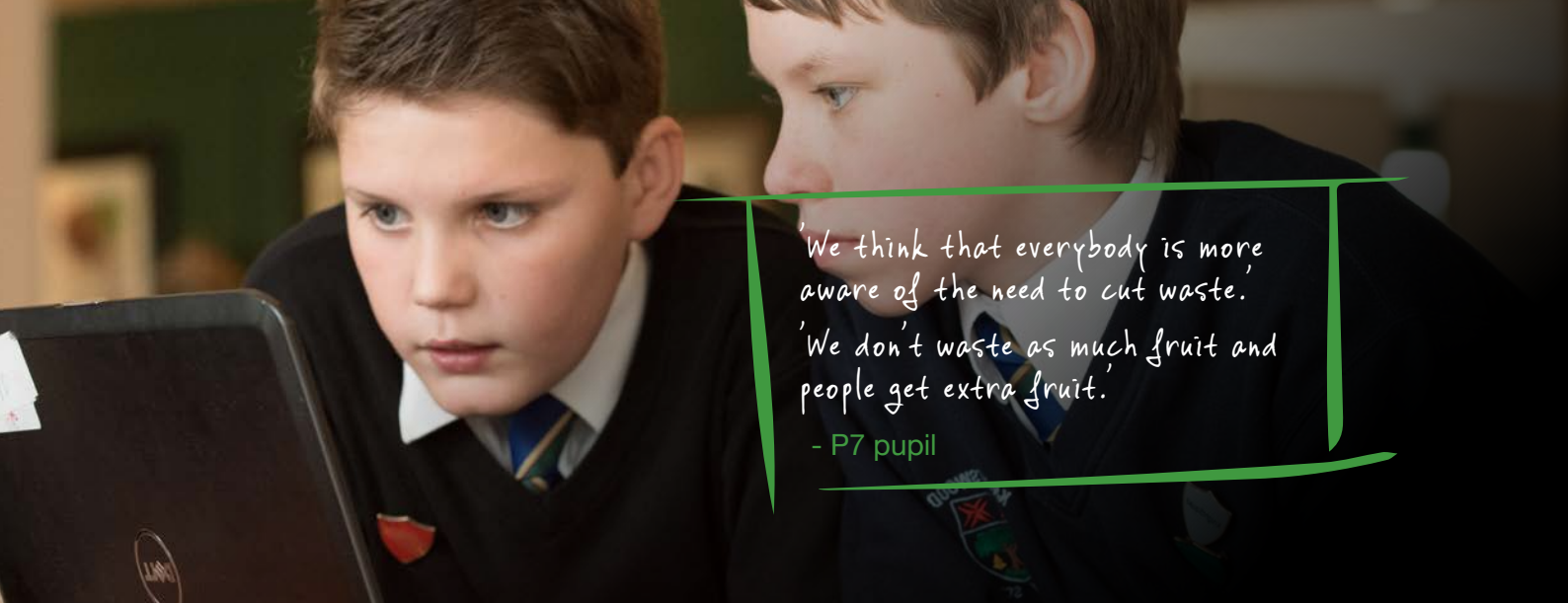
The House Captains ran monthly House Assemblies and told the whole school about the project and what they were doing.

They started by giving out stickers to children who were eating healthy fruit snacks at morning break and checking the fruit taken by children at lunchtime. They were keen to stop waste fruit going to landfill.

A container called the 'fruit basket' was provided for fruit not used by children after they have finished their lunch. The group thought about washing it and offering it to classes at home time or by agreement with class teachers. However, as the P7 Ambassadors wanted to become involved in the project they proposed that the fruit that was 'saved' should be turned into frozen yoghurt and sold as part of the school's healthy snack focus.

The BEBL group decided to start weighing and measuring general food waste in the dinner hall to get the message across to the pupils. On one day alone they found they could feed about 30 people from the waste.





'We think that everybody is more aware of the need to cut waste.'
'We don't waste as much fruit and people get extra fruit.'

- P7 pupil

The House Captains attended a Parent Council meeting to tell them what they were doing and get their ideas and help with reducing waste. They also met with Cordia, who run the school catering services, to discuss and find solutions.

The BEBL group found:

- It was important to keep talking about food waste at House Assemblies and to write a BEBL blog so everyone felt involved
- House Lunches (different age groups eating together) once a month reduced waste
- 'Clear a Plate Day' made the biggest difference to the amount of waste
- Having more adult helpers in the dinner hall reduced waste
- Allowing pupils to help themselves to some things encouraged pupils to eat what they have chosen

Their successes

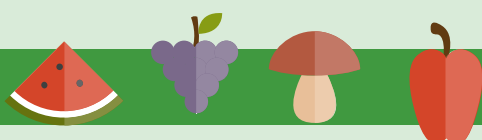
- By keeping careful checks the BEBL team was able to see what worked and advise the school
- Older pupils were able to positively influence the choices younger pupils made

Top Tips to solve problems

- Meetings need to be regular to keep the project moving forward
- The whole school should be involved if there is going to be a real change

Self evaluation tool

(Powerpoint)





Irvine Royal Academy's story...

You will find
Irvine Royal Academy in Irvine, North Ayrshire

Length of project:
September 2014-June 2015

The BEBL team was a group of six S3 pupils, supported by their Home Economics teacher.

Their themes were '**School food and drink provision**' and '**Outside catering or school lunches**'.

The group explored what pupils are choosing to eat and drink, where they are buying their food and drink and worked on finding out the reasons for this.

What did the Irvine team do?

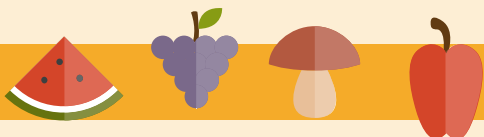
The BEBL group decided to survey the whole school. Over 500 surveys were distributed through registration classes.

They wanted to know:

- Where pupils chose to buy their food at lunchtime
- Why pupils chose to go out of school
- How much they typically spent
- What they thought about the dining experience in school

They collated the results and found the key messages.

They discovered that most S1 pupils and S5/6 pupils tend to stay in school for lunch. The main group that chooses to eat outside of school is S2-4 pupils. Outside of school the young people said they bought food in a local shop, a chip shop and the garage. Some pupils made the journey into the town to buy food at Subway.





The main messages were:

- Pupils would like a Subway-type alternative where they could self-select fillings
- They wanted more variety e.g. types of sandwich
- They wanted to know what the choices were before getting in the line
- They thought a 'Deal of the Day' type marketing would encourage uptake of healthy choices
- They said Wi-Fi in the dining hall would increase use of school dining facilities
- They said that different spaces for different year groups would encourage pupils to stay in school
- The dining hall needed to be improved
- The juice on offer should be improved

Their successes

- Changes have begun to be introduced
- The BEBL team plan to continue working on the project next year

Top Tips for solving problems

- Find time for the group and the supporting teacher to work together regularly
- Make time for the BEBL team in the same way as Pupil Council or Committees

Self evaluation tool

(School Food Rubric)





Hilton Primary School's story...

You will find
Hilton Primary School in Inverness in the Highlands

Length of project:
June 2014- March 2015

The BEBL team was a group of 12 P5/6 pupils, helped by a class teacher.

Their theme was **'Food and Learning'**.

They decided to investigate what pupils think about what they learn about food in school and where they can learn about food.

What did the Hilton team do?

The project started in the summer term 2014 as it fitted well with the school Health and Wellbeing focus.

The group had regular meetings, supported by the class teacher but more and more led by the children as the project progressed.

They began exploring their own ideas on food and learning in their school.

'What do you think you need to learn about food?'

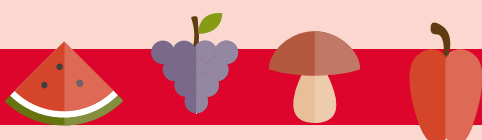
'Why do you think you need to learn about food?'

'What ways of learning about food have been most successful?'

'Where do you think you learn about food?'

The group decided to use surveys to find out what the whole school thought about food and learning. They created different surveys to allow all ages to participate, gathered all the information, found the big messages and worked with the staff and senior management to look at solutions.

One big message was that pupils thought there was not enough learning about food in the school garden or the school dinner hall. The BEBL group wanted this to be an area for improvement. They also found that pupils said they did not learn as much as they would like about food.





'We get to tell
the teachers
what to do'

- P5/6 pupil

*'Our job is to do something
to fix these problems!'*

To improve learning about food in the canteen the BEBL group organised a Pumpkin Theme Day. The canteen staff made roast pumpkin and seeds as part of school dinner that day. This whole school event was reported in the local press.

To improve the amount of learning within the school garden the BEBL group planned to split the school into Growing Groups in the summer term, with each group being responsible for growing and caring for a crop in the vegetable garden.

Finally the group looked at the experiences and outcomes linked to food, split them up and recommended what the teachers should be focusing on at each stage to improve the amount of learning about food within the curriculum.

The annual Health focus in the summer term has been renamed by the BEBL group as Fruity Friday. Each Friday the school will have a health day and the activities will have been influenced by the BEBL group.

Their successes

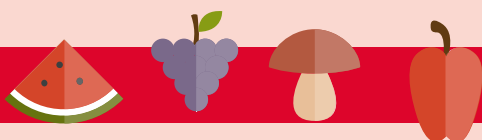
- Pupils have realised they can make a difference
- They learned their opinions were being listened to
- They hope that the project will continue next year
- They have become confident about sharing their ideas with a wide range of people

Top Tips to solve problems

- Have regular meetings
- Don't be scared to tackle difficult things such as what you learn in the curriculum about food

Self evaluation tool

(Photo Story)





Kilchuimen Academy's story...

You will find
Kilchuimen
Academy
in Fort
Augustus
in the
Highlands

Length of
project:
January
2015-June
2015

The BEBL team was a group of six P6/7 pupils and a group of six S3/4 pupils, supported by their Guidance teacher and PE teacher.

Their themes were '**Outside catering or school lunches**' and '**Staff development**'.

The group decided to find out the reasons for the low numbers of secondary pupils eating school lunches and to look at the dining environment and eating experiences of all pupils.

What did the Kilchuimen team do?

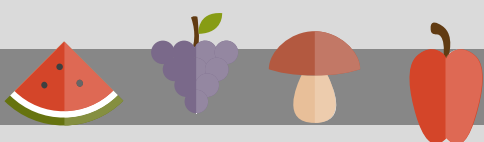
Kilchuimen Academy is a campus for both primary and secondary pupils. The lead group in Kilchuimen Academy was made up of pupils from P6-S4.

The BEBL team began their investigation by becoming researchers. They were each given a research kit that contained some basic tools e.g. notebook, pens, Post-its and a disposable camera.

They were asked to use these to record what the choices were in and out of school and to take photographs to show the school lunch experience.

The main points that arose following this were:

- The high street has many special offers but not on healthy foods
- The canteen needs more choice
- There are "ideal world" improvements that could be made to the canteen
- Pre-ordering of Subway style options might be good
- The canteen was your only choice (except packed lunch eaten in classroom) at primary so why not go out of school as soon as you can?
- The spaces available in the school to eat are not that attractive but they use them anyway





The children and young people then focused on what they thought were the important things to improve and three were identified:

- The school dining experience
- The amount of food waste
- The school lunch or outside catering outlets

The team decided the rest of the school should be involved. They discussed different ways to gather opinions including exit polls at lunchtime and use of a Survey Monkey mobile phone app but finally decided a paper survey distributed through classes would make sure that most pupils gave their views.

The team split into four groups. Three groups began to create mood or inspiration boards to share their ideas in a mixture of images, text and 3D materials. The remaining group devised a short survey.

Following their surveys, the primary pupils identified three areas to develop:

- The Environment of Eating
- Food Waste
- Food Choices

Their successes

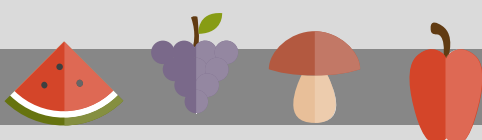
- They got their project started in a really visual way with their own photographs
- They were creative in their investigation e.g. mood boards
- They involved as many pupils as they could in both the primary and secondary schools

Top Tips for solving problems

- Have regular meetings
- Be willing to work independently
- Don't be scared to ask for help or make suggestions

Self-evaluation tool

(Food Rubric)





What can **you** and your **teachers** learn from the **BEBL** project?

- You can take the lead on changes to school food and to learning
- Your schools should be looking for ways to allow you to be more involved in making decisions
- You can develop a lot of skills
- Anyone can be involved
- You can develop a BEBL project that is completely your own
- Try to involve the whole school: it makes it more successful
- Try to work with the catering staff

Good luck with your projects! Share what you do through the BeXcellent website, a website created by children and young people for children and young people.

<http://bexcellent.org.uk>

