

Parents and pupils enjoy a packed lunch workshop



Cherry Fold Primary School in Burnley have been working with Food for Life Lancashire to engage parents and pupils by sharing simple and healthy packed lunch ideas.

After attending the Food for Life Eating Well event Joanna Heys, Pupil and Family Manager at Cherry Fold Primary, was inspired to share her learning with the school community.

"The Food for Life Eating Well event provided me with so many easy ways to make eating and drinking healthy and fun. I was immediately inspired to share them with parents and their children."

Joanna Heys, Pupil and Family Manager

Parents of pupils who regularly have packed lunches were invited to attend a workshop for an hour before the end of school. Due to the numbers, a series of workshops were scheduled – one a week for each year group.

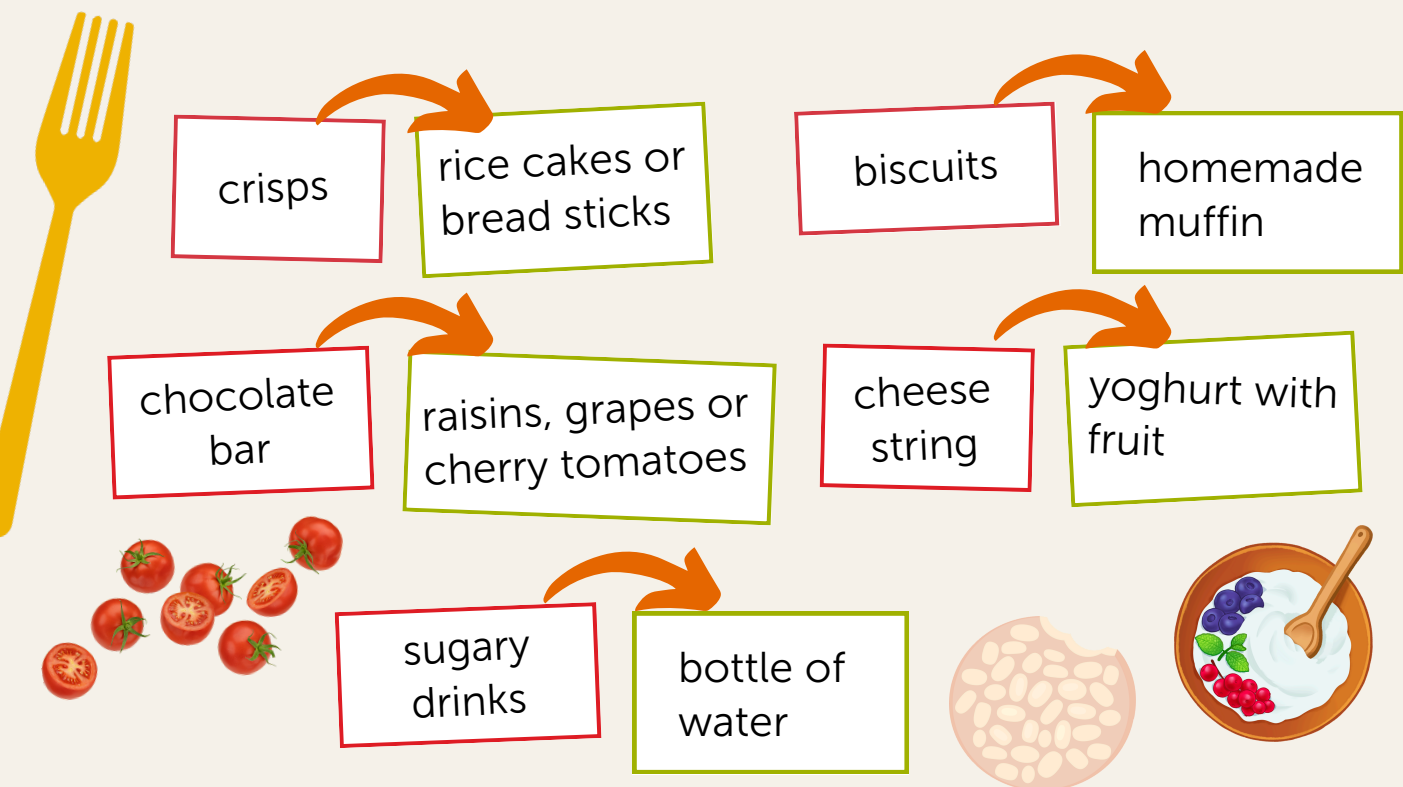
The workshop addressed common barriers and challenges when it comes to preparing healthy packed lunches.

Cost: pre-bought vs homemade

The pupils arrived and got stuck in with decorating their own paper lunch bag. As a fun welcome activity, they, alongside parents, completed a cost comparison challenge. They were shown two packed lunches – a quick and easy one pre-bought from the supermarket versus a quick and easy homemade version, then asked which they thought was the cheapest. This triggered lots of positive chatter and some surprise when the homemade packed lunch was revealed as cheaper.

Quick and healthy ideas: lunchbox swap

Next, the pupils helped complete a 'lunch box swap'. How could they give the dull packed lunch some colour, goodness and sparkle?! They started with a typical packed lunch including a ham sandwich on white bread, crisps, a chocolate bar, biscuits, cheese strings and a sugary drink. On the table was a selection of different food, which they sorted through to make healthy swaps.



Throughout the activity there were bowls of fruit and other packed lunch foods available for pupils and parents to try, and they were also invited to put some of the food in their own paper lunch bags. The ham sandwich was left until the end and prompted the next challenge...

Fun and healthy fillings: build a wrap!

Each pupil, with the help of their parents, built their own wrap choosing from a selection of yummy healthy fillings available. Once finished they added their wrap into their paper lunch bags.

Sugary packed lunch drinks: a teaspoon (or more?!) of sugar...

The third station challenged the pupils and their parents to guess how many teaspoons of sugar they thought were in the popular drinks like cola, blackcurrant juice, milkshake and lemonade. There were shocked faces when the results were revealed! Alongside this activity, pupils and parents were offered fruit-infused water – a jug of cold water with slices of orange and lemon.

"I was so inspired from the Food for Life Eating well event that we now have 'hydration stations' around the school which include jugs of infused fruit water and herbal cooled tea using herbs from our school garden. The children love helping themselves."

Joanna Heys, Pupil and Family Manager



Air fryer ideas

Many families have air fryers and wanted inspiration on how to use them for packed lunches. The final station involved making their own vegetable crisps, with sweet potato, parsnips and potatoes, using the air fryer.

"I've never tried them before and I like them, especially with some hummus"

Year Three pupil

But what about a sweet treat?!

Finally, pupils were asked if they'd like a homemade chocolate muffin to complete their packed lunch paper bags. They were invited to try one, resulting in big smiles. It was then explained that they were beetroot and chocolate muffins – the parents loved that, and pupils weren't put off eating them either!

As the children left with their full and healthy packed lunches, there were handouts including recipes and school meal information which many parents helped themselves to.

