

Currow kids are real food dudes

EXOTIC FRUITS and vegetables were on the school curriculum at Currow National School this week as pupils began a new healthy eating programme at the East Kerry school.

BY CON DENNEHY

On Friday the school was a hive of activity as the 159 pupils began a Food Dudes programme which was developed by the Department of Education and Department of Agriculture to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables both in school and at home.

"There was great excitement with the launch of the programme which will run in two phases at the school.

"This new programme is aimed at

making children think about what they eat and develop good eating practises.

What makes it appealing is that a reward system is built into the 16-week programme.

"On Thursday they were given a wide range of fruits and vegetables to taste," said Margaret Hannafin, Scoil Mhuire agus Naomh Teresa in Currow.

Phase 1, which commenced on Thursday, is an intensive intervention which lasts 16 days.

During this time, children are

given fruit and vegetables while they are read a letter and watch a specially designed video of the Food Dudes.

Each day the children are rewarded with small prizes for successfully eating the fruit and veg.

This phase is primarily school based, although children keep a diary of fruit and veg they have eaten at home.

REWARDS

Phase 2 extends the home element of the Food Dudes Programme by encouraging the children to bring their own fruit and veg to school everyday in special Food Dudes containers. Classroom wall charts are used to record progress, and

children receive Food Dudes certificates and further rewards upon reaching goals.

This phase maintains fruit and veg consumption in the longer term.

"As well as eating fruit and vegetables at school, it is important that children eat them at home too. "Parents can help by encouraging children to eat and enjoy a healthy amount of fruit and vegetables, and set an example by eating them too.

During Phase 1 the prizes given to the children include biros, frisbees, pedometers and other gifts.

"It's an amazing programme and we are looking forward to positive results," Margaret added.