

## ComputerXplorers

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### ComputerXplorers SW Scotland Runs Junior Energy Detective Workshops in Local Primary Schools

**Playing with Lego has never been so educational!** Thanks to ComputerXplorers S W Scotland and the LEAP (Local Energy Action Plan) Project, Renfrewshire primary school children were able to be energy detectives for the day and help their families improve the energy efficiency of their homes.



Three one-day workshops took place during September using innovative Lego eLab kits to help children understand how energy is produced and the importance of saving it.

Every child from year four to seven at Kilbarchan, Howwood and Lochwinnoch schools took part in the 90 minute workshops funded by LEAP and run by independent educational technology specialist ComputerXplorers. Pupils used specialist Lego to generate electricity and then carry out tests to see for themselves how energy is used – and the monetary and environmental cost of wasting it.

After the workshop each child used their energy detective skills to find ways to save energy in their homes and their parents were offered a free home energy check worth £45 from LEAP.

ComputerXplorers is a new concept in ICT classes for children aged 3-13 in Scotland. They help children to master technological skills at an early age and increase their e-confidence and competence, giving students a great head start to their education.



LEAP, the Local Energy Action Plan was set up in 2010 to help residents in the communities of Kilbarchan, Howwood and Lochwinnoch save energy and money and provide free impartial advice on insulation, draught proofing, heating, renewables, grants and subsidies. Draught tests and thermal images of properties can also be carried out to help residents find areas of energy loss in their homes. By funding these workshops LEAP will extend its energy saving message to the younger members of these communities.

Commented project manager Carol Gemmell: "We've worked closely with ComputerXplorers to develop the workshop content which we hope will really get the children and their parents engaged on the subject of how to conserve energy and save money."

The workshops start with a group discussion about 'what is energy' and the different forms of energy. The children generate electricity themselves using Lego e Lab kits to power small motors and light bulbs. The class then talk about how energy is wasted at home and are encouraged to think about ways to reduce wastage before using test equipment to see for themselves how much energy various household appliances use and the associated monetary cost.

ComputerXplorers owner John McGill recently delivered a series of highly successful workshops to schools in Aberdeen on renewable energy.

He said "Children really enjoy the fun and excitement of working with the Lego eLab kits to generate their own power. Being able to switch on a light or computer is something we all take for granted, and the Energy Detective workshops have been designed to help children begin to realise the environmental impact and monetary cost of energy use in their day to day lives."

LEAP have carried out over 600 Home Energy Checks, Draught Tests and Thermal Images in these communities since the project started. The free and impartial advice is provided by qualified Energy Advisors, funded by the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund. Free home energy checks are available to any residents in Kilbarchan, Howwood or Lochwinnoch.

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