


Contents:

- Editorial Note
- A word of advice for Green Flag applicants 
- EkoSkola Annual Seminars
- Arbor Day at Xrobb I-Għagin
- Flag hoisting ceremonies
- Kids' Summit on Climate Change
- EkoSkola on the Internet
- Teaching Resources
- From our schools



Issue 22

Editorial Note

This year has been a very busy year for us all! More schools have joined our growing family and we are proud to say that 58% of all schools in Malta and Gozo are EkoSkola schools. We could not have achieved these results if it wasn't for your continued support and co-operation together with the backing of the Education authorities and our sponsors.

We would also like to apologise with all our readers for the lack of newsletters for this year, but as you might recall, we were short of staff. Catering for all the needs of our 95 schools, organising professional development sessions, preparing educational material, organizing two national events, updating our website and a host of other chores has taken its toll! We sure hope that next year we'll be in a better position to continue offering the support and the initiatives like in the previous years.



On the other hand, as can be seen from this super newsletter, we have kept ourselves rather busy. Our EkoSkola teachers have gone through thorough training, both locally and abroad, with the aim of offering you the best service possible. In fact I would like to take the opportunity to thank them on your behalf. Besides the Children's Climate Change Summit (see further), this year we have also launched our first in service training programme (for July) and 16 teachers have applied.

We would also like to formally welcome Ms Desiree Scicluna Bugeja. She has been appointed by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education as the EO responsible for environmental education. We have already had a cordial meeting with her and we look forward for further co-operation.



Nature Trust (Malta)
PO Box 9
Valletta VLT 1000
<http://www.naturetrustmalta.org>



A word of advice for Green Flag applicants

Towards the end of the scholastic year we receive a lot emails and verbal requests from schools asking us whether WE think that they are eligible for the Green Flag. Please note that YOU have to decide on this. To help you here is a list of DOs and DON'Ts:

- **Do** check your progress along the list of criteria listed in Resource Sheet 9 of your introductory pack ... or visit <http://www.ekoskolamalta.com/pdfs/Res9GetAward.pdf>
- **Do** apply for a Bronze or a Silver Award if you feel that you've achieved the standard. Although not as prestigious as the Green Flag, they reward the efforts of the children (and the school).
- **Don't** judge your progress by comparing your achievement with that of other schools. Your school context is unique and what might work for other schools might not work for you.
- **Don't** get obsessed about getting the Green Flag. IF you have NOT achieved the Green Flag criteria DO NOT apply for it. Our awarding criteria are internationally determined and cannot be 'bent' to accommodate deficiencies. Keep in mind what an application refusal would do to the morale of your students.

EkoSkola Annual Seminars

Following last year's success, the EkoSkola Steering Committee organised two sessions of its annual seminar. The first seminar was held on Tuesday, 11 November 2008 at St Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary C and was attended by 130 students and 112 teachers from 67 schools (of which 19 are new entries), the Hon Dolores Cristina (Minister for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport) and the Hon George Pullicino (Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs).



Children from St Benedict College, Kirkop Primary receiving the Green Flag



Children from San Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A's turn to receive the Green Flag



Children from St. Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary holding their Green Flag



Children from St Joseph School Blata l-Bajda receive the Green Flag for the second time



Children from St Joseph Mater Boni Consilii School receive the Green Flag for the second time



Children from St Monica School, Gzira awarded the Bronze Award

Five Green Flags were awarded during this seminar. St Benedict College, Kirkop Primary; St. Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary and San Gorg Preca College, Paola Primary A received the Green Flag for the first time; while St Joseph School Blata I-Bajda and St Joseph Mater Boni Consilii School received theirs for the second time. St Monica School, Gzira were awarded the Bronze Award during the seminar.

The Seminar in Gozo was organised on Friday, 14 November 2008 at Xaghra Primary and was attended by 38 students and 19 teachers from 12 schools (of which 2 were new entries), and Chev. Frank Gatt (Gozo College Coordinator). The students from Xaghra Primary were awarded the Green Flag while Xewkija Primary received their Silver Award.



Children from Gozo College, Xaghra Primary welcoming the Green Flag



Gozo College, Xewkija Primary receiving the Silver Award

Both seminars had the same general programme that included a Progress Report of EkoSkola's seven-year history and offered participants a choice of workshop sessions. While teachers from new member schools and teachers from EkoSkola schools had specific sessions on issues related to the management of the programme, primary school and secondary school students had special activities that were suited to their needs.

Arbor Day at Xrobb I-Għagin

EkoSkola celebrated Arbor Day on Friday, 16th January 2009 with the participation of 250 schoolchildren from 10 schools, the Hon George Pullicino (Minister for Resources and

Rural Affairs) and the Norwegian Ambassador, Einar M. Bull. The day was characterised by tree planting and treasure hunts.

The day was opened by Mr Vincent Attard (Nature Trust president) who pointed out that over 15,000 trees have been planted over a period of three years in the park. Rachel Zerafa and Joseph Baldacchino from the Marsaxlokk Primary School said they were proud of having a place in their village which practises sustainability. In his speech, Ambassador Bull said that he was pleased to see that the project, which is partly supported with an Economic European Area grant and the Norwegian Financial Mechanisms, was becoming a reality. Minister Pullicino said that he was pleased that another 5,000 trees (donated by HSBC) were to be planted at Xrobb l-Għagin. He pointed out that the place will be ready by 2010 and will be used both as a marine rehabilitation centre, a wildlife clinic and a field study centre for schools.

Flag hoisting ceremonies

The 11th December 2008 is a special day for Siggiewi Primary, the fruit of all our work. The hoisting of the Green Flag is the day all students longed for. The preparation was in the hands of Ms Irene Abela and the Senior Management Team.

However the theatre performance was in the worthy hands of the Year 4s. The play was written by Mr Phillip Stilon the drama teacher and directed by Ms N. Sammut, Ms C. Gafa and Ms P. Vella. The play clearly explained the significance for a better, cleaner and greener world. Songs called ' Everything' s Gone Green ' and ' Absolute Green ' , sung by the students, expressed the need to improve and sustain our environment. While Mark Vassallo, the president of the EkoSkola committee, recited the poem *F' Jum it-Tluġh tal-Bandiera l-Hadra* written by Ms C. Camillieri, the Green Flag was hoisted by the committee members. To commemorate this event a bookmark, designed by Mr P. Decelis, was given to all the distinguished guests, students and staff.



Last October our school was awarded the Green Flag. You can imagine how happy we all were and we were bursting to celebrate. However we had to postpone the official



celebration over and over again. We were finally able to hold it on the 8th May, right after the end of the Junior Lyceum Exam. It was then a double celebration for the Year 6 pupils. Unfortunately no important people could attend because the date had been changed so often that nobody could make it! However the most important people were all there – all the pupils of Kirkop primary. We all took part in the celebrations. We sang, danced, played games, distributed posters. Then we all went to Ġnien Kirkop to plant trees and show off our Green Flag. It was Great!

Written by Arianna Mangion and Daphne Agius, EkoSkola Committee President and Secretary, St. Benedict College, Kirkop Primary

Kids' Summit on Climate Change

The Ministry of Resources and Rural Affairs, in conjunction with YRE and EkoSkola (both programmes run by Nature Trust Malta as FEE Malta Coordination) held a one day summit on climate change and waste for secondary school children at the Dolmen Resort Hotel, Qawra on Saturday 7th March 2009. The aim of the event was to encourage students from different schools to explore issues about climate change and waste management in relation to the consultation process of both the Climate Change Strategy and the Waste Strategy. About 68 students from the following schools attended the event:

- St Benedict College, Tarxien Girls' Secondary School
- St Joseph, Mater Boni Consilii School
- St Claire College, Pembroke Girls Junior Lyceum
- St Michael School, Sta Venera
- Antonio Bosio Boys' Secondary School, Gzira
- St Francis School, Sliema
- St Catherine's High School, Pembroke
- Gozo College, Agius de Soldanis, Girls' JL & Sec. School

After being introduced to the themes of Climate Change and Waste Management by Dr Paul Pace (EkoSkola National Co-ordinator) and Dr Ing Christopher Ciantar (Permanent Secretary, Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs) respectively, children formed four workshops. During the workshops they discussed various aspects of the themes contained in the plans of the discussion documents presented. During the discussions the children had the opportunity to air their views with the Prime Minister, Dr Lawrence Gonzi.



Working in groups to prepare presentations about Climate Change and Waste Management



Sharing ideas with the Prime Minister and the Minister for Resources and Rural Affairs



Students' presentations to distinguished guests, teachers, parents and the media

The event ended with a series of presentations that summarised the main suggestions of each group. The suggestions were presented to the Hon. George Pullicino (Minister of

Rural Affairs and Resources), Ms Joanna Drake (Head of the European Commission Representation in Malta), parents and the media. The press note that the children released for the event is given below.

Kid's Eco Summit – 2009

Press release

We would like to start by thanking the Minister of Resources and Rural Affairs for offering us the opportunity to speak about two very important environmental issues: Climate Change and Waste Management. We would therefore like to share with you a summary of our ideas.

We discussed a lot of issues. This is understandable since we are talking about our future. When we grow up we will be facing the results of the decisions that you, as adults, are taking today. Climate Change is a perfect example: we are faced with the problem of resolving the damage done by others. During this Summit we worked in groups to discuss the three major causes of Climate Change:

- (a) Energy Generation: we felt that our country needs to look more into ways of using solar energy. But we also need to study how we can use our surrounding sea to get energy.
- (b) Transport: we would like to point out, to those involved with the public transport service, that most of the problems associated with transport can be resolved if the service provided is improved. We also feel that the quality of the surfaces of our roads can be far better than they actually are.
- (c) Waste: we feel that a lot of work has been done in this field and people are learning how to control waste. However, we felt that people do not know enough about reducing waste. Therefore it would be better if we knew what happens to the waste once it is collected, what we can do to get energy from waste and how we can use organic waste.

In our groups we also mentioned the importance of educational campaign to resolve these environmental problems. Education helps people to think about their lifestyles and make the right choices. In most of the cases, solutions are not found in the technologies used (e.g. whether we use energy saving lamps) but how we behave (e.g. not wasting electricity).

Once again we would like to thank all those who gave us the opportunity to voice our ideas. However, at times we feel that you have so much to do that you seldom find time to listen to us. Till now you've listened to what we had to say about climate change during the EkoSkola Parliament. We would like you to keep on doing the same with the suggestions that we made today. It would be great if, after a couple of months have passed, we could see what we've accomplished ... just like we do with our EkoSkola Action Plans.

Thank you

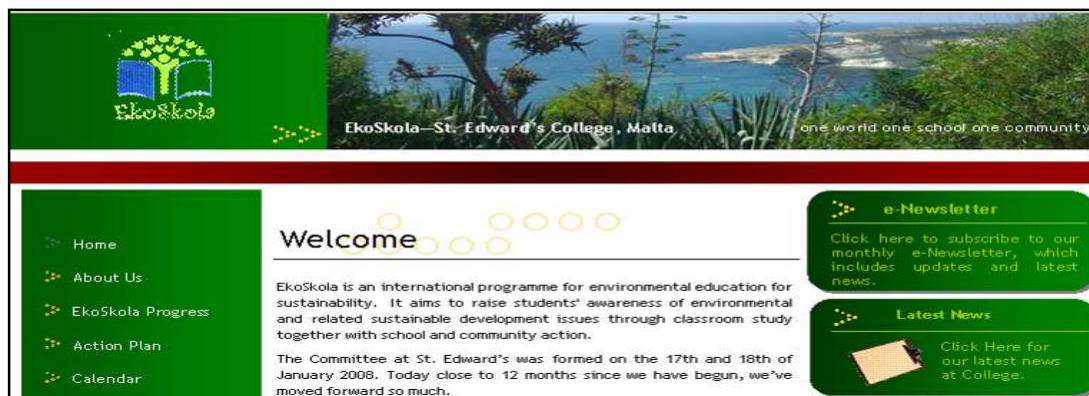
Following the summit, the children's suggestions were sent to the Chairman of the Governments Committee on Climate Change, Mr David Spiteri Gingell, who in turn included their feedback in the final document about climate change.

EkoSkola on the Internet

It seems that quite a large number of schools have adopted an environmental theme for their ICT based projects ... and some have specifically set up websites and blogs related to EkoSkola. Besides being an efficient way of showcasing your activities and plans, the medium is proving to be an effective way of communication between schools.

We would be very interested in knowing who is using this medium ... specifically for EkoSkola. To date we have been informed of the following schools ... but we are sure that there are many more.

- St Edwards College EkoSkola website: <http://www.stedwards.edu.mt/ekoskola/>



- St Benedict College, Birzebbugia Primary A blog: <http://ekobirzebbuga.blogspot.com/>



- St Thomas More College, Zejtun Primary blog: <http://year5.skola.edu.mt/category/kullegg-san-tumas-more/zejtun/year-51-zejtun-kullegg-san-tumas-more/>



Teaching Resources

Continuing with our list of useful websites ideal for lesson planning and project work related to environmental education.

(a) Climate Change Education.Org



This website is treasure of resources for anyone interested in climate change. It provides lesson plans for different age groups, book reviews, videos and other teaching resources and updated information about this environmental issue. The site can be accessed on: <http://www.climatechangeeducation.org/>

(b) EcoSeek



This database is compiled by MEPA and provides information about various living things that inhabit different habitats in our islands. The living things are grouped into three categories: Plants; Animals and Habitats. For each entry, the user is provided with information about the object found. The site can be accessed on: <http://www.mepa.org.mt/environment/index.htm?ecoseek/ecoseek.asp&1>

Question & Answer

We feel that our school achieved all the Green Flag criteria, but we haven't been in the programme for "at least two years". Should we apply?

EkoSkola criteria emphasise the process rather than the products. If you feel that these criteria are embedded in your school ethos you can apply for the award.

From our schools

- **St. Ignatius College Primary Luqa**



Our EkoSkola Committee



Recycling Stamps, Batteries and Mobile phone cards

After completing our environmental review of our school premises the committee decided on an Action Plan. We decided that our school should reduce waste by avoiding buying disposable products (e.g. cups, plates) and buying in bulk to avoid excessive packaging. Waste separation is done in each class and we collect used stamps, batteries and used mobile cards. We have also improved the school grounds by having games painted on our school ground, caring for all the plants in the school corridors and school grounds and fixing nest boxes and bird tables.

This is our Eco Code:

- Have healthy lunches (and food)
- Be kind and caring towards animals
- Keep our school surroundings clean and appealing
- Participate in environmental-oriented activities
- Be aware of health and safety measures
- Handle waste separation



Separating waste



Caring for the plants in our school

- **Letter in the press**

This letter appeared in December in the Malta Independent and in the Times of Malta:

Dear Editor,

My name is Matthew Platts Dimech and I am a member of the EkoSkola group. In our school, we are doing a campaign to save the environment. We really would like all the people to be aware of it. We could start by recycling our garbage. In every locality, you can find recycling bins and specialized people are going around in houses so that they explain how and why we should recycle. There are four different coloured bins: the white is for paper, the blue for plastic, the brown for glass and the black for metal.

It is a very easy task and it doesn't require a lot of time. When garbage is not recycled, a lot of toxins and fumes are released from it. This is not only bad for the environment but it also affects our health. When we have a party, for example, or having a barbeque, instead of using disposable things, we can use plastic cups and plates so that we can wash them and use them again.



Our EkoSkola committee

Now that Christmas is on its way, we can also save the environment by sending less Christmas cards. There is no need to give a card to a person if we see that person everyday. Instead of giving a card to everyone, we can send e-cards or use the phone. We can also use old wrapping paper so that the use of paper is reduced and reused.

In our school we have taken these decisions mentioned above. Why don't you all join us? If everyone does his part, we will keep the environment clean. Please let's all work together so that we will have a better country and a better world. On behalf of the committee and all the school, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2009.

Thank you

*Written by Matthew Platts Dimech, EkoSkola Committee Member,
San Gorg Preca College, Guzeppi Agius Paola Primary B*

• **Compost making**

As we had a great success the first time we made compost at school, the EkoSkola committee decide to start the process once again this year. Mark Vassallo, our president, announced this during the morning assembly. For this purpose we set up the compost tank in the schoolyard near our rock garden as there it is sunny all day. Another bin with a lid on was put nearby. A list of material good for compost was given to each and every class as a reminder of what they can get for the compost.

All students responded to our appeal and started to get organic material from home. Students put this material in the bin with the lid. Then twice a week we empty these



bags into the compost tank adding shredded newspapers and soil. Then we wet it and poke it. The process is slow but it's worth seeing the result at the end.

*Written by Yanika Deguara and Martina Schembri,
EkoSkola Committee Secretaries, St. Ignatius College, Siggiewi Primary*

- **Eco-Week at Safi**



Our waste separation station



Group work during Eco-Week

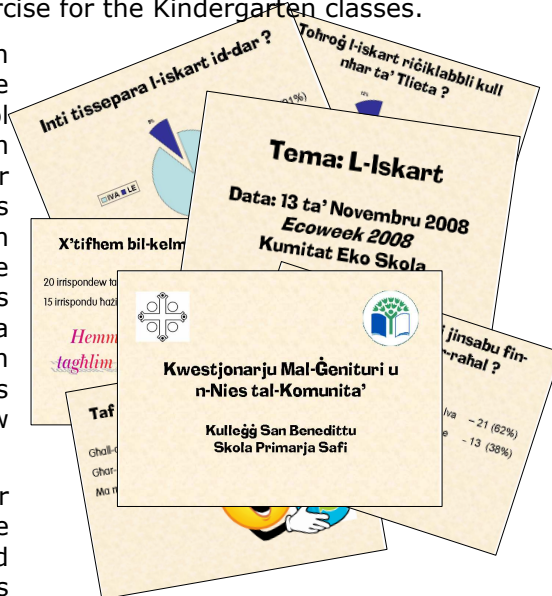


Sharing information with people from Safi

From the 10th November till the 14th was a special week for us students and staff at St Benedict's College, Safi Primary. We held an eco-week with WasteServ because in that term we were concentrating on the waste management. The Eco-Week was full of activities regarding the EkoSkola programme. We started on Monday and our first activity was a seminar for parents working together towards a better learning environment. The seminar was held in the morning and on the same day in the afternoon there was a story-telling activity and a waste separation exercise for the Kindergarten classes.

On the next day we had an interactive session using a power point presentation while the President and the Secretary of the eco-school committee attended an EkoSkola seminar. On the same day three quizzes were held: one for the year four pupils, one for the year five pupils and finally one for the year six pupils. On Wednesday we had the opening of the recycle world corner at our school. A message was addressed by the President of the EkoSkola committee and afterwards we carried out an exercise regarding waste separation. All this came to an end with a talk and a puppet show carried out by Xummiemu in our school hall.

On Thursday we had three college activities for the early years in our school. The children were asked to bring three large cereal packets and some pictures from magazines. The students then stuck the pictures to the right bins. After this activity the WasteServ representative discussed with the students how much waste was saved from entering the landfill and which material can be reused. On the last day of the week, we carried out an informative activity for the public about waste separation. We even held a questionnaire regarding the topic. The year 6 class together with the EkoSkola committee visited the Civic Amenity Site at Hal Far. There we learnt a lot about the importance of separating waste.



Report of the questionnaire given to Safi families

Written by Daniel Briffa and Luke Borg, EkoSkola Committee President and Secretary, St. Bendict College, Safi Primary

- **Spring Day at Dingli Primary**

On the 27th May 2008, the EkoSkola committee at Dingli Primary School organised its first Spring Day. The theme chosen for this year's Spring Day was "*Aħjar siġra Maltija milli siġra barranija*" and therefore it was dedicated towards the promotion of native trees of our country. The day consisted of different activities such as tree-planting, a presentation about native trees and finally, a short play.



*Kinder students planting their own
Widnet il-Baħar*



*Year 3 students planting the
Għargħar our national tree*

During the morning assembly, some members of the EkoSkola committee briefed the whole school about the programme of the day. The first activity was the planting of ten different trees, one for each class. These trees, that are native to our islands, were bought by the students themselves after an initiative taken by the EkoSkola committee during the Christmas period. Each child agreed that instead of giving cards for Christmas they were to donate a small amount of cents in order to buy a tree for the school garden. This initiative was very successful and each class, even the Kinder classes, bought a tree for the school garden. The trees were planted by the students themselves with the help of the school EkoSkola coordinators. Before the planting there was a brief description of the tree by the EkoSkola representatives. The trees planted were the Għargħar, Żnuber, Siġra ta' Ġuda, Balluta, Randa, Riħan, Bruka, Ċipressa, Ġummara and Widnet il-Baħar.



Students during the play "Aħjar siġra Maltija milli waħda barranija".

The second part of Spring Day consisted of a PowerPoint presentation about the trees and shrubs that had been just planted in the school garden. During this short presentation, information about the trees and how to take care of them was given. This presentation was followed by a short play called *Aħjar siġra Maltija milli siġra barranija*. This play was prepared by the members of the EkoSkola committee who worked hard during their free time to set-up this play. The play pointed out, in a very amusing way, the benefits of planting native trees in our environment as opposed to the detriment of planting alien trees.

Spring Day was a very successful activity thanks to the work of the EkoSkola committee members who worked very hard during their free time to prepare for this activity and the other activities held during this scholastic year. A big thanks goes also to Audrey Gauci, our EkoSkola coordinator, and to the teachers who coordinated the EkoSkola committee meetings. We hope that this will be a yearly activity in our school calendar.

*Written by the EkoSkola Committee, St. Benedict College,
St Nicholas College, Dingli Primary*

• **We're all in this together**

The world today is an overpopulated place with few resources. Over the last few hundred years our world has experienced global warming on a large scale due to heavy industry, aeroplanes, cars and the cutting down of precious rainforests. The glaciers in the Arctic and Antarctic are melting. Sea water levels are rising. There are disastrous hurricanes and typhoons and tsunamis in Asia and the Caribbean. In certain parts of Africa there is drought. Even Australia and Cyprus have a fresh water shortage. We are polluting our environment and we need to act before it is too late. The ex- American vice president Al Gore explained this very well in his documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth'.



Our global challenges are mainly to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and wastage and to respect our flora and fauna. We need to use less carbon for our fuel. We need to clean up the world! We need to help poor nations of the world to fend for themselves. People need to use solar and wind energy. We need to place solar panels in outdoor areas like for example in Madurodam in Holland where the whole city runs on solar! We need to use electric cars or hybrids to cut down on emissions. We need to walk and cycle instead of drive. We need to use energy saving bulbs and not leave lights or heating on unnecessarily. We should use recycled

water for our plants and use drip irrigation. We should have showers instead of baths. We should collect water from our washing machines and use it for flushing.

My school, St Joseph Paola won the Green Flag for the environment. We only use recycled paper for school circulars. We discard paper in a separate bin for recycling. We recycle our batteries. Our bins are split into Good Rubbish such as leftover food, and Bad rubbish such as wrappers. The compost bin contents are given to a farmer to use in his field. We are not allowed to bring plastic water bottles or plastic bags for our lunch-only reusable containers. We respect animals and had our animals blessed on St Francis of Assisi day last week. Our motto is 'Believe And Achieve', and this should also be our motto to save the planet because 'We're all in this together'.

Written by Sophie Muscat, St Joseph Mater Boni Consilii School

• **Earth Day at San Gwann Primary School B**

On Wednesday 22nd April our school celebrated Earth Day. We started with an assembly full of information about this wonderful day dedicated to our Earth. We found that this day was first celebrated in 1970 and founded by Senator Gaylord Nelson to create awareness about the destruction of the environment because of oil spills, polluting factories, toxic dumps, pesticides and loss of wilderness and wildlife. Nowadays it focuses on global warming and clean energy.

We were concerned because we were thinking that we, as children, can do nothing to



A selection of posters that we drew to show our concern about our Earth

change the world for the better. We can do nothing to stop factories from polluting or to save animals or to make people use clean energy. But then we realized that little things can make a big difference too. So we made a big tree and every one of us, including the headmaster, assistant heads and teachers, wrote our little promise to the world on a leaf and stuck it on the tree. Now our tree is full of our little promises. I promised not to litter the floor ever ... and you, what are you going to do for the world?

*Written by Kirsty Willow Debono, EkoSkola Committee President
San Gwann Primary School B*

- **Give A Spring to Your Walk / Mixja favur Ghixien Ahjar**

The 18th of May was an important day for our school. We celebrated the completion of the Environmental Review for our school by organizing a Healthy Living Day by the name of 'Give a Spring to Your Walk'. The name and all the activities for this day were coined by the EkoSkola Committee members together with our EkoSkola teachers in the school.



We started off with a walk round the coast road. Pupils, teachers, LSA's, parents all walked together holding placards with messages in favour of healthy living. On our return to school, we found a healthy breakfast waiting for us. When we had our own fill of healthy cereal, milk, yoghurt and fruit, we (and our parents) had a talk by the name of 'Uncover Your Lunch Box' by teachers from the Home Economics Centre.

We really enjoyed this day not just because it was fun and packed with healthy food, but because it was us who took part in organising it. We even had the school full of healthy messages and tips. Well done EkoSkola Committee! Well done Birzebbugia Primary School B!

If you would like to contribute to this newsletter please contact Dr Paul Pace, National EkoSkola Co-ordinator, on paul.j.pace@um.edu.mt

Visit our website on www.ekoskolamalta.com