

Green-Schools News Fingal



An Taisce
The National Trust for Ireland

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Find out what Green-Schools has been doing in your area...

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The Green-Schools Year that was...

The Green-Schools programme continues to prosper in Fingal and 2009/ 2010 has been no different. 28 schools renewed their Green Flags for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd times on themes such 'Energy', 'Water' and 'Travel' while continuing to work on reducing litter and waste.

Throughout the year, schools working on the Green-

Schools programme were given help and support from Trish Kennedy, Environmental Awareness Officer in Fingal County Council, and from An Taisce Green-Schools Officers. Schools working on the Green-Schools programme can get practical advice regarding the structure of the programme and what schools are required to do to achieve a Green Flag, while talks and

workshops to staff and pupils are also available.

As well as continual contact with schools in the Green-Schools programme, 'assessment' visits are carried out in schools when they have completed all the required work on a particular theme.

In the 2009/ 2010 many more Fingal schools successfully completed the work required to gain Green Flags and March and May An Taisce held award ceremonies in Croke Park to award these successful schools with their Green Flags. An Taisce and Fingal County Council continue to be impressed by the ingenuity and enthusiasm employed by schools each year through their Green-Schools work. Well done!

Pupils, teachers and special guests from Donabate/ Portrane Educate Together NS displaying their bikes and posters on one of their WOW days.



Green-Schools Travel

In the last school year, there were 10 schools in Fingal working towards their Travel Flag and two of these schools were awarded flags. In addition, 7 Fingal schools have already been awarded a flag in previous years for their work in making school travel more sustainable. Green-Schools in the county have been very active in coming up with creative alternatives to using private cars on the school run, For example:

Burrow National School, Sutton held seminars for parents to discuss sustainable travel options for the school and held a very successful cycle action day with over 100 pupils, parents and teachers cycling to school on the day accompanied by the local garda mounted unit. The school also participated in cycle maintenance workshops and bike health clinics facilitated by An Taisce and the local bike shop in Sutton.

Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School successfully promoted walking and cycling by holding WoW (Walk on Wednesday) days twice a month and also by running a mini-bike model making competition from recycled materials. The school also launched its new cycle parking facility funded by An Taisce during Bike Week in June this year.

A Message from Fingal County Council

The Green schools programme in Fingal is in a very different place than it was in 1999 when four pioneer schools registered. The programme is now so well established and respected that in July this year the principal of a new Fingal school due to open in September phoned asking how quickly they could get involved in Green-Schools!

There is great diversity in the range of schools involved in Fingal. Of the 66 schools awarded flags so far, there are small schools, large schools, primary schools, secondary schools, residential hospitals, a creche and a detention school. The Green-Schools programme has great flexibility and can be adapted to suit the school rather than vice versa.

The first official function of the new Mayor of Fingal Councillor Ken Farrell was raising the Green Flag in St. Mary's National School, Garristown in July 2010. Cllr. Farrell said he was very impressed by the level of enthusiasm the youngest citizens of Fingal have for their natural environment.

I continue to look forward to working with new and current schools registered in the Green-Schools programme in the future.

Trish Kennedy - Environmental Awareness Officer, Fingal County Council

Lusk Educate Together National School

All schools have their own particular approach to the Green-Schools programme and also in the way they apply the seven steps to suit their own school environment. An Taisce love to see when a school incorporates the programme into day to day school life. In this way the Green-Schools programme does not become a separate activity from school life but the 'norm' and also compliments other environmental initiatives in the school.

In Fingal during 2009/2010, Rush and Lusk ETNS received their 3rd Green Flag on the theme of 'Water', and in doing so showed exactly how to incorporate Green-Schools into the core of school life.

With the constant work from their co-ordinator Dermot Higgins they have transformed a relatively new school building

and surrounding area into a model of environmentalism.

Not only are they a great example of how to follow/ apply the Green-Schools programme in order to be applicable for a Green Flag. They have transformed the school grounds by planting flowers, trees and vegetables. They have also succeeded in improving awareness of the environment among pupils and staff, which is imperative to the success of the Green-Schools programme. To celebrate the raising of their 3rd Green Flag



Rush and Lusk ETNS receiving their 3rd Green-Flag in Croke

and acknowledge their achievements, Rush and Lusk ETNS invited parents and many special guests to the school. After performances, speeches, and a tree planting ceremony Trevor Sargent TD, along with other guests raised the Green Flag.



Staff, pupils, parents and special guests prepare for speeches and performances at their flag raising ceremony at Rush and Lusk ETNS



A pupil with a hat made from recycled materials and a bagpipe player preparing for the start of the Flag raising ceremony at Rush and Lusk ETNS

Green-Schools in Ireland

During the 2009-10 academic year the number of schools, institutions and education centres registered for the Green-Schools programme rose by 9% (307).

There are now over 3,300 schools participating in the programme representing over 83% of all Irish schools.

Almost 60% of schools participating in the programme have now been awarded the Green Flag in recognition of their achievements.

Nearly 1,000 schools were awarded the Green Flag by An Taisce in 2010.

St. Mary's Boys National School, Rathfarnham, Dublin became the 2,000 school in Ireland to be awarded a Green Flag. The school was awarded its Green Flag at a ceremony in Croke Park, Dublin, in May of this year.

The 2010-11 academic year sees the nationwide launch of Biodiversity as the fifth theme of Green-School. It is preceded by the themes of Litter & Waste, Energy, Water and Travel. Over 200 schools will start work on Biodiversity this school year.

A combined overall minimum saving of approximately €3 million was achieved by awarded schools working on the Green-Schools programme during the 2009-2010 academic year. This was achieved through diversion of waste to landfill, reduction in energy and water consumption, use of transport fuel and reduced CO2 emissions.

Research shows that over the past school year Green-Schools:

- Diverted 2,500-3,000 tonnes of waste from landfill
- Saved 15-20 million units of electricity
- Saved 200 million litres of drinking water
- Saved 600,000-700,000 litres of transport fuel

Green-Schools Travel Competition

The Green-Schools Travel competition invited students to write a poem or short story, or compose a song describing 'what Green-Schools Travel means to you'. The competition was hugely popular with over 1,000 entries. The quality of entries was extremely high which made it a difficult decision for the judges. Category award winners included: St Paul's JNS, Ayrfield, Dublin 13; Claregalway NS, Co Galway; Clonburris NS, Clon-dalkin, Dublin 22; Colaiste Einde, Salthill, Co Galway. Prizes were presented to the winners and runners-up by Mr. Ciarán Cuffe, T.D., Minister of State for Planning, Sustainable Transport and Horticulture, at an awards ceremony in Dublin on 28th May 2010.

Green-Schools Projects & Award Winners

Repak Recycling School of the Year 2010

Midleton C.B.S. Primary, Co. Cork was awarded the winner of the Repak Recycling School of the Year 2010 at the National Convention Centre, Dublin, on the 7th October. The school was recognised for their excellent Green-Schools Litter and Waste programme, along with runners-up, Inchicore NS, Dublin and Brierhill NS, Galway. Awards were presented to pupils from the schools, by the Minister of Environment Heritage and Local Government, Mr. John Gormley TD.



Presentation of the Repak Recycling School of the Year Award to pupils from Midleton CBS Primary

Green-Schools Energy Project

The 2010-11 Green-Schools Energy Project, sponsored by ESB Independent Energy, was launched by Eamonn Ryan TD, Minister for Communications Energy and Natural Resources at Ireland's 2,000th Green Flag school, St. Mary's BNS, Rathfarnham, Dublin, on 1st October. The Project is open to all primary level Green-Schools that have been awarded the Green Flag for Energy and encourages schools to partner with local businesses to share ideas and expertise on energy conservation. For more information visit www.esbie.ie



Pupils from St. Mary's BNS, with Mr. Plug at the launch of the Green-Schools Energy Project

HSBC Eco-Code Competition

An Taisce is currently piloting Climate Change as a theme of Green-Schools. This phase of the programme is supported by HSBC bank and is currently in its second year in Ireland. As part of the initiative schools entered an Eco-Code Poster Competition in 2010, with the winning poster going on to represent Ireland internationally. This year's national competition was won by 4th, 5th and 6th class pupils from Scoil Naísiúnta Mhuire, Stratford-on-Slaney, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow.

An Taisce - Environmental Education Unit Programmes

Green Home

The **Green Home** programme began in 2006 with sponsorship from the Environmental Protection Agency. It is an action based environmental programme that extends the very successful Green-Schools message beyond the school gates out into the wider community. Green Home members learn ways to save money on household bills, build



stronger community networks and enhance their quality of life and environment. The programme thrives on a partnership approach between An Taisce, The EPA, Local Authority staff and all Green Home participants. The Green Home website www.greenhome.ie offers an abundance of online resources and has over 3,300 online members. Educational materials, competitions, household surveys, action plans and lesson plans on the four themes of waste, energy, water and transport are available online. Thirty six primary schools were awarded their Green Home flag at a ceremony in Croke Park in June 2010.



National Spring Clean

National Spring Clean is Ireland's most popular anti-litter initiative. The campaign encourages every sector of society to take responsibility for litter, by conducting clean-ups in their locality.



Earlier this year over 525,000 volunteers participated in over 5,300 events nationwide throughout the month of April. National Spring Clean is a suitable event for the Green-Schools Action Day.

Taking part in the National Spring Clean is straight forward:

Pick the location and date for your clean-up.

Register your event with An Taisce at www.nationalspringclean.org or by telephone on 01 4002219.

Receive your free clean-up kit from An Taisce containing clean-up materials and an information Pack

Groups should also contact their Local Authority for assistance with the efficient management of materials collected after events.

Green Communities Project

Through Green Communities, An Taisce works with community groups and organisations as they take steps to enhance their local wildlife/biodiversity and improve access to green spaces, while actively reducing the groups carbon footprint. Groups adopt an area within the locality (ie a roof garden, a local woodland, the grounds of community centre, a stretch of beach etc) and work to make it a friendlier habitat for flora and fauna and hopefully more accessible for people.

Currently there are over 70 Green Communities groups, including Tidy Towns groups, community gardens, asylum seekers groups, drug rehabilitation centres, and centres for adults with intellectual disabilities etc. taking part in the project.

An Taisce facilitate group's actions and provide information on health and safety if required. In addition, groups can receive grants of up to €500 yearly towards their Green Communities activities and further funding to go towards training group members.

Kindlestown Woods Green Community Group working to protect and enhance Kindlestown Wood in Greystones



For more information visit: www.greencommunitiesproject.org

Coastal Programmes

The Blue Flag programme has been operating in Ireland since 1988. It is an international award for beach and marina excellence and is operated in Ireland by An Taisce the FEE. This year, 74 beaches and 2 marinas were awarded Blue Flags for excellent water quality and high standards across a wide range of other criteria including environmental management, safety and services. The National Green Coast Award has seen another year of growth with an additional six beaches receiving the award for 2010 bringing the total number of Green Coast Award beaches to 46. Green Coast Awards go to beaches for their, clean environment, excellent water quality and natural beauty. They may not have the necessary built infrastructure required to meet the criteria set for Blue Flag status however they are exceptional places to visit and enjoy our rich coastal heritage and diversity. The Green Coast Award is just one part of the two-part Clean Coast Programme, the second of which is Coastcare. Coastcare encourages the local community to become involved in the management and protection of their local coastline.

For further information, please visit:
www.beachawards.ie www.blueflag.org

www.cleancoastproject.org

