

March 2010

## GREEN IS THE THEME AT YEAR 9'S "GREEN DAY"

Year 9 students at Parkstone enjoyed a superb learning experience last week when they spent the school day off timetable and participated in lessons with a "green" theme.

The students were off timetable for the day, participating in various subject lessons all focussing on environmental and eco-friendly issues.

In Technology the students were given the opportunity to design and make fashionable clothes and accessories using recycled materials.

Particular successful items included a dress made from colourful empty crisp packets.

The students said they used this unusual material because the colours of the packets were bright and attractive, allowing for a vibrant and attractive design. Additionally the packets were flexible and so were able to be folded and shaped to meet the pattern of the dress. The finished design was very attractive and eye-catching – next stop, the Paris catwalks?!

A further successful design was a dress made from colourful plastic bags tied to a foundation made of wire mesh. This particular design had the added feature in that by using the wire mesh, no fixings or glue were needed and so taking the green theme a step further - another striking and



original eco-friendly creation made completely from used materials.

In Textiles, students were able to demonstrate their creativity by making accessories and jewellery from recycled goods. They included purses and bags made from

felted wool (wool jumpers washed on a hot cycle causing the material to "felt") and jewellery made from old buttons, beads and decorations.

All items were entered for the department's competition for the most creative and artistic use of recycled materials and the winning design were produced Konnie Willett of 9T and Jenny Haskell of 9R.



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Outside, students spent their time preparing for and then assembling raised beds for planting vegetables. The students started with a small area of grassed, uncultivated land and by the end of the day the patch



was neatly displaying four raised beds, filled with soil and compost and ready for planting with vegetable seeds / plants. Sadly for the students, the elements were against them for this exercise – the start of the project was embraced with sunshine but the weather worsened as the day went on and by the end of the school day the poor gardeners were slopping around in sticky mud and puddles of murky water – but it was perfect planting weather!

To support the growing vegetables, a group of Geography students made large cloches for use as “mini greenhouses” designed to sit on top of the raised



beds and so provide the perfect growing atmosphere for the baby plants. The cloches were made by fixing recycled clear water bottles to a

wooden frame, sized to fit on top of the raised beds. When fitted they will protect the seedlings from adverse weather conditions, provide heat to assist germination and also protect the vulnerable plants from unwanted pests such as slugs and caterpillars.

Additionally, the Languages Department put their linguistic and design skills to the test by creating and producing large plant labels with the aim of fixing these signs in the raised beds and so aid easy identification.

This was a highly successful session as the girls selected a plant and then researched and designed their sign, incorporating the plant names in 5 different languages – English, French, German, Spanish and German.



The Art Department visited the local Recycling Centre and brought back to school some wonderful materials to allow the students to produce a unique piece of “green” art. One particularly striking art piece was a



fish made by attaching recycled materials to a bicycle wheel resulting in a highly attractive and unique piece of artwork.

In Politics the students had time to question their own and other people’s thoughts on the Green Theme. In groups, students discussed the Green Agenda, looking at the views of the 3 main political parties. This led to some lively debates and sharing of views. Additionally, Year 13 student Kate Rose, a member of the Green Party, visited groups and talked about the Party’s views.

The Science Department was busy supporting the



students with both their chemical and technical skills. Students worked with the Chemistry Department to manufacture bio diesel from

vegetable oil. They then tested their bio fuel to see how flammable it was, compared to the vegetable oil alone, and they also made comparisons with diesel from the petrol station.



In Biology students combined their knowledge of animals and their IT skills by making documentaries on endangered species.

The students were required to identify a particular endangered animal and then produce a thought provoking and attractive documentary offering further information of that particular species. In Physics students designed and built wind turbines to produce energy.

The IT Department concentrated on a little self-reflection! Their sessions involved working out the cost of running the IT equipment in their IT room. They calculated such areas as the amount of hours the machines are on and the amount of power required, then used this information to determine the total cost of energy used. This was a particularly enlightening exercise as the total cost for the year was calculated at £27,237 – just for IT1 alone!

Green Day was a tremendous success for all involved. The students – and staff – were inspired by the creativity of the year group and the knowledge learned on the issue of being eco-friendly.

Thanks go to Mr Gilbert and Mrs Morris who organised the day on behalf of our Science Specialist School.