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Education goes green

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Students at St Ignatius College in Qormi are the second to benefit from environmental measures installed at school following the construction of St Benedict's College.

The government has put the environment among its list of priorities and believes that the most effective way of raising awareness on the state of the environment is through education. It has therefore decided to implement the measures listed in an extensive list of books studied at school into the students' academic lives. After all, they do spend a lot of time at school.

The ceilings at St Ignatius College have been insulated to control the climatic conditions indoors. In winter, the lining of the insulating material used retains heat and in summer it preserves the cool air.



Photo: Chris Sant Fournier

All windows are made of laminated aluminium and double-glazed glass, minimising background noise and retaining heat. This glass is also shatterproof to ensure that no one gets hurt should it break. And since rain is scarce on the islands, two reservoirs have been constructed, storing about 1,600 square metres of water.

The run-off from the roof will be used as second class water and that from the school's grounds is considered third class water. Second class water will be used for cleaning purposes and to flush toilets and the other will go to water the college's trees and plants.

Although drinking water and tap water is derived from the national water network, the taps in the school ensure that the flow stops after a designated period of time.

To save on electrical consumption, the authorities have installed light bulbs that save up to five times the consumption of a regular light bulb. Switches have also been installed in each room, giving teachers and students the option of either using half the power of the light bulbs or their full strength.

Tubes that absorb sunlight and reflect it indoors were installed in the upper floors. During bright sunshine, no artificial lighting is needed.

The government has also installed five solar water heaters, holding a total of 1,500 litres of water, on the school's roof. Together, these will save 15,000 electrical units every year.

A total of 39 photovoltaic panels of 200 watts each, producing a maximum 7.8 kilowatts, are also in place. These are expected to produce 13,000 electrical units and save 10.5 tons of carbon dioxide.

The installation of a wind turbine is also being considered.

Through the Foundation for Tomorrow's Schools, the government has invested about €7 million (Lm3 million) into St Ignatius College, which covers an area of 20,000 square metres, 12,000 square metres of which are recreational areas.

The school consists of four floors, containing a total of 132 rooms. These include 45 classrooms, 18 resource rooms, 17 laboratories, five computer laboratories, three guidance and counselling rooms, three art rooms, five personal and social development rooms, three staff rooms, a drama room, a multi-purpose room, a clinic and a store.

The school includes facilities for students with special needs and has two lifts.

Sports facilities include a seven-a-side football pitch and a 200-metre long athletic track, among others.

The school also has a Greek theatre.