

Sustrans Active School Travel news

Making a mark with the Big Street Survey



Pupils from St Patrick's PS, Glenariffe, and St Patrick's & St Brigid's PS, Ballycastle, conduct their fieldwork and work together to draw up their safe active travel manifestos.

Schools across the Causeway Coast & Glens area have been participating in the Big Street Survey during the past term. The Big Street Survey is a curriculum resource produced by Sustrans; it allows children to investigate their local area, thinking specifically about the good and bad things which affect their journey to school. Pupils then work together to create a manifesto for change, which suggests five changes that will make their active journeys to school safer and more enjoyable.



St John's PS, Coleraine, was the first to complete their manifesto in March. Just before the Easter break, the P7 pupils presented their manifesto for safe active travel to local political representatives and the school board of governors. Their presentation was lively and informative, and they raised important issues in their manifesto. Over the coming weeks, other schools will also be completing their manifestos. It's great to see primary school children engaging with their local area, working on a project together, and coming up with really positive outcomes for change.

Pupils from St John's PS present their manifesto

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Travel green... like a runner bean...

Schools have been getting creative in promoting active travel on the journey to school, with great posters popping up around the place. Why not launch an active travel poster competition in your school this term?



I'd love to hear from you...



I'm Emma Keenan, Sustrans Active Travel Officer for Causeway Coast & Glens. Please get in touch if you have any great school stories or would like to find out more about our schools work.

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Is your school up for a challenge?

Sustrans' Big Shift is a free-to-access online challenge designed to motivate the school community to travel more actively. Schools are set their own targets based on how pupils currently get to school, helping them make a **Small Step, Big Stride** or **Giant Leap** to increasing active travel. You can see how well other schools have already done in our **Hall of Fame...** and maybe see if you can do even better. The Big Shift is perfect for continuing the excitement if you took part in **The Big Pedal**, or a great alternative if you didn't manage to participate this year.

bigshift.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make every day. It's time we all began making smarter travel choices. Make your move and support Sustrans today. www.sustrans.org.uk

Overheard this term...

“The Active School Travel programme is a fantastic way to incorporate exercise as part of a healthy daily routine and encourage children to walk, scoot or cycle to school in a safe and greener environment. As a past pupil of St John's PS it was a real treat to meet the enthusiastic P7 children and their manifesto was so professional and really outstanding.”

Cllr Stephanie Quigley, Causeway Coast & Glens Council

“All the pupils, staff and families at St Ciaran's are very excited at winning such a prestigious competition and making the Top 20 in the UK. I'm very proud of this achievement for the school and local community. The kids have really taken to the walking and cycling. We couldn't have done it without all the parents' support.”

Helen Magee, Acting Principal, St Ciaran's PS, Cushendun, on being regional Big Pedal winners

Pupils actively engage with active travel

The Sustrans School Mark scheme recognises and supports schools' excellence in active and sustainable travel. It enables them to be beacons of best practice, and consists of three progressive levels for schools to work through – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

Sustrans schools in the Causeway Coast & Glens area have been taking really positive steps towards achieving their Bronze award.

Many schools are seeing an increase in the number of pupils travelling actively to school; this is in many ways the most visible



outcome of the Active School

Pupils at St Ciaran's PS take part in an active travel breakfast, which was promoted by the school eco-council

Travel programme. However, there is plenty of work going on behind the scenes in schools, as staff and pupils work towards their bronze award. Pupils are encouraged to participate in sharing ideas about how to develop and promote active travel among their classmates – a number of schools have involved their student eco-council in this process. The students themselves make decisions, with the support of the dedicated school champion, about the kind of events they feel would benefit the school, and how they will promote active travel through the school community.

By encouraging children to be active not just on their bikes and feet, but in the decision-making and ideas-sharing part of the programme, we hope that active travel will gradually become a natural part of the culture of the school.

This term in numbers

Your local schools

8 schools held a Big Shift week, with active travel increasing on average from 27% to 57%, including:

- 3314 active travel journeys (2614 walking, 509 cycling & 191 scooting journeys)
- 249,975 calories burned off (equivalent to 992 donuts!)

The Big Pedal in Northern Ireland

- Saved over **50,000** car journeys to school.
- Saved more than **£10,500** in fuel costs.
- Prevented approximately **23 tonnes** of CO2 from being emitted.
- Saved over **2,000 gallons** of fuel from being used for the school run.

Did you know? A recent study found exposure to high levels of traffic-related air pollution around schools was linked to slower cognitive development in their pupils. (J Sunyer et al, www.plosmedicine.org)

...and across the UK

The Big Pedal took place between 2-20 March. We introduced a new format to allow schools to enter either a 10- or three-day version and also to enter individual classes if the whole school was unable to take part.

Last year we broke through the one million journey barrier and this year schools managed to better it again, making over 1.4 million journeys to school by bike or scooter. Here is this year's event in numbers:

- **1,329 schools recorded journeys**, representing over 550,000 pupils
- **1,418,604 journeys by bike or scooter** were made to school (plus we assume a similar number again home!). Just two years ago it was 847,725
- On average, **23% of pupils scooted or cycled** at participating schools.

If that isn't exciting enough, this all equates to:

- * **3,669,907 miles** by scooter and bike (incl. return journeys)
- * **Over 1,000 tonnes of CO2 saved** (if replacing car trips) plus **94,000 gallons of fuel**, which would have cost over **£475,000**.
- * **69 million calories** burned

Magical Lullaby Rides



In March, a series of three sold out “Lullaby” rides lit up the streets of Derry~Londonderry. Each Lullaby ride featured an entourage of bikes decorated with LED lighting and kitted out with audio equipment, playing gentle lullaby music and riding through residential streets at dusk as children were going to bed. The effect was magical! Would you like to see a Lullaby ride to come to your neighbourhood?!



Hype that site: movewithsustrans.org.uk

Your one-stop shop (literally) for all sorts of useful goodies to promote and inspire walking, cycling and scooting to school, including badges, buttons and reflective slapwraps, as well as a range of resources for Sustrans Superheroes.

The Big Pedal 2015

In Northern Ireland, 67 schools registered to take part in the competition – double last year’s number – and together made over **33,000 bike and scooter journeys** to school! **St Ciaran’s Primary** in Cushendun was the top performing school in Northern Ireland and was in the Top 20 of schools across the whole of the UK (out of 1,720 schools). The primary school achieved a daily average of 76% of pupils travelling to school by bike or scooter over the 10-day challenge. The other top performing schools in Northern Ireland were **St Mary’s Christian Brothers Grammar** in west Belfast (top post primary school in the 10-day challenge); **St Mary’s Primary, Killyleagh** (top primary school in the 3-day challenge) and **Limavady Grammar** (top post primary school in the 3-day challenge). Well done all!



Photo competition

Pupils at Ballymoney Model CIPS learning basic bike maintenance skills - they learn how to perform basic safety checks on their bikes, and make minor adjustments for safe cycling



Do you have a good photo? Share it with us, and we’ll publish the best one next time. Send your photos to: emma.keenan@sustrans.org.uk

Top tips for the summer term

- **Bike Week is 14-21 June**... perfect for celebrating all the good work your school is doing whilst the weather is benevolent! Keep an eye on our website for a brand new guide we are producing to help you make the most of it
- Use the **sunnier weather** and **lighter evenings** for events, guided rides or walks and after-school skill sessions
- **See Events on the back page** and use any **themed weeks, dates or events** to celebrate walking, cycling or scooting in various ways... Earth Day, International Youth Day, World Environment Day and World Car-free Day are all coming up over the next few months
- **Discuss what went well in 2014/15** (and what didn’t) with your Sustrans officer, other staff, parents and importantly, pupils! Then plan how to make next year even better.

Get these resources...

- Have a read of our information sheets: **Benefits of active travel** for young people; **Finding funding** to promote active, **Cycle and scooter storage**; **Becoming a travel champion**. Find them at www.sustrans.org.uk/teachers under **Help Yourself**.

Cycle Skills

Pupils across the Causeway Coast & Glens area have been participating in cycle skills playground sessions. These sessions use games and challenges to help pupils to improve their bike control and bike handling skills in a fun and safe way. Even with the weather as difficult as it has been over the past term, the kids have shown great enthusiasm in getting out on their bikes and taking part. We've had obstacle courses, emergency stop challenges, slow bike races, team competitions - it's amazing to see how much confidence and competence kids develop on their bikes as a result, and it's a great step towards eventually developing the knowledge and skills to cycle on-road safely.



Pupils at Bushmills PS take part in a cycle skills session

Bikeability On-Road Training



Pupils from Portstewart PS receive their Bikeability certificates

Bikeability Level 1 & 2 training is provided to 16 P6 pupils in each school that is part of the Active School Travel Programme. It takes trainees from the basics of balance and bike control (Level 1) to being able to plan and make a journey by themselves on quiet residential streets (Level 2). So far in this academic year, seven schools

have taken part in Bikeability training in the Causeway Coast & Glens - with an impressive 94% of pupils achieving their Level 2 award.

Dates for the diary

April

7th World Health Day – use our 'Benefits of Active Travel' infosheet to discuss how important physical activity is to our health, or try the activities on our 'Being Healthy' Suss It Out sheet
22nd Earth Day

May

4th Bank Holiday
7th General Election
18th-22nd Walk to School Week
This year Travelwise NI is running a competition called 'My Walk to School'. Details of the competition here: www.nidirect.gov.uk/walk-to-school-week
25th Bank Holiday

June

5th World Environment Day
10th Giant Walking Bus
14th-21st Bike Week
18th Ramadan begins
20th Piccolo Fondo – more details from Sustrans to follow!
21st Gran Fondo – remember and celebrate the excitement of last year's Giro d'Italia www.granfondogiroditaliani.com
16th-22nd European Mobility Week
22nd World Car-free Day

Thank you for supporting our work

Sustrans' vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment, and this applies to children just as much as it does to adults. The positive experiences of all the children that you have read about in this newsletter are the culmination of more than 20 years of Sustrans and our officers working with schools, colleges and young people.

Without your support, many children would not have the opportunity to enjoy independent and active journeys in and around their communities, so a huge thank you from us on their behalf. The long-term benefits of creating healthy and sustainable journeys will be shared by every one of us – in terms of our health, the environment and the wider economy.

If you like the sound of what Sustrans does and think that more schools, colleges and young people in your area could benefit from our work, or you want to know more, please get in touch.

email youngpeople@sustrans.org.uk
phone 0117 915 0100
online www.sustrans.org.uk/youngpeople



Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

