



A BIKE-TASTIC YEAR FOR BIKE IT

A round-up of the year's activities for Southend's Bike It schools



Graham Pearl, Bike It officer for Southend has worked with ten Southend schools over the last year, not only to encourage children to physically get on their bikes but also to raise their awareness of the health and environmental issues benefits associated with cycling to school.

The main ingredient in all Bike It activities is fun - and in Southend children in Bike It schools have responded outstandingly.

Dr Bike

Thanks to extra funding from Cycling Southend Dr Bike visited 10 Bike It schools carrying out safety checks and repairs over 600 bikes free of charge.



Thorpe Greenways' Headteacher Ashley Eastwood on the Blendavenda

Route planning classroom sessions

Using local maps pupils were tasked with plotting cycling routes from home to school. Home work was to discuss the route with parents.

At the start of one session, 24 year seven students were asked if they consider cycling to school to be feasible for them, six responded positively. By the end of the session only two still felt the same way. Although both lived some 20 miles from school they did find a route involving taking their bike on a train.

The Sustrans Virtual Bike Race

For one month during March schools were allocated a number of kilometres for each journey to school by pupils, parents and staff. Journey numbers were recorded by class via a dedicated website. Schools marked their location on giant wall maps and reported their position in the race during assemblies. National and regional prizes were available. In Southend there were additional prizes including a trophy for each school to award to the best performing class each week. Thorpe Greenways Junior School were the first Southend school to finish ending up 21st in the country with Temple Sutton Close behind in 23rd.

Cycle Skills – There were lots of chances to improve cycling skills or learn new ones. Or just have fun on a bike. Creating a positive cycling experience that will live long in the memory.

Assemblies – learning about the environmental and health issues and benefits in a fun and interactive way.

The Bike It Breakfast – Cycle to school and get a free fruit smoothie and be entered in a prize draw. What is even better you also have to make the smoothie on the Blendavenda on loan from South east Essex Pct. That's if you can get the head teacher off it.



The Bike It Crew – An invaluable asset to any Bike It school. Helping out with Bike It activities and influencing and encouraging their schoolmates.



Over the 20 days on average 633 pupils cycled to Southend Bike schools each day.

The Stunt Show – Funded by Cycle Southend, the show is both educational and inspirational, a great way to round off a fantastically successful Bike It Year. Photo 1657

Sustrans' Bike It Project

Bike It is one of Sustrans' most successful projects and aims to introduce a cycling culture in schools. Currently Sustrans employs 58 Bike It officers who work with over 600 schools and over 100,000 children and young people across the UK. Bike It works with many partners, including Cycling England, the cycle industry through the Bike Hub, local authorities, various Primary Care Trusts and the Big Lottery Fund. Bike It is not only a great way to introduce daily exercise to children in a fun and interesting way, it also helps reduce 'school run' congestion.

Bike It's own research shows that 49 per cent of children would like to cycle to school but only 4 per cent currently do. Bike It works directly with pupils, parents and staff to help them overcome whatever it is that is preventing them from cycling to school – by organising cycle training, helping to install new bike sheds, contributing to classroom work and providing information about safe routes to schools. Participating schools across England and Wales have seen levels of cycling double in the last academic year (2008/09).

Bike It is successfully changing travel behaviour all over the UK by giving young people the opportunity to travel in a way, which is healthy, sustainable and fun.