

Safe Routes to schools

Scotland

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Underpass murals lift morale



Transforming ugly pedestrian tunnels in Denny with Sustrans-funded makeovers has won acclaim and inspired more projects to uplift others in the area



When a Falkirk Council travel assessment highlighted two underpasses in Denny as intimidating, local pupils from Nethermains Primary School suggested that painting murals would make them more inviting. The council agreed and asked Sustrans to fund a project to lighten and brighten the tunnels.

Just 11 kilometres miles west of Falkirk, Denny has a number of busy roads which includes the M80. Access to the other side is by a couple of underpasses – also the route to school for a number of children from Denny High, Denny Primary and Nethermains Primary.

In order to make the underpasses more inviting, Falkirk Council bid for £3,750 from the Tackling the School Run fund for a painting project to empower local school children to improve their environment.

The bid was successful and community artist Scott Gilbert was commissioned to work up designs with the primary pupils. He painted background scenes before the young people, dressed in head-to-toe protective overalls, applied their own designs in the foreground. Adding to the revamp, the council improved the footpath surfaces and lighting.

The result? “I think it’s brilliant and so do the children!” said Headteacher Don McPherson from Denny Primary, whose pupils also use the M80 underpass to get to school and to reach a playpark.

“The children have been able to make an effective contribution to this community,” said Don. “The project has tied in with the pupil experience elements of the Curriculum for Excellence: learning the

skills and knowledge needed for today’s society.

“A tiny bit of graffiti was discovered on the mural and the children got really worked up about it because they’re so proud of what they’ve done,” he said.

Lynn Slavin from Falkirk Council said: “The project was deemed a success as all pupils involved enjoyed the experience and agreed that the underpasses were more attractive to use. The local community has rated it a success too, with many users commenting that they look fantastic.”

Falkirk Council has secured funding for three more underpass enhancements – including lighting and landscaping – on Falkirk’s Callendar Road which serves Graeme High School, Laurieston Primary and St Andrew’s Primary School.

For more information please contact lynn.slavin@falkirk.gov.uk or Sustrans

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JOIN THE MOVEMENT



Welcome to the *Safe Routes to Schools Newsletter*.

Congratulations go to the 78% of schools in Scotland who are developing a school travel plan.

As you'll read inside, schools are now giving life to these plans and getting on with practical walking and cycling projects which are making a real difference. But schools and parents need support. They need advice, inspiration and practical help, especially as they begin their work.

Sustrans and our partners in government and the local authorities are ready to assist, and this September we started a two-year project which aims to put more girls on bikes at schools in Edinburgh and Perth. We are delighted that the UK cycle industry Bike Hub fund is paying.

Whilst it's terrific news that the Scottish Government aims to get 10% of the country's population on two wheels by 2020, it needs to increase funding for the practical projects that will help make this happen.

Malcolm Shepherd
Chief Executive

STP

School Travel Plan

We've written an STP

Congratulations! You're among the 78% of Scottish schools who are either writing a School Travel Plan (STP) or are working on one.

Keep it alive!

An STP is not something to be consigned to a dark shelf to collect dust. Quite the contrary; some schools say they see their STP as an ongoing challenge which spurs them on to new achievements or events.

To keep it fresh, an STP should be revisited and updated, maybe every term, every six months or every year depending on the level of activity you need or want.

What challenges do you face? Worried about levels of pupil obesity? Are numbers of cars at the school gate a concern? Do you want to share your STP with the wider community to spread your safe, active school travel message? Outline these issues in your STP.

Quantify or verify them Why not conduct a survey, or collect some data to prove the need?

Got a solution? Sometimes the way forward becomes clearer during surveys, or can come from consulting pupils or parents. Your Active Schools Co-ordinator, School Travel Co-ordinator or local Road Safety Officer might have ideas too. Maybe you could mine Sustrans' rich seam of inspiring ideas from schools around the UK – or ask the Sustrans School Travel team for possible solutions and add it to your action plan?

Celebrate your results Your results are the proof of an effective STP so record and celebrate them. Learn from your mistakes and share them too. Why not submit your project as a case study to Sustrans, like Kirkton of Largo Primary did, and reach an even wider audience?



Fife Council

Celebrate success

To celebrate their STP and its achievements, Kirkton of Largo Primary in Fife threw a Bike Smart Day with Dr Bike maintenance sessions. Year-round events kept the school's commitment to cycling fresh with sponsored Pyjama Cycle rides and setting up an accredited cycling club.

How can we develop our STP?

Cross-curricular possibilities Travel themes can be woven into almost any part of the curriculum. From using data collected by pedometers, to twinning with schools from parts of the world with very different sorts of school journeys, to designing road safety logos... the possibilities are endless.

Travelling Green



This free resource is open to schools across Scotland and users report that 70 per cent of pupils involved now walk to school thanks to the small, achievable targets set. To get this free resource, contact your School Travel Co-ordinator or email schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk



Who can we involve?

Refresh the team Just as an STP needs to be refreshed, so do members of its action team. Why not set terms of office for members and invite new ones on board at regular intervals?

These could be members of the Eco-schools or Cycle Friendly School committees because an STP will count towards both initiatives. Or invite members of the pupil council to join and, of course, the junior road safety officers (JRSOs) – see pages 4-5 for more on the JRSOs and their role.

Maybe individual parents or the parent council could support particular projects?

How often should we update it?

It depends on what you want to achieve from your STP. Ideally it should be refreshed annually – why not revisit your action plan and see how you're progressing, or why not tie it in with regular JRSO or pupil council meetings?

Monthly walking competition

Ferryhill Primary in Aberdeen runs a monthly walking competition. The prize is a challenge trophy and the choice of having the winning team's favourite music played in the canteen, or to have a non-uniform

day. Updating monthly results of an initiative like this could give the school's STP a higher profile.

Can we use it to get more funding?

Yes. If your school travel survey can demonstrate to your local authority that you need, for example, secure cycle storage, a footpath improved or maps need to be created, you can apply to your local authority for Sustrans' Tackling the School Run funding.

Use it as evidence An STP can be used to support bids to for the Climate Change Challenge Fund (see page 7).

Raise funds Selling copies of the STP to the local community spreads the word and can raise cash for your school or for charitable projects (see page 7).

Who needs to know about it?

Share the STP How many ways are there to share your STP? As many as your imagination allows. Turning it into a DVD, publishing it on tea towels, placemats and calendars are some of the ways that schools have got the message to the community.



Writing on the wall

Parents don't necessarily want to see graffiti when they arrive at school, but at Ordiquill School near Banff, an STP graffiti board went up in the playground to spell out safe travel messages.

STP on DVD

To broadcast its STP, Longside Primary near Peterhead used animation, film, artwork and a script to create a take-home DVD about the plan and its aims. Classroom screenings were also held for nursery children and their parents.



Check what others are doing

Find out other schools how they're taking their STP forward and ask where your school sits alongside the National Hands Up Survey results.

Adapt the plan as needs change

As you get brilliant new ideas, or as changes occur in the school's neighbourhood or as new priorities emerge, make sure your STP moves with the times. Adding new challenges to an STP can help focus on what needs to be done, when and how.

For more ideas go to www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk or contact your local School Travel Co-ordinator

JRSO – all together for road safety

Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) have been making a difference in schools since 2002

JRSOs were first appointed to show what pupil power could achieve when given a voice in decision-making in schools and the wider community. The stories on these pages show the impact these P6/7 pupils have made.

Meanwhile RSS and the JRSO Working Group will continue to develop new materials and support in time for the new school year in 2010. It's all under the new motto: JRSO – all together for road safety.

Road Safety Scotland (RSS) provides educational and support materials for road safety units, which co-ordinate JRSO work in their local area. The focus this year has been the re-development of the website www.jrso.com

Focus groups of young people and their adult helpers gave feedback to help guide the re-development of the site. During these consultations, vox pops of the JRSOs were filmed for the site to boost its interactivity and appeal.

JRSO facts and figures

In 2008-2009:

- 1,467 schools enrolled in the JRSO scheme - that's 67 per cent
- there were 3,397 JRSOs and many others acting as deputies and assistants
- 1,582 adults committed to help the JRSOs.

Pumpkin power



In the past they've had Winter Welly Boot walks, but last year, Stoneyhill Primary School's Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) led a Pumpkin Parade.

Last year and this year, over 100 pupils took to the streets of Stoneyhill bearing decorated pumpkins, and the most creative won prizes.

Competitions are popular amongst Stoneyhill pupils. Last year, the JRSOs held an all-school challenge to design a car sticker promoting road safety.



Ownership of the sticker shows a responsible approach to road safety

Teacher Alison Taylor said: "We had a fantastic response! The winning design was launched at our school fair in May, and car stickers were given to people who completed a road safety checklist.

"The pupils are looking forward to spotting their stickers on cars throughout East Lothian and beyond!"

The competition doesn't end there as the new JRSOs had to go through a rigorous selection process by the previous year's team.

They chose well. The new JRSOs have already designed an animated road safety advert, are planning a JRSO page on the school's website – and are devising yet more competitions.

For more information, contact ataylor@stoneyhill.elcschool.org.uk

Bonny bonnet gives Grace a head start



Cillian Devaney



Amazing Grace: the four-year-old milliner shows off her traffic-stopping headgear

Getting her head around the safe travel message, young Grace Devaney designed and made a traffic-stopping hat for a Walk to School Week competition.

In her first term at St Mary's Primary School, Greenock, the four-year-old mini milliner trimmed

the hat with stickers she'd collected from belonging to the Children's Traffic Club Scotland, run by Road Safety Scotland for pre-school children.

A hat competition is the sort of idea that Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSO) could run for

younger pupils as part of Walk to School week. Could involvement like this inspire Grace to become a JRSO in the future?

Find out more about The Children's Traffic Club in Scotland at www.srsc.org.uk/education/preschool/ctcs/

JRSOs present to academy pupils

Aboyne Primary pupils shared road safety messages as they took part in the attempt to make the world's longest walking bus



Christina Gillies

The role of Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) doesn't usually extend to the local academy. But a group of Aberdeenshire JRSOs at Aboyne Primary School gave a presentation to S5 and S6 pupils at the academy next door.

The P7s visited Aboyne Academy to raise students' awareness of safe travel and to develop the schools' joint School Travel Plan (STP) to which staff from both sites and the primary pupils had contributed.

The youngster's Power Point presentation encompassed concerns about transition and plans to join in the UK-wide attempt on the world record for the longest walking bus.

P7 teacher Christina Gillies said: "We're encouraging them to continue their work into their secondary schools because they do such a good job and because the role helps them develop as young people."

For the primary's attempt on the world record, the JRSOs helped marshal over 150 placard-carrying pupils from P3 to P7 on a walking bus – at the same time as 160,000 other children in over 650 schools around the UK. Aboyne's JRSOs now hope to set up a regular walking bus.

For more information contact Christine Gillies on cgillies727@aboyne-pri.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

Hi-vis competition reflects well on JRSOs



Clare Rainey

The hi-vis winners at Simpson Primary are ready for the darkest afternoons

A new school's first-ever group of Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs) is helping to embed a road safety-conscious culture by running a reflective fashion competition.

All pupils live on the Wester Inch housing estate in Bathgate, West Lothian, where Simpson Primary was built two years ago.

To help establish safe walking habits from the outset, the team invited pupils to design and make a high-visibility toy outfit. The most visible would win.

The project was given over to the school's two P6 JRSOs, Nikkita and Hannah, who explained: "We held an assembly and showed a Power Point that we made ourselves, that gave information about the competition and why we were doing it.

"Then we did an experiment. We put off the lights and, using florescent clothes and a torch, we showed the assembly how a car could see you in the dark."

A torch in the dark was also used for the judging by the JRSOs and nursery pupils. The winners and runners up were given hi-vis goodies from Sustrans and other supporters.

For more information contact clare.rainey@wled.org.uk



The Alloa Academy students took a daily ten mile walk between attractions in their stride

Step by step to London

To step up preparations for a trip to London, some social studies students from Alloa Academy used pedometers to get even more value from the experience

In February this year, 73 S3 and S4 Alloa Academy students signed up for a study trip to London. Each was given a pedometer provided by Paths to Health.

By using pedometers before and during the trip, statistical evidence was gathered along with pupil's' perceptions of fitness levels.

In the build-up to the five-day trip in June, they were asked to record the number of steps they took. They collated the data into a collective mileage and charted it on a map to show the 425-mile journey from Alloa to London.

Once in London, the majority of pupils were prepared to walk an average 10 miles a day – which gave them a better feel for the city and more time at the attractions. Only two or three complained of blisters.

On their return to Alloa, feedback from the trip showed it was very well-received, and video diaries of the students' experiences were shared with the school to encourage others to get involved in similar projects.

For a copy of the project report or more information, contact alloa@edu.clacks.gov.uk

Get the most from your pedometers



Looking for ideas on how pedometers can be used as part of the Curriculum for Excellence, in cross-curricular ways, as well as boosting awareness of and actual fitness levels? Suitable for secondary and primary schools, pedometer guidance can be downloaded from

www.pathstohealth.org.uk/pedometers

S3s tell P7s Go for Gold

Primary 7 pupils have been invited by an Aberdeen academy to Go for Gold as part of its school transition programme.

Whether or not the P7s were moving up to St Machar Academy, they were encouraged to develop healthy walking to school habits, spurred on by prizes of t-shirts and i-pods.

The scheme was first launched two years ago by graduates from St Machar's Leadership Academy, with support from partners Aberdeen City Council, Active Schools and Grampian Police.

S3 students visited the primaries during May when the project runs, and processed the data collected on wall charts about how many walks to school or circuits of the playground were made.

The students also organised and hosted a conference for P7s to discuss ways to help the P7s handle transition, and also held a presentation for the Going for Gold awards during the P7's two-day summer term visit.

Some 270 pupils from nine schools took part and this year, 90 per cent earned an award while 78 per cent walked almost every one of the school days in May.

Deputy Head Teacher Neil Hendry said: "This work is an excellent example of partnership working making a huge difference on the health and well-being of almost 600 P7 pupils in the past two years."

For more information, contact School Travel Co-ordinator Dawn Haggarty at dhaggarty@aberdeencity.gov.uk or Neil Hendry at hendryn@st-macharacademy.aberdeen.sch.uk



P7s walk tall in their Going for Gold t-shirts

Pioneer cycle train scoops £18,000 funding



Kieran Chambers

It started off with two boys and a dad, but now what could be Scotland's first daily school cycle train has £18,000 funding to keep pedalling on

Inspired by the daily cycle train to St Matthew's Primary, maps have been produced, a club set up and regular training delivered

An informal cycle run to school in a Glasgow suburb has gathered so much momentum that it's won £18,000 to pay for the production of local safe routes maps, a monthly club and training.

St Matthew's Primary's cycle train escorts seven young cyclists to and from the school each day. The all-age train follows a fixed route past each child's home and is led by parents and grandparents who all get training.

The train is contributing towards St Matthew's second Eco Schools Green Flag and its application for Cycle Friendly School status.

Mark has ambitions to promote cycling more widely: "Keeping within safe limits, I'd like to create more cycle train routes, roll out the club to pupils in five more local schools and set up a transition group with the local high schools.

"It's all about creating a cycling community in the area," he said.

See more on the Climate Change Challenge at www.infoscotland.com/gogreener/33.html

The closing date for the next round of applications is 13 January 2010

For more on the cycle train, making maps and running a cycle club, contact markkiehlmann@gmail.com

STP crosses continents

Fundraising doesn't have to be for your own school – Strathburn Primary has used its School Travel Plan (STP) to help lessen the dangers of school travel to a primary school in Zimbabwe



Strathburn Primary School

Strathburn Primary's P3 pupils prepare to meet Transport Minister Stewart Stevenson to show their fundraising Safe Routes to Strathburn booklet

Think your school journey is tough? Think again. Pupils at Bere Primary in rural Zimbabwe have to wade through a frequently-flooded river where crocodiles live, in order to reach their termite-damaged school building, 10kms distant from the main road.

Hearing about the pupils' plight from charity Aid to Africa, Strathburn Primary pupils got a whole new perspective on the dangers they face on their school journey.

Wanting to help, the P3 pupils decided to publish and sell copies of the school's STP. All profits from the £1 booklets which show local safe routes and road crossing points in Inverurie would go towards building a bridge to keep Bere Primary pupils a little safer.

Aberdeenshire Council sponsored the booklet's printing and the school raised £545 from sales and donations dropped into a giant crocodile at coffee mornings when the pupils performed their road safety assembly.

Find out more about Bere Primary and the fundraising project at www.aid2africa.co.uk/a2a_Bere_primary_school.htm or from strathburn.sch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



One small step.
One giant leap.



Subscription

Safe Routes to Schools Scotland Newsletter is aimed at transport, health, education and environmental professionals and is published bi-annually as a free resource. To subscribe, contact Sustrans School Travel Information Service by phone, email or via the SRS website. The newsletter can also be downloaded from www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk

To submit ideas, news, images and stories for inclusion, email schools-scotland@sustrans.org.uk

The School Travel project in Scotland is co-ordinated by Sustrans and is supported by the Scottish Government, Charitable Trusts and Sustrans Supporters.

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity, working on practical projects so people can choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment.

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SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

