

**Sustrans School Travel Case Study**  
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### **St Marys Primary School, Derrytrasna**

**Title of project:** Rural Safe Routes to Schools

**Local Authority:** Northern Ireland – Craigavon Borough Council area

**Partners:** School, Sustrans, DRD Roads Service, DARD, DENI, DOE  
Road Safety Branch

**Key Features:** School Travel Plan, Community Involvement, Walking,  
Infrastructural Changes, Curriculum

#### **Summary:**

##### **Issues:**

- **Speed** of traffic along the Derrytrasna Road
- **No safe crossing** area for children
- **Poor visibility** to the west of the school gate
- Problem with the **volume of traffic** in the school lay-by at school opening and closing times

We applied for the scheme because it gave us the opportunity to **address some of the major concerns regarding our pupil's safety** and it would make the whole school environment safe. Reducing speed on the Derrytrasna Road was a major concern of the local community. The money available would help us address some of these issues.

##### **Initiative:**

**The project involved trying to reduce the number of cars at the school gate** by encouraging children to walk and cycle to school. We began by having a walk to school day and were pleasantly surprised at the number of children that walked or cycled, but even more surprised at the number of accompanying adults.

Slowly parents began to allow their children a little more independence and let them walk or cycle unaccompanied. **When the traffic-calming measures began on the road, parents could see that their children were safer.** We built on the success of our early walks by introducing themed walks (**spooky Halloween walk** – Carbon Footprint walk). We even provided **walk to school breakfasts**.

Towards the end of the project the walk to school on Friday was well established as a school routine and we will continue with this every Friday. Throughout the project **there were many opportunities to complete classroom-based work.** Our walk

around the world with Alastair Humphreys provided many maths lessons as miles were calculated on a daily basis and each class in KS2 completed a variety of work in “The world around us.”

I applied for the project believing that the external work beyond the school gates would make St Mary’s a safer school. I didn’t realise that **the biggest change in our school would be in our attitudes**. As a staff, we think before making unnecessary car journeys. We enjoy our school walks and the informal chats we have each Friday morning with a growing number of parents who walk to school with us. Our children enjoy cycling on a daily basis and our new bicycle shelter is always full of bikes.

**Outcomes:**

81.8% of children being driven to school before the initiative

51.5% of children being driven to school after the initiative.

**Costs and Funding:**

Funded by DARD, DENI, DRD Roads Service, DOE Road Safety Branch.

**Problems and solutions: n/a**

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