I'd love to hear from you…

I’m Michele Murphy, Sustrans Active Travel Officer for Derry, Limavady & Strabane. 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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Active Travel Summer Competition

Are your pupils superheroes?

Sustrans' Superheroes is an award scheme recognising pupils' skills and achievements in walking, scooting and cycling. Aimed at 7- to 11-year-olds, pupils gain points for activities they complete to become either a Sustrans Hero or Superhero. Based on a booklet of activities, the scheme provides the structure and inspiration for children to learn and practice the skills essential for fun, safe and sustained active travel to school and for other journeys.

Big Sustrans Welcome to Our New Schools

I would like to thank all our Active School Travel schools for their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication to the programme over the last few years. It has been a real privilege to work with you all. I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the 6 new schools who will be joining the programme in September 2015, including Long Tower, St Eithne’s and St John’s in the Derry area. I am also now delighted to be working in Strabane with St Mary’s and St Catherine’s, and finally with St Finlough’s in Ballykelly. Welcome aboard everyone!! Looking forward to a fun packed active travel year ahead.

As always if you have any queries or suggestions, please drop me an email: michele.murphy@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

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Overheard…

“Really enjoyed the walk to school breakfasts this year organised by Sustrans. Hopefully the school will run more next year.”

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Parent, Hollybush PS

“What a fab experience. Can we do this every year and could staff get some bike maintenance classes as well?”

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School champion, St Patrick’s PS, commenting on the joint bike ride between their school and Greenhaw PS.

“It was great seeing the children all walking/cycling/scooting to school during the active travel competition run by Sustrans. The village (Eglinton) was just buzzing.”

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Teacher, Lisnagelvin PS

School Mark

Sustrans is delighted to report that this year 3 schools in the local area have achieved their School Mark Silver Award: Greenhaw PS, Sacred Heart PS (above photo) and Gaelscoil Eadain Mhoir (below photo). I am looking forward to all our Level 1 schools going for the Bronze Award in the new academic year. This year the first school in Northern Ireland received their School Mark Gold Award. To date no school in the north west has received this very prestigious award. Can we get a Gold Award before the end of 2016? I think that’s our challenge for the next academic year... Let’s get active!

This term in numbers

Your local schools
51 Bike shed counts
6 Active Travel Breakfasts (1,038 recipients)
5 Bike Rides (67 recipients)
6 Dr Bikes (107 recipients)
4 Cycle Skills Sessions (53 recipients)
9 Award/Prize Ceremonies (1,869 recipients)

In the region
371 pupils took part in Bikeability on-road cycle training this term.
1st school in NI wins Gold School Mark Award.
65 new schools will be joining the Active School Travel Programme for the 2015-16 school year.

…and across the UK

Sustrans’ School Mark recognises and supports schools’ excellence in active and sustainable travel.

At last count we had 690 schools who had achieved Bronze level, 75 with the Silver award and 19 with Gold.

Schools have also demonstrated impressive increases in active and sustainable travel after taking part in Sustrans’ Big Shift, our a free-to-access online challenge which sets targets and charts their success.

One of our officers used it to run an inter-school competition between six primaries, representing over 2,400 pupils. It ran for just a week, but the results were eye-catching:

* 54.5% - the % of active journeys (across all schools) at the START of the week
* 78.1% - the % of active journeys by the END of the week
* 94.0% - the highest % of active journeys recorded by a school on one day
* 2,959 - the number of ADDITIONAL active journeys generated over the week

Visit bigshift.sustrans.org.uk to set your school a challenge.

Did you know? 7-8 years old is a critical age in keeping girls motivated to play sport. Beyond this age, girls become more self-conscious, lose confidence and many stop participating.

(Women in Sport and the Youth Sport Trust)
Piccolo Fondo
First there was the Giro d’Italia, then the Gran Fondo, next the Piccolo Fondo... Northern Ireland was once more in the pink! In June, 4 led family bike rides set out along radial routes into the Titanic Quarter for the Northern Ireland Festival of Cycling. The Piccolo Fondo – The Big Pink Pedal attracted around 400 cyclists along greenways and quiet roads into Belfast for a family festival of food, drink, entertainment and the exciting centrepiece – a street velodrome open to the public.

Active School Travel is Golden
St Therese of Lisieux Primary School in north Belfast became the first school in Northern Ireland to achieve the Gold School Mark Award in May. The school now has more than 76% of its pupils regularly cycling, scooting or walking to school – a figure that has risen dramatically since the school first started working with Sustrans in 2011. The Health Minister for Northern Ireland presented the award to the school this term in a special celebration event. The school also received an exciting visit from Dino Jeffers of Deaf BMX who put on amazing flatland display for the pupils!

Photo competition
Caption: Mayor chatting to children from Eglington PS during their walk to school breakfast to celebrate the opening of their new school.

If you have a great photo you would like to share, please send to: michele.murphy@sustrans.org.uk

Top tips for the autumn term
- See Events on the back page and use any themed weeks, dates or events to promote or discuss walking, cycling or scooting... World Car-free Day, International Walk to School Day (and Week) and Road Safety Week are all coming in the months between summer and Christmas.
- Start thinking about when the evenings get darker and the importance of using lights and being visible. Diwali is the Festival of Lights, perfect for promoting being seen after the clocks change.
- Plan your activities for 2015/16 and take your hands-up/baseline surveys to see how pupils are currently travelling. Do you need to refresh a travel plan, or tweak your information for new parents and pupils? What new things do you want to try?

Get this resource...
- Bike to School Week may have come and gone, but our new guide, 5 Small Steps to Something BIG, includes five activities designed to be delivered over five days, to help you turn any week into a Bike, Walk or Scoot to School Week. Download it at www.sustrans.org.uk/biketoschoolweek
Term 3 Highlights in Photos

Children from Eglinton PS—1950s Walk to School Breakfast

Children from Lisnagelvin PS receiving their Bikeability Certificates

P7 children from Oakgrove IPS on their annual picnic in the park bike ride

Children from Eglinton PS completing Travel Surveys

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: