

Case Study

Active Journeys

Ysgol Gynradd Rhostryfan
Rhostryfan, Caernarfon
Cyngor Gwynedd



Figure 1: Map of Rhostryfan created by pupils highlighting barriers to active travel. ©Sustrans

Background

Ysgol Gynradd Rhostryfan is a Welsh language primary school in rural Gwynedd with 84 pupils. Residents and the school community are concerned about pupils' safety when walking, cycling, and scooting to school. Limited public transport and a lack of active travel infrastructure, such as missing pavements and safe crossings, prompted the creation of an active travel school plan.

With most pupils living within a mile of the school, the plan aimed to increase active travel and reduce car usage. It also sought to address issues like inconsiderate parking, unsafe crossings, and a lack of cycling skills and confidence among the school community.

The AJ programme played a crucial role in building a case for change through various activities. Supported by the Sustrans Active Journeys officer, the school and pupils were empowered to act.

Key components

Building a case for change activities:

- A morning was spent with pupils sharing maps to plan a 'route audit' walk.
- An afternoon was dedicated to walking the route with pupils, taking photographs of barriers, and annotating maps with issues and suggestions for improvements.
- A follow-up activity was created for the class, including letter writing, parent questionnaires, and a manifesto creation.
- Additionally, the school took part in the National Travel to School Hands up Survey.

The pupils' activities greatly strengthened Cyngor Gwynedd's Safe Routes in Communities (SRiC) funding application, which included the pupils' work, such as a copy of the map, a document detailing why it is difficult and unsafe to travel actively in the village, a letter from the class to Cyngor Gwynedd, suggestions on how to solve the problems, as well as the results of the parent questionnaire.

Achievements

The impact of the pupils' voices on how seriously the Local Authority and Welsh Government approached funding the scheme cannot be overstated. Their advocacy has the power to reshape their surroundings, making the infrastructure safer for future generations.

The involvement of the AJ programme and the hands-on activities conducted with the pupils were key to Ysgol Gynradd Rhostryfan's ATSP and the success of the subsequent SRiC application. The collaborative efforts not only enhanced the safety and awareness of pupils traveling to school but also provided a model for other schools seeking similar improvements.

As a result, funding was granted in 2024 for several infrastructure improvements which could include:

- An accessible ramp at the school's back entrance.
- Walkway improvements from the car park.
- Better signage / wayfinding.
- A new uncontrolled crossing point at the front entrance.

