

South West Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Summer Term 2019 Newsletter

I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Ann-Marie, Sustrans' schools officer for the South West. 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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Message from Sustrans ...

The Active School Travel Programme is an exciting initiative for schools who wish to see more of their pupils choosing an **active and healthy** journey to school. The aim of the programme is to increase the number of pupils walking, cycling and scooting to school.

Sustrans is being funded by the **Public Health Agency** and the **Department for Infrastructure** to continue delivering the Active School Travel Programme across Northern Ireland until 2021.

Sustrans has been delivering this successful programme for the past three years. In 2017-18 within participating schools, there number of pupils travelling actively increased from 34% to 44%.

We are currently working with over 340 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](http://www.sustrans.org.uk) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.



#feetfirstfamilies

Aughnacloy P.S. (above) who turned their closed car-park into a hockey pitch!

Another successful 'Feet First Families' event was held on 17th May 2019, where schools encouraged their families to walk, cycle or scoot together for their school journeys.

The aim of this was to reduce congestion around local schools and to make the car parks and school grounds more enjoyable places to be, by closing these off to vehicles.

We were delighted to hear that many schools had such brilliant, innovative ideas for making good use of their new space; we saw obstacle courses, parachute games, scooter and bicycle races at one school! At another there was a tea and coffee stall for parents, ice-cream for children and an arts & crafts station.

Most of all it was great to hear families expressing how much they enjoyed travelling to school actively together, and are trying to incorporate these healthy habits into everyday life now.

It's not too late to promote a new travel culture in your school! Just ask Ann-Marie for help in encouraging everyone in your school community to think of better ways to use the valuable space around your grounds.



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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JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Ditch the Stabilisers

Continuing to be one of our most popular sessions for Key Stage 1 pupils, Term 3 this year was filled with getting the little ones riding bikes independently and off stabilisers. Lots of Parents & Grandparents came in to watch and help their child perfect their balance and grow in confidence.

Ditch the Stabilisers sessions are full of fun, and always guaranteed to draw a few tears from parents as they watch their children take a massive step in growing up!

Below: Parents and Pupils from St. Ninnidh's P.S. in Derrylin and Kesh P.S. taking part in the outdoor sessions



Dr. Bike

A great way to instil an attitude of responsibility into Key Stage 2 pupils is by showing them how to look after their bicycles correctly.

Bike maintenance sessions can be carried out by any member of your school community who knows how to fix a puncture—teacher, classroom assistant, caretaker, parent etc.

You could always ask your local Cycling Club or Bike shop if they could volunteer an hour after school to show P5—P7 pupils the basics of bike maintenance.

Prior to National Standard Cycle training in Level 1 schools we carry out a 'Dr. Bike' check for participating pupils, where we check over bikes to make sure they are roadworthy and safe for training. It would be good practice to offer or carry this out in school twice a year, to show pupils how important it is to look after your bicycle.



Right: The bikes were in great condition at the Dr Bike check at Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, Dungannon

National Standard Cycle Training

We trained 55 pupils from 5 different schools up to National Standard this term, 52 of whom passed Level 2!

Our instructors work closely with the pupils over the 3 day course, showing them how to safely check their bikes before setting off, hand signalling, passing parked cars.

The on-road aspect of Level 2 equips pupils with the knowledge and skills to deal with traffic and hazards. All of which can be used when they are cycling to school.

Please do encourage your P6s and P7s who have completed the training to keep cycling and utilise the excellent skills they have recently acquired.



Left: Pupils from St. John the Baptist P.S., Belleek taking a quick rain check before getting back to business (above)



Above: St. Brigid's P.S., Mountfield pupils being put through the motions by Sustrans instructors

School Streets closure

In May this year to coincide with our Feet First Families event, Sustrans piloted a street closure outside Donegall Road P.S. in Belfast.

The aim of this was to ease congestion, poor air quality and road safety concerns that many schools experience during drop-off and pick-up times, by facilitating timed traffic restrictions on the road outside the school gates.

Streets around schools are often dominated by idling cars, speeding traffic and bad parking during school run time, resulting in air pollution and an environment that is generally unpleasant for walking and cycling.

By demonstrating that closing roads outside schools at drop-off and pick-up times is achievable, measuring the impact and sharing our findings, we aim to encourage more regular street closures and inspire more schools to try this approach. Ultimately, we want to affect a permanent change in the way children travel to school.



At Donegall Road P.S. pupils were able to enjoy safely walking, cycling and scooting to school, with no worries over crossing the road to get to school. We also used the extra space for lots of activities during the day, and at the end of the day had games and activities for families on the street as they left school.

Some food for thought maybe, on promoting more 'car-free' days around your school grounds?

Above: Pupils from Donegal Road P.S., Belfast with parents and Sustrans staff

Teacher survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our end of term Teacher survey!

We are so pleased to hear you're all enjoying the programme and think of it as valuable to your school.

"Pupils so enthusiastic about getting involved now"

"Super support"

"A VERY COMPREHENSIVE AND ENJOYABLE PROGRAMME"

"Loved range of activities"

"SUPER ACTIVITIES AND GREAT TUTORS"

"Encouraged children to travel in an active way to school and to think about the health benefits."

"Whole School has benefitted - assemblies, road safety"

New schools joining the AST programme



We are delighted to welcome 60 new schools across Northern Ireland to the Active School Travel programme in September, 10 of which are in the South West area:

- ◆ St. Joseph's P.S., Drumquin
- ◆ Tummery P.S., Dromore
- ◆ Walker Memorial P.S., Castlecaulfield
- ◆ St. Davog's P.S., Belleek
- ◆ Bush P.S., Dungannon
- ◆ St. Scire's P.S., Trillick
- ◆ Ballinamallard P.S.
- ◆ Cooley P.S., Sixmilecross
- ◆ Dungannon P.S.
- ◆ Garntall P.S., Clogher

We sincerely hope your mission of getting more of your kids happy, healthy and active gets off to a great start! Please do your best to welcome these new schools, particularly if they are neighbouring or within Shared Education circles; sharing best practice among schools is something we are passionate about!

NI Schools Circumnavigate the World!!

During the Big Pedal this year Northern Ireland schools made a staggering **164,000 active travel journeys**, including:

- **25,200** bike rides
- **20,220** scooter journeys
- **118,000** walking journeys



This combines to equal an incredible **816,995 miles** during the ten day challenge, the equivalent of nearly **33 times around the world.**

That's 3.5 trips to the moon!!

All the great work done by Northern Ireland schools in this 10 day period means that we averted **421kg** of nitrous oxides and **193,630 kg** of carbon dioxide being emitted into our atmosphere.

