

Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (for Schools) (SMoTS)

Update Report 2014/15



Change

the way you move



West Berkshire



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

1 Introduction

The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy for Schools (SMoTS) was first developed by West Berkshire Council in response to a statutory requirement from Government under the Education and Inspections Act 2006. The Act required Local Authorities to:

- Develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the local authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are being catered for
- Outline opportunities to promote sustainable travel schemes and modes of transport for the journey to, from and between schools and other institutions

The 2006 Act required authorities to develop a 5 year strategy, which was extended by the 2013 Home to School Transport Guidance. This reiterated the duty on councils to develop and maintain their SMoTS strategies.

West Berkshire Council's original SMoTS strategy was developed in 2006 and had become outdated. The strategy was updated in 2013, and covers a 5 year period promoting safety and sustainable travel to school. This report has been revised to include this year's data and reflects changes to the programmed delivery of sustainable travel measures by West Berkshire Council.

Since the original SMoTS strategy was written the Council have published a new Local Transport Plan with the following vision:

"To deliver effective transport solutions for all by increasing choice and minimising congestion"

Policy LTP K10 – School Travel within the Local Transport Plan states:

"The Council will work towards reducing car use through increasing the use of walking, cycling and public transport to school for staff and pupils. This will improve accessibility to education and training, reduce congestion and carbon emissions, and improve the health and well being of the school community. To achieve this, the Council will focus on the following:

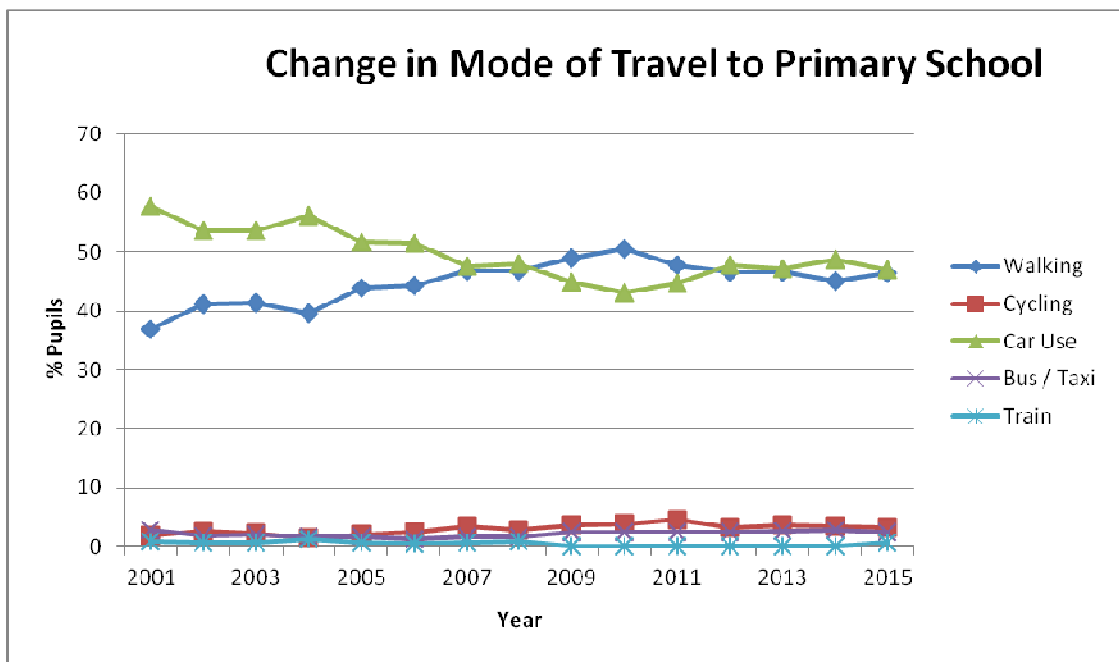
- i. Supporting schools to implement, review and update their school travel plans.
- ii. Working with schools to improve safety through comprehensive training, infrastructure schemes, and parking controls where appropriate.
- iii. Continuing to develop an efficient and sustainable home-to-school transport policy which considers a range of options to fulfil the needs of the student and the Council's duty.
- iv. Providing resources and information to facilitate the promotion of active travel through walking and cycling programmes.

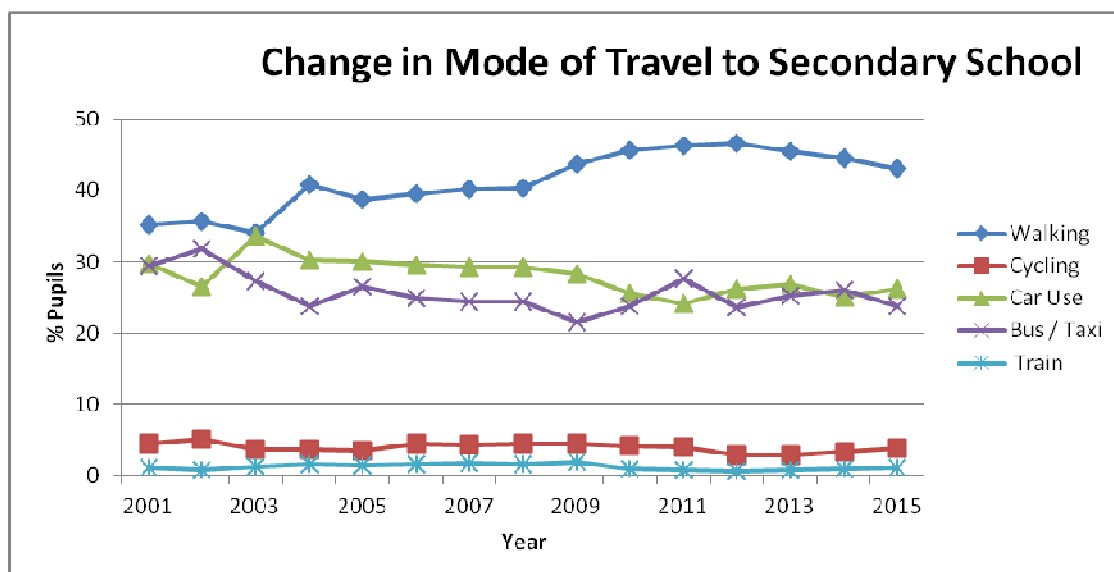
- v. Supporting schools and local operators to promote and encourage the use of public transport for the journey to school.”

2 Monitoring

Travel to school data is collected every year in the fortnight following the return by schools from the Easter break. The “Annual Schools Travel Survey” is undertaken at every school in the District at primary and secondary level in the form of a ‘Hands-Up’ survey. The survey has been undertaken since 2001, and the long term data shows a positive long-term trend in travel to school, with a reduction in car use and an increase in walking. There has however been an overall decline in this positive trend (mainly seen at Primary level) since 2010, which coincided with a reduction in dedicated resources to support and actively promote sustainable travel to school. Cycling to school has remained fairly constant at approximately 3% since 2001.

The following graphs show the general trends in school travel for primary and secondary schools.





2.1 Targeting schools

Using the outcomes of the Annual School Travel Survey, analysis has been undertaken to determine the number of pupils living within one mile of their school. Many projects are now being targeted at schools where a high percentage of pupils live within one mile of the school, but mode of travel to the school is predominantly by car.

Through an increased programme of expansion at school sites, effective engagement has taken place to ensure new school travel plans are implemented. Schools which are seeking to increase their daytime population, through a combination of new pupils and staff, require the school to give necessary attention to the increase in demand for travel to the site, and its potential impact on the local community. This provides an opportunity to support schools with the promotion of travel initiatives and the resources to help encourage sustainable travel to school, particularly at sites which experience issues of congestion or conflict during the start and end of the school day

3 Projects

The Council are delivering a number of projects which support the delivery of the LTP's School Travel policy. These are split into a number of categories, and are set out below:

Project	Target Audience	Responsible Team
School Travel Planning		
School Travel Plans	All Schools	Transport Policy
Modeshift STARS	Primary Schools	Transport Policy
Improving Safety		
Cycle Training	Year 5 -9 pupils	Road Safety
Road Rangers	Year F / Reception pupils	Road Safety
Safer Steps	Year 3 pupils	Road Safety
Ride Start	Year 11 – 13 pupils	Road Safety
Drive Start	Year 12 – 13 pupils	Road Safety
Safe Drive Stay Alive	Year 12 pupils	Road Safety
Road Safety Days	Schools	Road Safety
New Parents Meetings	New Parents	Road Safety
Considerate Car Use leaflet	Parents	Road Safety & Transport Policy
Promotion of Active Travel		
Go Kinetic & Steposaurus	Nursery & Primary schools	Transport Policy
5 Minute Walk Zones	Primary Schools	Transport Policy
Walking Buses	Primary Schools	Road Safety & Transport policy
Park and Stride	Primary Schools	Road Safety & Transport Policy
Bike IT	Eastern Urban Area Schools	Transport Policy
Travel Breakfasts	Schools	Road Safety & Transport Policy
Cycle Treasure Hunts	All	Road Safety
Cycle Days	Schools	Road Safety & Transport Policy
Infrastructure		
Cycle / Scooter Storage	All Schools	Transport Policy
Routes / Signage	Eastern Urban Area	Transport Policy
Travel Training		
LIFT	SEN pupils	Transport Services Education

3.1 School Travel Plans

3.1.1 School Travel Plans

All primary schools within West Berkshire have a travel plan, however this does not mean all schools are actively engaged with their STP. The Council are keen for schools to engage in the process and take actions to help reduce congestion and issues of travel to and from the school site at the beginning and end of the

school day. Encouraging schools to identify actions to increase travel to school via active measures – walking and cycling, or sustainable travel – car sharing or bus will help to reduce the number of cars travelling around the school gates at busy times. This helps to improve the safety around schools, and has a secondary impact on improving the health and wellbeing of children, as well as increasing their levels of attention within class. Within their travel plans, schools can state their aims and intentions at tackling these issues, as well as setting targets to help focus towards improvements.

Where schools are developing new travel plans as part of the planning process, it is recommended that the school takes into consideration the impact any new on-site development will have when it is fully complete and the school has achieved its maximum proposed intake of staff and pupils. Implementing this travel plan prior to any occupation of new buildings then helps the school to implement measures promoting sustainable travel to school prior to any increase in school numbers.

In the past twelve months, the Council has engaged with six schools to review, update or implement new School Travel Plans. Following their implementation, schools are required to engage with the Council annually to review their travel plan and any actions and targets within.

Any school that requires guidance on how to write their travel plan can request support from the Council, and will receive an easy-to-follow STP template which will show in detail what needs to be added into the document. This template has been comprehensively refreshed in 2015, and has since been made available to schools.

3.1.2 Modeshift STARS

To support the monitoring of travel plans the Council has moved towards an electronic travel planning system, Modeshift STARS, which allows schools to keep details of school travel activities online, enabling them to quickly and easily monitor their travel plan. By participating in STARS, schools have the opportunity to earn national School Travel Planning accreditation.

All schools submitting planning applications are required to monitor their travel plan using the Modeshift STARS system.

John Rankin Infant and Junior School (combined) and Spurcroft were the first schools in the District to achieve accreditation through the Modeshift STARS scheme, with a Bronze School Travel Plan award in 2013. These awards were presented to schools in an assembly in the early part of the academic year. In 2014, another four schools achieved a Bronze award. These schools were St Josephs Catholic Primary, St Nicholas Junior, The Castle School & The Winchcombe. By the end of the 2015 academic year a further two schools have achieved Bronze awards, Robert Sandilands and Little Heath becoming the first

secondary school in the District to achieve accreditation. A further five schools are expected to achieve Bronze in the next year, with an aspiration for any school which has achieved Bronze by summer 2015 to be awarded Silver in the next two years.

3.2 Improving safety

3.2.1 Cycle Training – Bikeability

West Berkshire has been successful in bidding for funding to support the delivery of Bikeability cycle training for the last six years. This has meant that the council has been able to offer free Bikeability cycle training to year 5 and 6 pupils at participating schools. Level 1 and 2 are usually taught as a combined 2 day course for pupils in years 5 and 6, with level 3 delivered to years 7 to 9 pupils. Training is delivered by a team of nationally qualified instructors. Bikeability was delivered to 1352 children at levels 1 and 2 two and 10 participated at level 3.

Number of Children receiving cycle training				
	Volunteer Scheme	Bikeability Level 2	Bikeability Level 3	Total
2007	Records Unavailable	n/a	No Level 3 Training	
2008		177		>177
2009		800		>800
2010	195	1508		1703
2011	55	1309		1364
2012	45	1200	42	1287
2013	12	1332	41	1385
2014	-	1325	37	1362
2015	-	1352	10	1362

Cycle Mechanics training is being offered to pupils in years 7 and 8 to accompany their Level 3 training. This is offered as an after school club, run by trained instructors.

3.2.2 Road Rangers (Reception)

Story book style resource covering the main road safety messages to raise awareness to the young audience – in car safety / holding hands when walking / safe scooting / safety outside schools. The resource also provides key information for parents.

3.2.3 Safer Steps (Yr 3)

Safer Steps is an activity book with a supporting DVD designed to help build a child's road safety skills using a parent's knowledge and examples as a foundation. Parents are encouraged to work with their child through the activity booklet and watch the DVD together and then they both can put what they have learnt into a practise.

3.2.4 Big trucks & Bikes (Safer Steps Special edition) (Yr 5- 6)

2016 will introduce an extension to Safer Steps – Big trucks and Bikes! Looking at independent travel options in relation to cycling, as part of transition from primary school to secondary school, the resource will be delivered to all Year 5 and 6 students in its first year but then will become a Year 5 resource thereafter. The programme is supported and sponsored by the Royal Mail.

3.2.5 Scooter Heroes

Scooter Heroes is a fun way of engaging with children and approaching the subject of using their scooters safely. The resource is distributed to schools consisting of an information leaflet for parents and a comic book that can be read with them, and is full of fun activities that they can do.

3.2.6 Booster Boy

Booster Boy, and his sister Booster Girl, are fictional characters that appear in a fun themed comic book to promote the correct use of car seats for children. The resources are delivered to Year 3 and 4 children in classroom workshops to raise the awareness of the 135cm rule.

3.2.7 Ride Start (Yr 11 – 13)

Ride-Start is a day long course aimed at 15 – 19 year olds (especially young offenders) focusing on Powered two Wheelers (P2W). The course covered the responsibilities associated with ownership, experience and development of practical skills relating to powered two wheelers (P2W includes: Moped / Scooter / Motorbike 50cc).

The course consists of four workshops: Practical Ride – motorcycle training ‘off road’ incorporating all basic riding skills; Road Safety and the Law – understanding attitudes and behaviour to reduce road risk. Also tests theory knowledge and understanding of the law; Protecting Gear and First Aid – guidance on safety clothing and equipment, also covers basic first aid knowledge and skills; and Basic Mechanics – learn simple maintenance to reduce bike running costs and keeping it roadworthy.

The course has been recognised and highly commended by Thames Valley Police as a suitable educational programme for those who otherwise would have to attend court for P2W offences.



3.2.8 Drive Start (Yr 12 – 13)

Drive start is aimed at pupils aged 17 or over with a provisional driving licence. There are two parts to the course, a compulsory half day, with a practical option once the half day workshop has been completed.

The (half day) Workshop covers:

- Road Safety and Law - understanding attitude and behaviour to reduce your road risk, understanding of the law and theory test knowledge
- First Aid - covering basic first aid knowledge and skills.
- Basic Mechanics - learning simple maintenance to reduce bike running costs and keeping it roadworthy

The Practical Course (optional on completion of the workshop) enables the young person to have a free 60 min driving lesson / assessment with an approved driving instructor who is affiliated with the workshop.

3.2.9 Safe Drive Stay Alive (Year 12 & 13)

A 'Live' production stage show aimed at raising awareness of the risks and dangers associated with young drivers. Many young drivers are carried away with the thrill of their new skills. Their confidence may exceed their experience and judgement, often resulting in tragic consequences.

The show is based around a video reconstruction of a road traffic collision. It traces the events leading up to the collision and then follows the actions of all the emergency services dealing with the incident.

Police, Ambulance and Fire Services as well as A&E consultants speak of their own experiences. But perhaps the most poignant messages come from parents who have lost a teenager or from a person that has been disabled by the actions of a young driver.

The 'Safe Drive Stay Alive' campaign reaches new and pre-drivers in an emotive and hard hitting way, questioning behaviour and attitude on the roads. The campaign has been running for the past ten years, with over 20,000 participants.

3.2.10 Louis Taylor – Road Safety Days

For a number of years West Berkshire Council has employed the services of a puppeteer to deliver the important message of road safety to children in primary schools.

The show comprises of 'a blend of magic' that is used as a vehicle to put across serious road safety messages in a responsible, fun and interactive way, leaving a lasting impression on the children. 20 schools had presentations with a total of 3,892 pupils receiving the important road safety messages.

3.2.11 Global UN Safety

As part of the UN's Decade of Action on Road Safety; every day, more than 500 children lose their lives on the world's roads and thousands more are injured. The Road Safety team worked very closely with West Berkshire schools to take part in a campaign **#SaveKidsLives** to help children to understand this important issue and to create awareness of how they can keep safe.



3.2.12 New Parents Meetings

As part of the new parent inductions for new primary school starters, the Road Safety team are able to give a presentation on the issues related to a safe journey to school. The following topics are covered:

- Walking bus or Park and Stride schemes.
- Inconsiderate parking
- The importance of keeping zigzags clear
- General Road safety information
- Walking & Cycling initiatives

3.2.13 Considerate Car use leaflet

The Considerate Car Use leaflet was developed to help school educate parents on safe and considerate parking outside schools. The leaflet can be given to all new parents, or used as a 'ticketing' method for cars parked illegally, unsafely or inconsiderately.

3.3 Active Travel

3.3.1 Go Kinetic & Steposaurus

The Council has two walk to school reward schemes available for Nursery schools (Steposaurus) and Primary Schools (Go Kinetic). Pupils are given a sticker or stamp each time they walk, scoot or cycle to school and receive rewards at a set number of walks (rewards include: pencils, Frisbees, zip tags, & free swimming / activity sessions at a local leisure centre). Resources are available free to all schools. There is also a chance for schools to run an in house competition – 'The Go Kinetic League', in order to promote and increase interest in the scheme. Classes or year groups can compete against each other by walking, scooting or cycling to school for a chance to win the opportunity to take care of the Go Kinetic hedgehog mascot. A refresh of the Go Kinetic programme is proposed for the new 2015/16 academic year.

3.3.2 Five Minute Walk Zones

Five Minute Walk Zones are being set up around schools to encourage parents to park away from the entrance gates and walk the last five minutes with their children in to the school. They will help to reduce congestion and parking issues immediately around the school, as well as increasing the safety of children and their exercise and concentration levels. The walk zones are set up by the school children themselves, who help the Council to time the 5 minute walking routes around the school. Stickers are then placed on lampposts to signal where the five minute walk zone starts, and promotional items such as banners and handouts with a map of the zone are also used. This initiative can be implemented to support and enhance participation within the Go Kinetik & Steposaurus schemes. Children who live more than a viable walking or cycling distance from the school are able to formally participate in the scheme.



3.3.3 Park and Stride

Park & Stride is a great way to encourage 'out of catchment' families to drive part of the way to school but to complete the journey on foot. Parents are encouraged to park in an approved safe parking area away from the school and then walk the rest of the journey by foot.

These parking areas are usually supported by local businesses or village halls with an understanding that the parent parking does not restrict normal business activity. In 2015, St Josephs School, Newbury has worked with a local pub & church to enable a Park and Stride scheme. Parents driving from the east along the A4 can park at the Long Boat pub to drop-off and pick up from the school, and from the west can use the local church.

3.3.4 Walking Buses

A 'walking bus' is a great way to encourage more children to walk to and from school. Each 'bus' consists of a group of children, who are escorted by a minimum of 2 parent volunteers – a 'driver' at the front and a 'conductor' at the back. A walking bus can take up to 16 children (or passengers) who walk in pairs. . In the past academic year Calcot Infant and Junior Schools have successfully launched and expanded their Walking Buses.

There are many benefits associated with encouraging more children to walk to school;

- Reduced traffic on the routes to school and outside the school gates.

- Improved levels of health and fitness – children who walk to school are generally more alert when they arrive than those who travel by car.
- Improved road safety – children who walk to school get the chance to practice their road safety skills and enhance road awareness.

3.3.5 Bike IT

Bike IT is a project funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Bike IT is a national project which aims to encourage pupils to cycle to school and on other journeys, to benefit their health, the environment and to cut down on congestion around the school. A dedicated Bike IT officer works intensively with a number of schools for one year, raising awareness with children, staff and parents, running events (including bike maintenance workshops, after school bike rides, biker's breakfasts etc.) and working with the school to put in place strategies to continue once the initial year's support is over.

The project will last 3 years, with 4 schools in West Berkshire receiving the support over the three year programme. Following a year of intense support, the Bike IT officer is able to provide at a distance support to the school to keep projects in the school running. The schools currently working with the Bike It project are St Pauls Catholic School, Birch Copse Primary & Downsway. In September 2015, Springfield Primary school in Tilehurst will be the fourth school to receive support from the Bike It project. In the summer of 2015, St Pauls & Birch Copse were awarded the Bike It Bronze award for their work within the project.

The Bike IT programme has been funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

3.3.6 Cycle Treasure Hunts

These treasure hunts, run on specific days during the school holidays, have been very popular with families looking for a free holiday activity, as well as promoting cycling and encouraging participants to visit areas of towns they may not know so well. Families are invited to turn up at the start point, collect a map and set of clues and then cycle off to find the answers. On their return they are rewarded with an edible treat.

3.3.7 Banners

Banners are a great way to engage the school community in the messages of road safety or walking and cycling to school. Schools run a 'design a banner competition, with the winning poster (or combination of designs) being made into a banner which can be hung outside the school.

3.4 Infrastructure

3.4.1 Cycle & Scooter Parking

The majority of schools in West Berkshire have cycle parking, and many are beginning to install scooter parking. Through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund the Council have been able to provide additional cycle and scooter parking for a number of schools in the east of the district. A further four schools will receive additional cycle shelters in the early part of the Autumn Term.

3.5 Travel Training

3.5.1 LIFT (SEN)

Since 2011 the Council has worked with LIFT training; this is an award winning programme which provides free independent travel training for vulnerable young people with support needs. This training enables learners to develop the skills and confidence they need to independently travel to school or colleges using a range of public transport. Students are assessed for a 1:1 personalised training programme which is delivered in partnership with parents/carers and schools and colleges. The training is continually reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate for the learner and their journey to school or college.

Every student also has the opportunity to enrol in an accredited qualification on using public transport safely.

The benefits of this training for the students include increased personal safety and road awareness, journey planning, time and money management skills. These skills can be built on and used in other areas in the young person's life to improve independence.

Learners have achieved a success rate of 92% over the last year and monitoring of learner progression has shown these skills are maintained long term. The experience and well regarded LIFT team is delivering high quality training for vulnerable young people across West Berkshire. Feedback from learners and parent/ carers consistently rates training as excellent. A parent recently wrote:

“Travel training, what can I say! This training has transformed my sons life, this I say without exaggeration. It has given him the confidence and know-how which in turn has opened up a whole new world and freedom to travel on his own.”

4 Funding

Funding opportunities for additional work with schools are limited. The Local Sustainable Transport Fund has provided some money to support Active Travel measures in the east of District, however this has now expired.

5 Challenges

One of the main challenges facing the delivery of the SMoTS strategy is engagement with the schools. While the primary schools are more receptive, they do require support and guidance. The secondary schools are much more difficult to engage, and with some becoming Academies there are fewer opportunities to work with them.

Limited funding means that there is limited scope for active promotion of sustainable travel to school. Many of the projects available are school led, with the resources being provided by the Council.

6 Opportunities

The integration of Public Health into the Council has enabled increased support and benefits to the promotion of sustainable and active travel to school. There are strong links between childhood obesity and children's physical activity levels, as well as other health related outcomes. Public Health do have a degree of funding to support the delivery of projects which meets their aims that could have a positive impact on the delivery of active travel schemes such as Go Kinetic and Steposaurus.

The delivery of Sustainable Travel to School programme has been further supported by the appointment of a Children's Active Travel Coordinator in November 2014. In the time since the appointment, there has been a significant increase in the engagement by schools in active travel initiatives including the promotion of Go Kinetic and Steposaurus, encouraging participation by schools in cycle training activities such as Bikeability and Bike It, and encouraging active and healthy lifestyles for school aged children. This new resource has also enabled the Council to launch the new 5 Minute Walk Zones initiative.

Appendix

Past Initiatives used to encourage active travel:

Bikeability Challenge

The Bikeability challenge is a four week challenge given to pupils receiving Bikeability cycle training. The challenge encourages pupils to use their bikes following the training to consolidate what they have learnt and includes cycling to school, going out for a family bike ride and making sure their bike is road worthy. On completion of the challenge pupils are rewarded with a 'Bike West Berkshire' Water Bottle.

Travel Breakfasts

Travel Breakfasts are offered to schools making significant changes in the numbers of pupils walking and cycling to school. The schools are chosen for increasing walking by at least 10%, or cycling by at least 5%. They can also be used to reward schools and the children who are taking part in travel initiatives.

Cycle Days (Primary school)

Cycle days are organised with primary and junior schools. KS2 pupils have the opportunity to take part in an all school ride out. This is facilitated with the support of National Standard Bikeability Instructors as well as staff and parents of the school. These events are normally organised in conjunction with national cycle to school weeks and road safety campaigns.

Routes / signage

The Local Sustainable Transport Fund has also enabled a number of routes in the east of the district to be signed. Using existing 'cycle routes' the signs show cyclists the best route from Tilehurst into Reading Town Centre (and back again). The routes also sign pupils to the local secondary schools of Denefield and Little Heath.

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 42400 and ask for the Transport Policy Team.

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