

North East Sustrans Active School Travel Programme Summer Term 2017 Newsletter

I'd love to hear from you...

I'm Johnny McCrystal,
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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. Since 2013 within participating schools, there has been a **38% increase** in the number of pupils travelling to school by an active mode.

We are currently working with over 280 schools across Northern Ireland. Please visit our [website](#) where you can learn more about the programme and download newsletters from other areas.



Active Travel Champion Mrs McMullan, Vice-Principal Mrs McNally with pupils receiving their Big Pedal winner's plaque from Sustrans Schools Officer Johnny

St Brigid's PS Wins Big Pedal Award

This term, St Brigid's PS in Ballymoney were presented their Big Pedal winner's plaque after coming first in NI in the large schools category. The school also came third overall in the UK with an incredible 88% of the school turning out on bikes and scooters for the 5-day challenge.

Spurred on by their Big Pedal win, the school organised a summer term active travel day for everyone to get involved. Parents and staff led groups of walkers, scooters and cyclists on a trip to the local Riverside Park in Ballymoney. There the pupils enjoyed some play time in the park and cooled off with ice lollies!



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

Silver Award in the Glens of Antrim

Pupils and staff at St Patrick's PS, Waterfoot received the prestigious Sustrans School Mark Silver award this term at a special outdoor school assembly. The school were also celebrating their annual sports day, which now features a 'slow bike race' as inspired from all the cycle skills the children have been learning! Special mention of thanks goes to Mr Dinsmore for his work as Active Travel Champion in school, which has led to the award. He has been leading cycling skills sessions, organising assemblies and travel challenges to keep everyone active on the school run.



Pupils from St Patrick's PS, Glenariff with their new Sustrans School Mark Silver award.

Camphill PS Superheroes!

Camphill Primary in Ballymena took on the 'Active Travel Superhero' challenge this term to encourage their pupils to ditch the car for their school journeys and choose to be active instead.

The challenge was to try and complete 10 active journeys to or from school over a 2 week period. In fact, many pupils completed even more than that.

A total of **2,636 active journeys** were completed! Which means that there were lots of pupils who achieved their 'Superhero status' at Camphill Primary!



Ditch the Stabilisers

Do you remember what it felt like to ride a bike for the very first time? I wish I could but unfortunately I can't! Though I'd like to think that I'd have had a big smile on my face, just like this pupil from Ballycraig PS who ditched the stabilisers during one of our led sessions in school.



This term lots of 'Ditch the Stabilisers' sessions took place in schools across the North East to help pupils of all ages learn to ride their bikes independently for the very first time. This is always inspirational to see!

"One of the most important days of my life was when I learned to ride a bicycle." (Michael Palin)

"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of riding a bike." (John F Kennedy)



(Above) Active Travel Champion, Mrs McHugh with pupils, parents and grand parents at St John's PS, Carnlough.
(Below) Pupils and parents from Ballycraig PS.



Scooter Safety on the Journey to School

During our scooter skills sessions, pupils learn a range of skills to help them keep safe when they scoot to school.

These skills include learning how to complete a safety check on your scooter prior to the ride; how to brake in a safe and controlled way; how to adjust your speed to corner safely and also covers the principles of the 'green cross code' for when you need to cross the road on your journey.

Lots of pupils have gone through this training this year and many schools have mentioned noticing increased numbers of scooters at school following the training.



10 New Schools in the NE

After another highly competitive application period, we're pleased to welcome sixty new schools on to the Active School Travel Programme. Ten of these schools are from the North East region, and I'm excited to have met them already and looking forward to the new school year ahead.

Starting in September will be: **Antrim Primary, Braidside IPS, Dunclug PS, Harryville PS, Macosquin PS, Six Mile IPS, St Comlicille's PS, St Colum's PS, St Joseph's PS Antrim & St Malachy's PS.**

Already we have a wide range of activities planned for the first term including 'Teacher Cycle Skills', 'Ditch the Stabilisers', 'Bling Your Bike Days', assemblies and much more.



School Mark Online

This year Sustrans School Mark, our award scheme for schools, moved online schoolmark.sustrans.org.uk

The School Mark website will guide you through the key steps required to increase and sustain the number of pupils travelling to school actively.

Schools can track their progress and access a wealth of supporting resources in order to achieve three awards and become beacons of best practice.

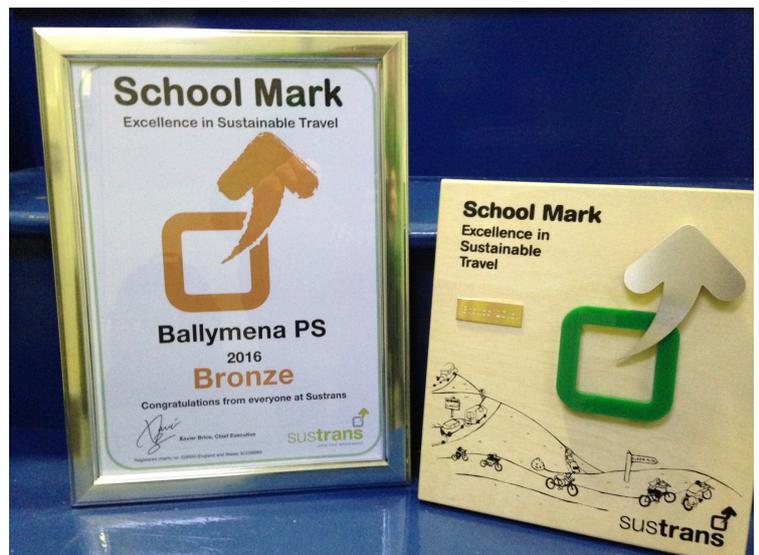
Each school on the programme has access to their own school account and Active Travel Champions are then able to chart their progress toward achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold awards.



Remember to log into your school account any time anything happens in school to encourage active travel to school—cycle training, assemblies, curriculum links, active travel event days, etc.

It's also really useful to keep a folder of evidence to support and record your School Mark progress (photos, newsletters, participation data, etc)

Once you feel the award criteria are complete, simply submit for assessment using School Mark Online and an award like this *could* be on its way to **your** school!



School Streets launched in East London

Sustrans has recently helped to launch the first ever School Streets programme in Hackney, East London, to celebrate safe streets and promote active lifestyle amongst children.

Run by Hackney Council, the 'school streets' initiative is a programme of timed street closures outside schools at drop off and pick up hours to bring together children, parents and teachers and offer them a safe space to play and socialise.

Together with Play Streets, our team in London ran a variety of activities, including a School Streets banner design workshop, a smoothie bike and an air quality quiz.

Ben Addy, our Head of Collaborative Design in London said: "It was a brilliant day. It goes to show how a street can change when you take cars out of the equation. The social side cannot be over emphasised either – parents, kids and teachers all spontaneously playing, collaborating and talking. If we are 'more divided than ever', I didn't see much evidence of that yesterday."

Click [here](#) to read more.



The School Streets programme had parents, kids and teachers all spontaneously playing and talking together.

Big Pedal 2018

The Big Pedal 2018 will return on the 23rd April, running for two weeks until the 4th May. We're aiming to break the 1 million journey barrier again and are hoping for a record breaking year.

Click [here](#) to see some of our amazing statistics from the 2017 challenge.

Sustrans is grateful for the continued support of our schools work in Northern Ireland from the following:

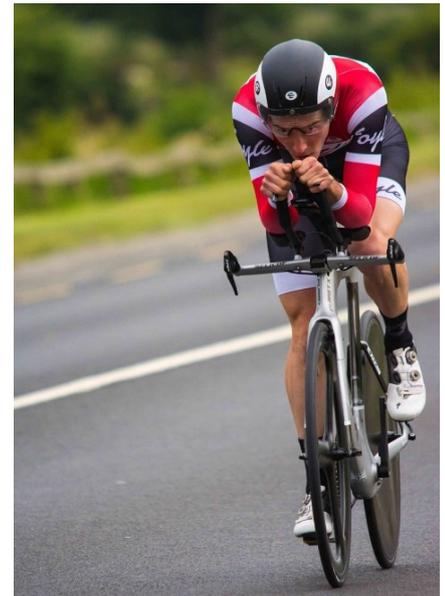


Gran Fondo winner inspires new generation to cycle to school

When he's not winning the [Gran Fondo](#) or the [Donegal Atlantic Way Ultra](#), Ronan McLaughlin (former professional cyclist) is helping inspire children to walk and cycle to school.

Ronan's day job combines his passion for cycling with getting children active on the school run. He joined Sustrans in March 2017 as an Active Travel Officer, working with schools in the North West of Northern Ireland.

"It is great to be able to inspire children and young people through the Active School Travel Programme," Ronan said. "When I was full-time in cycling, I lived in Belgium and Holland. The mentality is very different there as everybody cycles everywhere. I know it's not always possible to cycle but there are some people who don't live far from school who still drive there. Hopefully that mind-set is changing. Just a few generations ago we all used to walk or cycle to school, hopefully the work we are doing is helping to bring those habits back."



Super Cycling Man

Two years ago Super Cycling Man, aka Will Hodson, a teacher from London, set off on a journey around the world. He plans to cycle across all 7 continents including Antarctica dressed as a Superhero!

You can follow his journey on his website and social media channels. Click [here](#) to find out more.

