

School Travel Plan Case Study 2 – A small/medium-sized rural primary WHIMPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Size: 135 pupils and 16 members of staff
TravelWise Award: Silver (2006)

1. Background and Location

Whimple Primary School is situated in the village of Whimple, some 7 miles from Exeter. There has been a lot of housing development in the village in recent years. Whimple is divided into the old village around the Square and the newer housing estates, with the school located in the middle.

2. Main issues & problems

Although most of the children live in or near the village, many were driven to school before the introduction of the travel plan, resulting in congestion outside the school and major inconvenience for local residents. Victory Hall car park is located alongside the school, but this is also used by staff and quickly fills up. There is a public house just up the road from the school, and the landlord allows parents to use the car park at the beginning and end of the day.

Many of the roads in the village, particularly in the older part, do not have pavements, making walking to and from school quite hazardous.

3. Travel Plan (First Travel Plan 2005)

Aims & Targets

The main aims of the travel plan were to reduce congestion outside the school, encourage healthier and safer travel, set up a walking bus and encourage more children to cycle.

Key Strategies & Actions taken

(a) Educational

- Walking bus(es)
- Reward scheme for walkers – “Walking the Wizard Way”
- Support Walk to School Weeks
- Travel Action Committee a permanent feature
- Assemblies about travelling to school and to reward walkers
- Leaflets and newsletters to raise awareness
- Travel plan ideas incorporated into curriculum
- Introduction of cycle training
- Health and Safety Day held in spring2007

(b) Engineering

- 20 mph zone past the school
- Remarking of zig zag lines
- Cycle storage using DfES grant (for 2007)

4. Outcomes

Travel Modes Survey Results – Past to Present

Travel Mode	2005	2006
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	No.	%	No.	%
Walk	67	51	110	81
Cycle	6	5	5	4
Car/Van	9	7	6	5
Car Share	37	28	14	10
Other	2	2	0	0

How well the school met its original targets and how the travel plan has developed since

In the first year, the school hoped to increase walking by 10%, cycling by 5% and reduce cars by 10%. By the summer of 2006, walking had increased by 30% and cars reduced by 20%! The cycling target was not met, but the school hopes to achieve this by 2007 when cycle training is established and new cycle racks are in place.

The school updated its travel plan in May 2006 to gain the Silver TravelWise Award. This year it plans to spend the DfES grant to provide a sheltered area and extra cycle racks.

The main priority for 2006-7 is to maintain the walking buses and to keep enthusiasm amongst pupils and parents alive. During the year the school has worked hard to incorporate the travel plan ideas into the curriculum but recognises the need to do more.

What the school feels it has done well and what could have been done differently

The walking buses, now numbering three, are a major success. Sustaining the buses, however, is a big challenge. Parental involvement in the walking buses is crucial, and is the key to the success of the initiative.

The number of cars used to transport pupils to school has been substantially reduced. This has eased congestion, and pupils and parents are now able to enter school more safely. The Travel Plan Committee has wide representation from governors, local parish council, parents, pupils and teachers. Everyone is clear about the aims and regularly reminded about them. The Committee helps to keep the profile of the travel plan high at the school and involves pupils in its development.

The headteacher has included a section on the travel plan in the induction pack for new parents, and actively tries to recruit new volunteers for the walking bus

when taking parents round the school. The school is also starting to recruit volunteers from the village community, which is probably a "first" in the county. The only thing the headteacher feels could have been done differently is starting the whole process sooner!

Comments from children/headteacher/parents

Both the headteacher and parents commented that the introduction of the walking buses has eased congestion outside the school and improved safety for both children and staff.

“Like any project which relies on volunteer help, it is sometimes difficult to sustain enthusiasm, but a year on after we launched our first buses I still feel a thrill when I see them all arriving at school. It makes all the hard work worthwhile.

We are entering a new phase in the form of our first community volunteer, who will start in the New Year. This is exciting and broadens our potential volunteer base as well as raising our profile and giving our passengers a little more independence. We are currently targeting our new intake, which will reinforce the message that ‘Whimble Walking Buses are a way of life and not just a novelty’.

Emma Palmer

Whimble Walking Bus Co-ordinator

“The Walking bus is a great way of reducing traffic congestion around the school, making it safer for the children at the start of the day. Although we live a little way out of the village we walk to school everyday and travel on the bus when it’s our turn. It provides a safe and fun way of travelling to school and ensures we have a daily dose of fresh air and exercise. I’d certainly encourage more car users to join it.”

Mandy Fielding

Parent Governor

5. Future direction of travel plan

The introduction of community volunteers is a major new development for the school and should broaden support for the walking buses. The school will continue to use the Walk the Wizard Way incentive scheme, and has requested that this be expanded to include a Diamond level.