

Case Study

School Name: Northampton National School

Location: Northampton, Kinvara, Co. Galway

Type: Rural primary School

Number of Students: 55

Number of Teachers: 3 class teachers + 1 part time resource teacher

Introduction: This is a small rural school located approximately 3 miles from Kinvara. It is situated on a narrow country road with 2 bad bends in close proximity towards the east of the school, a straight stretch of road provides access from the west of the school



Current Trends for School Travel: (anecdotal evidence)

At the outset of the programme all the students were being driven to school as there was no school bus service and a total absence of a cycling culture.

Work Undertaken to Date:

The following action took place as part of the Travel programme over the first year:

- Parents Presentation
- Class Presentation

- Staff Presentation
- Walking bus training with parents and pupils
- Hi viz jackets for all pupils and parents sponsored
- Transferable road signs purchased
- 2 weekly entire school Park n Stride/Walking buses launched
- Children walking to school every day
- Art exhibition in local town
- Announcement at mass
- Articles in parish newsletter, Connaught Tribune, Clare Champion and Clare People newspapers
- Interviews and news headlines on Galway Bay FM

A group of parents from the school also volunteered to do a walkability audit of the roads leading to the school in both directions. This was arranged on the back of a presentation given to them by An Taisce's Green-Schools Travel Officer for the region. The students were very inspired by the travel challenge that An Taisce designed and really appreciated the various challenges and benefits that go with taking on the programme. From this point on individual children and their parents began walking to school



The parents felt that through raising awareness and being highly visual on the road that they could be effective in changing the speed of the traffic in their locality and this would lead to permanent traffic calming in the area. After the audit it was decided that two walking buses be set up as the parents felt the best way to enable the children to walk was through the walking bus model. Walking bus training was then provided and locations at a distance of approximately 1 km from the school in either direction were identified. One is a local farmer's large yard and the other is a clearing at the side of the road outside a cluster of four houses. Permission to use

these locations was received, hi-visibility jackets were given to every pupil, road signs were purchased to be placed 1km at either side of the school and a rota of parents was set up with four parents in each walking bus, two parents at the front and two at the back for safety. In addition, to improve safety one parent would walk ahead of the bus and one parent would walk a little bit behind the bus to warn cars in advance. These parents wear hi-visibility jackets too.

Opportunity for Success: The children did beautiful posters depicting all the various themes under sustainable travel and they displayed them in the local Londis shop where everyone around does their shopping. They were on Galway Bay FM singing the safe cross code and the Principal asked drivers to watch out for their walking buses. The whole school turned out for the launch of their walking buses including all parents. The principal was amazed to see 100% attendance of all parents on the day.



Comments: It is amazing what a school can do with no infrastructure but a very positive attitude. The travel theme has resulted in the school having a parents association for the first time and this came about purely as a result of the parents wanting to be able to walk their children to school. Because a walking bus or a 'park and stride' were not an option on their own the school combined the two ideas to come up with a solution that fits their school. On the night of the initial parent's presentation every parent was handed a map with their school at the centre of it and every car that comes to the school and the route that it takes mapped on to it. This was very effective in showing the parents the current travel situation and gave them a chance to look at possibilities to reduce their car usage.

Currently: The School continues the two walking buses every Friday and many pupils also now walk independently on other days. The parents' willingness was a big help in the success of this school. The green trees

idea was embraced by the pupils was a good motivator in encouraging them to walk to school.