



Green-Schools Travel ANNUAL REPORT 2024



An Taisce, The National Trust for Ireland, is the foremost environmental organisation in Ireland. Its range of interests extends from the natural heritage of land, air, water, flora and fauna, to the heritage of buildings and gardens. Through its local, national and international networks, it seeks to educate, inform and lead public opinion on the environment and influence policy and development. Strategies to achieve these aims include awareness and education programmes and campaigns such as:

- Green-Schools
- Green-Schools Travel
- Blue Flag
- Clean Coasts
- National Spring Clean
- Green-Flag for Parks
- LEAF – Learning about forests



The Green-Schools Travel Programme is funded by the Department of Transport and supported by the National Transport Authority.



SDG Ambassadors

An Taisce was designated an SDG Champion Organisation for 2023/2024 and in 2024 has achieved the status of SDG Ambassador, working to advocate and promote the goals. As an SDG Ambassador, An Taisce leads as an example of how organisations or groups can integrate the Sustainable Development Goals into their work and activities.



FEE (The Foundation for Environmental Education)

seeks to promote environmental education by coordinating programmes and improving awareness of the importance of environmental education. It is composed of a network of organisations which undertake individual programmes in their own countries and participate in international efforts. An Taisce as the Irish member of FEE co-ordinates FEE international programmes in Ireland as follows: Green-Schools, GreenCampus, Blue Flag, Young Reporters for the Environment, Learning about Forests (LEAF).

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INTRODUCTION

Message from the Director

An Taisce’s Green-Schools Travel programme saw another successful year in 2024. This is thanks to the effort and dedication of many, working together in partnership to promote and support sustainable travel on the journey to and from school. Congratulations to all schools who received their Green Flag for the Travel and Global Citizenship Travel themes in 2024! I hope that you celebrated this fantastic achievement and raised your Green Flag with pride.

Thank you and well done to all the students, teachers, parents, principals and wider school and local communities who have all come together in unique, creative ways to achieve this award.

Thank you also to the incredible Green-Schools Travel team who work nationwide to support schools on the programme. I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge their work and recognise the key contributions of some of our longest serving team members and welcome those who are new to the team and organization.

This report highlights the scale and range of initiatives that have been developed by the team and embraced by our fantastic schools, and this work is having a real impact. It is critical we maintain this work going forward and we look forward to continuing to do so. I want to sincerely thank the Department of Transport, the National Transport Authority and our Local Authorities for their ongoing support of Green-Schools Travel.

-Cathy Baxter, Director of Education and Community Action



Cathy Baxter, Director of Education and Community Action, speaking at the Big Travel Challenge Awards, April 2024

Executive Summary

2024 was another impactful year for the Green-Schools Travel Programme, as we continued to support schools in adopting sustainable and active travel habits. Through school visits, national events, and strategic partnerships, we empowered students and communities to reduce car dependency, improve air quality, and embrace active travel as a daily habit.

Engagement with schools remained at the heart of our programme, with Green-Schools Travel **supporting 557 schools nationwide**. Throughout the year, Travel Officers conducted workshops, audits, and hands-on travel activities, fostering a culture of active and sustainable travel among students. These direct interactions played a crucial role in motivating schools to take meaningful steps toward more sustainable travel choices.

Our national events continued to inspire action, with the **Big Travel Challenge** in March encouraging school communities—including a dedicated staff room challenge—to choose the most suitable sustainable travel mode for their school. Winners of the challenge were celebrated at a special awards ceremony in Dublin Zoo. **Bike Week** in May saw primary and secondary schools across the country embracing cycling, while June focused on **Scoot to School Week**, engaging younger students in active travel. In October, **National Walk to School Week** aligned with Walktober and Climate Action Week, and reinforced the benefits of walking for personal health and the global environment. Following this, **Clean Air Week** in November highlighted the connection between transport choices and air quality, further motivating schools to adopt sustainable travel habits.

Walkability Audits remained a cornerstone of our work, empowering students to assess their school environments and amplifying student’s voices for safer, more child-centred routes. In 2024, **139**

walkability audits were completed by Green-Schools Travel Officers. These audits not only provided valuable feedback on infrastructure but also instilled a sense of responsibility and civic engagement among children and young people. In addition to these efforts, infrastructure improvements played a key role in supporting sustainable travel. In 2024, **1,180 new cycle parking spaces and 702 scooter parking spaces** were installed in schools nationwide, through grants provided by Green-Schools Travel, ensuring students have safe and secure facilities for active travel. These parking spaces represent a lasting legacy of Green-Schools Travel’s work, supporting sustainable school communities for years to come. Additionally, **Cycle Right grants** were allocated to **5,836 students** across the country, providing essential cycle training to equip students with the skills and confidence to cycle safely.

The Green-Schools Travel Programme thrived in 2024 through strong partnerships and collaborations with various organisations, including our Green-Schools Core and Safe Routes to School colleagues; local authorities; cycling and mobility advocacy groups; other environmental NGOs; Road Safety Groups; and local sports partnerships. These collaborations played a crucial role in expanding our reach, improving infrastructure, and strengthening efforts for safer, more sustainable travel options for students and communities nationwide.

Looking ahead to 2025, Green-Schools Travel aims to expand participation in national travel events, engage more students and school staff, and enhance digital and interactive resources to support schools on their sustainable travel journeys.

We extend our deepest gratitude to all the schools, teachers, students, parents, and partners who contributed to the success of Green-Schools Travel.

-Allison Phillips, Green-Schools Travel Manager





GREEN-SCHOOLS TRAVEL

The Green-Schools Travel theme has been operating at a national level since 2008. The theme is funded by the Department of Transport, and supported by the National Transport Authority. The Green-Schools seven-step methodology is a key component which guides schools through the development of strategies to reduce car dependency through student-led actions. As part of the Travel programme, schools receive the dedicated support of a Travel Officer who provides guidance and support to participating schools.

In any given school year, participating schools will be at different stages of the programme. Schools that have completed a minimum of two years on a Travel theme will progress to award status in May, while schools progressing to a Travel theme will be invited to commence in September. Meanwhile, some schools are currently working on the theme and may be somewhere in between these points.

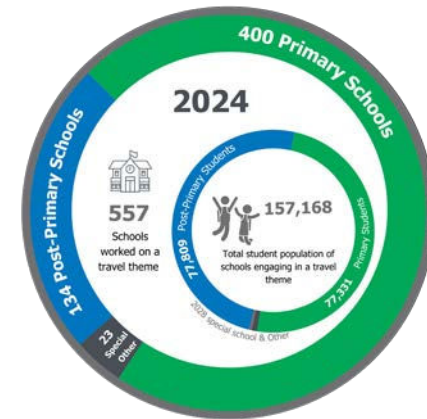


Figure 1: Participation in a travel theme in 2024

School participation in a Travel theme

Programme Reach

In 2024, 557 schools (400 Primary, 134 Secondary, 13 special schools and 10 non-mainstream education centres) worked on a travel theme. Schools working on a travel theme work to raise awareness about sustainable travel with the entire school as part of Step 6: Informing and involving. In 2024, of the 557 schools engaged in a travel theme, 161 schools were invited to begin their work in a travel theme, 149 schools awarded for their work on a travel theme and 247 schools continue to work on a travel theme. The estimated reach of the Travel programme nationwide, as taken from the Department of Education school lists for 2023-2024, indicates that the programme reach was over 157,000 students and over 14,800 staff members staff members through student led actions.

● Travel ● Global Citizenship Travel



Figure 2: School status within the programme in 2024 by travel theme

Theme Progression

The Travel theme is delivered in two phases – Travel and Global Citizenship Travel. The first Travel theme introduces schools to the concept of sustainable travel and begins working to promote sustainable transport options such as walking, cycling, scooting, park & stride, wheeling or public transport for school journeys. The Travel theme is then revisited approximately eight years later through the lens of Global Citizenship. Through this theme, schools learn about the impact of transport on global issues such as green-house gas emissions, air quality and sustainable development in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In 2024, 54% (301 schools) engaged with the first Travel theme and 46% worked on Global Citizenship Travel.



Figure 3: School status within the programme in 2024 by travel theme and school type

Key Achievements in 2024:



1,728
school visits



200
walkability audits



25
walking bus workshops



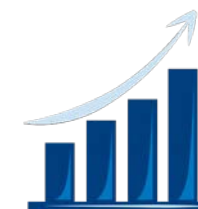
16
cycle bus events



1,180
cycle parking spaces and 90
shelters provided to 81 schools



702
scooter parking spaces
delivered to 26 schools



10%
increase in sustainable
modes (walk, cycle, scoot,
park& stride or public bus)
across sample survey schools
between 2022-2024



87%
of schools awarded for a
travel theme in 2024 noted
a decrease in car use in their
applications



66%
recorded an increase in the
number of students walking



116
teachers attended **four** online Travel training
seminars nationwide



149
schools were awarded a Travel flag at **twelve**
award ceremonies nationwide



CALL TO ACTION WEEKS

Green-Schools Travel deliver five dedicated call to action weeks throughout the school year. These weeks aim to motivate schools to implement behaviour change in their school communities, with a focus on a particular aspect of sustainable travel.

These weeks include:

- Big Travel Challenge (March)
- Bike Week (May)
- Scoot to School Week (June)
- Walk to School Week (October)
- Clean Air Week (November)

Big Travel Challenge

The aim of the Big Travel Challenge is to implement measurable change over a period of 10 days during the month of March. Any school in Ireland previously awarded, or currently working on, their Green-Schools Travel or GC Travel flag were invited to participate in the Big Travel Challenge (BTC).

Changes to the Challenge this year included the promotion of more than one mode of sustainable travel, which in previous years had been restricted to one mode of focus. Alternative actions such as workshops and other classroom based activities were also recognised when selecting outstanding schools.

Another addition to the competition this year was the recognition of county winners, in order to foster friendly competition among schools within a county.

The staffroom challenge returned for a second year, with enthusiastic uptake from several schools around the country. Engagement on social media was high in general throughout the competition, with many schools sharing and tagging @greenschoolsire in their images and videos.

Four regional winners were selected from the county winners, as well as a national winner taking the top prize. The winners were celebrated with a ceremony at Dublin Zoo in April.



Tús Nua RehabCare is a disability day service located in Tullmore, Co. Offaly. They focused their work on using sustainable methods to get to their centre such as public transport, walking and wheeling. They also completed a walkability audit which they submitted to Offaly County Council. As a result of their hard work they were awarded the midlands regional winner for 2024.



The full list of winners:

Easter Regional Winner:

Loreto Primary School, Dalkey, Co. Dublin

Midlands Regional Winner:

Tús Nua, Rehab Care, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

North-Western Regional Winner:

Tooreen National School, Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo

Southern Regional Winner:

Cappawhite National School, Co. Tipperary

Staffroom Challenge Winner:

St. Joseph's National School, Templemore, Co. Tipperary

Ireland's Travel School of the Year:

Cappawhite National School, Co. Tipperary

Cappawhite National School, Co. Tipperary won both the BTC Southern Regional Travel School Category and the overall BTC Travel School of the Year award in April 2024. This school demonstrated exceptional skills in maintaining the momentum of their walking events and ensured every member of their local community was involved.

Cappawhite NS, a school of 126 pupils, concentrated on encouraging students to Walk/Wheel to school, as well as Park & Stride, where possible.

Actions undertaken:

- Organised a walking bus from the park for the 10-day challenge.
- Brought life to the event each day by appointing different groups to lead the walking bus each day such as Students Council, Staff members, local politicians and local celebrities, to name a few.

Impact:

- Reduced traffic congestion and wait times
- Improved air quality at the school gate (no cars idling)
- Increased awareness about sustainable travel across the local community
- Enhanced community relationships

The school plan to use their prize money to install a disabled parking space.



Above: Big Travel Challenge regional and national winners 2024 pictured at Dublin Zoo.



(CLICK HERE): Travel award for Tipp school, Nenagh Guardian



Above: Cappawhite NS, from Tipperary, were named Travel School of the Year at the Big Travel Challenge Awards at Dublin Zoo, April 2024.

Bike Week

In partnership with the National Transport Authority, Green-Schools Travel celebrated National Bike Week from Saturday the 11th until Sunday the 19th of May, with National COW Day (Cycle on Wednesdays/Weekdays) held on Wednesday, May 15th.

This is a key event in the Green-Schools calendar where Travel Officers nationwide work closely with schools and other stakeholders for bike events. In May 2024, travel officers nationwide completed 233 visits to 199 schools. Activities ranged from bike skills and bike maintenance training to whole school cycle. In addition, officers worked with local sports partnerships, local authorities and An Garda Siochana to realise larger bike themed events.

Mayo School Cycles

In May 2024, Green-Schools Travel Officer Lukasz Kryzwon coordinated a series of school cycles with Mayo schools in partnership with Mayo Sports Partnership, Mayo County Council, RSA and Gardai Siochana. Events were organised for each day of the Bike Week between 13th-17th May where over 300 students from different parts of Mayo participated.

- In Castlebar, 80 children from Castlebar ETNS, Snugboro NS and Gaelscoil Raifteri joined forces to cycle through the town.
- The biggest cycle took place in Westport with over 100 pupils from Gaelscoil Raifteri, Quay NS and Scoil Padraig. Children cycled together through town and on the greenway and stopped at the Point for a group photo.
- Other participating schools explored their locality on the bikes – Cong NS, Parke NS and St Joseph’s PS, Ballinrobe. In Cong NS, 3 children with special needs were able to participate on their special bikes and the local cycling club provided volunteers to join the group.



Westport school cycle, May 2024



COW!

St. Marys NS in Donnybrook, Dublin 4 indicated that 56% of their 631 pupils in attendance participated in National COW day.

Glasnevin Educate Together National School in Dublin 11 noted that they had 170 cyclists for their National COW day event.



Over 70 students participated in a bike week event in **Scoil Mhuire, Carrick on Shannon, Co. Leitrim** organised by Green-Schools Travel in partnership with the community gardai. Refreshments were funded through Leitrim sports partnership as part of the bike week funding bursary.

Photography Competition

As part of the week, Green-Schools Travel coordinated a photography competition which invited students to capture their own bicycle experiences on film. Prizes for three themed bike photography challenges (Junior Primary, Senior Primary and Post-Primary) categories were offered to schools nationwide. In addition, prizes were offered for a school collage using photos from students cycling.



Winning entries can be viewed [here](#).



Scootathon

The Green-Committee at **Corville NS, Co. Tipperary** organised a ‘Scootathon’ for the junior and senior infants. They created a street-like scenario with stop-and-go signs, everyone wore high-vis vests, used helmets and discussed safety concerns. This was such a success the school aims to run this every year.



Scoot to School Week

National Scoot to School Week took place from the 10th – 14th June 2024 where schools nationwide actively promoted scooting to school. This call to action event is now in its 10th year and is hugely popular, particularly amongst junior primary students. Scooting events take place throughout the year and gather momentum in the lead up to Scoot to School Week. In June 2024, over 1,900 junior primary students from over 30 schools nationwide participated in scooter skills training events, led by the regional Travel Officer.

National Scoot to School day took place on the 12th June 2024 and some schools shared their results as part of the scooting competition. St. Olafs NS in Dundrum, Dublin 16 recorded a participation rate of 62.8% where 336 of the 535 students in attendance scooted to school on National SOW day. St. Josephs National School in Gorey, Co. Wexford recorded over 315 students scooting (60.46% of the school) on June 12th 2024.

Participating schools that submitted their SOW Day results were entered into a draw for prizes generously donated by Micro Scooters UK. Three schools were selected as winners of the draw.

Social media engagement across the Green-Schools channels was active during the month of June, with Travel related posts receiving more than 13,000 impressions on Facebook during the month. Scoot to School related pages and resources received nearly 1,000 engagements in the two weeks before and after the event.



Scooter skills workshop in Kildare.

Walk to School Week

Walk to School Week took place from October 7th to 11th, with National WOW Day celebrated on the 9th. This week-long initiative encouraged students to walk or Park & Stride to school. Throughout the week, schools enjoyed resources alongside their Travel Officers like the Ultimate Walking Playlist for secondary students and the Catwalk Relay Race for primary students.

Of the 557 current Travel and GC Travel schools targeted for participation, 112 schools submitted their WOW results. It should be noted that many schools participate as routine and do not register for the competition.

It is estimated that more than 10,000 students walked to school on National WOW Day.



National WOW Day Presentation Secondary, Castle Island



National WOW Day Balla NS, Co. Mayo

Spotlight event:
Balla NS National Walk to School Day

Balla National School in Mayo walked to school on NWOW Day 2025. The whole school met at the town square and the entire population of 220 students walked to school that day. Children and parents walked together. While parents had opportunity to meet each other, children enjoyed chatting and laughing on their way to school. Mayo County Council installed a sign on the day asking drivers to slow down. Their Travel Officer Lukasz then delivered Journeys to School Around the World presentation to 120 pupils in the junior classes and discussed the benefits of walking. The school actively promotes walking and run regular WOW days throughout the school year.



National WOW Day Balla NS, Co. Mayo

Spotlight story:
No Idling Campaign

A survey conducted in **Scoil Chormaic, Cashel, Co. Tipperary** in November 2023 highlighted that 83.3% (25 out of 30 vehicles) were idling outside the school. Following on from this they organised slogan competitions, promoted no-idling using the Green-Schools No Idling Toolkit and asked drivers of school transport vehicles to pledge to turn off their vehicles. In addition the school organised a show case event in February 2024 where each committee member created a stall to show case their work on travel and preceding themes. Other activities included the creation of a bespoke travel themed monopoly game, interactive tours of an electric vehicle, travel puzzles and quizzes and information detailing the impact of air pollution on health. This featured on News2day in April 2024 and can be viewed through the button below. In April 2024, the school completed a follow on survey and found that the incidence of no-idling had reduced to 23% (7 out of 30 vehicles).



News2Day interview with Scoil Chormaic

Clean Air Week

Clean Air Week (25th-29th November 2024) aims to raise awareness about air quality and the factors that can impact the air we breathe. Over five days, schools are encouraged to promote sustainable travel modes and to work within their community to tackle the issue of car engines idling. This call to action event has been running since 2018 and is popular owing to its inclusivity as idling is a shared issue for all school communities.

For the 2024 event, a new character mascot (Clean Air Week, 'CAW'—Crow) was created and primary schools across the country were invited to name it. The winning entry for this competition was Carriglea National School, Co. Waterford who came up with the inspiring name 'Carlos' (Car-loss). Post-Primary students were invited to design bespoke no-idling stickers. This competition was won by a student in Sacred Heart Secondary School, Co. Mayo with two runner up prizes from schools in Kildare and Dublin. These were converted into stickers that will be used by the Green-Schools Travel Programme moving forward.

Green-Schools Travel also teamed up with the Globe Ireland team to host a webinar for secondary schools. This event hosted guest speakers from NASA and University College Cork's Behaviour Psychology department. Over 150 schools signed up for the event with 79 attending on the day.

As part of the promotional campaign for this event, 483 A3 posters were sent to schools engaging in a travel theme and a dedicated Clean Air Week page was created to highlight resources and competition details.



Scoil Chormaic on News2day



TRAVEL SURVEYS

Travel Surveys

In order to monitor the progress and performance of participating schools over the two year period of the programme, Green-Schools Travel completes baseline and follow on surveys with a sample of the schools at the start and end of the theme. Student surveys are conducted by travel officers via classroom 'hands up' surveys.

In October 2022, baseline travel surveys were conducted with 30 randomly selected schools (46.7% Rural, 53.3% Urban). Of these, 75% were primary and 5% post-primary. This survey was repeated with the same school set in May 2024 to measure programme impact.

Baseline surveys conducted in 137 individual classes (totalling 2,876 students) were compared with follow on surveys conducted in 116 individual classes (totalling 2,428 students). The majority of students (70%) attended urban schools.

In terms of the journey to school, the percent increase of sustainable modes (walk, cycle, scoot, park& stride or public bus) was 10.14% between baseline and follow on surveys. A percent decrease of 26% for school bus transport was recorded within the sample. Carpooling increased by 19.56% and the number of students travelling independently by car reduced by 14%.

When comparing surveys from urban schools specifically, it was found that cycling increased by 2.6% and the uptake of public transport increased by 2.77%. Rural schools participating in the survey achieved a reduction in independent car use of 16.3%.

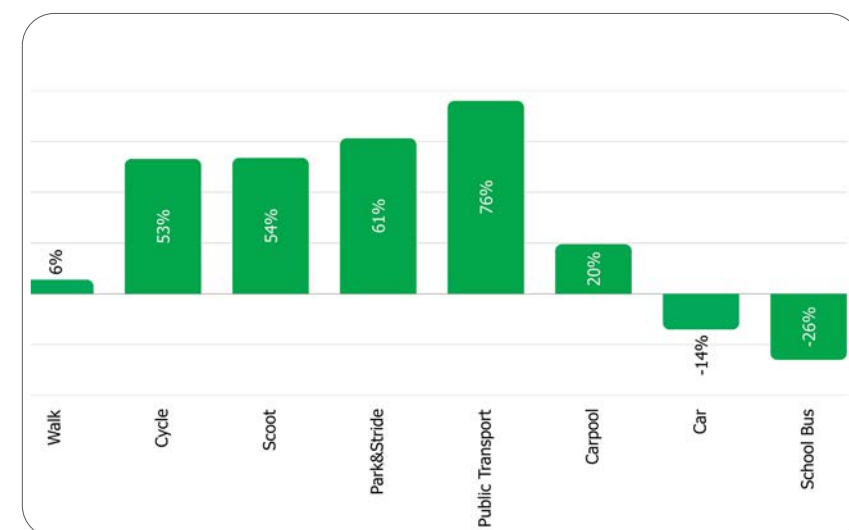


Figure 4: Increase/Decrease recorded within the survey sample 2022-2024 (30 schools)



Schools submit travel data in their applications as part of the awards process. These surveys were conducted by the schools themselves as part of the monitoring & evaluation step of the programme. Approximately 87% of 145 schools awarded in 2024 recorded an decrease in car use between baseline and follow on surveys.

Other findings

- 20% of schools are located in areas with speed limits exceeding 50km/hr.
- 13.3% increase in pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures outside survey schools compared to the baseline survey
- 10% more schools have access to public transport compared to the baseline
- 20% increase in the number of schools that have cycle parking
- 16.7% increase in the number of schools that have undertaken cycle training
- 8.7% more students wear a helmet when cycling
- 9.7% more students have lights on their bicycles



Galway school conducting a walkability audit



Speed survey in Co. Waterford

Looking ahead

To support action planning in 2025, a general information survey was conducted with active Travel schools in October 2024. These surveys requested information about school location, infrastructure and facilities inform programme development.

A total of 386 travel information surveys were completed with 280 primary, 93 post-primary and 13 special and other schools. Some of the key outcomes of this survey is provided below:

Key findings

- 45.1% do not have a school transport scheme in place
- 56.2% have yet to undertake cycle training
- 98.7% did not have a cycling policy in place.
- 64.2% have cycle parking (41.4% Urban, 22.8% Rural)
- 56.2% have poor signage or road markings on the approach roads (30.3% Urban, 25.9% rural)

This information will be of value in targeting actions on the ground and capturing the impact of the programme. For example, in 2025, Green-Schools Travel will be launching a cycling policy template to help schools promote safe cycling behaviour. Schools within this sample will be invited to apply for cycle parking and training in the next round. Schools undertaking walkability audits will aim to address issues with poor signage and schools will be encouraged to apply for the school bus transport scheme in 2025.

Survey results showed that out of the 386 schools active in October 2024, 16.1% are located within 30km/hr zones and 64.5% are in 50km/hr zones, the remaining 19.7% are located in zones with higher speed limits (60-100km/hr). Of the 76 schools located in higher speed limit zones, only one school has a traffic warden service and 39.4% (30 schools) have a footpath leading to the school and only 15% (12 schools) located in high speed limit zones have traffic calming measures in place. The new speed limit review is currently underway nationwide where speed on local roads will reduce to 60km/hr and further reductions are expected to take place in 2025. Travel officers nationwide will work to ensure schools are aware of speed reviews in their area.



CAMPAIGNS & PROJECTS

AndSheCycles

In February, the #AndSheCycles team had a video introduction meeting with Sport Ireland's Women in Sport Lead Nora Stapleton and her team behind their 'Her Moves' campaign. The 2023/24 Ambassador Programme continued with #AndSheCycles Ambassadors travelling to Eamonn Ceannt Park in Dublin. Here, the students enjoyed their first experience of track cycling on the outdoor Velodrome located at the park. They also received a hands-on bicycle repair workshop with The Bike Hub at the same location. This event was covered by RTE news2day.

The #AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme once again hosted an online seminar for ambassadors on March 8th to celebrate International Women's Day. The theme for 2024 was 'Inspire Inclusion'. During the webinar, a short film was screened of a female cyclist in Dhaka, how using a bicycle allowed her to support her family, and her struggle with being a woman in her line of work. The guest speaker was Dr. Sue Redmond, a psychotherapist with a PhD in Youth Leadership, Resilience & Social Support, and former triathlete, to speak to the ambassadors and do some mindfulness exercises.

The 2023/24 Ambassador Programme culminated with the Awards Ceremony at Richmond Barracks in Dublin in May. Cathy Baxter, Education Programmes Director, addressed the ambassadors and congratulated them on their achievements on the programme. Elaine Gallagher also gave a presentation about the history of women's cycling and its ties to women's emancipation. Ambassadors were then presented with their certificates and medals. Three 'Outstanding Ambassador' trophies were awarded also, and these students gave attendees a summary of their experience on the programme.

For the 2024/25 Ambassador Programme, the number of ambassadors accepted onto the programme increased to 79 across 13 schools and Youthreach programmes. Ambassadors attended training events in Limerick and Dublin in October 2024. Here they received initial training from the #AndSheCycles Team in creative campaigning, action planning, and survey design. There were also group discussions about barriers to cycling, and the creation of vision boards in a group activity.

In November, ambassadors attended an online network gathering to receive training in communications from Green-Schools Communications Team Lead, Sheila McCormack-Cooney, followed by an inspiring talk from Olympic finalist, Hannah Craig, and her work with Sports Ireland and the Her Moves campaign. Both speakers shared tips and advice for effective campaign communication specific to their demographic.



Spotlight story: St. Josephs Secondary School

St. Josephs Secondary School in Rush, Co. Dublin highlighted that they found a 'jump in girls cycling for fun and to school' as a result of their participation in the #AndSheCycles Ambassador Programme. According to their application for the Travel theme, girls cycling increased to 50 students in Year 2 with more stating that they are cycling outside of school for fun on a regular basis.



#AndSheCycles Ambassadors at the Velodrome Sundrive, Feb 2024



Scoil Chonglais post-primary school in rural west Wicklow had five #AndSheCycles Ambassadors for 2023/2024. Teacher and Green-Schools coordinator Elma Nolan remarked that 'the exposure and range of events helped to develop and increase all of the girls' confidence levels. It also helped them to see the value of cycling and how they as ambassadors could contribute to their school and wider community.'



#AndSheCycles Ambassadors at the awards ceremony in Richmond Barracks, May 2024



#AndSheCycles Ambassadors interviewed for RTE's News2day programme



#AndSheCycles Ambassadors at a bicycle maintenance workshop at the Bike Hub in Dublin, Feb 2024



Students from Baltinglass school honored as female cycling ambassadors - Carlow Live

Bus in the City

From March to June 2024, nine schools from Kilkenny, Limerick and Waterford participated in the Bus in the City project. This was delivered in partnership with Bus Eireann, City Direct and An Garda Síochána and was the first time it was delivered outside of Limerick city.

The aim of this project is to promote ‘active learning’ and highlight the potential use of public transport. As part of this event, students boarded a dedicated bus service to navigate the city and learn more about bus safety, personal safety and the benefits of public transport. Over 230 students participated in the initiative which took place over three school days. Over 90% of participants identified that this was their first time on public transport. This project will be developed further in 2025 as part of the Department of Transport’s Public Engagement Strategy.

Success

The Kilkenny workshop was broadcast on RTE News2day and featured on the RTE News Instagram account. This led to an increased interest in the initiative with some schools writing directly to the bus operators to find out more. Participating schools also took inspiration from the event and engaged with City Direct to attend an event in Kilkenny using public transport.

Waterford ETNS contacted Bus Eireann directly to enquire about the initiative and also the possibility of taking a class to the city centre. This school was not involved in the initiative or currently working on a Green-Schools Travel theme but was inspired by the concept presented by Bus in the City. This highlights the impact of the initiative as an awareness raising tool for public transport.



Students from Gaelscoil Osrai participating in the Kilkenny Bus in the City event.

“*‘This event was absolutely brilliant. Notwithstanding the actual day itself, which was a hugely enjoyable outing, the trip was also a huge benefit in other ways. It was a huge learning experience for all our students and fantastic for ‘life skills’. For them to see the aspects of the bus station, the ticket machines etc was brilliant. The experience of walking on to the bus and getting a ticket, the opportunity to ask questions etc was huge for students who need that exposure to oral language events like that. In school, this event was excellent for cross-curricular education. For English, we wrote diary entries of the day we had and we also wrote letters of thanks to the people. Students used it as part of their QQI folders and assessments. It covered aspects of local geography and the social skills element was huge for our students. Recreating the event in class as part of drama was also brilliant. Students had to talk about the event in assembly, which was a huge moment’*

-Catherine McAuley, Limerick City

“*‘Our pupils were so excited about their adventure on the brand new, double decker all electric bus. It was a wonderful, interesting, hands-on, real life learning opportunity.’*

Stephen De la salle, Waterford

Public Transport Projects

Spotlight event:
Bus Stop Art Competition

Nine schools participated in the first ‘Bus Stop Art Competition’ held in May 2024. This formed part of the wider Bus in the City project where students attending participating schools were invited to submit their interpretations of a ‘magical bus stop’ or ‘Bus stop of the future’. Winning entries were displayed on bus stops located in the vicinity of participating schools and were visited by classes and parents during the display cycle. This competition will be revisited and expanded further in 2025.

Success:

Schools organised class walks to their local bus stop to view the art works. This furthered awareness about local public transport links within the school community. Students presented inspirational ideas that could be implemented in the urban realm. For example, one student suggested that new bus stops should incorporate sensory elements.



Competition winners from Catherine McAuley School

Bus in the Country

In 2024, Green-Schools Travel piloted two new ‘Bus in the Country’ workshops to highlight new and enhanced existing services delivered through the ‘Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan’. In contrast to initiatives piloted in urban areas, this initiative is structured around destinations and the use of public transport to explore neighbouring villages/access services by school groups. One of the goals of this workshop was to illustrate to teaching staff that public transport could be used for school activities.

In June 2024, the ASD unit from Scoil Fhionain, Kilfinnane, Co. Limerick organised a visit to Kilmallock using the 329 service operated by Bus Eireann. As part of this workshop students reviewed pedestrian infrastructure leading to the bus stop and learned about ticketing, positive bus behaviour and the benefits of public transport in rural areas. The event was a huge success where nine students and five staff participated.

In November 2024, students from Kilcrohane NS, Co. Cork organised a trip to Bantry using the 232 Allihies-Bantry- Kilcrohane local link service. The visit was arranged as a one-way trip where parents collected students after. Many students had not used the local link service before and this was the first time this service was considered for a school trip and they are planning another event for 2025.

Success

This intervention was followed up by a sixth class teacher in December 2024 who, using inspiration from the Bus in the Country workshop, organised a class trip for 14 students to visit Colbert Station and civic amenities in Limerick City. This was the first time the school used the service and more trips are planned for 2025. Schools on rural networks have expressed interest in organising similar events for 2025.



Students from Kilfinnane NS participating in the first Bus in the Country event in June 2024

Portlaoise Cluster Project

The Portlaoise Schools Cluster Project is being delivered by Green-Schools Travel as part of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Initiative. This project represents a direct implementation of recommendations from a school sustainable travel study delivered by Green-Schools Travel, on behalf of Laois county council in 2020-2021.

The Portlaoise Travel Cluster Project aims to deliver the Green-Schools Travel theme across ten mainstream schools in town simultaneously. Supported by Laois County Council, the ultimate aim of the project is to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and safety on the way to school and complement other interventions underway through the wider low carbon town initiative. The school cluster project was initiated in September 2024 and will run up to June 2026. Actions delivered by Green-Schools Travel as part of this project include travel surveys, audits and workshops to explore sustainable travel opportunities in Portlaoise.

In October 2024, schools started organising ‘Walk on Wednesdays’ or ‘WOW’ days where everyone was asked to make the extra effort to travel sustainably to school. This initiative was extended to workplaces where students requested Laois Chambers to ask employers to offer their employees the flexibility to take part in WOW day initiatives.



WOW Day, Portlaoise College



Green-Schools Travel was one of 40 participants invited to participate in a community based education pilot delivered by Laois County Council in partnership with Trinity College Dublin. The Course ‘Systems Innovation for Sustainable Enterprises and Communities’ or ‘SISEC’ ran from January to May 2024. This provided a platform to create strong relationships with local people interested in developing sustainable transport in Portlaoise. The initiative resulted in the creation of the Portlaoise Climate Alliance which will support the objectives of the Portlaoise Low Carbon Town Project. Through this initiative, Green-Schools Travel was invited to join monthly meetings held by the Portlaoise Town Active Travel Working Group.



SISEC Training participants



‘It was such a fun and informative few hours. We played games and had a quiz, but we also had some serious issues to discuss. We talked about how to improve the traffic situation around our schools and we discussed our first WOW Day.’

-Scoil Bhride NS

‘The forums were so helpful to the schools in giving them a sense of community, working to a common goal of more people walking and cycling in Portlaoise’

-Dr.Karen Moore, Climate Action Officer, Laois Co.Co.



Secondary School Forum, Portlaoise

Travel Forums

Travel forums designed to support school collaboration within the Portlaoise cluster project took place in November 2024. These were facilitated by Green-Schools Travel Officers in November 2024 with the support of Laois County Council.

Primary School Forum

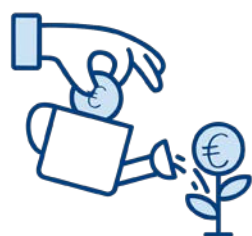
The primary school forum was organised to discuss the creation of safer, healthier and more sustainable school journeys for Portlaoise. The event was attended by 50 students and teachers from six primary schools and facilitated by Green-Schools Travel Officers. Feedback from both students and staff on their involvement in National Walk to School Week was very positive as they set about planning the first multiple school Walk on Wednesday (WOW day) in December.

Secondary School Forum

Three weeks after the primary school forum, over 28 students from four post-primary schools met in the council chambers to plan a town-wide launch of their Walk on Wednesday initiative in December 2024.



Primary School Forum, Portlaoise



GRANTS & FUNDING SUPPORT

Cycle and Scooter Parking

Green-Schools Travel (GST) has been delivering cycle and scooter parking to schools since 2011. GST has been able to scale up its delivery of cycle and scooter parking since its partnership with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programme which commenced in 2021. Since 2021 GST has delivered cycle parking to 348 schools and scooter parking to 92 schools. That's a total of 10,700 cycle parking spaces, 642 shelters and 5,328 scooter parking spaces.

In 2024 cycle parking was delivered to 81 schools, with scooter parking delivered to 26 schools, with 1,180 cycle parking spaces, 90 shelters and 702 scooter parking spaces. The total cost for cycle and scooter parking in 2024 was €896,620.46.

The delivery of cycle and scooter parking by GST in partnership with SRTS is planned to continue in 2025.

Following an initial cycle and scooter parking monitoring survey in December 2023, in May 2024 a second survey was issued to all schools that had received cycle and/or scooter parking since 2021. Schools were asked to conduct a count of the number of bikes and scooters using the parking and to assess if the parking had increased the uptake of cycling and scooting to school.

The results were positive, with most respondents observing an increase in parking during the summer months. A significant majority (74%) agree or strongly agree that the number of students cycling or scooting to school has increased since the installation of the parking infrastructure.



74% of all schools that received cycle and/or scooter parking since 2021 agree or strongly agree that the number of students cycling or scooting to school has increased since the installation of the parking infrastructure.



Cycle parking at Portlaoise College



Cycle parking in Killina NS, Co. Roscommon



'The CycleRight training was exceptional. 6th Class benefited greatly from it, with 2 pupils learning to cycle for the first time. It will really stand to them.'

-Boherbue NS, Co. Cork

'Many of the children would not have had the confidence to cycle to school prior to doing the training. There were a number of students that learned how to cycle from the programme.'

-Scoil Cholmcille, Co. Donegal



Cycle Right

Green-Schools Travel supports the development of practical cycle safety and cycling skills through the provision of funding towards Cycle Right Training. CYCLE RIGHT is the national standard of cycle training in Ireland which is produced and supported by the Department of Transport, the Road Safety Authority and Cycling Ireland. Eligible schools apply to receive a grant of €10 per student up to 60 students who then receive eight hours of cycle training from an approved provider to develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence to cycle to school or for leisure. In 2024, this funding strand was open to schools currently working on a travel theme. Throughout 2024, 171 schools accounting for 5,836 pupils nationwide, received a cycle right grant from Green-Schools Travel account.



Cycle Right training in Sligo



Cycle Right training in Leitrim



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Engaging with key stakeholders is essential to the success of the Green-Schools Travel Programme. Throughout 2024, Green-Schools Travel Officers engaged with a range of stakeholders such as An Garda Síochána, Sports Partnerships, Local Authorities, Active Travel teams, Community groups, HSE, Public transport operators, Universities, Road Safety Working groups and the wider school community. These partnerships led to multiple school events, bespoke travel projects and an increased awareness of the Green-Schools Travel Programme. Some stakeholder events from 2024 are summarised below:

- Green-Schools is a constituent member of the Transport & Mobility Forum (TMF) Cork. This is a representative group of over 20 organisations who have a common interest in sustainable and active travel. The group meets monthly and provides networking opportunities for stakeholders to coordinate sustainable and active travel projects, programmes and services. In 2024, the group hosted the EMBRACER Interregg Stakeholders meeting (January 2024) and a 'Mix your Mode' seminar in April 2024 where schools presented travel themed projects. The group is also actively involved in the Get Cork Walking initiative led by Get Ireland Walking.
- The new D24 Neighbourhood Cycle Scheme provides 11km of cycling infrastructure which links schools, communities and provides access to the Dodder Greenway. In April 2024, Green-Schools Travel linked with representatives from the National Transport Authority (NTA) and

South Dublin County Council (SDCC) to discuss ideas to promote this network to fifteen schools located on this network.

- Green-Schools Travel is an active member of several Road Safety Working Groups across the country. This inter-agency group provides a platform to communicate road safety issues from travel schools and support interventions collaboratively.
- Travel Officers nationwide partnered with Sports Partnerships and local authorities to deliver bike week events across the country in 2024.
- IPPN (Irish Primary Principals Network) Deputy Principals Conference 2024: Over 600 principals from across the country attended this event in Galway. This provides an opportunity to discuss and promote the travel theme with school decision makers.
- Green-Schools Travel attended Get Ireland Walking stakeholder events attended by Local Sports Partnerships, local authorities, HSE and walking interest groups in Waterford and Laois in 2024. These aim to create an action plan for walking following on from the success of a similar initiative in Cork. Green-Schools Travel collaborated with Get Ireland Walking to create a promotional video which focused on the establishment of walking buses for National Walking Week in September 2024.

The programme also participated in significant public consultations at regional and national level to communicate barriers to sustainable travel experienced by school communities:

- Green-Schools Travel made a submission to the Athlone Joint Urban Area Plan Pre-Draft Issues Paper Consultation on 31st January 2024. This was compiled to highlight work undertaken in the Athlone Area and highlight Green-Schools' role in the promotion of sustainable transport in schools.
- Participation in the Public Engagement Pilots – Schools Workshops in June 2024. This is part of the Public Engagement on Climate Action and Sustainable Mobility : Strategic Approach 2024- 25 which is a key element in Climate Action Plan(CAP) 23, CAP24 and the Sustainable Mobility Plan (SMP). The bus in the city project piloted by Green-Schools Travel in 2024 will form part of this pilot scheme in 2025.
- Participation in National consultations i.e. 'Moving Together – a strategic approach to improving the efficiency of Ireland's Transport System' and 'Shared Mobility Hubs – Issues, Challenges and Opportunities'.

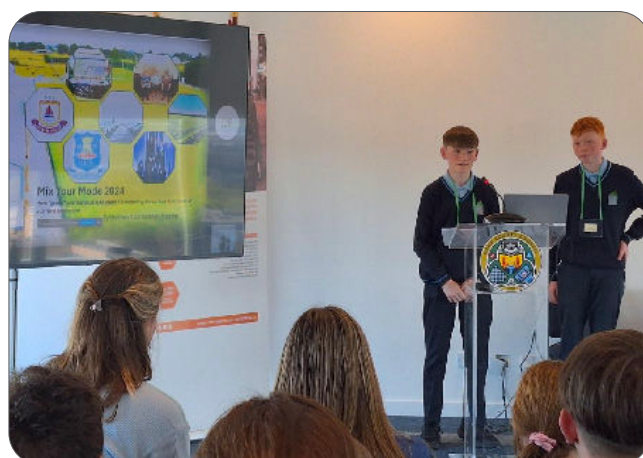
Working to enhance post-primary engagement

Stakeholder engagement events at post-primary level increased significantly in 2024. New workshops and forum based engagement created a platform for meaningful dialogue and tangible outcomes.

- In April 2024, Green-Schools facilitated a 'World Café' style event in St. Marys Holy Faith Secondary School, Old Finglas road, Dublin City. This was delivered following a request from Dublin City Council (DCC) to gauge students receptiveness to alternative travel solutions and identify potential Park and Stride options for the school. Over 100 1st year participated in the event and a report was submitted to DCC to detail outcomes.
- In May 2024, students from multiple schools in Cork collaborated to organise their own multiple stakeholder event with decision makers (refer to audits section).
- The first 'Climate Hope Forum' was delivered by Travel Officers in Cavan in October 2024. This event was hosted by Breifne College where 60 students from six post-primary schools, including members of the Cavan Climate Action team and Cathaoirleach, came together to explore climate solutions for Cavan.



D24 Cycle Network Meeting



TMF Mix Your Mode Seminar 2024



Get Waterford Walking Stakeholder Event



Cavan Climate Hope Forum

7 STEPS IN MOTION



Step One: Green-Committee

'Collaborating with students beyond our own classrooms was truly rewarding. Their boundless enthusiasm and eagerness to engage in our initiatives and workshops was inspiring. Sharing knowledge about travel sustainability with the entire school community was immensely fulfilling. Our experience on the Green School Committee has been invaluable, providing us with abundant learning opportunities.'

-Scoil Eoin, Special Secondary, Dublin City Council

Step Two: Environmental Review

'The Travel Committee enjoyed carrying out the Walkability Audit with our Travel Officer. They highlighted many areas of concerns around our town. It is nice to see more children walking, scooting and cycling to school. The children enjoyed writing letters to the local Garda Superintendent, Donegal County Council Litter Warden and Councillor Barry Sweeney. They were delighted to get replies from all three letters. The children were delighted to be chosen to participate in a 'Safety at the Gate' day organised by Donegal County Council. The local Gardai and the Roads Safety Authority were there too.'

-Kilbarron NS, Co. Donegal

Step Three: Action Plan

'The Cycle Right programme was very successful. The school now has a new bicycle shelter. There has been a decrease in the number of cars outside the school in the mornings as Park 'n Stride has increased. The Walkability Audit carried out with our Travel Officer will help our campaign to have the speed limit outside the school lowered from its current 80km/hr limit.'

- Annagh NS, Co. Clare

Step Four: Monitoring & Evaluation

'We monitor and evaluate our travel action goals in a variety of ways: Travel surveys periodically throughout the year to monitor how people travel to school and why. Results are displayed as graphs and charts on our Green Schools notice board to communicate the findings with the school. Walkability audit to ascertain the benefits and hazards of walking to school in the local area. Participation in Walk to School Week. Active schools week to promote active ways of travelling to and from school. Travel Day of Action to promote walking, cycling, scooting to school. Walking school bus every Wednesday. Park and stride messages sent to parents. No idling campaign. Speed workshop.'

-Scoil Naomh Buithe, Louth

Step Five: Curricular Links

'Our students greatly improved their knowledge and awareness of what sustainable travel is. The children are making more conscious and informed choices about travel and the environment. In addition, students feel more responsible for the wellbeing of others, climate change and inequality. They realise that what they do has a big impact on everyone. Students on the various committees learned new skills and became more empowered, responsible and confident due to their work for the Green Schools.'

-Scoil Bhríde NS, Co. Galway

Step Six: Informing and Involving

'As part of their informing and involving step St. Andrews NS, Co. Meath provide updates through their school website. 'The committee rely any important information and initiatives back to their own classes and our secretary will announce it over the intercom. We display all information on our noticeboard and send it home in our school newsletter. The committee also do short videos for our schools social media page.'

-Tiermohan NS, Co. Kildare

Step Seven: Green Code

'We had a competition between the 4 classrooms to come up with the best code. The Green School committee judged all entries and in the end we picked a line from 1st/2nd class, 3rd/4th class, 5th/6th class. We printed off the code and had it placed on the noticeboard and also in each classroom. The code was included in the Safer School Gates leaflet that was sent home with the students and was put on our website.'

-Ballyleague NS, Co. Roscommon



AUDITS

Walkability audits are student-led assessments of routes to school conducted by Green-Schools committees with the guidance of Green-Schools Travel officers. The aim of these workshops is to determine if walking is a viable option for school journeys. In 2024, 200 walkability audits were conducted with participating schools. Routes to school and issues faced by schools vary widely across the country. For some infrastructure is a key issue but for others it is driver behaviour. For example, 56.2% of 386 schools engaging in a travel theme in October 2024 were found to have poor signage or road markings. Each school is unique and through the audit process, students prioritise actions that they feel are most relevant to them. They then identify actions to address these issues. Some of these workshops have led to whole school awareness campaigns to address driver behavior and others have led to direct contact with stakeholders to request infrastructural improvements.

Infrastructure improvement

St. Josephs Infant School, Charleville Co. Cork

St. Josephs Infant School is located within a cluster of schools on the R515 immediately outside the town centre. The N20 runs through the town and the R515 is a significant access route for the wider hinterland and so prone to significant traffic congestion throughout the day. The committee completed a walkability audit with their Travel Officer Angela Wall in early 2024. Issues recorded included: narrow footpaths, poor driver behaviour, unsafe crossing points and congested streetspace. This, coupled with the absence of safe pedestrian infrastructure, presented considerable dangers for those walking to school.

Students felt that the biggest issue for walking/cycling were that the 'footpaths were very tiny, traffic was too fast' and that they had no zebra crossing. Within their report they recommended that the footpaths 'need to be bigger and wider' and requested traffic calming measures with increased signage. A zebra crossing was also requested. Following submission of their audit findings to Cork County Council, findings were incorporated into a proposed project for the school zone.

'The report is in fact timely as we have commenced a design to improve the layout at the junction of the R515 and Park Road, funding has been secured and we would hope to be in a position to carry out works here during the summer months.'

-Cork County Council Engineer

The audit enabled the school to express their views and ensure that they were included in the design phase of upcoming works. The school now has a new pedestrian crossing, build outs and a new footpath to the carpark and town park.



Increased engagement with local authorities in 2024 lead to many positive outcomes for participating schools.

-Allison Phillips, Green-Schools Travel Manager



Before: school entrance before work



After: improved crossing point



Audit Action

Students from **Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Co. Longford** conducted an audit in March 2023 and identified poor road markings, broken signage and poor driver behaviour at the zebra crossing. Following the submission of their walkability audit report to Longford County Council increased safety signage was installed on the approach road to the school.



Mercy Secondary students celebrating new safety signage near their school

Action Day with a difference: Culleen NS

Culleen NS, Ballina, moved from their overcrowded old school to a state of the art brand new one last April. The new school is across the road from the old one but unfortunately there is no linking footpath/cycle-path that links the school to nearby Ballina. In addition, the road has a speed limit of 80km/hr and has a large volumes of traffic at peak times. Along with the new school there are two new housing estates that were also recently built. There is no safe crossing, no footpath, nor any traffic calming measures. The school is very proactive but cannot encourage their students to cycle or walk on such a dangerous road. In October 2024, The school organised a day of action to highlight the need for footpaths and the impact of high speeds outside their school. The focus of the event was to raise awareness with the main decision makers and the event was followed up with a letter writing workshops to local representatives. This featured in RTE News in October 2024 and it is hoped that the school can organise a formal meeting with decision makers in 2025.



Students from Culleens NS during their audit follow on action day

Speed interventions

Many schools identify speeding as a significant barrier to sustainable travel, particularly in rural schools. As part of the audit process, Travel officers conduct speed surveys with committees to determine if speeding is an issue and then identify ways to address this issue. Actions to address issues with speed in 2024 included letter writing workshops, submissions to local consultations, engagement with local council representatives and targeted action days.

Slow down for safety: St. Lassaras NS

St. Lassaras NS, Ballinacarrow, Co. Sligo led an impressive campaign to improve safety outside their school. A **speed survey** conducted as part of their walkability audit in 2023 identified that 94 vehicles exceeded the 50km/hr speed limit. This information was used to lay the groundworks of their campaign which included **radio interviews**, news articles, representation at the **joint policing committee** and local council meetings. In addition, the committee met with the regional **TII Engineer** for the N71. 2024 was an active and productive year for St. Lassaras where, as a result of their actions, the speed limit outside their school on will be reduced to 30km/hr in 2025 which, for a national route, is exceptional. In addition, pedestrian crossing infrastructure has been improved in the vicinity of the school.



 **Scoil Padraig Dobhair, Co. Donegal** conducted an audit in 2022 where they met with the local engineer to present their findings. These were included in design considerations for front of school improvements which was realised in 2024.



A new pedestrian crossing was installed outside Tooreen NS, Co. Mayo following on from recommendations from the schools walkability audit report



Learn more about the progress they are making at St Lassaras NS



Listen to St Lassaras NS call to action on Ocean FM



Front page The Corkman, May 2024



Learn more about Boherbue NS' SSOS campaign here



Inspired by the SSOS Action day in Cork, **Kilmeedy NS in Co. Limerick** created their own 'SSOS' action day in late May 2024.



Students from Kilmeedy NS during their SSOS day

SSOS – Stop Speeding Outside Schools

Students from Boherbue National School, Co. Cork created an innovative way to address speeding issues outside their school. Following on from their audit, the school conducted a speed survey with their Travel Officer Angela Wall. This was completed immediately outside their school during morning drop off time. It was found that 66% of vehicles exceeded the 50km/hr speed limit. The highest recorded speed was found to be 78km/hr. A follow on action planning meeting with their Travel Officer led to the creation of a '**SSOS – Stop Speeding Outside Schools**' Action day. The aim of this event was to encourage drivers to slow down and raise awareness about the presence of the school. In April 2024, students designed banners and created slogans to promote their cause and invited the local Gardai and press to attend. Following on from the event, the school wrote an article that featured on the front page of The Corkman newspaper and regional Garda Síochána media. Their walkability audit report was also shared with Cork County Council and was included in an upcoming traffic calming proposal for the area which went to public consultation in May 2024. In August 2024, the school community noted that the council had taken on board everything they had highlighted in their walkability audit report and more.

Success

Along the route audited by the green-committee, the following improvements were implemented:

- Four raised zebra crossings were installed
- Footpaths widened and replaced in places
- Extra road markings to improve visibility
- Pencil bollards along the footpath in front of the school.

Local representatives noted that 'The works outside the national school are very impressive and top class. It has completely slowed down the traffic at that particular point.' The council are now seeking funding from the NTA next year to carry out further traffic calming measures in November 2024.



Green-Schools Committee members from Boherbue NS during their audit

Audit Stakeholder Engagement

Active citizenship is a pedagogical approach to give students a practical experience of democratic action and community involvement. It involves students in learning how to take part with others in activities designed to make a positive difference to the world around them. This is a focus of the audit process which has been embraced by many schools nationwide. Schools are encouraged to explore online reporting tools (Your Council/Report It) on local authority websites where available or to engage with local representatives by means of deputation or direct contact.

Ballycanew National School, Co. Wexford

In Wexford, students from Ballycanew NS took their audit findings to the Municipal District meeting in March 2024. The school is located on the R471 which connects Gorey to Wexford. Through the audit process, the committee identified poor pedestrian connectivity, inadequate signage high levels of poor driver behaviour and the absence of traffic calming measures. A speed survey conducted in conjunction with the audit revealed that 92% of vehicles recorded at 1.40pm exceeded the speed limit and the fastest vehicle was recorded to be 80km/hr. Following their deputation to the council, new feedback signs are to be installed on the Gorey side. It is hoped that speed limits will be reduced to 30km/hr with the upcoming speed limit review.

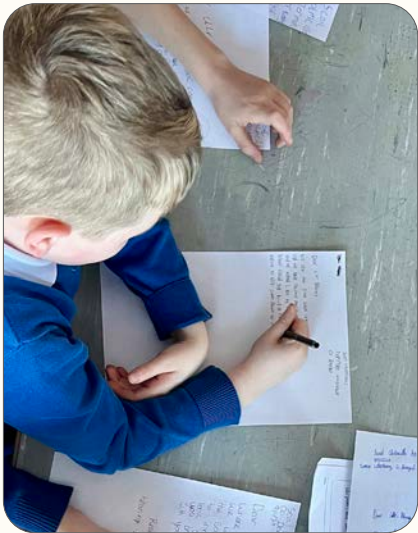


Ballycanew NS Municipal District Meeting



Letter writing

Following on from a revision of the audit process in 2023, an increased level of engagement between schools and local authorities was evident in 2024. Schools completed **letter writing workshops** to support local authorities and representatives. Many of these audits have yielded infrastructural improvements nationwide including a few innovative approaches to problem solving.



Murroe NS, Co. Donegal



CRAWL -World Café

In February 2024, Green-Schools Travel (GST) attended 'CRAWL -World Café' event held in TU Dublin (Blanchardstown Campus). This event convened a range of experts, policy makers, local authorities, charity and community representatives to discuss challenges and solutions for walkability in our communities. The value of the GST Audit process, which promotes critical thinking and active citizenship skills, was evident where many issues cited by community representatives are frequently cited in GST Audits. This highlighted the broader impact of successful school walkability audits.



Learn more here

Direct engagement with key stakeholders

The Green-Schools Travel Programme is in a unique position as it can provide direct insight into student travel perspectives from schools across the country. This has enabled the programme to highlight issues raised during audits for public consultations or as a support for local council projects.

- In February 2024, following request from Mayo County Council, summarised relevant school audits for a public consultation relating to the Ballina local area plan were supplied.
- In July 2024, Green-Schools Travel compiled a submission to the Letterkenny Active Travel Project consultation to Donegal County Council. This flagged findings from school walkability audits relative to the defined project area.
- Engagement with regional Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Officers nationwide to share student audit findings. This has enabled Green-Schools Travel to communicate findings from travel schools (past and present) that are starting their SRTS journey or share routes with SRTS schools.



Macroom Travel Hub stakeholder engagement



St Joseph's Foundation Sustainable Travel Champions delivered in partnership with Bus Eireann

Student Led Action

In 2024, stakeholder engagement for post-primary walkability audits was taken to a new level through the introduction of ‘travel hub’ events. These aimed to bring together decision makers and community representatives to communicate audit findings. Initiated by students and supported by the regional Green-Schools Travel Officer, these events have identified a step forward for post-primary engagement in the travel theme.

Macroom Travel Hub

Green-Schools committee students from St. Mary’s Secondary School and McEgan College, Macroom, Co. Cork completed audits of their routes to school in 2023/2024. Recognising issues were shared, they then set about to collaborate, organising events designed to communicate the findings of their walkability audits. The schools also share routes with two primary schools and extended an invitation to two local primary schools St. Colmans NS and St. Josephs NS. The latter then requested to become active participants of the event. There are many issues stopping sustainable travel in Macroom but with a newly opened bypass it was felt that it was the time to make their voices heard

In April 2024, school representatives, local politicians, MEPs, TDs, Local Authority and TII road engineers, local press and the Safe Routes to School Infrastructure Officer convened in Macroom Town Hall. Green-Schools Committee representatives presented their travel survey results and audit findings and senior committee members led a walk around the town to enable stakeholders to observe issues discussed. The main issues observed were heavy traffic, walkways ending, no paths to school and students having to step onto the main road to enter/exit the bus station as the access gates were locked. This was then followed with a student led ‘world café’ style event focusing on travel issues in Macroom. The event received much local press and was an innovative example of student led stakeholder engagement.

Macroom pupils want safer routes to their local schools | Southern Star

“Imagine a Macroom where every child has the option to walk or cycle safely to school. It would make such a difference to our fitness, our health, our parents stress levels, our community and most importantly our planet”

-Travel Hub Presentation. St. Josephs NS, Green-Committee



Student led audit with decision makers as part of the travel hub forum

Millstreet Community School Stakeholder Meeting

Inspired by the Travel Hub event in Macroom, Millstreet Community College, Co. Cork decided to organise a ‘Walkability Audit Forum’ in November 2024. Students presented their survey results and outlined findings from their audit to MEPs, TDs, SRTS and Local Authority engineers and walked the routes to discuss possible solutions.



Travel Officer Catherine Russell speaking at the Millstreet Travel forum

Learn more here

Success

- The event provided decision makers with a wider understanding of the concerns of student populations in Macroom.
- Of the four schools, one is registered with the Safe Routes to School Programme. The event enabled the consideration of neighbouring schools in the SRTS Outline Delivery Plan for St. Josephs National School (SRTS-R2).
- Cork County Council area engineers have been looking to address traffic flow in the area around St Mary’s and St Joseph’s for many years. The wider discussion and issues raised at the event enable further examination of the area. For example, proposed traffic measures are being progressed to detailed design stage in order to complement the concerns raised through the GS (Walkability Audit) and the SRTS (Outline Delivery Plan) programmes.
- The proposed collaboration between all parties and wider consideration of the GST Walkability Audit and the SRTS Outline Delivery Plan to improve connectivity to the bus station will influence the design and recommendation of the TII study. The walkability audit conducted by St. Mary’s Secondary School was incorporated into their Young Scientist submission, entitled ‘Passenger transport emissions modelling to inform local and national sustainable transport policy.’ This received a special commendation at the awards in 2023.



Travel Officer Catherine Russell speaking at the Macroom Travel Forum



CASE STUDIES

Travel Case Study: Urban

School Name: Scoil Eoin/Colaiste Eoin, Crumlin Village Dublin

School Type: Special Primary and Secondary School

Location: Urban

Theme: Travel

School Population: 132

Staff Population: 48

School Description: This is a special primary and secondary school for students with Mild General Learning disabilities located near Crumlin Village, Dublin. The school is beside a cluster of other schools and with multiple Dublin Bus routes servicing the road outside the school.

Challenges

The school felt this theme would be challenging as the majority of attendees already travel by bus (76% use organised school buses with a further 11% of students using Dublin Bus services). As a special school, they felt they it would be difficult to adapt the theme to their needs. Bus idling at peak times was also identified as a challenge.

Actions

- A student-led 'No engine idling' initiative for school bus drivers parking in the school yard, with ongoing monitoring and occasional reminders to the drivers.
- Adapted WOW days to suit travel habits by holding walking activities in the school yard once, focusing on health benefits and exercise.
- Public transport and route planning workshop with Green-Schools Travel Officer centred on encouraging student independence and life skills when using public transport.
- GS Travel Workshops – Speed Surveys, Bike Repair, Air Quality, Benefits of sustainable transport
- Visit to the Bike Hub in Crumlin.
- Promotion targeting parents/guardians to encourage students to walk, cycle, scoot or take the bus for journeys outside school where possible
- The LCA classes held talks on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and had guest speakers in their classes to talk about them.
- Gardaí guest speaker days on road safety awareness delivered to whole school.
- Presentation of work on the theme to principals from across Dublin during the school's opening day for their library and sensory room.

Success

- The school succeeded in the theme by conveying the ethos of the Travel theme in tangible actions that focused on life skills learnings by participating in WOW days in alternative ways, focusing on learning independence on public transport, learning about clean air and the link between engine idling and air quality.
- Continued success in tackling of bus idling in the school yard as there is ongoing monitoring of engine idling in the school yard and the committee continues to give friendly reminders to school bus drivers to turn off engines.



Exploring timetables and bus stops with Travel Officer Ellen Kissane

Travel Case Study: Rural

School Name: Killeevan Central National School, Co. Monaghan

School Type: Primary

School Location: Rural

School Population: 103 Students, 10 teachers

School Description: Killeevan National School, on the outskirts of Newbliss Village in County Monaghan, sits off the main Clones – Newbliss road. Footpaths lead from the village to the school but no cycle lanes available leaving it difficult for students to cycle to school.

Challenges

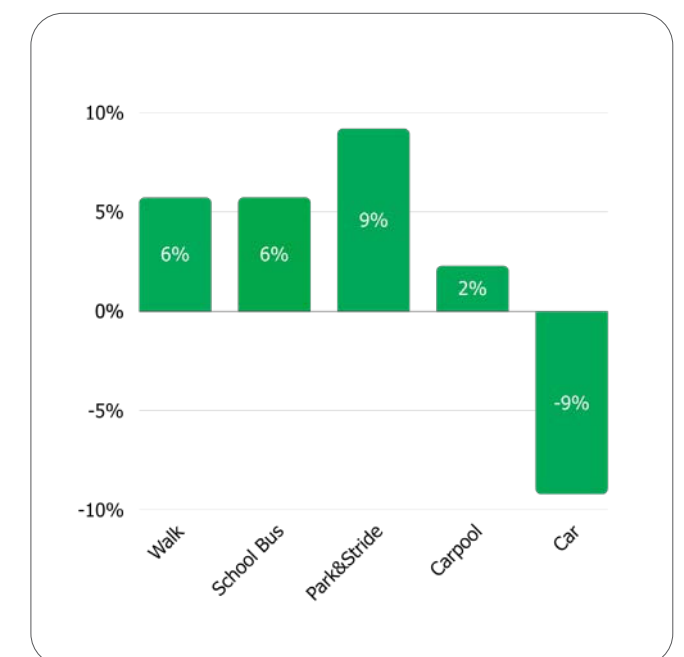
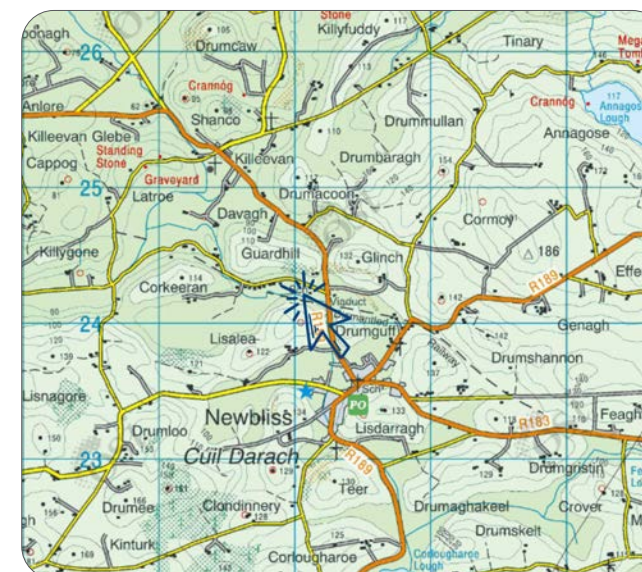
The school faced two main challenges: lack of awareness and engagement. Students, parents, and staff did not fully understand the benefits of sustainable travel. As such, there was difficulty in engaging the entire school community consistently.

Actions

- Action Days (COW/WOW/Park & Stride)
- Walkability Audit and Cycleability Audit
- GS Travel Mapping and speed workshops
- Travel Surveys and posting results on the noticeboard

Success

Killeevan National School has made significant strides in promoting sustainable travel among its students. The school successfully increased walking through the implementation of park and stride and other green initiatives, resulting in a 5.74% rise in their own morning walks and a substantial 9.20% increase in park and stride participation. This focus on walking and park and stride has also contributed to a notable 9.20% decrease in car usage, reflecting a positive shift towards more environmentally friendly travel options.



Travel Case Study: Urban

School Name: St Matthew's N.S, Crumlin, Dublin 12

School Type: National School

Location: Urban

Green-Schools Theme: Global Citizenship Travel

School Population: 219

Staff Population: 14

School description: The school is located in a built up residential area. The school entrance is situated down a laneway on a narrow road, with crossing wardens present on this road and the adjacent main road.

Challenges

A good amount of students already walked or cycled to school, with 41% of students walking to school, 14% cycling, and 26% being driven to school, but these numbers had room for improvement. When starting off on the Global Citizenship Travel theme the general understanding of sustainable travel topics in the school was moderate, with 41% of students being able name three benefits of sustainable travel and 34% listing why it is a better option than taking the car.



Students of St Matthews NS conducting a walkability audit

Actions

- Initial introductory presentation at the school assembly about the GC travel theme and active travel.
- Promoted of and participated in Walk to School Week.
- Two 'Green Week' events over both years which promoted active and sustainable travel throughout the whole school for the week.
- 'Bling your Shoe' competition and yard clean ups.
- Multiple COW, WOW and SOW days.
- Walkability Audit.
- Promoted the newly launched Sandymount Cycle bus network to parents.
- Clean Air workshop with GS Travel Officer.
- 6th class projects on GCT themes on different types of sustainable transport around the world. These colourful and informative projects were displayed on noticeboard for the whole school to read.

Success

- 9% fewer students are being driven to school in Year 2, with the amount of children coming by car reduced from 23% to 14%.
- 9% more students are walking.
- The amount of children park n' striding rose from <1% to 4%.
- Yard and laneway litter clean ups by students to help make the front of school environment nicer to walk to school.
- Greater understanding of the sustainable development goals, having worked on class projects and displaying an improvement in the GCT awareness survey: 12% more students and staff can now list three ways in which cars affect our health and environment 11% more can name three types of sustainable travel.

GC Travel Case Study: Urban

School Name: St. Joseph's Primary School, Templemore, Co. Tipperary

School Type: Primary

School Location: Urban

School Population: 150 students, 14 staff

School Description: St. Joseph's Primary school is situated in Templemore town. It is a DEIS school and co-educational to first class, with girls only from 2nd up. An extremely active and dedicated Green School, St. Joseph's have been engaged in the programme for over 20 years.

Challenges

- Safety at the school was a concern due to the volume of cars arriving each morning and the shared entrance to the school. There had been a serious accident involving a student from a neighbouring school in recent times.
- High numbers of students being driven to school despite a relatively small catchment area.
- Students had a relatively low awareness around Sustainable Travel, and the associated issues.

Actions

- Classroom visits to introduce the theme and raise awareness around the issues associated with transport, locally and globally.
- A comprehensive audit was conducted and was submitted to the LA along with speed survey data.
- Students from 4th class wrote letters to their local councillors in advance of the local election.
- No idling campaign.
- WOW & SOW days were promoted at the school and had a huge response.
- Scooting and cycling workshops were delivered.
- The school made an excellent application to the Big Travel Challenge competition.

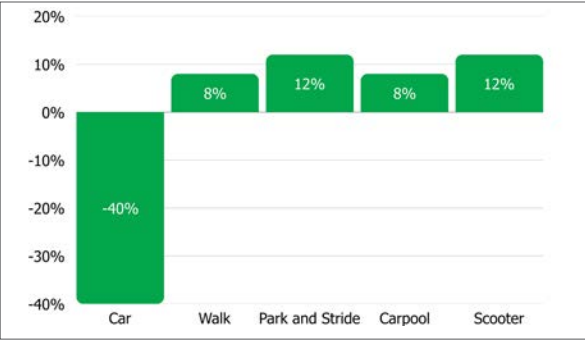


St. Joseph's PS scooter workshop

Success

St. Joseph's Primary school embraced their work on the theme and experienced many successes including:

- A decrease of 40% in car use
- 8% increase in students walking to school
- 12% increase in scooting and Park & Stride



- Staffroom Challenge winners in The Big Travel Challenge.
- Visits from local councillors to the school, and a 'promise' to address their safety concerns.
- Reduced traffic outside the school improved safety
- Pedestrian guideline markings inside the school gate were improved.
- Awareness across the school increased significantly.

St. Joseph's had a fantastic GS committee that was inclusive of students from Junior Infants up and included several students from their ASD unit – this added a richness to ideas input and approaches adopted.



STORIES WORTH SHARING

Global Citizenship

Working to promote Sustainable Cities – SDG11

Scoil Eoin, Ballincollig, Co. Cork organised a whole school competition to design a sustainable city as part of their work on the Global Citizenship Travel theme. Each class worked as a team to build their vision for a sustainable city and demonstrated an exceptional level of creativity and dedication to their project. Designs favoured public transport over private vehicles and incorporated protected bicycle lanes. This project incorporated elements of other themes such as energy conservation and waste reduction and demonstrated a broad range of curricular objectives. Students promoted their work through posters, classroom demonstrations and created a video (Sustainable City Project ES) to describe their work to the wider community.



Sustainable City Project - Scoil Eoin. Co. Cork

Bad Weather Boutique



The Green-Schools Committee from **Pipers Hill College, Naas, Co. Kildare** discovered, through their travel surveys, that bad weather plays a large role in hindering students walking and cycling. To counter this, they decided to create a room for students to 'fix' their clothes and appearance before attending class. They fundraised money themselves for this room in 2023 and called it 'The Bad Weather Boutique'. During the second year of their travel programme, three students were accepted to participate in the #AndSheCycles Ambassador programme. As bike ambassadors they linked in with the bad weather boutique to encourage more cycling. As a result the cycling hut is regularly full of bikes!



Students from Scoil na Maighdine Mhuire NS, Co. Clare created a speed board game based on their survey results. This fun and innovative activity is an inspirational way to integrate with the curriculum and actively engage the wider community in the travel theme is an inspiration.



Trim Travel Action Day

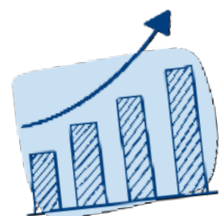
St. Marys Convent Primary School, Trim, Co. Meath organised a day of action to ensure that every student would be engaged in some form of sustainable travel. The day kicked off with a cycle to school event where cyclists were treated to a 'biker breakfast'. Younger students received a scooter training workshop from their Green-Schools Travel Officer and later in the day they held a whole school walk along the River Boyne by Trim Castle. To ensure everyone understood the goals of the event, the Green-Schools Committee made a presentation to all classes about routes to school and landmarks along the route. The day ended with a bike safety talk from a parent volunteer with students that had cycled to school.

Global Classrooms

The Global Classrooms project is an international collaboration between Green-Schools Travel and Brisbane City Council's Active School Travel Programme. Both are travel behaviour change initiatives, seeking to increase active and sustainable modes and reduce single family car trips on the journey to and from school. Students working on these programmes in Ireland and Australia are connected as pen pals and can choose to correspond via a short video or slideshow, illustrating the travel situation at their school. They exchange details on any behaviour change campaigns and initiatives and reflect on the effectiveness of these measures. Students discuss challenges faced in addition to successful outcomes. By the end of the project students will have gained an international perspective on the measures being taken globally to reduce car use and the negative impacts of congestion, road safety and air pollution. They will also have had the opportunity to showcase their school, share their experiences and learn strategies to help achieve travel behaviour change.



Global Classrooms workshop



PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, Green-Schools Travel made significant strides in programme development, enhancing resources, expanding digital accessibility, and strengthening support for national events.

A major milestone was the development of a new suite of Green-Schools handbooks. Designed by The Factory using environmentally friendly methods, the Green-Schools Travel and Global Citizenship Travel handbooks were both redesigned and made available as interactive digital versions, providing schools with an engaging and easily accessible tool to support their sustainability efforts.

The programme also launched a new Green-Schools website, offering an improved user experience with fresh content, streamlined navigation, and better access to resources. This update ensures that schools, students, and communities can easily find the information they need to support their sustainable travel journeys.

To enhance the coordination and impact of national events, Green-Schools Travel introduced a new Events & Admin Officer position in 2024. This role was created to support the organisation and delivery of key call-to-action weeks and Travel events, ensuring greater engagement and participation from schools nationwide. Additionally, the establishment of a new Irish Language Officer has strengthened the programme's ability to provide resources and support in Irish, promoting inclusivity and accessibility across all Green-Schools initiatives.

Programme development in 2024 also included continued research and expansion of the Bus in the City project, a key initiative aimed at improving public transport awareness and use for students. This ongoing work reflects Green-Schools Travel's commitment to providing practical, research-driven solutions that support safer and more sustainable school commutes.

Through these developments, Green-Schools Travel has reinforced its commitment to innovation, accessibility, and long-term impact, ensuring schools have the tools and support needed to continue making sustainable travel choices well into the future.

