

# Stretton Sugwas Primary School: Walking Bus

## Background and rationale

Within our semi-rural location in Hereford, we serve the village of Stretton Sugwas. The majority of our pupils do not live in the village itself with families commuting to the school from within catchment. Put simply, most of our children come to school in cars.

With the school growing in numbers and looking to become single-form entry, there will be an inevitable increase in cars around the village at key points of the day. The other side of this is the impact that this has on the healthy lifestyles of the children. There is a lack of children and families walking to school and we need to provide opportunities to show healthy alternatives, as well as be role-models for adults and children.

**"It wakes you up and it's nice to talk to your mates before school."**

Pupil

## What did you do and how did you do it

To address the issues above, we decided to create a walking bus programme.

We wanted to support this to encourage families to explore a healthier lifestyle. It was an opportunity for parents and children to get active and was also a chance to try and have a positive impact on the environment. Changing to a healthier, more sustainable culture happens one step at a time and this was a chance to do that.

In order for it to happen it needed the support of staff, who would be available to supervise the walk on a rota basis. Often new initiatives can be down to a finite group of staff but we were overwhelmed by the majority of the staff who were able to commit to one or more mornings to join in on the walk.

Once we knew we had the staff support, it was simply a case of sending a message out to parents to notify them the timings and the route. We are able to park at the village hall in the village and there are paths alongside the road that lead to the school. We found that the support from children and parents was equally as impressive.

Because of the staff support, the responsibility of the Walking Bus could be shared between a wide range of staff and happen weekly over the course of a term, whilst the weather was suitable and safe.

## The Impact

The impact has been that parents and children seem far more aware of healthier ways of coming to school. We've noticed a lot more bicycles and walkers in the morning. The difficulty with anything new is getting started. Having started this initiative and seen how well-received it was and how easy it was to co-ordinate, it means things like this can grow and be a sustainable event in the active life of the school. This was able to be proven when we did the Walking Bus for a second time, and plan a third when the weather improves.

Parents use our Parentmail service to book their interest in advance. This means we have an idea of how many and who to expect on the walks each week. There are roughly between 20 and 30 each week. There are also families and children who would regularly attend as well as ones who change over time. This meant that by the end of the first Walking Bus approximately one fifth of the children from Y1 to Y6 had taken part. By the end of the second Walking Bus, there were new people taking part. Participants had increased to a quarter of the pupils Y1 to Y6.

## Sustainability

This has already happened once and the cost involved is zero. We have already replicated the Walking Bus for a second time and are looking for a third. The model we have and the route, as well as the trust and confidence of the parents and staff means that we are comfortable and well-equipped to continue the Walking Bus as a regular part of the school calendar.

Our next step would be to involve the children more in the leadership of this event and any ideas they may have. Our Sports Leaders have grown to the extent where children from Y2 to Y6 are involved in the pupil leadership of health, activity and well-being. They have expressed ideas on what to do next, including themed walks and walks for causes.

**"We know that changing to a healthier, more sustainable culture happens one step at a time and this was our chance to do that!" - Headteacher**

**"It's good to ease the cars around the school. Keeps the neighbours happy." - Staff member**

**"It's lovely. It makes you feel good and it's great to see the kids all together." - Parent**