



**St James CE Primary School**

**Travel Plan**



## **The School**

The current school site was developed in the late Victorian era, catering for infants only up until 1981. Extensions and extensive refurbishments have been made over the years. There are now approximately 200 pupils at the Primary School, which caters for pupils from age 5 to 11 in seven classes. Pupil numbers have risen in recent years and there are significant pressures for places. The school has an admissions policy determined principally by the local catchment area.

## **The Locale**

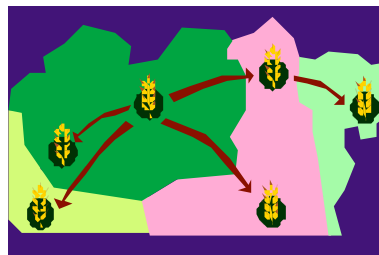


The school is situated in the southwest corner of a triangle of land, Bartonsham, which is largely residential, less than a mile from the centre of Hereford with approximately 700 households. The school is near the end of a cul-de-sac, although the street is the main entrance for a local dairy and the WRVS, both of which attract significant volumes of traffic including lorries. The entrances to these sites are used as turning heads by parents who drive their children to school. In between the entrances to the dairy and the WRVS is a footpath that provides access to a riverside path which links to a large park, King George V playing fields via a footbridge over the River Wye. There are shared use cycle and pedestrian paths in this park which provide a motor traffic free link between Bartonsham and a housing estate on the south of the river.

To the north a boundary to the Bartonsham area is the heavily trafficked A438 and some pupils have to cross or travel along part of this road.

Congestion on the A438 is one reason for rat-running traffic in the residential area which also suffers from motor traffic generated by the Cathedral School, an Independent School at the north western edge of Bartonsham, which has a high volume of car borne pupils.

### **Travel Planning**

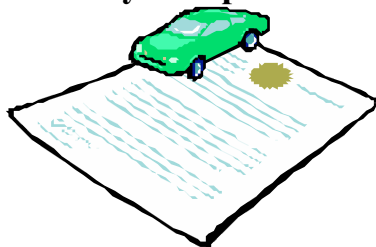


An immediate concern for the school is congestion around the school site as a result of a combination of parents driving pupils to school, milk lorry movements and traffic with a destination at the WRVS site. Eight car parking spaces for staff are allowed at one end of the school playground. There is no on site parking for parents and there are yellow ‘Keep Clear’ markings outside the school together with double yellow lines, but these are largely ignored by many parents arriving to collect children. There is no formal bicycle parking and so bicycles brought on site are lent against the walls of the school building. The location for bicycle parking is largely out of view from the pavement.

The school became interested in developing a travel plan as a result of its involvement in the St James and Bartonsham Community Association. In partnership with the Community Association the aim is principally to reduce the volume and speed of local traffic and to work with the highway and planning authority to improve facilities for alternative forms of mobility to the private car, for the benefit of the whole community. While traffic management measures to assist pupil safety on the school journey are sought as an outcome of the school travel survey and Travel Plan it is recognised that a broader strategy to improve the Bartonsham environment is required in order to significantly improve perceived and actual safety, particularly among parents who may currently restrict their children’s travel choice on account of road traffic concerns. As such, beyond the development of a School Travel Plan the aspiration and vision is to develop a community wide travel plan.

In order to achieve a community wide travel plan it is hoped that a dynamic partnership with Herefordshire County Council can develop best practice in participation in behaviour travel change, as well as a sympathetically designed streetscape that encourages walking, cycling and a safer environment for all children. As a consequence, the development of the School Travel Plan can be seen as a catalyst for such a community-wide travel plan for St James and Bartonsham.

### Policy Perspective



National transport policy has been through a period of change in the 1990s, focused particularly towards management of demand for travel and this includes encouragement of alternatives to the car. School travel has been identified as a particularly important issue, not least because of the disproportionate impact car travel for the school journey has during the morning commute peak hours. School travel was highlighted in the Government's 1998 Integrated Transport White Paper, *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*.

One of the negative aspects of the increasing use of the car for taking children to and from school is the contribution this makes to the overall levels of physical activity among young people. It is increasingly recognised that the routine habit of walking and cycling is important for children because of the health benefits which accrue and also because children who are physically active are more likely to remain active in adult life than those who are largely inactive.

Table 1 below shows that there has been a significant and steady decline in walking and cycling nationally among 5 to 11 year olds since 1985/86 albeit with a minor improvement in 1998/2000.

**Table 1: Trips to and from school per child (aged 5-10) per year by main mode and average distance.**

	1985/86	1989/91	1992/94	1995/97	1997/99	1998/ 2000
Walk	67	62	61	54	53	56
Bicycle	1	1	1	-	-	-
Car/van	22	27	30	37	38	36
Private bus	5	4	4	3	3	3
Local bus	4	4	4	4	4	4
Rail	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other	2	1	1	2	2	1
Average length miles	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.5

National transport policy concerns are reflected in those of Herefordshire County Council through its Local Transport Plan. Herefordshire City Council, like other English highway authorities seeks to support and develop travel plan initiatives and wishes to see more schools and businesses actively involved and developing their own Travel Plans.

### **Initiatives on school travel**



There have been some problems of parents parking outside the school in the cul-de-sac due particularly to turning manoeuvres in order to exit Vicarage Road. Aside from attempts to discourage parents from parking illegally, and school pupils completing a 'hands up' survey, there has been no structured approach to traffic issues at the school.

### Travel Survey



In May 2002 a travel survey questionnaire was completed by a 79% sample of pupils at the school during lesson time. The questionnaire was comprised of three pages of written questions, largely with tick boxes. There was also a map of the area of Bartonsham (and adjacent districts) where the school is located onto which the pupils had to draw their routes to and from school, if they had had an accident where this had occurred, and if they felt any parts of their routes was dangerous to mark such locations. The travel survey revealed that 78% of pupils live less than 2 kilometres from school, rising to 82% for all pupils living less than 3 kilometres from school.

Table 2 provides data showing current travel to school and the mode pupils would like to use for this journey. The current level of walking significantly exceeds levels of walking to primary schools as reported in the National Travel Survey data. There is a strong desire for cycling and to a lesser extent the use of scooters and a concomitant desire for less car travel and walking. Importantly, approximately 75% of car users would prefer to travel to school be another mode of transport.

#### **Table 2: Current mode of travel to and from school and preferred mode.**

Option	Number currently travelling to school by each mode	%	Number that would like to travel to school by each mode	%
Walk	111	69	51	32
Car	42	26	11	7
Cycle	7	4	68	43
Other Bus	1	1	2	1
Other	0	0	3	2
Scooter	0	0	15	9
Taxi	0	0	2	1
School bus	0	0	9	6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of what would make walking and cycling to school better or encourage pupils to use these modes a range of measures were identified from a pre-determined list. For walking the top three were:

- Less traffic
- Safer crossing places
- Cleaner pavements

For cycling the top three measures were:

- A safe place to leave my bike
- More cycle lanes
- Less traffic

The same questions were asked of those pupils who came by car and lived up to three kilometres away from school since it's physically feasible for most primary children to walk or cycle this distance.<sup>1</sup> Among car users the top three measures to encourage walking were:

- Safer crossing places
- Less traffic
- Slower traffic, an entrance away from cars, cleaner pavements (three with equal polling)

Similarly, among car users the same questions revealed that the top three measures to encourage cycling were:

- More cycle lanes
- A safe place to leave my bike
- Less traffic

### **Road Accidents and Road Danger**



Road accident data for a 1.6 kilometre radius of the school for the last three years for which data was available (1999 – 2001) was obtained from the police. Two accidents involving primary school aged children, at times which could be associated with school travel, occurred within the Bartonsham area, one as a pedestrian and one as a cyclist. There were no serious child pedestrian or cycle accidents recorded within the Bartonsham area itself.

As part of the questionnaire pupils were asked whether they had had an accident on their way to or from school. One location, midway along Mill Street, was marked by a child who walks to and from school. This location does not match with the road accident data recorded by the police. Two locations were identified by a number of pupils and this



suggests that these locations may be problematic for a number of pupils.  
These were:

- Nelson Street/Green Street/Harold Street junctions
- Vicarage Road/Green Street junction

## **Travel Survey Summary**

Key findings from the Travel Survey which have influenced the travel plan are that:

- Three quarters of car users living less than 3 kilometres away from school would prefer to use another mode of transport
- There is substantial suppressed demand for cycling to school contrasting with few who do cycle
- There is some preference for scooting

## **School Travel Plan What is it and what can it do?**

A School Travel Plan is a 'living document', regularly updated, which sets out a school community's aims and aspirations to increase the use of alternative modes of transport to the car as much as possible while working to improve safety for those walking, cycling and using public transport. It also identifies the means through which travel behaviour change can be monitored and sets targets for increases in non-car travel. A travel survey provides the baseline data. In addition a Travel Plan can:

- Demonstrate to the local community the school's environmental responsibility
- Attract funding towards safe routes to schools initiatives
- Attract pupils because of the ethos and safe and considered journey planning
- Promote school travel issues among staff, pupils, parents and Governors
- Provide support for any planning application to the local planning authority
- Provide a framework for curriculum links, particularly under Citizenship, Geography, Sustainable Development, Health and Safety.



## What St James wants to achieve



Safety is a primary concern. Through our efforts to promote safe walking and cycling to school we seek to better equip pupils for their travel needs now, during secondary education and beyond. The road environment, the speed and volume of traffic is, however, a key determinant of parental decisions about how their children travel to school and as such we support the idea of a 20mph speed limit zone for Bartonsham.

### Safety for those who walk



At St James CE Primary School we are committed to walking which in practice means encouraging those parents who have to drive their children to school to give considerable care to the safety of other road users, and for pupils and accompanying parents walking the school journey to be alert to their school environment and adhere to basic road safety principles such as care when crossing roads. We would be willing to trial walking buses. Walking buses can particularly help parents who drive their children short distances to school, usually less than 1,600 metres, to feel confident to let their children walk. This could operate on one or two days a week for a short period in order to demonstrate its effectiveness to staff, parents and children alike.

The travel survey confirmed that there are a number of locations within

the local area where better traffic management including crossing facilities would improve safety and give greater confidence and support to those walking or considering walking the school journey. We will therefore work with the Community Association and Herefordshire County Council and other interested agencies to achieve improvements to the pedestrian network around the school.

### **Choice of safe cycling**

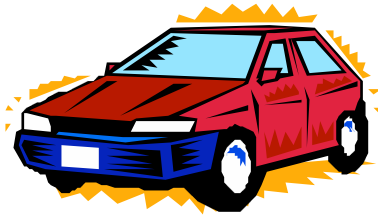


Cycling is a very marginal activity among our pupils but there is a clear desire to be able to cycle the school journey among many pupils. The Travel Survey found that 91% owned bicycles and all who wish to cycle to school own bikes. Cycle training is an important part of equipping pupils with the road sense and confidence to cycle. We propose introducing cycle training for Year 5 pupils, as this will allow them to practice their cycle craft skills during Year 6 before they transfer to secondary school where the journey is usually longer.

The school recognises the need for weather protected, secure cycle parking (Sheffield type stands) and we shall apply to a variety of funders including the Department for Transport's Cycle Project Fund, in order to provide this.

There are, however, clear improvements to the highway environment which could enable more pupils to cycle in safety. That Travel Survey identified the need to address certain localities and again the school will work with the Community Association and Herefordshire County Council and other agencies in order to attain infrastructure improvements.

### **Reductions in car use**



For those pupils who live close to school, less than 3 kilometres, but are driven to and from school, there is potential for increases in cycling and as distance decreases, for more walking too. Even where parents may wish to either collect pupils or drop them at school, there is potential for walking on one of these trips. Such reductions would also reduce the congestion around the school at the start and finish of the school day. We will also encourage parents driving to and from school to park away from Vicarage Road and walk a few hundred metres, as this will reduce danger in front of the school entrance.

We will therefore identify opportunities through curricula and extra curricula activities to educate pupils of their own and their parents' travel decisions.

## **Actions to be taken**

### Traffic Management:

The Travel Survey results have provided a strong mandate for close collaboration with Herefordshire County Council in addressing barriers to walking and cycling. The school will press the County Council to work with us, and the Community Association in implementing traffic management measures which addresses concerns raised by the pupils through the Travel Survey.

### Development of a Walking Bus:

Mrs Ann Mundy will explore with parents the opportunities for establishing a walking bus route.

### Reaching new parents:

The school will develop information for the school prospectus about the Travel Plan, including a safe routes to school map, highlighting the

school's ethos of promoting walking and cycling. Such information will also be provided at new parents evenings and other such events.

#### Public Events:

The school will take part in Walk to school days and take advantage of similar days where the opportunity to highlight the benefits of walking and cycling can be promoted to parents, pupils, staff, Governors and the local community.

#### Preparing Year 6 Pupils for the transfer to secondary school:

For most pupils the transfer to Secondary School will entail a longer school journey than they currently experience. The ethos of St James Primary School to encourage walking and cycling in encouraging healthy and environmentally sustainable travel behaviour can be encouraged in pupils as they move on through their education. The School will, therefore, liaise with the key Secondary Schools it feeds, to encourage increased attention on support for safe routes to school initiatives.

#### Curriculum Links:

The Head of St James will review links with the curriculum on a regular basis.

#### Access to the Travel Plan:

Make the Travel Plan available to staff, parents, pupils and Governors.

#### Staff:

Support and encourage staff considering or actively using alternatives to the car.

#### Community Focus:

To maintain the focus of the school in serving the local community, which is essential if journey lengths are remain short, so that they are attractive for walking and cycling and to work with the Community Association.

### Targets:

By July 2003 to achieve:

- Walking bus – initiate training during Spring 2003 establishing regular use Summer 2003.
- 65% of journeys on foot to school by bicycle (substantial increase) apply for training & cycle training
- 14% of all journeys to school by bicycle (substantial increase)
- 20% of car trips to school (moderate decrease)
- 1% of journeys to school by bus (maintain current level)
- Raising parental awareness of Community Travel issues & Travel Plan.

### Monitoring:

In order to assess progress of the School Travel Plan, Ann Mundy is assigned to ensure that monitoring of the Plan takes place. This involves evaluating progress of actions identified and ensuring that each term a travel survey is undertaken in order to judge progress against targets set and to suggest any updates in these as deemed appropriate. In order to replicate the recent full survey this will be undertaken each February. A review of the Travel Plan will take place each March in order that changes identified can be included within the School Improvement Plan, which is also revised each year in March.

Ann Mundy will also act as the first point of contact for the School Travel Plan with Herefordshire County Council and outside agencies in order to maintain continuity of coordination for progression of the Travel Plan.



Footnote 1 It is worth noting that under the 1944 Education Act all school aged children are expected to travel to school without the need for the local authority to provide transport. This applies to children below age eight living a distance of up to 3.2 kilometres from the school. From age eight this rises to 4.8 kilometres.