

School Travel Plan Parents' Questionnaire - October 2012

A big thank you to the **22** people who replied - this represents 25 - 30% of the school population. The results are summarised below and are followed by some comments.

1. When asked, the majority of children say they would prefer cycle to school. As a Bike It school we try to offer activities and facilities to make it easier for families to cycle to school - eg. training, covered bike storage. What would help your child/ren to cycle more often?

(To/from school - or if you live outside Oakington/Westwick you could answer this question about any cycling your child/ren might do.)

The 9 replies all referred to cycling to school.

- Why we don't cycle:
 - Live too close to cycle (2)
 - Locality unsafe for cycling: Roads too fast (2), pavements narrow (3), need cycle path (2)
- What could be done to help:
 - Learning how to ride their bikes with confidence (1)
 - Encouraging children to cycle (1) - "I let my child cycle if she asks to"
 - Nothing (2) - eg. weather dictates [a longer-distance ride to school]

2a. If you live in [Oakington](#) and sometimes (at least once a week) take/fetch by car, is this because... (tick any that apply)

I have to go somewhere else by car (eg. work, nursery, swimming lesson) before/afterwards	6	One respondent emphasised this was only once a week
"Never use the car"	6	
the weather's bad	2	"We live on Cambridge Road"
we're running late	1	
"Rarely and only when late after work"	1	
it's less hassle than getting everyone ready for walking or cycling	0	
it's quicker	0	
I don't enjoy walking or cycling	0	

OR

2b. If you live in [Westwick](#) or further away ([Cottenham](#), [Bar Hill](#), [Girton](#) etc) do you

walk or cycle at least sometimes	4	"more in summer"
sometimes come by bus	0	

and when/if you drive, do you park

Water Lane (ie the road school is on)	4	"sometimes if going on somewhere"
at the Pavilion car park	3	
High Street	1	"when Water Lane busy"
Arcadia Gardens	1	
Queensway	1	

3. These are currently the objectives of the School Travel Plan:

1. Increase healthy and car-free school journeys, especially cycling.
2. Decrease car use (not just for school run but for all users/visitors to school site)
3. Reduce congestion on Water Lane and in High Street

Do you think these are the right objectives? If not, how would you change or add to them? & Any other comments.

Ten respondents explicitly stated that they agreed with the objectives, although three qualified this by saying they personally had no choice but to drive (due to distance or time.)

People's suggested additions were:

- "Talk to council on road/path issues"
- "Encourage other village journeys to be non car"
- "Work with Oakington & Westwick Village Plan community group to increase opportunities for safer cycling in and around Oakington."
- "Encourage drivers to respect cyclists/walkers and slow down"

Five respondents specifically agreed with or referred to reducing congestion and zigzags outside school:

- "Agree, especially to reduce congestion in Water Lane & High Street"
- "Even though I drive I do believe congestion on Water Lane is getting worse and becoming a problem and safety concern) for parents dropping their children at school whether walking, cycling or driving, and indeed other road users. I think the white zigzags should be extended further to the left hand side."
- "Better policing of cars parking on zigzag lines outside school gates (could school ask the police to attend at dropping off or picking up time?) - these cars create a safety hazard"
- "3 - yes please, zigzags outside school gate"

Seven respondents were concerned that local roads and paths are not safe. Comments included:

- "The road needs a speed limit of 20mph in morning."
- "The road is very busy and the pavements from the Westwick end are uneven and very narrow, to push a buggy and have small children cycle to school is not safe - should not feel pressured to cycle to school."
- "If road was safer (cycle lane on Station Road needed) would let my child cycle to school every day"
- "I choose to drive on most occasions as I believe path the path from Westwick to be inadequate and causing safety concerns."
- "My child can ride without stabilisers but is shaky & I would rather not let her ride in Oakington until she is better as the roads are busy - she does cycle locally to home."
- "The paths need work on them"

Other comments included:

- Parking at the Pavilion is not sensible if you drive in from the other side of the village (wastes petrol and adds to congestion). "I combine car journeys with other things I need to do in Oakington."
- Objective 1 - walking is also good.
- There was a suggestion to make a car park in the field next to Pre-school, issuing passes only to those living outside Oakington.
- " Nowhere in the village is really too far to walk or cycle if necessary. I appreciate sometimes people get a bit late or need to go on somewhere else, but other than that I don't think people in

the village should use a car to get to school if they can possibly help it."

- "On working days there is simply no time especially with no breakfast club available to enable us more time to get to work."
- "Promoting bike security."
- "More covered storage would be great but probably wouldn't affect whether my child wanted to cycle."

There were some words of encouragement too!

- "Keep up the good work."
- "I love all the incentives to cycle eg national bike race, housepoint weeks, golden chain."

Comments

1. The most obvious concern is that of local road and path safety. Paths, especially towards Westwick, are seen to be too narrow for cycling or even for walking. Traffic is too fast and busy for parents to be confident about allowing their children to cycle.

This is not something as a school we can directly change, but clearly there is support for us to use our influence as a significant institution and part of the local community to liaise with local councils and also the Community Plan to improve the local cycling and walking environment - it will be to everyone's benefit. There is strong support for adding this as a fourth objective.

However, the more cycle training children can have, the better able they are to cycle safely even alongside traffic, and this may give them and their parents more confidence.

2. Many parents are concerned about parking outside school, particularly violation of existing zigzags. There is some acceptance that driving and parking because the roads are unsafe adds to the problem. Despite the fact that several of the respondents park on Water Lane, there is support for extending zigzags. This is something that school and particularly pre-school have already taken up with the Council but which we should continue to press for.
3. It might help if the objectives of the Travel Plan were better explained so that parents do not see it as being pressurised to cycle even when they feel that is impossible or dangerous:
 - It's better for the environment and everyone's health if we don't DRIVE to school. Even if we can't walk/cycle 100% of the time, doing it whenever we can does make a difference.
 - It's better for our children, for lots of reasons, if they can learn to cycle safely and confidently while at primary school. They learn more quickly if they can practise and an excellent way to practise is to cycle to school as often as they can. Some families live too far away - or too close - for this to be practical - but we still want their children to have the opportunity to learn to cycle and to practise cycling.
 - It's better for local road safety if we don't PARK right outside school.

These aims obviously interact!

4. Local families do drive to school but (of those who responded to the survey) primarily because of going on somewhere else. We accept this but continue to encourage people to walk or cycle when they can - most already do. However, the issue of parking and congestion still needs to be addressed.
5. More regular bikers' breakfasts may help families pressed for time in the morning. *JP Feb 2013*