BCP School Streets Pilot

Creating Safer Spaces and Increasing Active Travel to School

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BCP Council

School Streets

Executive Summary

“Having access to the wealth of knowledge and experience that Sustrans have has been invaluable. Since getting a dedicated Sustrans School Streets officer on board we have been able to deliver four pilot School Streets, which are going really well thanks to their hard work and enthusiasm.

The schools, parents and children love the School Streets and we wouldn’t have been able to deliver these without Sustrans’ assistance.”

Beth Barker-Stock, Sustainable Travel team BCP

The BCP School Streets pilot project involved implementing a School Street at four schools in Bournemouth and Poole. A School Street is a timed prohibition of motorised traffic at the start and end of the school day. The aim was to reduce road danger around the school sites and increase perceptions of ‘feeling’ safe, encourage more people to walk, cycle and scoot for at least part of the school run, reduce congestion at peak times and improve the air quality around schools. We used various monitoring tools including perception surveys with pupils and parents, air quality monitoring using diffusion tubes and Sustrans Hands Up Survey (HUS) which collected data on pupil travel behaviours, to measure the success of the project.

Our Key findings include:

- **80%** of parents and carers identified **‘safety’** as one of the main advantages of their School Street and **59%** of pupils **felt safer**.
- **Active travel increased** from 61% to 68%, a relative increase of **11.5%** compared to before the School Streets were introduced.
- Data suggests that **NO2 levels**, which impacts air quality, has been **reduced** at Livingstone Road due to the project.
- **92%** of the parents and carers we spoke to and **70%** of the pupils said they want their School Street to **continue beyond the trial.**

Contents

Background

The Need for Change

The school run creates congestion, pollution and danger around schools and on the wider road network. The number of children being driven to school has more than trebled in the last 45 years, yet the average primary school journey is just 1.6 miles. It is estimated that one in four cars on the road during the morning peak times are doing the school run. The level of pollution created by motorised vehicles on the school run is harmful to everyone, but particularly children. Research carried out by UNICEF shows that children are exposed to higher doses of pollution during the school run and whilst they are at school, particularly in the school playground (1). The most recent statistics from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents indicate that every month 1,200 children are injured in traffic related collusions that happen within 500m of a school (2).

In Summer 2020 the Prime Minister launched ambitious plans in Gear Change, to boost walking and cycling in England, with a vision for half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycled or walked by 2030(3). Included in Gear Change was a commitment to 'increase the number of School Streets to protect children.' This built on the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy target to 'increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025' (4).

(1) Unicef, 'The toxic school run' https://www.unicef.org.uk/publications/the-toxic-school-run/ (2018)

(2) Royal Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, School Site Road Safety (2021)

(3) Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking (publishing.service.gov.uk)

(4) Department for Transport, The second cycling and walking investment strategy, July 2022

The number of children being driven to school has more than trebled in the last 45 Years.

> **"It makes me feel more relaxed as a parent, it just feels like your child is safer."**

Parent, Livingstone Road, talking about School Streets

Background

What are School Streets and How they Help?

What is a School Street?

A School Street is a timed prohibition of motorised traffic at the start and end of the school day. Motor vehicles are not permitted to enter the School Street unless they have been granted an exemption. Exempt motor vehicles include residents, blue badge holders and businesses with premises on the street, for example.

Hamworthy Park Junior's School Street

How do they help?

The aim is to create a safe, welcoming and attractive environment where children, parents and teachers can walk, wheel and cycle with less risk of air pollution and traffic congestion. A 2021 report by Possible and Mums for Lungs found that School Streets can reduce air pollution and road danger outside the school gate (1). A 2020 review found that, in almost all cases where School Streets were implemented the total number or motorised vehicles across School Streets and neighbouring streets reduced and active travel to school increased (2).

In implementing School Streets, for the first time in the local authority area, Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council hoped to reduce road danger around the school sites and increase perceptions of 'feeling' safe, encourage more people to walk, cycle and scoot for at least part of the school run, reduce congestion at peak times, improve the air quality around schools, and improve the health and wellbeing of young people. It was also hoped that implementing School Streets would provide a safer and more accessible space for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility.

(1) *School Streets: Reducing children's exposure to toxic air and road danger — Possible (wearepossible.org)*

(2) *Davis, A (2020). School Street Closures and Traffic Displacement: A Literature Review and semi-structured interviews. Transport Research Institute, Edinburgh Napier University.*

The Project

Working in Partnership

Challenges in the Local Authority Area

Traffic congestion is a significant challenge facing parts of BCP, as is poor mental health amongst children. A survey undertaken by the Children's Commissioner in 2021 showed that more than a fifth of children in BCP are unhappy about their mental health, 44% of children surveyed said they worry about a healthy environment and the planet (1).

Prior to the launch of the School Streets pilot project, there was demand locally, from headteachers and parents, for School Streets. School Streets align with BCP's goal, to become carbon neutral by 2030 and their Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Working Together

In Autumn 2021 BCP contracted Sustrans to support with the set up and delivery of four new Schools Streets to commence early 2022.

Sustrans are recognised as leading in School Street, having been at the heart of growth in School Streets over the last few years. Sustrans works in collaboration with local authorities, schools and local communities to realise the benefits that closing a road to traffic, whilst opening it up for people, can bring.

(1) The Big Ask: Mental Health, Children's Commissioner (2021)

> **"Children walk, scoot and cycle down the middle of the road in groups and we're now seeing a really lovely atmosphere."**
>
> **Headteacher at St Michael's school**

BCP had already been working with Sustrans on the Bike it Plus project. This, along with Sustrans track record of successful setting up and delivering School Streets elsewhere in the country, indicated that Sustrans would be the best partner to help deliver the School Streets project in BCP.

Sustrans Bike It officer delivering a cycle skills session

The Project

Project Overview

Setting up The Project

BCP identified and contacted four suitable schools in the local authority area to be involved in the School Streets pilot project.

- Hamworthy Park Juniors ('Hamworthy')
- St Michael's Church of England Primary School ('St Michael's)
- Livingstone Road Infant and Junior School ('Livingstone Road')
- St Clement's and St John's Church of England Infant School ('St Clement's')

Parents and carers, residents and local businesses were informed and consulted with through the pre-consultation survey that took place between the 18th of November and the 17th of December 2021. The results showed strong support for the project. It was therefore decided to proceed with the trial.

In December 2021 a Sustrans School Streets officer was recruited to work with the schools and the wider community to help set up and deliver the project. The break down of activities completed as part of this role is detailed over the page.

The School Streets Officer ensured the schools were fully onboard and supportive of the project and liaised with BCP Council to put in place all required processes and procedures to successfully and safely run the street closures. The officer also engaged with the school communities, local residents and businesses and supported the schools with the recruitment and training of volunteer stewards. Bike It officers worked with each school throughout the year to help educate and enthuse the children about active travel, to help families adjust to their School Street.

The School Streets pilot project was launched in two phases. The first phase, involving St Michael's and Hamworthy, was initially planned to be launched at the end of January but was delayed slightly and launched on the 28th of February. The second phase, involving Livingstone Road and St Clement's was launched on the 28th of March. The School Streets were operated on an Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO). The order initiated a six-month consultation period where the scheme was monitored, and feedback collected.

Two paid lead stewards were employed by Sustrans, and managed by the School Streets Officer, to support each school in the first six weeks of the trial. The School Streets Officer and the Bike It Officers also supported the schools to steward the street closures, this was particularly important in the early days of the schemes.

The Project

Project Overview – Step by Step set up and delivery

Identified and contacted trial schools.

Pre-consultation took place with parents, residents and local businesses.

Initial meetings with school champions and engagement with parents.

Memorandum of Understanding provided to and signed by schools.

Schools verified cover for School Streets with their insurer.

Pre School Streets data collected - HUS baseline data collected for the Bike It project, air quality monitoring, before photos.

Lead stewards employed and trained.

Recruitment of volunteers from school community initiated. Schools given communication resources, online training session and handbooks provided by School Streets officer.

Launch assemblies and other associated activity with schools undertaken.

The Project

Project Overview – Step by Step set up and delivery

Start date confirmed and communicated to local community and schools. Press releases produced.

Risk assessments for each site finalised.

School Streets implemented in two phases.

Lead stewards supported each school for first six weeks.

Regular meetings with schools and between Sustrans and the council.

Post project data collected - second round of air quality monitoring conducted, perception surveys with pupils and adults, post HUS data.

Produced project report, include data findings case studies, lessons leant and recommendations.

The Project

Locations of the School Streets

The Project

Objectives, Outcomes and Monitoring

Sustrans' undertook the following methods to measure the success of the schemes. BCP Council also ran a formal consultation alongside this.

Diffusion tubes for nitrogen dioxide monitoring.
Diffusion tubes are an affordable way to measure concentrations of a traffic pollutant to give an indication of air quality. We positioned three tubes on the roadside, attached to street furniture, for three weeks before (24.01.22-16.02.22) and during the project, once it had time to 'bed in' (04.05.22 and 25.05.22), at each School Street school and four control schools.

Parent and carer perception survey
We surveyed people standing or waiting in their car (if they were permitted to use the road) at the school gates at drop off and pick up, as we wanted to obtain feedback from people using the School Street. By using open questioning we hoped to get more in-depth response and tried to approach people using different models of travel. We began the survey after the Easter holidays to give the project enough time to bed in. 64 parents and carers took part in the survey across the four schools.

Pupil perception survey
The schools were provided with four questions and given a choice over how they wanted to conduct their survey, in the classroom or with a focus group. This survey was conducted to obtain the perspective of children on the School Street. 1,116 pupils took part in the survey.

Hands Up Survey
Baseline data and data post project is collected as part of the Bike It project. We used the results from the question on travel behaviours for the School Streets schools to see how the project may have influenced the way children travelled to school. It is however not possible to determine to what extend a change in travel behaviour is due to School Streets.

Objectives	Outcomes	Monitoring
Reduce road danger around the school sites and increase perceptions of 'feeling' safe.	Reduced congestion. People using the road feel safer.	Adult and pupil perception surveys, collection of anecdotal feedback.
Improve air quality on the street outside the school.	Decrease in pollution levels.	Air quality monitoring using diffusion tubes.
Encourage more people to walk, cycle and scoot for at least part of the school run, to reduce congestion at peak times.	Increased active travel. Fewer motorised vehicle trips.	Hands Up Survey data. Adult and pupil perception surveys.
Improve the health and wellbeing of young people.	Increased physical activity. Increased access to sociable public space.	Hands Up Survey data. Adult and pupil perception surveys.
Provide a safer and more accessible space for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility.	More inclusive and welcoming places. Reduced inequality of access and mobility.	Adult perception surveys. Case studies.

Case Study

St Clement's and St John's

The Challenge

St Clement's Infant school in Boscombe is located on St Clement's Gardens, a populated cul-de-sac, which comes off a very busy section of St Clement's Road. There are a number of residential properties, including those on side roads and a care home. The school faced a number of problems with engine idling and illegal parking on double yellows and zig-zags at drop-off and pick-up. Parents at the school reported more 'near misses' than any other school in the School Streets pilot. The School Street required a stewarded closure point at the entrance to the road, and vehicles entering and leaving the road were asked by the steward to drive carefully and slowly, at no more than 5mph.

What we did

The School Street began at the end of March 22. Although staff including the site manager and headteacher regularly supported the closure where possible, this School Street is mostly stewarded by volunteers. The number of volunteers at the start was just two, but by the end of the school year there was a team of five volunteers who regularly stewarded the closure. The team of stewards worked with parking enforcement to address the ongoing issue of illegal and dangerous parking just outside the closure on St Clement's Road.

Parents, children, staff and residents are very supportive of the School Street. The headteacher noted a real increase in the use of bikes and scooters to come to school.

> **"The parents are really pleased, the children are really happy coming into school."**
>
> **Mr Poole, Headteacher**

Results

Parent and Carer Perception Survey

Methodology

- Perception surveys were conducted through short interviews with parents and other adults outside the school gates at drop off and pick up times at each site. The respondents were asked a mixture of closed and open questions, covering travel behaviours, perceptions of safety, perceived advantages and disadvantages of the project etc.

- The survey also aimed to identify potential case studies which evidenced individual benefits and changes in behaviour.

- **64 adults were interviewed.** The majority, 89%, were parents. 7% were categorised as 'other' including, grandparents, other relatives, and a foster carers.

Limitations

Only a small portion of people doing the school run were surveyed in total. The data collected from each school is not sufficient to make statistically significant findings from their individual data, but when grouped together as a full data set, we were able to draw findings.

Before the School Street most respondents (88%) described the school run as either **busy, dangerous and awful.**

Now the School Street is in place, the school run is **better and safer,** according to 48% and 16% of the respondents.

20% of parents and carers said they had **changed the way they travelled** to school.

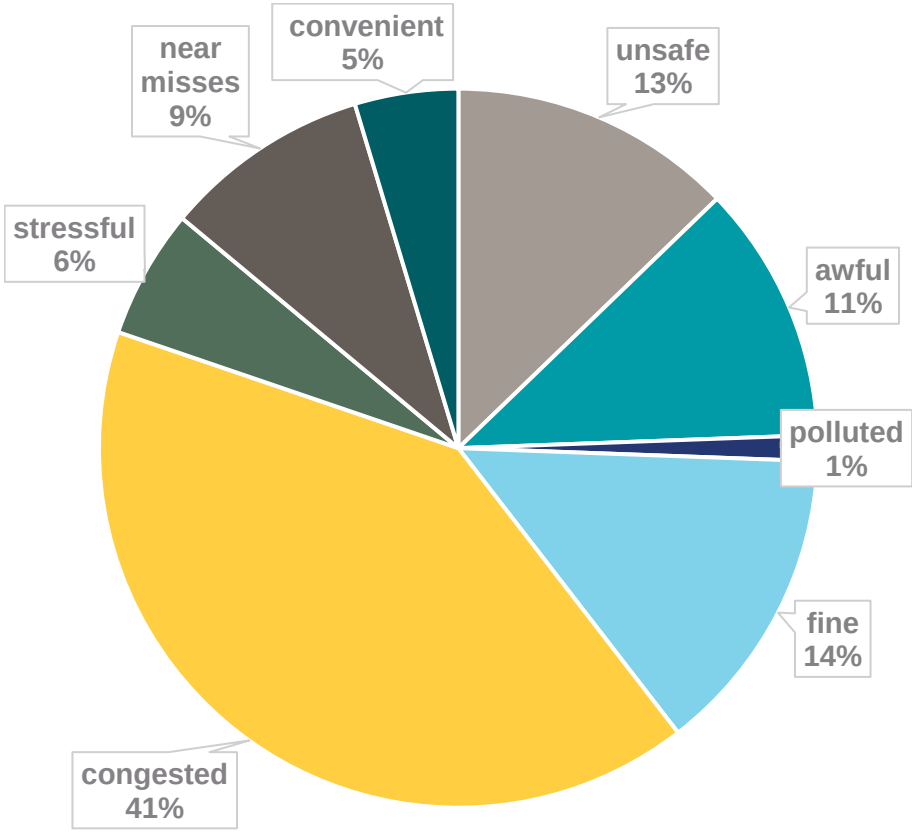
80% of the respondents said the main advantage was that it was '**safer**.' 55% could not think of any disadvantages associated with having a School Street at their school.

92% of parents and carers want their School Street to continue

Results

Parent and Carer Survey

Q1: How did you feel about the school drop off and pick up before the School Street was introduced?



The pie chart shows the words/descriptors used most in response to the question and the percentage of respondents who used them. Only 19% gave a positive response about the situation before the School Streets was introduced.

Q2: How do you feel about the school drop-off and pick-up now the School Street is in place?

The most commonly used words mentioned in their answers were: **better (48%) safer (16%)**

- 11% of the answers mentioned that the School Street has **made it easier, or had made them more likely to, travel actively to school.**
- 11% of the responses stated that they **did not think the School Street had made much of a difference**, as they had always travelled to school actively, for example. Others explained that the School Street failed to address some of the key safety issues at the school site, mostly relating to congestion and safety on other roads that also form part of the journey to school. At Hamworthy some parents stated that the adjoining road, Ashmore Avenue was *'the problem, not so much this cul-de-sac*' where the School Street is located.
- 11% of the respondents stated that the School Street had made the school run **more difficult** for them, if they have to come straight from work to collect their child or if they have other children that go to school elsewhere, for example.

Results

Parent and Carers Survey

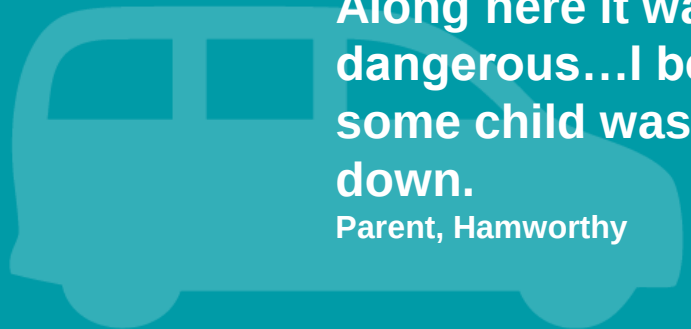
Before

Incredibly dangerous, my son almost got run over.
Parent, St Clement's

Manic, always cars stopping in the middle of the road.
Parent, Livingstone Road

It was terrible because there were so many cars.
Parent, St Michael's

Along here it was dangerous…I believe some child was knocked down.
Parent, Hamworthy



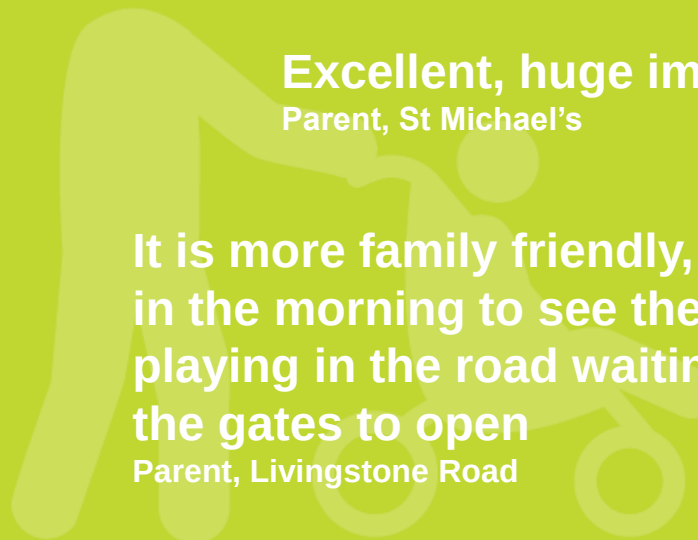
After

Lovely and peaceful, we rode a bike this morning.
Parent, St Clement's

Now I have a baby, I have a pushchair and I find it a lot easier to get on the pavements…It has cut the stress down a lot down for me.
Parent, Hamworthy

Excellent, huge improvement
Parent, St Michael's

It is more family friendly, it is nice in the morning to see the kids playing in the road waiting for the gates to open
Parent, Livingstone Road



Results

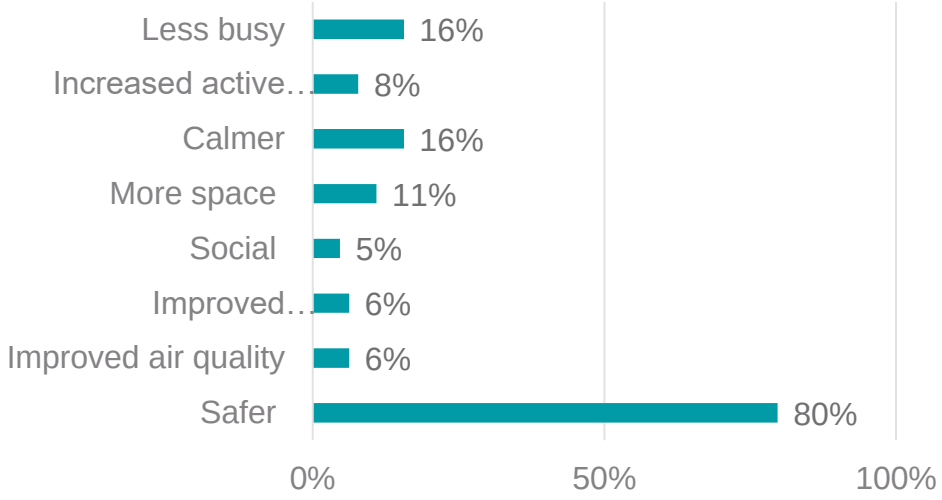
Parent and Carer Survey

Q3: Has the way you travel to school changed because of the introduction of the School Street?

Overall, 20% of the respondents said the way they travelled to school had changed because of the School Street, with 11% travelling actively (walking, cycling, or scooting) **more.**

Q4(a): What do you think are the main advantages or benefits of having a School Street at this/your school, if any?

The most common advantages mentioned most in their responses were: **safer (80%), calmer (16%) and less busy (16%)** The graph demonstrates the percentage of answers each advantage was mentioned in.



Q4(b): What do you think are the main disadvantages are of having a School Street at this/your school, if any?

55% of respondents could not think of any disadvantages. The disadvantages identified by the remaining respondents included:

- It is more inconvenient, particularly if you are running late (11%)
- More difficult for parents who don't live locally (3%)
- Insensitive parking in the surrounding areas (9%)
- Nearby car parks noticeably busier / not enough parking locally (9%)
- Traveling to school actively is more difficult in bad weather (3%)
- Other (9%)

Q5: Do you think the School Street should continue after the trial, and if so why?

An overwhelming majority - **92%** - of those interviewed wanted the School Street project to continue past trial period.

The parents that did not want the trial to continue said it was easier for them to park on the road outside the school.

Case Study

A Space for People

How did you feel about the school drop-off and pick-up before the School Street was introduced?

“Stressful because we often ride bikes or come on foot or scooters…before it was really stressful as the parents were fighting over parking spaces so sometimes it was a bit frustrating, with people being so agitated that they can’t get the parking space that they would like to…The kids were overlooked by drivers, kids being almost run over by a distracted driver who is desperate to find a parking space to drop their kids off in time.”

How do you find the school drop-off and pick up now the School Street is in place?

“Lovely and peaceful, we rode a bike this morning, my daughter is in reception and rides her bike. It’s nice because she doesn’t fit on the pavement because you have got people coming in both directions, but now she can ride on the road, so that’s really nice because it is an open space…we really like it.”

Any other comments?

“The closure of St Clement’s Gardens helps a lot, as parents and kids can spread out a bit more, ride on the road and don’t have to look out for oncoming traffic.” Jaroslova would like to see more road closures implemented, including on St Clement’s Road, which is the ‘main road we all accessing St Clement’s Gardens from’ as the ‘pavements are uneven and traffic is heavy, so kids are still in danger on their way to school.”

Jaroslava and her daughter outside St Clement’s

> “Lovely and peaceful.”

Results

Pupils Perception Survey

A short survey, consisting of four questions, was conducted with pupils at each school during the summer term, once the School Streets had bedded in. In total **1,116 pupils** took part.

> **“There is lots of space and I can scooter on the road.”**
>
> **Pupil, St Michael’s**

Over half of the pupils surveyed feel safer on the street outside their school.

37% reported they travel to school actively more often.

70% would like their School Street to stay.

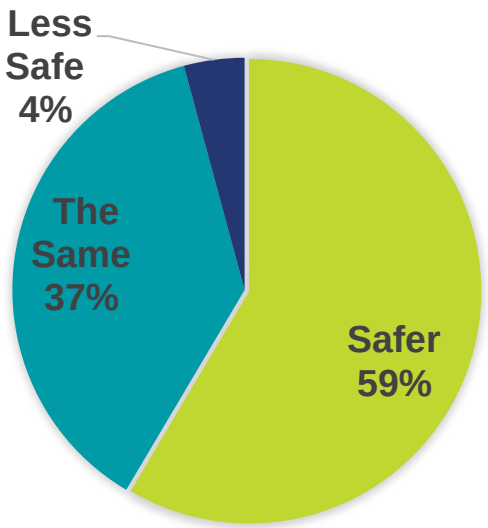
Methodology used by each school

- St Clement's and St John's - the survey was conducted with a focus group of 22 Year Two pupils by the School Streets Officer.
- St Michael’s - the survey was sent to the school and conducted with nineteen classes. 532 pupils in total took part.
- Livingstone Road - the survey was sent to the school and distributed to teachers to conduct with their class. 266 pupils in Years One to Six took part in total.
- Hamworthy – members of the Eco group conducted the survey with their classes, after a short information and training session for the School Streets officer. In total 296 pupils took part in Years Three to Six.

Results

Pupils Perception Survey

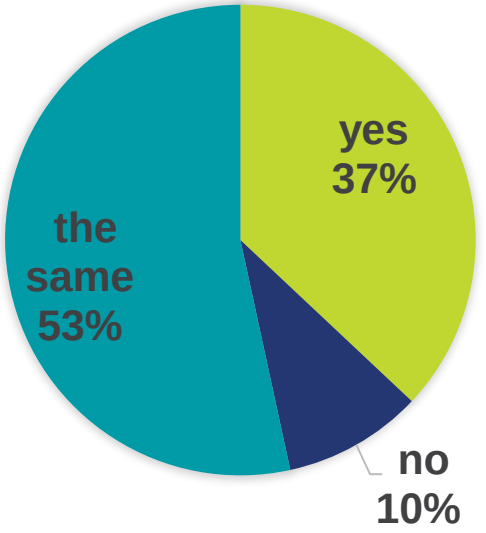
Q1: Since the School Street started do you feel safer on the street outside your school at drop off and pick up time?



	Safer	The Same	Less Safe
Livingstone	66%	28%	6%
St Michael's	58%	40%	3%
Hamworthy	52%	44%	4%
St Clement's	77%	5%	18%

NB: only 22 students took part in the survey at St Clement's so the results may not be representative

Q2: Do you walk, wheel, cycle or scoot to school from home more often now that the road outside the school is closed?



Q3: Do you think the road outside your school should stay closed at drop off and pick up time?

70% of the pupils said they would like the School Street to continue.

30% said they would not like the School Street to continue and would prefer the road to be open again.

Results

Pupils Perception Survey

Q4: What word(s) would you use to describe how you feel about the School Street at your school?

This question was answered by 41 out of the 45 classes who took park in the survey. The bigger the word appears, the more often it was mentioned in the survey responses. The top three words were positive, ‘safer’ and ‘safe’ were mentioned 23 times each, ‘happy’ was mentioned 13 times and the fourth most popular words was ‘normal’ mentioned 12 times.

Case Study

Livingstone Road

The Challenge

Livingstone Road Primary Federation is located in a residential area of Poole. There are 480 pupils across the Infant and Junior school. The section of Livingstone Road that the schools are located on, like many roads, becomes dominated by cars at drop-off and pick up time. Data collected by BCP showed that just over a quarter of all the pupils surveyed were driven for their whole journey to school.

What we did

A week before the launch date the school expressed concerns about their capacity to support the closure and the negative reaction from parents they anticipated facing, and considered pulling out of the project. The school met with a member of BCP's Sustainable Travel team and the School Streets officer to discuss their concerns and agreed to proceed with the trial, initially for only three weeks. During the early stages there were three closure points, one at the entrance to the road, one at the entrance to the Uppleby cul-de-sac, to prevent parents using this area to turn around in, and one temporarily at the end of the section of road. The latter closure point was to address the problem of parents reversing up the one-way system, which initially started happening when it was first launched. Eventually this final closure point was no longer needed.

The School Street was so well received by the school community that the school decided to continue with the project for the entire trial project and hope to make their School Street permanent. The School Street has transformed the area outside the school from one dominated by cars into a safe, welcoming space, where children play and socialise with their friends before and after school.

Easter themed 'bling your bike' at Livingstone Road

66% of pupils feel safer

> **"It is so much nicer…it is lovely seeing the kids cycling or playing football."**
>
> **Parent, Livingstone Road**

Results

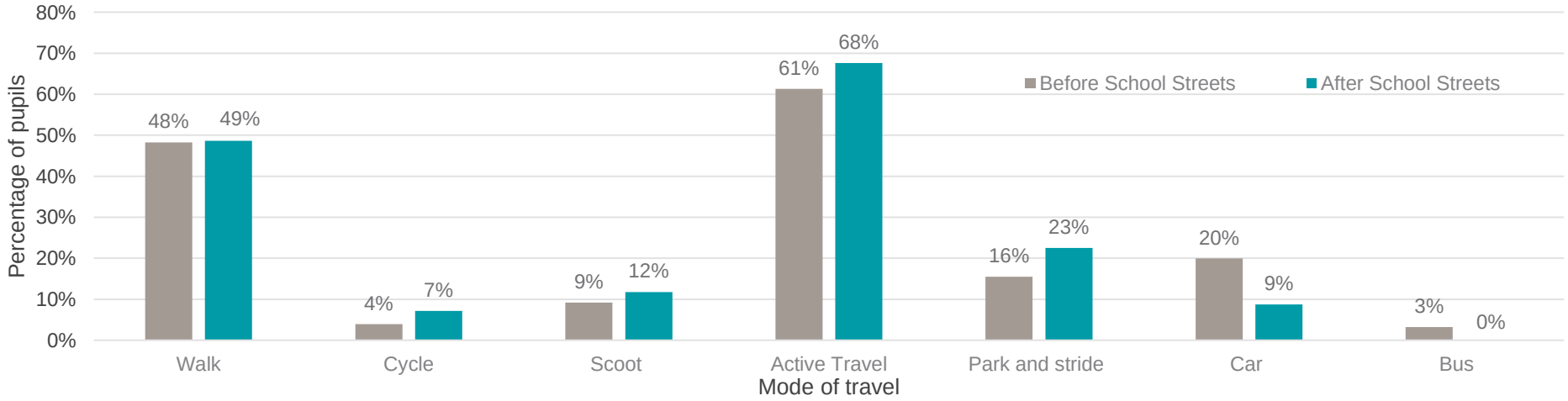
Pupil Travel Behaviour

Hands Up Survey data

Baseline data was taken from a total of 1,759 pupils who undertook Sustrans Hands Up Survey prior to the School Streets being introduced. A further 1,378 pupils took part in the post Hands Up Survey at the end of the school year. Pupils who took part in the survey were asked a series of questions, including **'how do you usually (or most often) travel to school?'** We extracted the data from the School Streets schools to produce these findings. As each school also benefitted from the Bike It project, we are not able to determine the individual influence of the School Streets project, any change in travel behaviours are most likely to be attributable to a combination of the projects.

Overall active travel to school increased from 61% to 68% of pupils. This is a 7 percentage point increase or 11.5% relative increase compared to active travel levels before the School Streets were introduced. All modes of active travel increased, with cycling increasing by 75%, although still a small proportion overall. The amount of children being driven the whole way to school has reduced by over half. The individual school results, displayed over leaf, shows that active travel has increased in all schools, most noticeably in St Clement's. Park and stride has also increased from 16 to 23 percentage points, suggesting families could be reducing the amount of distance they travel by car (parking the car and walking at least 5 minutes to school).

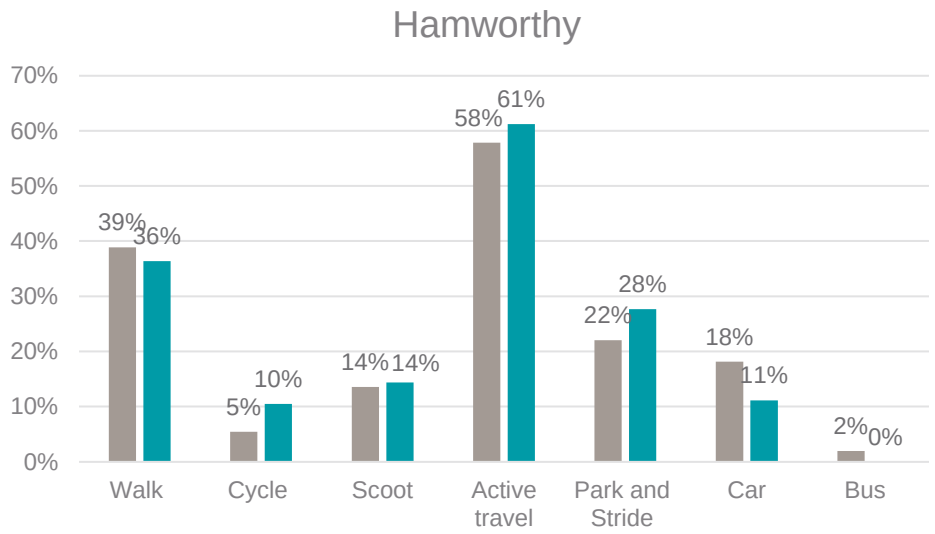
The mode of travel pupils state that they 'usually' travel to schools by, before and after the School Street was introduced (combined for all School Street schools)

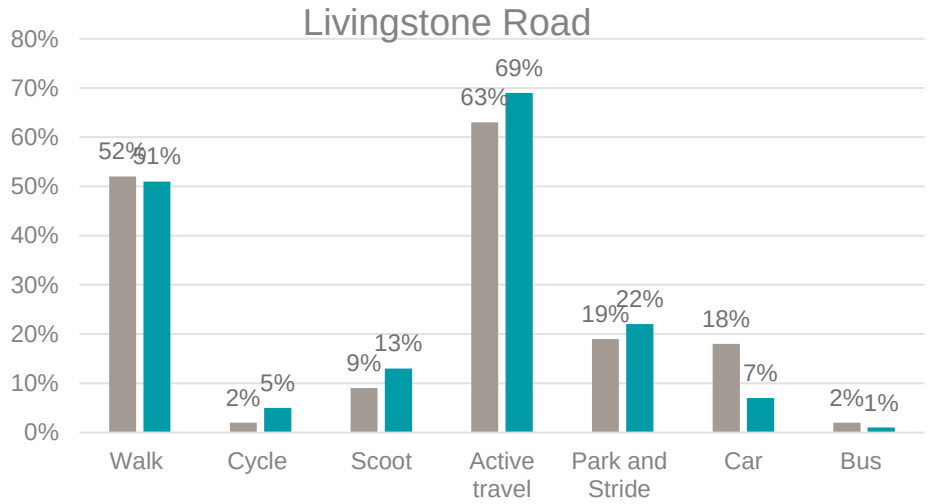


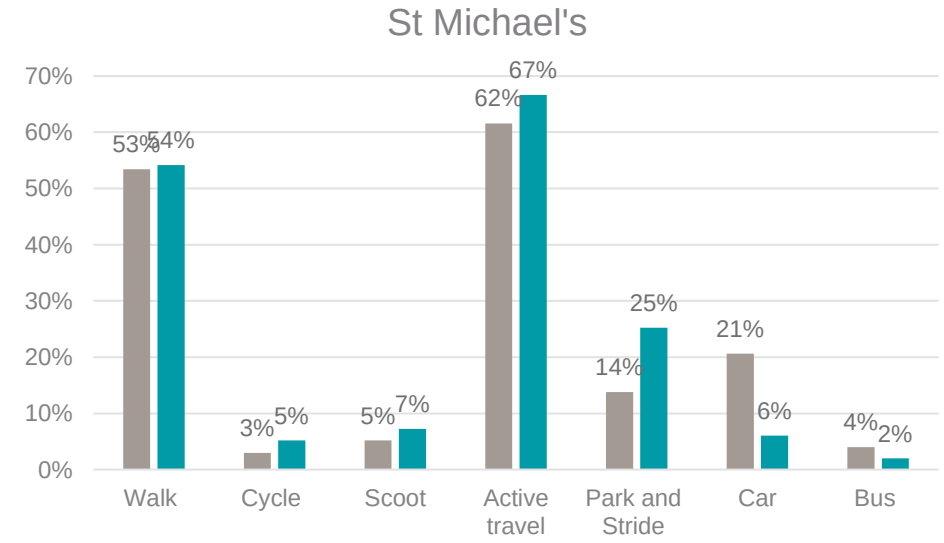
Results

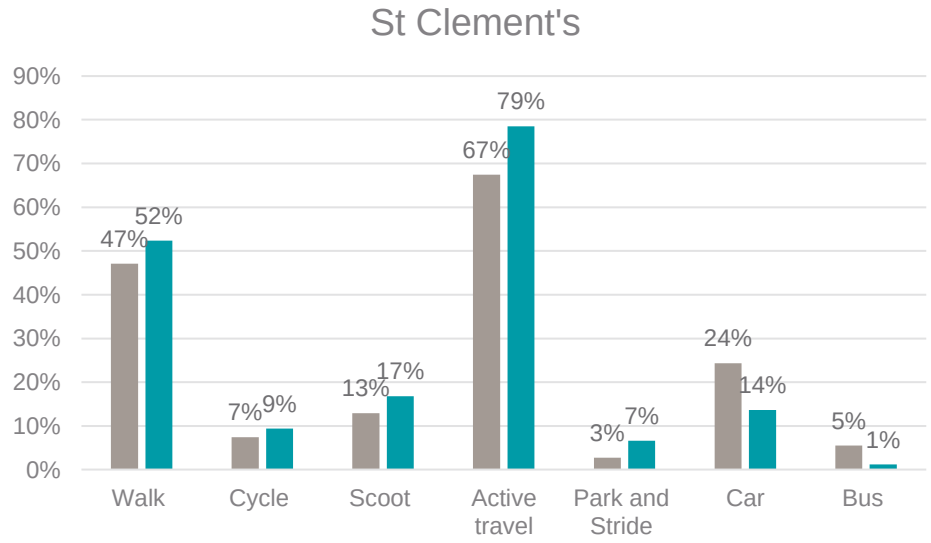
Pupil Travel Behaviour

The mode of travel pupils state that they 'usually' travel to schools, before and after the School Street was introduced (by school)









Case Study

Cargo Bikes on the School Run

Asa and her children cycle to school, St Clement's and St John's, on their cargo bike everyday. She was concerned about vehicle idling and the levels of pollution outside the school.

"I was annoyed a couple of times…mostly because of pollution levels, because parents who park right outside the school leave the engine on, take the child out and go up to the gate with the engine still on."

> **"It feels safer. Fresher air too."**

Since the School Street she has noticed that the air feels "fresher" and it '*feels safer*' at drop-off and pick-up times. She hopes that it may encourage more parents to travel actively to school too.

" I think people drive out of habit, because they always do it" but she thinks the road closure may encourage more people to cycle by showing them that *'it's not so hard."*

Out of all the School Streets schools, St Clement's and St John's saw the biggest increase in active travel.

Travelling to St Clement's & St John's school on their cargo bike.

Results

Measuring Air Quality

We used diffusion tubes to measure nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels on the road outside each school before and during the School Streets trial, to give an indication of the impact of the road closures on air quality.

How It Works

Diffusion tubes work by a process called molecular diffusion. During molecular diffusion, compounds will move from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration. The compounds in the air diffuse into the tube and collect on the absorbent zone at the end of the tube.

We used three diffusion tubes at each site and monitored the air quality at the four School Streets schools, and also four control schools: Epiphany C of E school, Queens Park Academy, Longfleet C of E Primary school and St Joseph's Catholic Primary school. The monitoring period lasted for three weeks each time, from the 24.01.22-16.02.22 and 04.05.22 and 25.05.22. Once the sampling period was over, the tubes were returned to the laboratory to determined the average concentration of compounds that were present in the air over the monitoring period. For each school we calculated the mean average NO2 levels and then worked out the percentage change that was seen between monitoring periods. At some sites, some of the tubes went missing which did not allow a comparison, these results were removed when we calculating the mean. An average was calculated for the control schools to allow seasonal variation to be removed from the School Streets results.

Considerations and Limitations

Many factors impact air quality including weather, road structure and vegetation. In particular, weather conditions: wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity, rainfall and solar radiation can impact readings. Nitrogen dioxide concentrations also show natural seasonal variation (1). For this reason we also chose to measure the air quality at four control schools, to take into account other influencing factors: wind, seasonal variations, etc. We also opted for tubes with a wind protection cap, in line with Defra recommendations, to adhere to more rigorous standards for EU reporting. The polyethylene filter prevents wind turbulence in what would otherwise be the open end of the tube. Please note that compared to other monitoring tools, diffusion tubes are categorised as an 'indicative' monitoring technique defined by relatively high uncertainty.(2)

Results

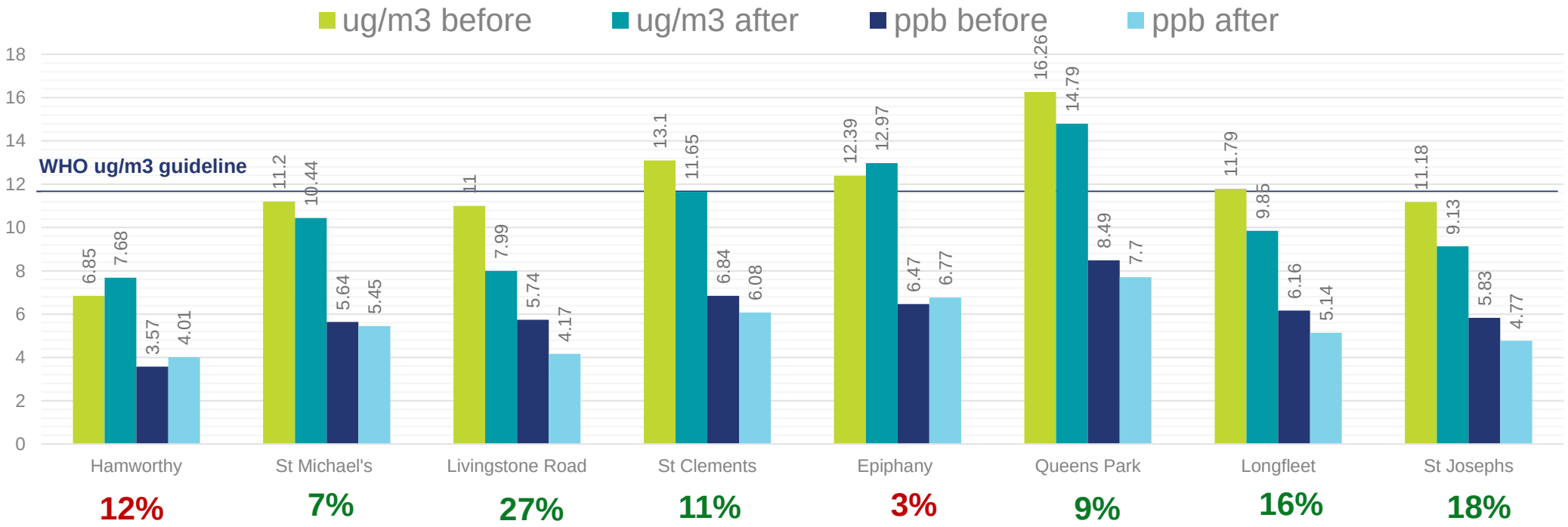
All School Streets schools, other than Hamworthy, saw a reduction in NO2 levels between pre and post readings. This is also the case for the control schools with all but Epiphany seeing a reduction. In order to remove other external factors, as detailed above, the average change for the control schools was calculated to be a 10% reduction. To try to determine the impact of the School Streets on air quality, by removing other variables, if we eliminate this 10% reduction for the School Streets levels it indicated that Livingstone Road would still have a 17% reduction (removing 10% for the average 27% reduction seen from the second readings). St Clement's also saw a smaller 1% reduction if the same reduction was applied.

(1) Queensland Government, 'Influence of meteorology on air quality' available here https://www.qld.gov.au/environment/management/monitoring/air/air-monitoring/meteorology-influence, (2) AEA Energy and Environment, Diffusion Tubes for ambient no2 monitoring practical guidance (2008)

Results

Measuring Air Quality

The average NO2 levels recorded before and after the launch of the School Streets and the percentage change



Percentage decrease or increase in NO2 between before and after readings

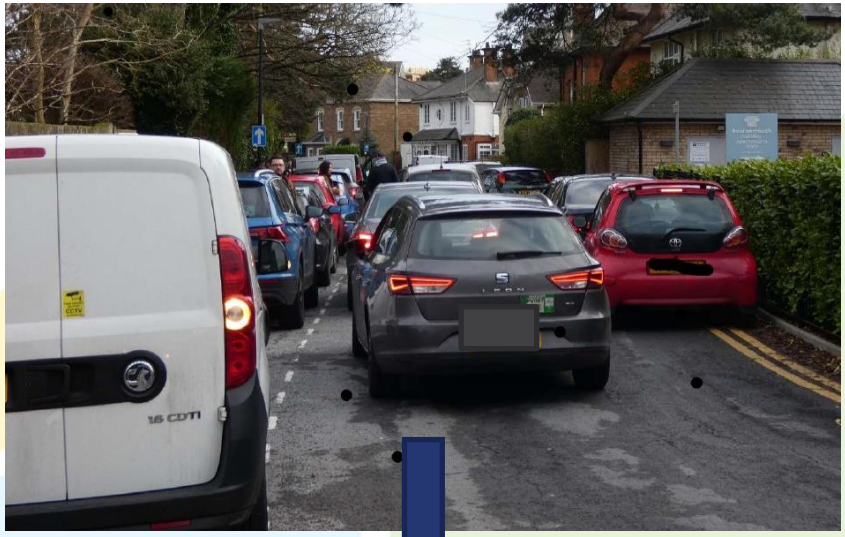
NO2	A nitrogen oxide associated with combustion sources.
ug/m3	The concentration of an air pollutant (e.g. NO2) in micrograms (one-millionth of a gram) per cubic meter air. Allows comparison to WHO guidelines.
ppd	The concentration NO2 as the ratio of its volume if segregated pure, to the volume of the air in which it is contained expressed in parts per billion.
WHO guideline	World Health Organisation air quality guideline of 10 ug/m3 (annual mean) serves as a global target for national, regional and city governments to work towards improving their citizen's health by reducing air pollution. **Our results are not directly comparable** as the WHO guidelines represent an average for the whole year, our monitoring period was much shorter (six weeks in total). This level is simply to put levels into context. The national annual air quality objectives is higher at 40ug/m3, again these results are not comparable as this is an annual average, and would be expected to be well within this objective.

Case Study

St Michael's C of E Primary School

The Challenge

St Michael's Primary school, located on Somerville Road in Bournemouth, had contacted BCP Council to expressed interest in having a School Street. During the school run traffic jams would regularly build up as people parked dangerously and illegally outside the school.



What we did

The school was one of the first in the area to benefit from a School Street. Parents and residents volunteered their time to support the project as volunteer stewards, trained by the School Streets Officer. As the road is fairly long with a bend just after the closure point, exempt vehicles are walked through the closure during peak times by school staff, to maintain the safety of those using the road.

The School Street trial has been very successful so far. All the parents and carers surveyed said they thought the School Street should continue. The local newspaper, Bournemouth Echo, wrote a series of positive articles about the School Street (1).

Alongside their School Street, St Michael's ran a number of initiatives to encourage active travel, as part of the Bike It Plus programme. The school purchased a number of school bikes and have implemented 'learn to ride' sessions for reception children into their curriculum.

If the Schools Street is able to be made permanent, street design changes may be implemented in the future to help slow the speed of vehicles using the road.

(1) https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/19961500.road-closure-introduced-outside-st-michaels-primary-school/

Conclusions

Improved Road Safety and Perceptions of 'Feeling' Safe

Our findings suggest that the School Streets have improved perceptions of 'feeling' safe.

Parents and carers

80% of the respondents answers identified 'safer' as one of the main advantages of having a School Street at their school. Respondents remarked that it '*feels a lot safer'* and that they '*did not have to worry*' as much. This is a marked change from how parents, and others, felt prior to their introduction, with 17% of respondents stating the school run was dangerous and 13% of the answers referred to 'near misses' (near-miss traffic accidents) before, where their child '*almost got run over*' or '*almost hit by a car*.'

Some raised concerns that the surrounding areas were still busy and therefore dangerous, particularly St Clement's Road and Ashmore Avenue in Hamworthy. Some attributed this to the School Street, saying *'this being closed means people park on the corner at Hamworthy park on the bend, which is really dangerous'*, for example. But most parents did not think the School Street had caused the danger, for example one parent at Hamworthy said *'I don't think the closure has made it worse it has always been a problem.'*

The project worked closely with the enforcement team to try to tackle dangerous and illegal parking on roads surrounding the School Streets. This did have an impact on driver's behaviour when they were present.

If the School Streets are made permanent enforcement teams should continue to have a regular presence and road layout or street design changes could be considered to address these issues.

Pupils

59% of pupils said they felt safer on the road outside their school since the School Street, 37% felt the same. This indicates that the School Street has improved perception of safety among children. Many indicated that they felt safer now there were less cars.

- "Safer, there are not lots of cars to run us over"
- "Safe, nothing is driving and less smoke"
- "Happier, I was nearly hit by a car door"
- "I could not walk alone before because it was too busy"

> **"My little boy rides his bike now going down this road, it's a lot safer, I can let him go and not have to watch him so closely."**
>
> **Parent, Livingstone**

Conclusions

Improved Road Safety and Perceptions of 'Feeling' Safe

Some safety concerns

Some children did still have safety concerns, for example a Year 5 pupil from St Michael's was *"worried about cars with blue badge",* and a Year 2 pupil at St Clement's was worried about cars *"coming the other way"* namely those leaving the closure from residences. These vehicles and blue badge holders are exempt and therefore still allowed to drive in the road during the closure times. Another pupil said that reception pupils *"might get used to a lack of traffic."* This was a concern echoed by some parents who were worried that it would encourage children to be less cautious on roads not controlled by a traffic order. A grandparent from Livingstone said that *'"sometimes in the morning there are kids running around on the road and to me, kids shouldn't be on the road."*

Lessons, assemblies and skills sessions were provided to the schools, as part of the School Street and Bike It project, which addressed road safety issues, including concerns raised above. This highlights the importance of addressing road safety particularly with younger pupils as part of a package of work around School Streets, to ensure safety is improved across the board. Notably, St Clement's have been involved in BCP's STEPS programme, which helps children learn the skills they need to keep safe when crossing the road. Programmes like these work well alongside School Streets.

Conclusion

Evidence collected from adults on the school run and pupils at the schools suggests that School Street has largely increased perceptions of safety in the area immediately outside the school gate. The fact that such a high percentage of the adults surveyed referred to the school run being 'safer', without being prompted to do so, as answers were open, is strong evidence of the fact. Also, 59% of pupils said they felt safer on the road since the School Street.

Although problems with inconsiderate and dangerous parking in surrounding areas persist, and some pupils still have some safety concerns, mostly relating to exempt vehicles still using the road, it is clear that the School Street has significantly improved perceptions of safety among road users.

"It feels a lot safer and quieter and calmer for the kids as they go into school."

Parent, St Clement's

Case Study

Hamworthy Park Juniors

The Challenge

Hamworthy Park Juniors and Twin Sails federation located in Poole faced insensitive and illegal parking on the road outside the Hamworthy Park Juniors entrance. This along with some dangerous car reversing manoeuvres were causing road safety concerns.

What we did

The School Street began at the end of February 22, located on Ashmore Crescent, a small cul-de-sac with a number of residential properties. The school were supported by a lead steward for the first three weeks of the project. After this point it was managed by school staff, mainly the two facilities managers for the schools, and occasional supported by Sustrans Officers. The timing of the road closures helped to deter parents form arriving early to get a parking space. As the closure became established, BCP Council agreed that the time period when the closure was stewarded could be reduced to cover peak arrival drop off and pick up times. The barrier continued to be placed at the start of the closure time, but only across the inbound carriage way. This allowed people to still leave the closure without the steward being present. This seemed to work well, with drivers still complying with the road closure, enforced by the signage.

Pupils at the school were involved in the monitoring and evaluation stage of the project. The Eco club were trained, by the School Streets officer, to complete feedback surveys with their own classes, their findings have been included in this report.

Parents, children and staff are very supportive of the School Street. All of the parents we spoke to wanted the School Street to be made permanent and 76% of the pupils surveyed wanted to keep their School Street.

Hamworthy Park Junior's School Street

> **"It's a lot more of a pleasant experience, it feels a lot safer and it's nice to know that residents can get in and out if they need to"**
>
> **Parent, Hamworthy**

Conclusions

Increased Active Travel to School

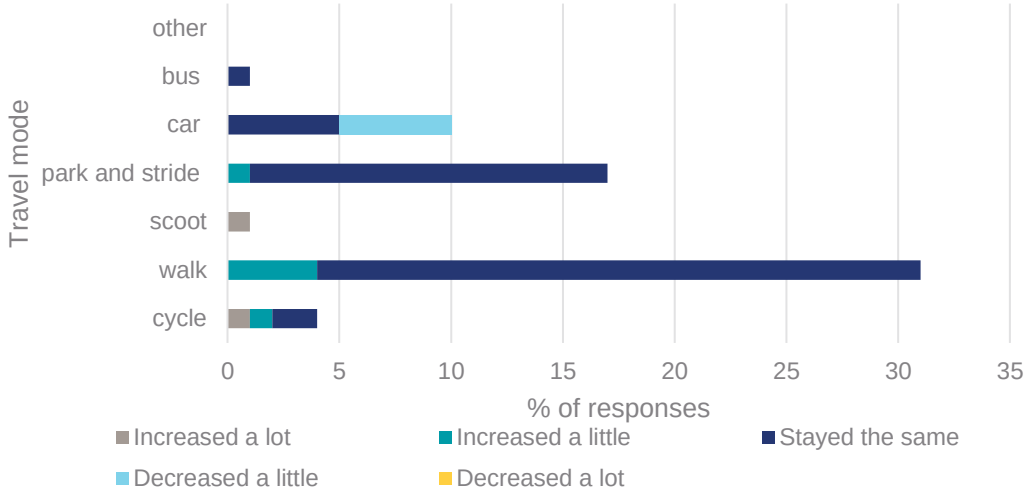
Our findings demonstrate an increase in children travelling to school actively and a decrease in the number being driven.

Parents and carers

Different reasons were given by the 20% parents, and others, who reported that they had changed the way they travelled to school. Besides from physically preventing most parents from parking close to the school gate, the answers suggest that parents' perceptions of feeling safer have made them more likely to travel actively to school, one respondent said that they *"feel a lot more comfortable now""* and they now *"come into school on scooters with the girls."* One parent from St Clement's said they were now able to "*ride to school on this piece of road because it's an open space*." Several parents noticed an increase in the number of pupils walking, scooting or cycling, "*it makes the children walk further than they did*," said one grandparent from Hamworthy, "*when it (the road) was open, there wasn't as many people with scooters"*, another parent from Livingstone commented.

However, for most parents, and other respondents, the way they travelled to school had stayed the same (80%), though 57% of those were already walking and cycling. The barriers to active travel were not extensively explored in this survey but some of the reasons given included: Living further away, having a younger child who goes to nursey elsewhere, they like to sleep in the car, or work schedules.

All modes of active travel were stated to have increased (a little, or a lot) with car journeys decreasing a little, though overall percentages were low.



Pupils

The Hands Up Survey data provides the best evidence for behaviour change and the impact of the School Street on modes of travel to school, increasing from 61% to 68%, a 7 percentage point increase. As each school was also involved in the 'Bike It Plus' project, which encourages active travel to school through various activities and initiatives, it is not possible to determine the individual influence of the School Street.

Conclusions

Increased Active Travel to School

Less children being driven

There was a reduction in the number of pupils being driven for their entire journey to school. We saw an increase in children parking and striding to school, which means driving most of the journey but parking away from the school and walking at least the last five minutes or more. This increased from 17% to 23%. The number of people being driven by car halved overall from 21% to 10%, and decreased at every school. The biggest decrease was seen at St Michael's, where there was a 71% decrease (from 21% to 6%) in people using the car for their entire journey to school.

More children travelling actively

Overall active travel to school saw a relative increase of 11.5% (walking, cycling or scooting/skating) from 61% to 68%. Cycling saw the biggest relative percentage increase by 75% (from 4% to 7%) with walking increasing by a factor of 7%, scooting increased by a factor of 20% from original levels.

Active Travel in each School

- Active Travel increase by **1 percentage point at Hamworthy** but this did include a 60% relative increase in cycling (5% to 8%), though only a small proportion overall.
- Active Travel increased by **6 percentage points at Livingstone.** Scooting increased by 44% in relative terms (9% to 13%).
- Active travel increased by **2 percentage points at St Michael's.** Levels of parking and striding increased by 78% (14% to 25%)
- Active travel increased by **13 percentage points at St Clement's,** the biggest increase overall, with scooting increasing by 41%.

Conclusions

Increased Active Travel to School

Conclusion

Increasing active travel could play an important role in reducing congestion, improving air quality as well as tackling fuel poverty. It would also help by supporting a healthier weight for school children, thereby tackling obesity and inactivity among primary school children. Our evidence demonstrates that the School Street has helped to increase active travel, with the HUS data demonstrating an increase in all forms of active travel to school and a decrease in car usage, though bearing in mind the limitations of this data. It has particularly increased the levels of cycling and scooting, which could suggest the School Streets have made it easier, or perceivably safer to travel by these modes.

There are many barriers to active travel that families face. Whilst a School Street may address some of these, it cannot address all the barriers to travelling actively to school, as the street outside the school forms only one part of most household's journey to school. However, improving the environment and increasing perceptions of safety by implementing a School Street clearly encourages, and gives people the confidence to, travel actively to school.

> **"Better because I can scoot and cars won't be near me."**
>
> **Year 2 Pupil, St Michael's**

Scooters and Bikes at Hamworthy

Case Study

An Inclusive and Welcoming Space

Kelly is a parent at St Michael's C of E School, who volunteers as a steward for the School Street.

Before the introduction of the School Street at St Michael's school, Kelly found the school run stressful. She describes the uncomfortable atmosphere that could make the start of the day more difficult for her and her child.

'Really busy and stressful, too many cars trying to get into one small space, also the path along the school is really tight, so really difficult to navigate…It was mayhem really, just uncomfortable, not a nice place to be and stressful before you have even got into school, especially as a parent with a child who is on the autistic spectrum, you need your day to go as smoothly as you can before you get in there."

Since the introduction of the School Street she has seen a big improvement in the atmosphere from somewhere that was '*not a nice place to be*' to a space to one where children can play and parents can chat.

"Lovely, it is great that it is just a big open space that the kids can run out on…maybe it's better for relations between parents too because we can talk or have a chat and we can stop and the kids can run around. Before, you were literally trying to get in and out because it was not a nice place to be. It's better for the space, better for the kids, hopefully better for parents."

> **"Better for the space, better for the kids, hopefully better for parents."**

School Street at St Michael's

Conclusions

Improved Air Quality

Air Quality Findings

The results at all the School Streets schools, except Livingstone Road, are similar to the control schools and therefore make it more challenging to draw conclusions. However findings include:

- Apart from Hamworthy and Epiphany all schools (School Streets and control schools) have seen a reduction in nitrogen dioxide levels.
- The greatest improvement in air quality occurred at a School Street school - **Livingstone Road**, where there was a 27% decrease in nitrogen dioxide levels seen when comparing before and after the launch levels.
- Nitrogen dioxide levels naturally reduce between the winter and summer (as detailed in the results section) and various other factors influence air quality. In order to remove these other influencing factors, we can 'crudely' use the overall average change of the control schools, to demonstrating the impact of the School Street.
- Overall on average the control schools saw a 10% reduction in NO2 levels between the two monitoring periods. If we remove this 10% from the averages of each School Streets percentage change, Livingstone Road continues to see a reduction of 17% and St Clement's by 1% in NO2 (see table), the other two School Streets, no longer show a reduction. Caution however should be used with using this data due to limitations of diffusion tubes and calculation.

The recommended annual WHO guidelines (10ug/m3) and the national annual air quality objectives (40ug/m3) for NO2 are annual averages. Our air quality readings are for six weeks in total, they are therefore not directly comparable to these guidelines. It does however help put the level of air quality at the monitored schools into context. It should be noted that all School Street (and control) schools are well under the national objective level and two out of four School Streets schools showed a nitrogen dioxide levels below the WHO level. If monitored over a year it would be expected that all levels would be under the WHO recommended guideline.

Removing other influencing factors from the percentage changes of average NO2 levels

School	Change in average NO2 before other influencing factors removed	Change in average NO2 levels once the average control school change is removed*
Hamworthy	+12%	+22
St Michael's	-7%	+3
Livingstone Road	-27%	-17
St Clement's	-11%	-1

*10% average reduction seen in control schools is removed from the average change in NO2, to crudely remove other influencing factors

Conclusions

Improved Air Quality

The importance of improving air quality

Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. Poor air quality has more severe effects on vulnerable groups, including children. Air pollution also causes damage to the natural environment as NO2 contributes to local ozone production which damages agricultural crops, forests and plants. Nitrogen oxides form quickly from sources emitting fuel combustion products, for example in power generation, industrial processes, domestic heating, and vehicles. The largest source of nitrogen oxide pollutants is vehicles. School Streets can help tackle poor air quality, associated with the pollution caused by vehicles.

Conclusions

The results demonstrate that, on average, air pollution levels were reduced at the school sites from before the School Streets, yet when other influencing factors are attempted to be removed Livingstone Road is the only school that clearly suggests the School Street has improved air quality in the School Street closure zone, and possible also St Clement's to a limited degree. These results should be used with caution.

From this we can conclude that the Schools Street has had a direct effect of reducing nitrogen dioxide levels and improving air quality to some extent.

It should be noted that the monitoring only looked at one element of air quality, for example levels of particulate matter (PM) has not been monitored.

The improvement in air quality from the data appear to be limited, however this could be partly attributable to the monitoring tools used (diffusion tubes) which are termed as an 'indicative' monitoring technique. Diffusion tubes can not identify fluctuations in NO2 across a day, meaning they are not the best monitoring tool to measure the impact of a short, timed road closure. The School Street only influences vehicle movement for two hours of a 24 hour period. therefore other activity outside the closures potentially diluting any improvements caused by the road closures.

Future monitoring of air quality for school streets should use a devise that can track changes to air quality across a day and also monitor levels over a longer period of time.

Conclusions

Improved Air Quality

Regardless of the results, School Streets undoubtedly remove the vast majority of cars from the street during drop off and pick up times. For example, a traffic count undertaken by a resident showed that St Michael's had 80 cars on the road at drop off times on a typical day prior to the School Street being introduced, this reduced to on average of 10 cars per day at drop off (as recorded by the lead steward).

The adult survey and the pupil Hands Up Survey also suggests that levels of car use for the school run has also reduced. This will have had a positive impact on air quality through the reduction in emissions through the removal of these vehicles. Vehicles being the main source of NO2 pollution. We can not determine how much of this modal shift is due to the Schools Streets as they are also Bike It Plus schools.

There is no clear evidence of a safe level of exposure below which there is no risk of adverse health effects. Therefore any reduction of NO_2 concentration, however small is likely to bring additional health benefits

> **“The fumes along the main road are quite strong, you can turn the corner and it feels much fresher.”**
>
> **Parent, St Clement’s**

Conclusions

Other Benefits

Providing a More Accessible Space

The School Streets helped to create a more accessible space for those with limited mobility, and for parents with younger children using pushchairs.

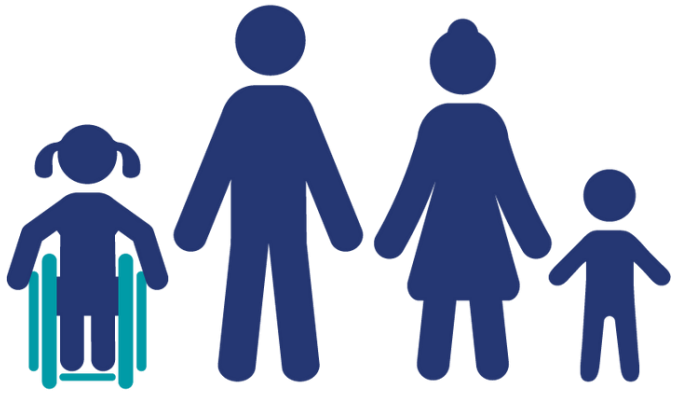
The School Streets also helped to create a quieter and more relaxed atmosphere that was more accessible for pupils with additional needs:

– We spoke individually to people on the school run, some with limited mobility, as part of the adult perception survey. A grandparent who was a blue badge holder described it as *"an actual gem"* as she was "*able to park easier and able to get to my granddaughter without having to walk half a mile".*

– Creating more space for people by tackling congestion, improved the school run for people with younger children using pushchairs. A parent from St Clement's described how they and *"so many other mums" have pushchairs* and how their own double pushchair *"was impossible to manoeuvre around"* before. They stated that there was *"no problem"* now the road is closed. Similarly a parent from Hamworthy said *""I have a pushchair and I find it a lot easier to get on the pavements".*

– Two parents described how the calmer atmosphere made the school run easier for their children who were both on the autistic spectrum.

> **"It is a lot calmer for my son, who is autistic. It's a lot calmer for him arriving to school, so he can start the day a lot better."**
>
> **Parent, St Clement's**



Conclusions
Other Benefits

A stronger sense of community

School Streets provide the opportunity to connect with other members of the local community and work together towards a common goal, to make the area safer and more welcoming. This helps everyone involved to feel a stronger sense of community.

- 5% of adults interviewed as part of the perception survey stated that there was more socialising since the introduction of the School Street, and a further 5% identified this as one of the main benefits of having a School Street. A parent at Livingstone described the atmosphere as more "family friendly" with *"parents standing around chatting rather than being all go, go, go".*

- At St Michael's residents of Somerville Road volunteered as stewards to support the scheme. One resident described how the "*completely different"* and "*more civilised* atmosphere" had helped create much more of a "*community feel".*

- Volunteers at St Clement's also felt that the School Street has helped improve relations within the school community. One volunteer described how they had formed "*quite close friendships"* with fellow volunteers.

> **"I can say hello to people."**
> **Year 2 pupil, St Michael's**

Improved physical and mental health for children

In a recent report, the WHO states that: *where active travel to and from school is safe, it provide the best opportunity to increase habitual daily physical activity* (1). Initiatives such as School Streets' help to make part of the journey safer and encourage active travel to school.

Data from the Hands Up Survey showed that active travel increased by 11.5%, including a 75% increase in the number of children cycling. The number of families/households parking and striding also increased by 30%, indicating that more children are incorporating increasing physical activity within their day.

The increase in physical activity is likely to have has a positive impact on those children's wellbeing. This is supported by the fact that 15 out of the 41 classes who give one word to describe how they felt about their School Street, said they felt "happy" or "happier". It is particularly important to prioritise the physical and mental health at this time, as both have been negatively impacted by the pandemic. Implementing School Streets is an effective way of boosting physical activity and mental health.

(1) World Health Organisation, Science and Technology in childhood obesity policy and lets be active, *'Promoting physical activity through schools: policy brief'* (2022)

Case Study

A Residents' Perspective

The situation before the School Street

Brian describes the parking situation as "*decidedly unsafe"* before the School Street. He describes how "*parents would arrive 45 minutes before the school closure times to take up parking on the double yellow lines…parking on both sides of the road".* He explains that the dangerous situation was exacerbated by the schools expansion and removal of a nearby car park. As a resident this impacted him, he would "*not attempt to access or leave my (his) property during drop off and pick up times",* however, his main concern was safety.

How the situation has improved

"Previously the situation was unduly unsafe. The situation is now safe…the School Street has created a safe environment around the school. This safe environment allows children to cycle and scoot to school, which was not possible previously. Parents with push chairs and young children can now safely access the school, disabled, wheelchair users etc can now safely traverse Somerville Road which they could not do previously. Residents can now access their properties without facing aggression and parents with blue badges can now park."

Brian's experience as a volunteer

He describes his experience as a volunteer as *positive:*

"I get to meet parents, residents and neighbours from adjacent roads and streets. I have received very positive feedback."

"Children's safety must be taken seriously. The need for a safe environment around schools to promote sustainable travel must be the priority."

Learnings and Recommendations

Issues and Challenges

Low number of volunteer stewards

Only two out of the four schools were able to successfully recruit volunteer stewards to help run the project by stewarding the barrier. School Streets work best when school staff are also actively involved, but having a team of reliable volunteer stewards can help the School Street run smoothly and take the pressure off of the school, as they are resource and time intensive projects.

Some dangerous and illegal parking just outside the closure

A small minority of parents continue to stop in dangerous places, sometimes parking illegally in areas just outside the road closure in order to drop children off just outside the closure. This is unsafe, and problematic as stewards have no authority to intervene in any situation that occurs outside of the closure. The problem was helped by the attendance of parking enforcement who helped tackle the dangerous behaviour of this small minority, however it could sometimes be a problem on the days they were not able to provide support.

> **“Some people still drop off, and park irresponsibly on the surrounding roads.”**
>
> **Parent, St Michael’s**

Traffic displacement

There is limited understanding of the displacement of traffic to streets adjacent to a School Street as this was not formally measured pre and post. This was not raised as a major concern in the perception surveys, but it was mentioned by a few respondents. Whilst we did not monitor surrounding streets in this pilot project, recent research from Sustrans shows that School Streets lead to an overall drop in traffic volume and despite traffic being displaces to some degree to surrounding streets, this does not create road safety risks that cannot be adequately mitigated(1). For future School Streets it would be recommended to introduce monitoring which could assess any change in speeds and volumes of traffic and other driver behaviour in surrounding streets.

Concerns that children may be less cautions on other roads

Some adults surveyed, and children, were concerned that children may get used to having a School Street, and therefore be less cautious on other roads. This highlights the importance of addressing the significant issue of road safety particularly with younger pupils as part of a package of work around School Streets to ensure safety is improved across the board.

(1) https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/research/all-themes/all/monitoring-the-impact-of-school-streets-safety-and-traffic-displacement/

Learnings and Recommendations

Lessons Learnt

key Issue	Learnings/Solutions
Long School Street closure times	The School Streets closures lasted from 8.00am until 9.00am and 2.15pm until 3.30pm. Whilst the long closure helped prevent 'early bird' parking, if school staff are supporting the closure, it made it harder as it was quite resource intensive. It was arguably not worthwhile to staff the closure for the entire time, for example at most schools the period between 2.15-2.40pm was very quiet. If future schemes are put in place the closure times could be reduced slightly.
Lack of baseline data	Some data was collected before the implementation of the School Street including Hands Up Survey data and air quality monitoring. It would be helpful to have more data about the situation at the school before the project to help measure the impact of the project. It would be useful to have traffic count data collected and perception surveys conducted before the School Streets is introduced.
Commitment from parking enforcement	Parking enforcement were needed, and proved extremely useful, in the early stages of the project. Due to various reasons the enforcement term were under resources at the time of the trials. It would be beneficial to have commitment form parking enforcement to continue to support the school regularly throughout the trial period.
Recruitment of volunteers and lead stewards challenging	The model used for the BCP pilot projects required a number of stewards, including volunteers and two paid stewards for six weeks. Social media posts, statements in newsletters, the school website and information sessions were all used as means to recruit volunteers, but the uptake was fairly low and ultimately only two out of the four schools were able to run the project using volunteers alone. A longer period of lead in time would allow more time to engage with parents and hopefully lead to more volunteers from the school community.
School's capacity to support School Streets	At all the schools the staff have been actively involved in their School Street and the projects could not have run without them. Various factors impacted the school's capacity to support the closures. One factor was the different waves of covid infections that led to staff shortages across all schools, which limited the amount of time school staff were able to dedicate to the projects in the earlier stages. Schools are under a great deal of pressure throughout the year, the School Streets programme should be designed with this in mind.

Case Study

Committed Volunteers

School Streets rely on volunteers from the school community. Mike is one of the parent volunteer stewards at St Clement's, he is very committed to School Streets and generously volunteered his time most days.

Why did you decide to volunteer?

"It is a way of thanking the school for all they do with my two children and it is to make the other children safer. It is something I believe in, seeing the amount of cars that used to be down the road and the fact that people would reverse and not really look and you saw countless parents pulling their children out the road."

Do you feel you have personally benefitted from volunteering?

"I have actually, with the new volunteers I have made some quite close friendships so that has been quite nice."

How do you think the school has benefitted from the School Street?

"Definitely a calmer atmosphere with the children going into school, people seem a lot more friendly. It is nice to see the children again at the end of the day it's nice and calm, they can leave and there's no frustration or parents getting angry because of the cars."

"I am now on the PTA, also myself and another volunteer are organising a competition for the children to design some 'slow down' signs."

Mike stewarding the School Street at St Clement's '

> **"It is something I believe in."**

Learnings and Recommendations

Our Recommendations

1. Make all four School Street permanent

We recommend that all four schools participating in the trial should have their School Street made permanent. This is based on the success of the projects across all schools and the school's own confirmation that they would like to continue with their School Street. We believe this decision is supported by the school community and 92% of the parents, and others, and 70% of pupils surveyed said they would like their School Street project to continue past the trial period.

> **"It's safer for the children, less pollution, obviously the residents are really happy. I honestly think it should stay."**
>
> Parent, St Clement's

2. Introduce more permanent features

In conjunction with the recommendation 1, we would also recommend that more permanent features should be introduced if the School Streets are made permanent. These permanent features would replace those used for the trial, including concertina barriers, which were only intended to be a temporary measure. Permanent features could include Street Design elements, planters and paintings, ANPR cameras (when these become an available option) and fixed barriers, for example.

3. Use alternative, or additional, means to measure air quality

It is difficult to accurately measure air quality at a local scale without long term sensors. Using a network of monitoring units positioned over a long period of time, rather than just diffusion tubes positioned for a short amount of time would give a more accurate results and therefore a better indication of changes to air quality. BCP council have now purchased a more accurate Aeroqual mobile device and Acoem AQ Mesh Unit static unit which will be better suited to more accurately measuring air quality for the project.

Learnings and Recommendations

Our Recommendations

4. Implement a self-nominating model for future School Streets

School Streets undoubtedly operate better when the school is fully on-board with the process, the closures run more smoothy and have more volunteers. Asking schools to self-nominate, and demonstrate some commitment to active travel prior to becoming a School Street may help alleviate some of the problems associated with lack of engagement. However, it is important that schools with more limited resources, who may have less capacity to self-nominate or demonstrate commitment to active travel, are still given the opportunity to become a School Street as these are often the schools who would benefit the most.

The School Streets officer and Bike It officer stewarding St Clement's School Street.

> **"I think every school should have a street like this right across BCP."**
>
> Mr Evans, Headteacher at St Michael's

5. Implement more School Streets across the local authority area.

A recent report commissioned by Mums for Lungs and environmental charity Possible concluded that a School Street is 'likely to be feasible' for around half of schools (44-50%) and 'may be feasible' for up to two-thirds (64-68%) (1)

We recommend that School Streets should be implemented at more schools across the local authority area. In the future, more ambitious projects could be considered, including closures on streets that would require two closure points, in order to maximise the impact of School Streets on the local authority area.

(1) *School Streets: Reducing children's exposure to toxic air and road danger — Possible (wearepossible.org)*

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We make it easier for people to walk and cycle

Strategic priorities

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School Streets

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