

School Eco-Club Climate Repair Activity: Overcoming Barriers To Cycling

AIM: To Increase School Cycling Rates

BACKGROUND

In the article “Twenty times more English children could cycle to school with better transport planning” (<https://theconversation.com/twenty-times-more-english-children-could-cycle-to-school-with-better-transport-planning-113082>) researchers state that only 2% of pupils in England cycle to school. The article describes how through modelling it could be found that if children in England cycled to school at the same rates as children in the Netherlands (for trips of the same distance and hilliness), more than two in five (40%) children would do so, and even in a best performing area like Cambridge the percentage of children cycling to school could still rise from 30% to 53%.

ACTIVITY

Collect data to calculate the cycling rate for your school. A simple way to obtain this percentage is to count the number of bicycles in the cycle racks each morning and compare this to the school population. By collecting a dataset from each class, like the one in the table below, the school will be able to understand how cycling rates and bike ownership, vary by year group and gender.

Class:

Year Group:

	Regularly cycles to school	Has not cycled to school but has access to a bike	Has not cycled to school but does not have access to a bike
Boys			
Girls			

Watch the Film “Beauty and the Bike”, which can be borrowed from the LALG Decarbonising Letchworth Group. Ask students to discuss the barriers to cycling, and their potential solutions, highlighted in the film. Follow this up with a discussion on what the students think are the barriers to cycling to their school and their ideas for how these barriers can be addressed.

Devise and implement a **Cycle To School Day**, collecting data to determine the cycling rate on this day. Stonehill school had a ‘Bling a Bike Day’ to encourage cycling and celebrate a refurbishment of their bike shelters, with a prize given for the most impressively dressed bike. Other ideas to encourage participation on a Cycle to School Day are

- a cycle circuit challenge that the children could ride during the day,
- a non-uniform day for anyone riding a bicycle

POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Hertfordshire County Council Active Travel Strategy included two targets “Percentage of all journeys under 1 mile in length by walking” and “Percentage of all journeys under 3 miles in length by cycling”. Extend your data collection so you can present cycling and walking rates by distance travelled (less than 1 mile, 1 mile to 3 miles and 3 miles and over).
- If identified barriers to cycling are because of the design of the local road network, ask students to write to Hertfordshire County Council and to their local councillors to explain how the road network could be improved to encourage cycling.