

Using the 'Action at School on Transport' module, the school is working to reduce car use, develop a Green Travel Plan and integrate travel and green issues across the curriculum.

Anne Wise is the Survey Manager at the Schools Health Education Unit.

This article comes from discussions with:

Anne Gough, Head of Year 8, and Ben Findel-Hawkins, Deputy-Head of Year 8 at Exmouth Community College, and Alison McGregor, Regional Development Manager at Global Action Plan.

Anne Wise

'Action at School' at Exmouth Community College




The main aim is to reduce the amount of cars used by staff and students in 2000 by 10%



Exmouth Community College is the first school in the country to take on the Global Action Plan (GAP) module *Action at School on Transport*. Their major aim is to reduce the amount of cars used by staff and students in 2000 by 10%, through the implementation offered by the framework within the GAP 'Action on Transport' module.

Aim

Exmouth's long-term aim is three-pronged:

-  to achieve a reduction in car use
-  to assimilate their work into a Green Travel Plan
-  to integrate travel and green issues across the school curriculum.

For many years Anne Gough, Head of Year 8, had been involved in running the cycle-safety courses at the College's feeder primary schools. These had taken place during the summer-term evenings with Year 6 students. Due to size of this task, it often meant that this training extended into the new school year as the children arrived as Year 7 students. Thus the opportunity to incorporate both road-safety and greener transport into the curriculum, was perfectly timed.

'TravelWise'

In 1997, Anne had been involved in a 'TravelWise' survey (see page 63) which was funded by Devon County Council and

supported by the Schools Health Education Unit.

Unknowingly at this stage, the data from the survey was to prove a key feature in *Action at School On Transport* launched by GAP's Regional Development Manager for the South West, Alison McGregor in 1999. Whilst setting up the early structure of the project, Ben Findel-Hawkins, Deputy-Head of Year 8, also became involved. Ben is a P.E. teacher who provided a natural link with the health aspect of modal change. Ben is now the lead teacher for the *Action at School on Transport* module and juggles the responsibilities of this role with his other year group and teaching commitments.

Step 1

The GAP project at Exmouth CC commenced during the month of May, 1999. GAP recommended a number of steps (see www.globalactionplan.org.uk/atschool.htm) for Exmouth CC to follow, as outlined below:

'Action at School' - Planning the campaign!

Term 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction ✓ Planning a meeting ✓ Selecting a Lead Teacher ✓ Appointment of Action Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up 'Action on Transport' ✓ Signing the letter of agreement ✓ Making the commitment ✓ Action Team training event 	
Term 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring ✓ Transport audit ✓ Journeys, pollution, health and fitness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking action ✓ Improve transport facilities ✓ Involving parents ✓ Reviewing transport decisions 	
Term 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum Activities ✓ Theme week and integration with curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment and Celebration ✓ Second transport audit ✓ Future plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicity ✓ Launching a campaign

The opportunity to incorporate both road-safety and greener transport into the curriculum, was perfectly timed.

Ben Findel-Hawkins was very grateful to key people within the College whose support was vital. These include: Vyv Game, Deputy Headteacher; Anne Gough, (then Head of Year 7); and Moira McDonald, Facilities Manager.

At this early stage of the project a written agreement was shared between GAP and the College, outlining how the two groups were going to work together, what GAP would do and what the College could do.

This formal approach served as a clear starting point and focussed at an early stage the thoughts of the various groups of people involved.

Step 2

During the summer term, 1999 the Action Team took part in a training day. This team had been appointed during the spring term 1999 and consisted of 25-30 children drawn from National Curriculum groups 7-11.

The main issue on the training day was the reduction in car use. This was achieved by a variety of activities, such as role play, games, simulation and videos:

"lots of good work, very lively and exhausting but all great...it is a crucial day because it really is the start of the programme in full..."

"lots of good work, very lively and exhausting but all great...it is a crucial day because it really is the start of the programme in full..."

The approach taken was to train the team about the transport issue globally, thus recognising from a wider perspective why their task locally, was so important.

The next step was to think about the local transport issues for the school, and what they perceived as the pertinent needs and issues. What became very apparent was the clear opinions held by them, specific to travel and safety issues!

Many of the activities during the day aimed to: get the team thinking about how they could communicate the message of reducing car travel; how to improve the use of bikes and public transport, and ways of communicating their findings to others.

The day concluded with the team designing their own campaign, with input from GAP about what would and wouldn't work, and to really listen to each others ideas of how they should reach their peers. Some of the day was also taken up with training the team how to carry out an audit.

Step 3

Having been trained as members of the Action Team, a key feature of the summer term's work was to carry out a travel audit,

consisting of counting students and staff at the school gates.

The results of this first audit are shown below:

Exmouth Community College Audit		
Transport	Average over a month	Percentage
Walking	1244	79.4
Cycling	30	2
Bus	64	4
Car	215	14
Train	4	0.3
Other	3	0.3
Total	1563	100

This audit data was further substantiated by the data collected from the Devon County Council *TravelWise* 1999 survey, developed by the Schools Health Education Unit (see page 63).

The next step was to look at ways of improving the transport facilities for the College, which was done through the district councils and planning authorities after the GAP audit and *TravelWise* 1999 survey.

Parents were also involved in the review of transport to school, through the GAP Action at Home scheme, parents evening and letters home outlining car-sharing information from Devon *TravelWise*.

Step 4

The College organised a launch day during November of the Autumn term. This well-planned day proved both enjoyable and successful.

It commenced with the 'cutting of the green ribbon' by the Manager of Exeter Football Club, the Action Team and a local councillor. Activities and displays consisted of:

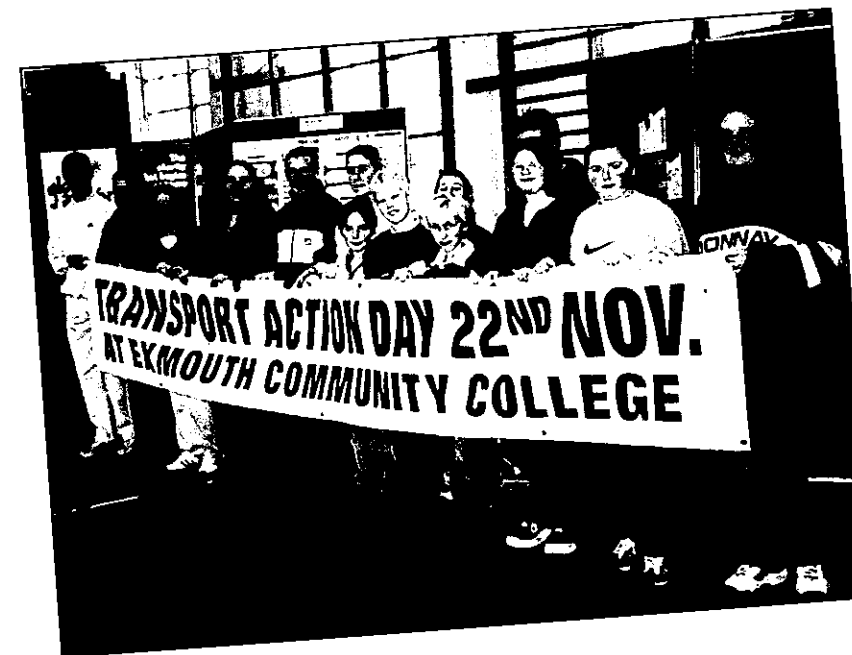
Bar the Car! Mufti Challenge

Students arrived in mufti if they had walked, cycled, bussed or caught the train to school or if they had car-shared.

Exhibition

Displays of students' work and their audit results. Devon CC, East Devon District Council, GAP, local bike shops and Stagecoach all contributed to this exhibition. This included an

opportunity for staff and students to pledge to travel less by car.



Advertising banner

Action team students (pictured above) organised a banner on the school footbridge which was clearly visible from the College and the road.



Posters about the Action at School

On Transport module were displayed around the school

Traci-Anna Harrison and Amy Mitchell (pictured above), supported by Terri Cooke (Art teacher), won a bus panel design competition. The aim was to design a panel to go on the side of local buses which promoted environmentally friendly forms of travel. They travelled to London, to the design company, and saw their design being made into a 11 metre

wide long vinyl print to be displayed on four buses that operate in the College area.

Opinion polling

At break and lunchtimes, students were interviewed to discover their opinions on the use of local roads by heavy lorries, position of school bike lockers, traffic calming and making walking to school safer. As an outcome of all the activities and initiatives, a select group from the Exmouth CC Action Team were invited in December 1999 to talk about their work at a House of Commons reception.

Step 5

As part of the multi-faceted approach to the project, the curriculum input has proved significant in terms of drawing the various approaches together. Within the College this has mainly been achieved through their personal development lessons, but has also included other subjects such as maths, english, geography, GNVQ Health and Social Care, drama and Art.

Although GAP don't provide their own curriculum materials, support is provided in the project pack in the form of a summary of ideas which are relevant to the national curriculum and other relevant organizations.

Future developmental work is envisaged within the area of citizenship. Strong links already exist as the GAP *Action on Transport* module encourages the students to have a voice. This is achieved by talking to local authorities and by taking on the responsibility of an action-based project with the intricacies of communication and team-work.

Next steps

Exmouth CC are now well-placed to achieve their long-term goals as outlined at the start of this article. The next steps important to the successful culmination of this project for the College are:

- ✦ To encourage greater cycle use by the students, the College is seeking to acquire funding from local businesses for sophisticated cycle 'sheds'
- ✦ Further development of the planned local safe bike routes, in which the College forms the hub to the network
- ✦ The repeat of the audit to review one year on, the forms of transport used to get to Exmouth CC
- ✦ To 'spiral' the use of curriculum materials into Key Stage 4.