News from the Unit

Life at the Unit is particularly hectic at the moment with many surveys around the country "on the go", resulting in newly handed and labeled stacks of questionnaires being moved around the office as they are processed by Beryl, and her most efficient workers.

Some of the current surveys in progress are the Isle of Wight, Glasgow and East Anglia. Anne has had many requests for additional services from these areas, and consequently has been busy preparing reports such as the School Report and the Community Profile Service. She has also finished a draft report for the Government's Primary Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire Survey which took place last summer, with 600 Year 5 pupils from the Island involved. David and John have been closely involved with the Cornwell Health Authority, continuing the work on the smoking project. The questionnaire has been used across all year groups in some secondary schools to find out such things as why it is that the youngsters smoke at all, and who encouraged them to try their first cigarette.

David read that health educators should be able to "promote and sustain a realistic vision for optimising the health and social well-being of all individuals, groups and communities", He welcomes suggestions on both the back of a postcard please.

James has been helping Anne produce an updated version of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire support materials, as well as getting Toothbrushing in Adolescence ready for the printers. In March Tracy gave birth to a bouncing baby girl, Charlotte, and both are flourishing. We look forward to her rejoining the team later in the year.

S.F.

Some Unit publications...

Very Young People in 1992-1993 £9.50
- Our first Primary report, with results from 7,852 very young people between the ages of 8 and 12, who completed Version 4 of our Primary Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire.

Young People in 1993 £25.00
- The latest of our annual reports, with results from 29,074 young people between the ages of 11 and 16, who completed Version 16 of the Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire.

Video pack: 'The Extra Class' £14.68
- This was developed to support alcohol education in secondary schools. The video included depicts a teenage party, and the materials include background information, suggestions for its use, worksheet masters and overhead transparencies. Price includes VAT.

Schoolchildren and drugs in 1987 £2.50
- The use of illegal drugs, based on the reported behaviour of 18,014 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16, is described and discussed.

Alcohol Education in Schools £15.00
- A report on current alcohol education practice in a nationwide sample of secondary schools, with an evaluation of some widely-used resources and recommendations for good practice.

Young People into the Nineties £6.00
(In 9 books: £4.25 for the set as issued)
- The survey of the decade: a study of 125,093 young people aged 11-16, over the period 1984-1990.

These prices include postage and packing.

Follow the safe yellow footprints
Pauline Maskell: What the girls in our school told us about period problems
John Balding on the latest Young People survey
The Unit: Welcome to a bouncing baby girl

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vocated as a 'last-resort' option to be pursued only when it can be shown that self-help methods were inadequate. This involves presenting a detailed case for presentation to the Response Team of professionals attached to the project.

The following examples of how schools reacted to their own 'Safe Journeys' surveys, as well as the information and advice in the action pack, are just some that have been reported back from the current total of 350 primary and secondary schools that have expressed interest in the scheme.

**Road safety in Social Education**

One of the original pilot schools, Paignton College, created an action group to include a country planning officer, a school crossing warden, an expert in school transport and pupils from the college. The group met twice a term, and Year 10 pupils, as part of their Social Education programme, wrote and conducted their own survey of all the pupils in the college. They drew recommended routes to school on a large-scale map of the area, canvassed parents for their views on local danger-spots via a letter and questionnaire, and used the information to inform new parents and pupils.

**Hill start**

At Ford Primary School, Plymouth, a number of minor engineering measures helped to ease traffic problems on the hill outside the school. Furthermore, the comments made by children during the survey were valuable in themselves as a stimulus for further discussion and understanding.

**School-gate initiative**

At Hayes Road Primary School, Paignton, the children's road safety awareness was raised both by completing the questionnaire and by seeing changes taking place in the environment and increased police presence as a direct result of their comments. A working group at the school met to discuss the survey findings and ways in which parents and children alike could become involved in adopting safer school-gate behaviour. A number of minor engineering works were undertaken on the basis of the survey findings.

**Yellow feet**

The Road Safety Unit has been promoting the use of yellow footsteps painted on the pavement to guide youngsters and their parents to the safest crossing-point on roads near a school. Forchett Cross Primary, Barnstaple, which has already benefited from the introduction of traffic-calming, is planning to use yellow footsteps to lead pupils towards the school crossing patrol. It will conduct a small survey before and after the introduction of the scheme to try to measure its influence on pupils' movements.

**Walk, don’t drive! (1)**

Jane Edmund, Headteacher at Redhills Combined School, Exeter, in addition to promoting her 'Walk to School' idea (page 4), reports on how her school has made Safer Journeys a priority topic. Activities include a refresher minibus training course for teachers, road safety
games and activities for the reception class, design of protective clothing and road signs, road accident statistics, and many other aspects across the curriculum.

A road safety week
Foxhole Infants School, Paignton, involved pupils and parents in this event. It included a visit from the local community policeman, a road safety drama, a tour around an ambulance by courtesy of the father of one of the children, and first aid procedures. A Response Team is now looking at the possibility of signing the roads around the school.

Walk, don't drive! (2)
Mike Steeman, the Headteacher of Hazeldown Primary, Teignmouth, has been aware for a long time of the difficulties caused by parents parking outside a school of over 400 pupils with only six parking spaces for staff! He is going to try a 'Walk to School Day', hoping that more parents will walk their children to school, offering an opportunity for good road safety training and less congestion outside school.

Using the survey in school
The awareness raised by completing the questionnaire and any resulting safety schemes has given the topic of 'road safety' an increased relevance and interest to pupils.

At Stoke Damerel Community College, Plymouth, road safety is an integral part of the PSE programme. The Year 7 pupils have been very enthusiastic about the topic, particularly when they have completed traffic surveys, accident reports and role-plays.

At St Thomas High School, Exeter, following the project — which led to several improvements in the busy road serving the school — staff decided to use these "pupil-owned" road safety improvements to phase more structured road safety education into the curriculum. This was done in modular form through the Social, Physical and Community Education course. In Years 8 and 9 the pupils select a hypothesis which involves the study of traffic or related topics, for example pollution, car parking or public transport. In Year 10, pupils follow a road safety module based on The Collector accident video and a by-pass simulation which deals with more general issues of road building and its impact on the environment.

I hope that this brief account of our work and achievements so far will encourage readers in other parts of the country to take a more enlightened attitude towards this neglected but potentially very useful and important part of the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools.

The Safer Journeys project can have useful spin-off in school. These aspects of road safety could support work across the curriculum.

Pupils at Redhill Combined School, Exeter, have used local accident data in their computer to strengthen work in Maths and Information Technology.

Geography
People who help us
Road works survey
Reconnaissance of road signs
Journey routes
Temperature and climate
Types of transport
Busy & quiet roads
Safe places to cross
Local roads

History
Development and location of towns and schools

Maths
Plan a safe route

Direction

Comparison of speeds

Probabilities, ratio

Graph of types of bicycles, cars, etc.

Science

Traffic sounds

Reflective and fluorescent materials

Senses

Study accident data

Light & dark

Wet & dry surfaces

Grip and friction

Experiments on restraints

Properties of road materials

English

Study emergency services

Describe a bicycle ride

Discussion on rules

Discuss need for seatbelts

Describe safe places to play in

Art

Tyre and wheel patterns

Safety posters

Health Education (Guidance 5)

Green Cross Code

Bicycle maintenance

Simple first aid

Peer pressure

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