

Step 2: Environmental Review

The environmental review involved assessing what the travel situation was like in St. Michael's at the beginning of the programme. This step helps establish what modes of transport should be promoted in the school. The main activities carried out were:

Travel Survey

A hands-up travel survey was conducted by the school's dedicated Green-Schools Travel officer in two of our classrooms and to our staff to see how people travelled to and from St. Michael's. The results showed that almost 68% of students travelled to school by car making it by far the most common mode. The survey showed that 16% travelled by bus, 12% carpooled for the majority of the week and only 2% walked to school and 2% cycled to school. From these results it was decided that the school should try to focus on promoting other methods of transport. Perhaps more car-pooling or looking into expanding the bus route and/or bus usage. Cycling, scooting and park 'n' stride strategies were also discussed too.

Mapping

This was done early on in our Travel Theme. It was done in conjunction with all school pupils, our committee and our Travel Officer. It is used to identify where students live and how far the commute to St. Michael's. We drew a large map of the school and its catchment area. The pupils then pinned their addresses on the map to identify their distance from the school and the route they take. This map can be used to identify clusters of families to encourage car-pooling or to promote the use of the bus.

Walkability Audit

A walkability audit was also carried out by the committee accompanied by their Green-Schools Travel Officer from the school along the Corcaghan Road to St. Michael's Church. The Green Committee investigated how safe it was for students to walk, scoot or cycle to school. The committee was not surprised to find there is no infrastructure to help people walk, scoot or cycle to school. The road along St. Michael's NS is very busy with lots of heavy duty trucks regularly on it and the majority of traffic do not adhere to the speed zone which is 50kph.

The committee noted the infrastructure surrounding the school. There were positives such as a footpaths opposite the school (for a short distance), traffic calming area of 50kph going towards both directions of the school with flashing lights (one which was not functioning properly). The committee noted some negatives such as non-compliance of the speed zone, lack of pedestrian crossing and insufficient footpaths and zero cycling lanes. Suitable park 'n' stride locations were not visible. The committee are now in the process of doing up a walkability audit report to send to the Monaghan County Council to request changes to make sustainable travel safer to our school.

Traffic Count Survey

The committee also carried out a traffic count survey on the main road in front of the school. This was done to assess: how busy the road was, what types of vehicles pass, driver behaviour and car occupancy. It was noted that the road outside the school was extremely busy with constant traffic flow as well as a high level of trucks. Due to this and having no footpaths or cycling lanes available, it was decided that walking, scooting or cycling to St. Michael's would not be good modes of transport to promote in our school.

The committee made a number of recommendations to increase safety at the school gate. It was also recommended that the speed limit outside school be lowered to 30kph in accordance with the Love 30 campaign.

Speed Survey

A speed survey was due to take place in conjunction with the Travel Officer and our committee in March 2020 but due to the onset of the Covid-19 this had to be postponed. The Monaghan County Council did a speed survey in August 2020 and you can see the findings in the attached report.