



Active Sustainable Travel and Road Safety

Newsletter

Autumn 2025

Welcome

Welcome to your A*STARS newsletter! In this edition we're celebrating the incredible work of the A*STARS programme alongside our schools, in championing active travel, improving road safety and making school journeys more sustainable. A*STARS continues to make a real difference—helping children travel more actively, safely and sustainably, and supporting healthier, greener communities across Walsall.

A*STARS Sheriff Training – Inspiring Road Safety Leaders



On Thursday 18th September, Manor Farm Community Centre was buzzing with excitement as enthusiastic children from across the borough took part in our annual A*STARS Sheriff Training Event.

The morning was all about helping our new A*STARS sheriffs understand their important role in promoting safe and active travel within their schools. A*STARS sheriffs are pupils from year 4 and 5 who are designated to help promote A*STARS within their schools to their peers.

Children were introduced to the A*STARS programme, explored their very own sheriff webpages, and learned more about what it means to be a leader and role model in their school communities whilst raising awareness of active travel. Sessions focused on how to set up and manage competitions, deliver assemblies, create engaging notice boards, and promote key messages around road safety and sustainable travel.



It was a fantastic start to the year, and we're proud to see such eager Sheriffs ready to make a positive difference.



Walsall Council

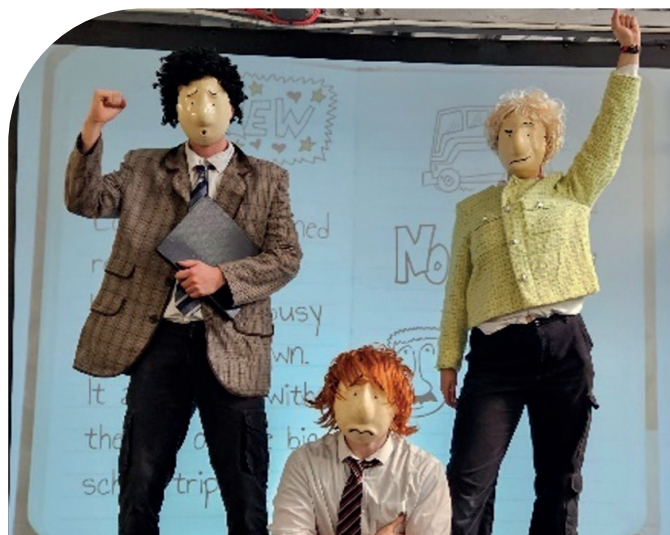
Streetwise – Evaluation reports

Walsall Council worked in partnership with Performance in Education to deliver an engaging pedestrian safety programme for Year 7 pupils with 1878 students participating. Aligned with the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum, the programme combined a live performance with an interactive workshop, supported by six follow-up lesson resources for classroom use.

The project helped pupils recognise everyday road risks, particularly on familiar journeys such as travelling to and from school, and encouraged safer decision-making in the face of peer pressure. It also promoted positive attitudes towards walking and cycling, appropriate use of crossings and patrols, and confidence in applying road safety knowledge independently. The programme aimed to leave a lasting impact by equipping pupils with practical strategies they can use on their daily routes.

An evaluation was conducted with a sample of the students attending the performances.

- **97%** said the project made them think about the dangers of poor road safety.
- **99%** are more aware of how young people get hurt on roads.
- **98%** said the project showed how forgetting to pay attention on roads can put their safety at risk.
- **99%** understand more about which actions would put them in danger.
- **100%** said the project influenced their thinking.
- **100%** identified actions they would take to stay in the future.



Some student responses we had to the performance included.

“The whole “how many times” shows the amount of casualties that happen due to recklessness.”

Bloxwich Academy

“Made me realise how dangerous the road is.”

West Walsall E-ACT Academy

“Road safety is really important, and we should not mess around.”

Barr Beacon School

“Always pay attention to the road. Don’t mess about when you’re next to the road. Use the designated traffic safety features.”

Shire Oak Academy

“Always look both ways. Take extra seconds to look so it doesn’t lead to a year or more of consequences.”

The Streetly Academy

A*STARS Travel Data – Key Highlights

This year’s A*STARS travel data shows continued progress in reducing car use for school journeys across Walsall. Locally, car usage has **fallen by a further 2%** compared to last year, outperforming the national picture where levels have remained unchanged. Walsall also compares very favourably with national data for active travel, with a **16% higher** rate of pupils walking to school. These results reflect the sustained commitment of schools and the A*STARS programme in promoting active, sustainable, and safer travel choices for children and young people across the borough.

Car

Walsall
29%



National
37%

Active Travel

Walsall
64%



National
46%

Safer Routes to School

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programme operates across A*STARS schools to make walking, cycling and wheeling to school safer, healthier and more sustainable. The programme aims to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality around school gates and increase physical activity for children. Schools submit any requests via their A*STARS action plan which are then considered and ranked by our engineering team. Schools selected for the programme work in close partnership with the council to co-design practical, locally appropriate improvements. These may include safer crossings and junctions, traffic-calming measures, pavement protection and street greening. Pupils, staff, parents and local residents are actively involved to ensure solutions reflect each school's individual context, needs and priorities.

Recent work at Rowley View Nursery addressed issues with pavement parking that were affecting families' ability to cross safely. Following recommendations from the Road Safety team and cabinet approval, bollards and guard railings were installed. These measures have already had a positive impact and are supporting more families to choose active travel to and from school.



Before and after our SRTS scheme at Rowley View Nursery.

Walsall Schools step up for Move More Month



Christ Church School



Palfrey Junior School

In October, our A*STARS schools took part in Move More Month, an initiative designed to encourage children and their families to adopt more active and sustainable journeys to school. Throughout the month, pupils were encouraged to walk, cycle, scoot, or use park and stride as their primary mode of travel. This year's campaign included a class-based challenge, where pupils collected a leaf for each day they travelled actively to school. These leaves were added to a provided tree trunk, resulting in a "forest" display that visually showcased each school's collective participation and commitment to active travel.

To further incentivise engagement, children who completed active journeys for the full 15 days were entered into a prize draw. The initiative successfully promoted healthier lifestyles, reduced car use around school gates, and reinforced the importance of sustainable travel choices within the school community.



Bikeability Learn to Ride Programme

Bikeability Learn to Ride is funded by the Department for Education and delivered as part of the A*STARS programme, designed to help children develop the skills needed to ride a bicycle safely and confidently. Delivered by fully trained instructors, the sessions focus on balance, control, and core cycling skills within a safe and supportive environment.

The programme plays an important role in building children's confidence and encouraging healthy, active travel habits from an early age. It also provides a strong foundation for progression to on-road Bikeability training in later years.

This academic year, the programme has supported Year 3 children, helping to increase participation in cycling and promote long-term sustainable travel choices.

Nature Explorer Challenge – 15 Things to Do in Walsall

Discover Walsall with the Nature Explorer Challenge!

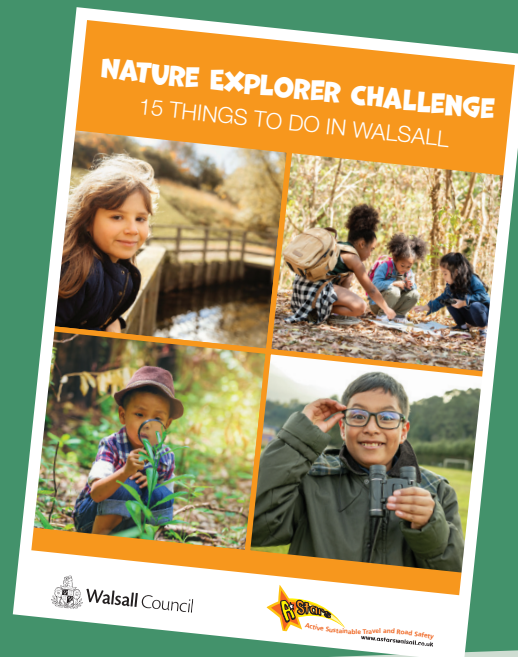
We're excited to share our brand new **Nature Explorer Challenge: 15 Things to Do in Walsall**, created by Walsall Council's A*STARS and Public Health teams. This fun, family friendly activity aims to get children exploring the outdoors, discovering local green spaces, and enjoying simple nature based challenges across the borough.

Each pupil will receive a leaflet to complete over the featuring **15 activities**, including:

- Finding different types of leaves
- Creating wild art
- Cloud watching
- Feeding the ducks safely
- Taking a winter walk
- Flying a kite

The booklet also includes a **QR code** linking families to an online page on the A*STARS website with more information and ideas for where to explore locally.

As children tick off each activity, they will build confidence, healthy habits, and a stronger connection to their local community – all while having fun outdoors.



Contact the A*STARS Team

Call: 01922 65 4680 or **email:** astars@walsall.gov.uk

