Case Study

After School Cycle Club: Banchory

Where: Banchory Primary School.

Issues they face: With a large school roll, providing the right support for each pupil when delivering cycle training can be challenging.

What they did: Banchory Primary are in their second year of running an after school cycle program aimed at Primary Five aged pupils. This is run as the Bikeability level 1 program. The aim is to teach pupils essential bike skills, in a playground environment so they are ready to learn rules of the road in an on road environment during their primary sixth year.

As part of Cycling Scotland’s new cycling standards, which has renamed the existing Cycling Proficiency as Bikeability, schools are being encouraged to have a look at the three levels of training available.

Bikeability level 2 is what schools currently provide to pupils and consists of on road cycle training. Nationally there is mixed picture where some schools do and others do not deliver on road cycle training but the majority of schools in Aberdeenshire have always delivered training on an on-road environment. Traditionally this is delivered to primary 6 aged pupils, but smaller schools do group years together.

Level 1 is usually aimed at primary 5 pupils although can be delivered to any age group. Although not an essential part of the cycle training it does help provide pupils with the bike skills required to tackle an on road environment. This becomes very useful within larger schools when your groups can consist of 30-40 pupils.

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The benefit of running a course like this is it helps identify which pupils need that extra support before taking them on-road. Banchory have 37 primary five pupils taking part in their afterschool cycle program which takes place within the playground and consists of cycle games to work on their cycling skills. This includes focusing on gears, braking, balancing and control, manoeuvring and signalling.

These are all delivered in a fun way through games such as; relay on bikes; who can cycle the slowest (without stopping or putting your feet down); obstacle course – cycling around cones, under bars and over small ramps.

The pupils at Banchory Primary school are all very keen to be involved in this program, with one pupil commenting, “I really enjoy it, it is great fun and gives me more confidence to cycle. It would be great to encourage other schools to run this course.”

The program relies on the commitment and enthusiasm of staff at the school but could be run by volunteers, and is a great program to help pupils develop their cycle skills as well as encouraging them to be more active.

More information on Level 1 or for free resources, contact Cycling Scotland on contactus@bikeability.org.uk