

GUARDIAN ANGEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CUTS CONGESTION WITH BURY'S FIRST EVER SCHOOL STREET



Guardian Angels Primary School has been involved in [WOW - our walk to school challenge](#) since September 2021. An initial survey prior to the launch of WOW, showed 66% of pupils normally travelled to school by car, with only 30% of pupils normally walking/wheeling to school. The school's participation in WOW to date shows positive impact with a 15% increase in active journeys to school.

Guardian Angels Primary School was struggling with heavy traffic congestion at peak times, particularly around the Melrose Avenue entrance. Our Living Streets Project Coordinator, Dan O'Connell, met with Headteacher, Damian Arthur, to find out how we could help.



We discovered that the school had requested a plan to establish a [School Street](#) to tackle these congestion issues with Bury Council and needed our support in making suggestions for a safer walking environment, as well as working with the local community to bring about change. School Streets schemes open places up to people walking or cycling – closing the road off to motor vehicles and encouraging more active travel to school.

Head teacher, Damian Arthur, said: “Melrose Avenue leads directly up to the school gates and is a cul-de-sac. There have been near misses with children and occasional bumps and scrapes with residents’ cars as parents turn round in the tight space right next to the main school gates. The idea for a School Street has been around for more than a year and we wanted to include all parties, particularly our neighbours who live close to the school, so everyone was supportive of the scheme. Having the area outside the school vehicle-free is

not only safer, it means the air is cleaner and it also supports our drive for more children to walk to school.”

Firstly, we enlisted a group of pupils, parents, local residents and school staff to carry out a School Route Audit around the local streets. The audit allows people who use the streets every day to have their say on what could be done to improve them. We then made a series of recommendations such as a repainting yellow zig-zags, providing litter bins and installing more dropped kerbs and tactile paving for accessibility needs.



Part of the School Route Audit included identifying and establishing four Park and Stride locations. We discovered that although 43% of pupils live within a 10–15-minute door-to-door walk of school, a significant 57% of pupils live beyond this boundary. The Park and Stride locations provide alternative parking arrangements for those that travel some distance to school, as well as providing an alternative place for traffic to filter to when the School Street is implemented.

Dan O’Connell, Project Coordinator, Living Streets said: “We’re thoroughly enjoying working with Guardian Angels Primary School to run WOW and promote the health, social and environmental benefits that come from walking to school. We know that unsafe speeds, pavement parking and road danger can put families off walking to school. This new School Street will remove those barriers, making it easier, safer and more attractive for even more pupils and their families to choose to walk.”



Through the wonderful support of TfGM and Bury Council the School Street was implemented and launched on 16 January 2023 along Melrose Avenue. Upon launch, over 20 cars were using the Park and Stride site on Newbold Street alone. We also successfully applied to TfGM’s Cycle Parking Grant scheme and acquired storage facilities for those who would like to scoot and cycle to school.

Councillor Alan Quinn, cabinet member for the environment, climate change and operations, said: “School Streets cut traffic and congestion outside schools, which will help to keep our children safe. The air quality will also improve thanks to the reduction in engines idling during busy drop-off and pick-up times.”

Greater Manchester’s Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey said: “A School Street’s main function is to improve the safety of children as they head to and go home from school. With Vision Zero, a key recommendation within my recent Refresh the Mission report, local interventions like this make a significant contribution to reducing road danger.

Whether it's pavement parking, struggling to cross the road due to the volume of vehicle traffic or speeding drivers, many parents tell me it just doesn't feel safe to head to school on foot or allow older children to go alone. It's great to see that Bury are trialling this School Street, with the park and stride locations still facilitating those who live outside walking distance of their school or who need to drive somewhere else after dropping off. Resident access is unaffected by these measures and in other areas School Street measures are welcomed by residents who are often affected by people blocking their normal access route."