Making cycling safer for thousands of school children

Thousands of Cumbrian schoolchildren are to get specialist training in how to ride their bikes safely over the next three years.

Cumbria County Council has secured £600,000 of funding from the Department for Transport to continue delivering Bikeability training to primary and secondary school pupils up until 2020.

The successful joint bid by the county council and partner Eden Valley Sports Partnership means thousands of primary school pupils in Cumbria will get access to free cycle training over the coming three years.

In total, approximately 11,000 children in Years 5 & 6 (aged 9-11) will receive Bikeability Level 2 training in how to ride their bikes safely on roads and cycle lanes, helping them start cycling to school. In addition, 1,000 children in Year 4 will get a basic Level 1 playground training session each year.

More advanced Level 3 cycle training will be made available to approximately 200 secondary school Year 7/8 students each year, helping them plan and make independent cycling journeys on busier roads.

Cumbria County Council has organised Bikeability training with DfT funding support for more than 30,000 pupils over the past ten years. Training is currently delivered by Cyclewise and Eden Valley Sports Partnership.

Councillor Keith Little, Cumbria County Council Cabinet member for Road Safety, said: “Bikeability is essentially cycling proficiency training for the 21st Century, helping young people improve their cycling and road awareness skills. The county council has a strong track record of delivering cycle training in schools with our partners and I’m delighted we have secured DfT funding to support this excellent work for a further three years.”
Councillor Clare Feeney-Johnson, Cumbria County Council Cabinet member for Schools and Learning, said: “Cycling is becoming increasingly popular and it’s a great way for young people to be active and stay healthy as well as being good for the environment. Bikeability training teaches essential cycling and road safety skills, and I am very pleased this training will continue to be delivered in Cumbrian schools.”

A picture of children taking part in a Bikeability training session is available to download from the link below.

Schools in Cumbria value Bikeability training:

Amanda Williams, of South Walney Junior School, said: “We really value the importance of Bikeability training and believe the children are more aware of road safety as a result.”

Karen Lowther, Deputy Head, Newlaithes Junior School, Carlisle, said: “The children once again benefitted enormously from the training and advice they received and this will allow them to carry out their cycling awareness much more proficiently.”

Steve Jackson, Teacher at Low Furness CE Primary School, said: “The sessions were very well organised utilising our local environment. Children really enjoyed the course and it is obvious that their skills and general safety awareness has improved. Children also have a very positive attitude to cycling and increasingly count it as one of their hobbies. We look forward to future sessions in years to come.”

Bikeability was developed by more than 20 professional organisations, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, and is supported by cross-Government departments including the Department for Transport and Department of Health.

Two million young people nationally have received Bikeability training since its launch almost ten years ago.

For further information contact Cumbria County Council's communications team on 01228 221008 or 226601.