



THE ASSOCIATION OF BIKEABILITY SCHEMES

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Bikeability Cycle Training on the National Schools Curriculum

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Introduction

We welcome this opportunity to suggest that Bikeability cycle training is included in the National Curriculum. In this document we give an overview of the importance of cycling for young people. We will suggest where it fits in the school's curriculum and offer some guidance as to appropriate language describing Bikeability outcomes in line with the Department for Education's draft National Curriculum in England document.

1. What is The Association of Bikeability Schemes (TABS)?

TABS is a Community Interest Company whose aims, in line with the aims of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Bikeability Scheme¹, are to get more people making trips by bike, more often and more safely. Working with relevant government agencies and public bodies TABS will act to ensure the delivery of high quality cycle training to the National Standard for cycle training.

2. Why should young people be encouraged to cycle?

Young people think cycling is an exciting and fun form of physical activity². This matters when levels of physical activity are falling and obesity is rising among children, contributing to widening health inequalities and increasing the risk of chronic health conditions later in life. In 2008, only 32% of boys and 24% of girls achieved the UK Chief Medical Officers' recommended minimum level of daily physical activity: 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity.^{3, 4} Ridler et al (2013) have shown that in 2011/12, 21% of boys and 18% of girls in Year 6 were obese, and obesity prevalence has increased steadily since the National Child Measurement Programme began in 2006.⁵ Physical activity is of central importance to children's health; we also know it improves educational performance,⁶ alleviates common mental health disorders,⁷ and enhances well-being. It is because

¹ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/>

² Ipsos MORI, Research to explore perceptions and experiences of Bikeability training amongst parents and children. London: Ipsos MORI, 2010.

³ Start Active, Stay Active: a report on physical activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers (2011),

⁴ Health Survey for England 2008: Focus on physical activity and fitness (Loughborough University, February 2010).

⁵ Ridler C, Dinsdale H, Rutter H., National Child Measurement Programme: Changes in children's body mass index between 2006/07 and 2011/12. Oxford: National Obesity Observatory, 2013.

⁶ See Singh et al, 'Physical Activity and Performance at School: A Systematic Review of the Literature Including a Methodological Quality Assessment', *Archive of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 166, 2012

⁷ See Saxena, S., Ommeren, C. K. and T. P. Armstrong, 'Mental health benefits of physical activity', *Journal of Mental Health*, 14:5, 2005.

many children in England do not enjoy these benefits that we think cycle training should be in the National Curriculum.

Despite growing interest in cycling following the 2012 Tour de France and Olympic Games, bicycle travel mode shares remain well behind motorised travel for both adults and children. The latest National Travel Survey data (for 2011) show trips made by car accounted for almost two thirds of all trips and four fifths of the distances travelled in Great Britain, compared to just 2% and 1%, respectively, for cycling.⁸ Importantly, more than three quarters of primary school pupils and half of secondary school pupils are driven short distances (between two and five miles) to school each day, while hardly any primary school pupils and only 5% of secondary school pupils cycle to school.

Recognising the scale of the challenge to public health presented by physical inactivity and the obesity epidemic, in November 2012 the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued guidance recommending schools promote cycling as an enjoyable form of personal transport and recreation. Central to its recommendations for schools was that all children should do Bikeability.

3. What is Bikeability⁹?

Bikeability/National Standard cycle training is aimed to give young people the skills and confidence to make trips by bicycle and to share the roads with other road users with minimum risk.

The Bikeability syllabus is divided into 3 levels. Badges and certificates are awarded on completion of each level. Levels 1 and 2 are currently taught at Key Stage 2, to years 5 and 6 where young people are able grasp the key principles and able to judge speed and distance of vehicles on the roads. Level 3 is taught at Key Stage 3 up to year 9.

Level 1: The young people learn how control their bike and check that it is roadworthy. They also learn how to dress appropriately for cycling. By the end of level 1 a person will be able to ride confidently off road and share space with pedestrians and other cyclists.

Level 2: This takes place on real roads and under realistic conditions. Training takes place on roads that the young people would use to ride to school. Young people learn how to share these roads with drivers, to communicate and to cooperate with other road users. They also learn elements of the Highway Code that are relevant to cycling (and which would give them a head start if they go on to learn how to drive). On completion of this level they should have the skills to ride on road to school or to the shops.

Level 3: This covers more complex road environments such as multi-lane roads, roundabouts and major traffic light controlled junctions. People learn how to share busy roads where people may move at faster speeds. They learn how to minimise risk when riding on roads with Lorries and in bus lanes. On completion of level 3 a rider will be able to use any road where cycling is allowed.

Bikeability training is outcome based which means that people progress at their own pace based on ongoing assessment by instructors. Most groups of young people are able to complete levels 1 and 2 of the syllabus in around 8 hours.

⁸ See Fox, K. R., 'The influence of physical activity on mental well-being', Public Health Nutrition, 2(3a), 1999.

⁹ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/what-is-bikeability/>

4. Who teaches Bikeability and how is the quality of training assured?

Bikeability is taught by National Standard Instructors (NSIs) trained by Instructor Training Organisations (ITOs) over a 4-day course and followed up with Post Course Assessments. ITOs are also responsible for the continued professional development of instructors.

There are a variety of Bikeability schemes some of which are Local Authorities, private companies, Charities, CICs, Cooperatives and some Schools. The Department for Transport together with TABS have set up a system of Quality Assurance¹⁰ which ensures high quality training is delivered with minimum risk. It is expected that all schemes will have had a quality assurance visit over the next 3 years.

5. How effective is Bikeability in encouraging cycling?

It is common sense to assume that where young people are taught an activity in a fun engaging manner and given the skills to perform that activity better they are more likely to take up that activity. This is the case with cycling though there are additional factors which dictate to what extent a young person takes up cycling after training, such as parents' perception of risk, the physical environment, encouragement by and facilities at the school etc.

A survey by TfL and Cycle Training UK¹¹, showed that adults after cycle training, showed a significant increase in the number of trips they took and increased distance travelled.

In 2010, an Ipsos MORI survey of children in years 5 and 6 and their parents showed that children who had done Bikeability were more likely than other children to cycle at least once a week and to always or sometimes cycle on the road, and their parents had greater confidence in their cycling ability.

In a more recent survey specifically looking at Bikeability training (March 2012) by the DfT¹² found that 'Where there is a history of delivering cycle training (in feeder primary schools) this coincides with a higher proportion of children cycling to secondary school. In schools where pupils have not received any training this is matched by a decline in the mode share of cycling for the journey to school.' '...the greatest increases in the level of cycling to secondary school coincide with a history of funded Bikeability training places. Local authorities that have received funding for Bikeability training for over four years have on average also experienced an increase in the proportion of 11-15 year olds cycling to secondary school by over 100%. Local authorities that are new to Bikeability or have yet to take Bikeability up (zero - two years Bikeability training) have an average increase of around 40%.'

The evidence therefore shows that Bikeability does encourage young people to cycle, and cycling more increases physical activity

6. Why should Bikeability be on the National Schools Curriculum?

At present Bikeability is funded through a DfT grant. This funding can be drawn down by Local Authorities and School Games Organisers. There is no obligation by school or Local Authorities to take up this funding and to offer training to pupils. Around a half of children do not have access to training for a variety of reasons. Some Local Authorities do not take part in the scheme, many schools do not engage with the scheme even where the LA offers training. Parents may not allow or

¹⁰ http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/wp-content/uploads/Bikeability-Quality-Assurance-System-Overview_August-2012_final_web.pdf

¹¹ <http://www.cycletraining.co.uk/library/website/resources/lib0000000289.pdf>

¹² http://www.dft.gov.uk/bikeability/wp-content/uploads/120320_Cycling_to_School_Bikeability_Data_Report_v_final.pdf

encourage their children to take part. There may be cultural and economic factors that also influence whether a pupil is allowed to take part in Bikeability.

Having Bikeability on the School's Curriculum would ensure a much higher uptake of training and help schools and parents understand how important it is for young people to develop the skills and confidence to cycle for the reasons outlined above.

7. Where would cycling/Bikeability fit on the National School's Curriculum?

Cycling is a life skill. It is much more than a sport. It is possible to weave cycling into many subjects across the curriculum. There are links to Citizenship (managing a budget and sustainable living), PSHE, The History and Geography syllabus. There are references to cycling in literature and links to Maths (measuring time and distance, gear ratios, frame geometry etc.). These links can be developed and strengthened over time.

A more simple approach would be for the status of Bikeability to be similar to that of swimming in the curriculum. Bikeability Level 1 could be delivered at either KS1 or KS2. Bikeability Level 2 at KS2 or KS3 and Bikeability Level 3 at KS3 and KS4.

Here are our recommendations as to how Bikeability/cycling could fit in the PE Curriculum:

Cycling and cycle safety

All schools must provide Bikeability cycle training Level 1 and level 2 by the end of Key Stage 2. Bikeability Level 1 can be provided at Key Stage 1. Bikeability Level 3 can be provided at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4.

In particular, pupils must be taught to:

- control a bicycle off road completing all compulsory Bikeability Level 1 outcomes
- use a variety of on-road infrastructure completing all compulsory level 2 Bikeability outcomes
- understand elements of the highway code relevant to cycling

Pupils may be taught to:

- Use more complex infrastructure at Bikeability Level 3

8. Thank you

Thank you for reading our submission to the National Curriculum review. We are sure that you will agree with us that being confident to choose to cycle can revolutionise a young person's life, health, independence and well being, and that by having Bikeability on the school's Curriculum all young people will have access to this crucial life skill.

David Dansky and Michael Frearson
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