

Case Study: Uniting the Active Travel Movement

How Two Mile Ash School is
Changing the Culture of
Movement in Milton Keynes



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The Starting Point: A Safety and Health Wake Up Call

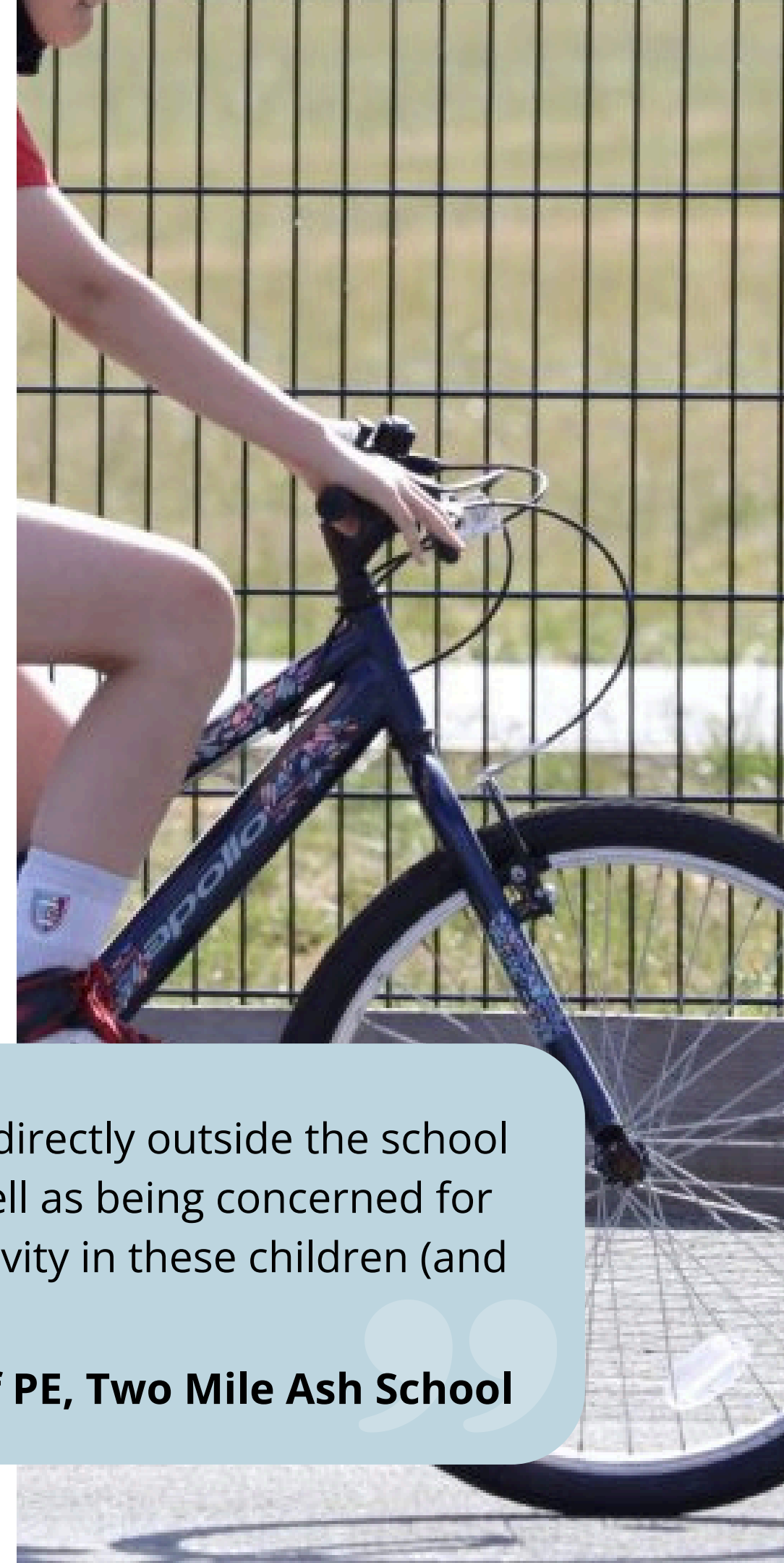
In 2021, Two Mile Ash School was facing persistent issues that many schools across Milton Keynes experience:

- Congestion and safety concerns at morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up
- High levels of inactivity among pupils and families
- Limited culture of active travel in everyday school life

Safety concerns around children exiting cars and crossing busy roads were significant. At the same time, inactivity levels presented a wider health challenge, impacting both physical and mental wellbeing. The school recognised that tackling these issues required a cultural shift towards active travel.

"When I joined Two Mile Ash School in 2021 I was shocked by the high levels of congestion directly outside the school caused by parents dropping off and picking up their children before and after school. As well as being concerned for the safety of children (when getting out of cars and crossing busy roads), the levels of inactivity in these children (and parents) worried me too."

Jake Saville, Head of PE, Two Mile Ash School



The Spark: Leadership Meets Partnership

Across delivery and strategy, partners worked together to ensure interventions were co-designed, sustainable and rooted in local needs.



Key contributors included:

School Leadership: Jake and the senior team championed active travel, set expectations, and unlocked timetable space.



Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC): Funding for bikes, cycle storage, maintenance, Dr Bike sessions, events and campaign materials.



Cycle Citizens MK: Community-centred cycling activities and ongoing, two-year observation of progress.



Living Streets: Active Travel Tracker to evidence change.

Parents & volunteers: Week-in, week-out practical support (especially for the Bike Bus and events.)



Leap: Amplifying learning, convening partners to support wider sharing and inspire more schools to join the movement.



What Changed: From Programme to Culture

The school recognised that tackling these issues required a cultural shift towards active travel and partners identified this as an opportunity to embed sustainable behaviour change by working collaboratively with the school and local organisations to shift culture, not just deliver activities.

What had changed through a coordinated place-based approach:



CURRICULUM • CONFIDENCE • COMMUNITY • SYSTEM

Curriculum & Skills

- Cycling added to the PE curriculum, with school owned bikes and helmets removing access barriers for all children.
- Expanded Bikeability and Learn to Ride ensured every child could build confidence and progress.

Confidence & Competency

- Bikeability Level 2 attainment leapt from 48% to 86% in 2025, a 38-point rise (~80% relative increase), showing real, measurable skill development.

Community Activation

- Friday morning Bike Bus from April to October
- Partnerships with Women's Cycling sessions
- Hosting and competing in cycling events

System & Strategy

- Development and delivery of a robust Modeshift STARS school travel plan
- Secured funding via Milton Keynes City Council for bikes, cycle storage and Dr Bike sessions



Moments That Moved a Community

A safer, more positive start to the day

The school's concerns about congestion and safety led to the creation of the Friday morning Bike Bus, which now brings 20–30 children and parents together each week from April to October. What began as a response to a practical problem has grown into a shared, active start to the day. Parents who once circled the block now join the Bike Bus, creating a calmer, more connected morning routine.

Joy on the big stage

A standout moment came when pupils took part in a victory ride around the MK Dons pitch at half-time, bringing joy to thousands of supporters. Seeing children celebrated in such a public arena reflected how cycling has become part of the school's identity and a source of pride for the wider community.

Growing skills, growing confidence

With cycling embedded in PE and access to school bikes and helmets, more pupils are learning to ride and progressing through Bikeability. In 2025, Level 2 achievement rose from 48% to 86%, showing how far children have come, developing not only skills, but confidence and independence through cycling.



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“The aim has always been to build a culture of active travel encouraging pupils and their families to develop habits that benefit their physical and mental health.

As Head of PE, I see this as my responsibility, and I model active travel by cycling to and from work myself.”

**Jake Saville, Head of PE at
Two Mile Ash School**

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Measurable Outcomes

The impacts include both quantified outcomes and wider quality improvements:

Participation & Skills

2 Bikeability Level 2 achievement increased from **48% to 86%**

 **8%** increase in bike journeys through Living Streets Active Travel Tracker

Engagement & Recognition

40  Pupils took part in **Bikeability Olympics**.

School achieved **Bronze** (2023) and **Gold** (2024 & 2025) in Bikeability Olympics 



Two Mile Ash named **Modeshift STARS Education Local Authority Primary School of the Year 2025**

Jake Saville won **Sports Leader of the Year 2025** 



'**Bikeability Champion**' award at the **Milton Keynes Mayor Awards 2025**

Behavioural Activation

Average of **20 - 30** children and parents **attending weekly Bike Bus**.

The school also participated in high-profile community events, including a half-time victory ride at MK Dons Stadium and a group cycle to watch the start of the Tour of Britain in Milton Keynes.



From Head of PE to Citywide Advocate

Leadership went beyond the school gates. Jake has played a leading role in expanding active travel across both the school and wider community. He has supported more women to cycle by opening Two Mile Ash School for monthly Women's Cycling sessions organised by MK Council, and has strengthened the school's cycling culture by securing council funding for bikes, storage, maintenance and events. Recognised for his outstanding achievements, Jake is not only a role model within the school but also a mentor to other schools, helping them develop effective travel plans through the Modeshift STARS platform and sharing practical examples of initiatives that increase active travel.

“Jake is an exemplar role model and advocate for active travel, understanding the importance of physical exercise and how it can easily be incorporated into everyday life. Jake has taken the time to explore opportunities and partnerships available to him to enable and encourage active travel within his school and the local community, winning numerous awards for his outstanding achievements in active travel and successfully securing funding via the Council for bikes, cycle storage, bike maintenance, Dr Bike sessions, event and campaign materials to help get more children cycling.”

**Hayley Roche, Senior Transport Planner
(Walking, Cycling and Smarter Travel) Milton Keynes City Council**

Wider Impact: The Power of Place-Based Collaboration

This incentive at Two Mile Ash School highlights how place-based partnership can generate sustained community impact:

Social impact:

- Improved safety outside the school gates
- Enhanced community cohesion through Bike Bus and shared cycling events
- Increased confidence and independence among pupils
- Healthier environment & reduced costs through reduced car trips and fuel spend; families discover habitual active travel for everyday journeys.

Health & Wellbeing impact:

- Higher levels of physical activity
- Increased cycling competency and confidence
- Positive contribution to mental wellbeing

Strategic alignment:

- Supports local active travel and climate objectives
- Contributes to public health priorities
- Reduces congestion and environmental impact
- Provides a replicable model for other schools in Milton Keynes



“Over two years I have observed Two Mile Ash School’s engagement with children, parents, teachers and external stakeholders, to achieve even higher impact in its quest to raise levels of walking and cycling, ... in recognition of promoting active travel within our community, TMAS were named Modeshift Stars Education Local Authority Primary School of the Year for 2025, together with obtaining an 'Outstanding' accreditation for their school travel plan.”

Tom Bulman, Organiser for Cycle Citizens MK

Key Learning for Other Schools

Start with safety and culture: Map your gate risks, set a shared goal (“10 fewer cars each morning”), and model the behaviour as staff.

Put cycling in the timetable: A short unit in PE with school-owned bikes and helmets removes barriers and normalises participation.

Make Fridays special: Pilot a weekly Bike Bus for one half-term (aim for a flat, friendly route). Use volunteers and keep it welcoming.

Track and celebrate - Use simple data (e.g., Living Streets tracker; Bikeability outcomes) to show progress. Celebrate small wins early; showcase big wins loudly.

Build your coalition - Connect with your council’s travel team, local cycling groups, PTAs and neighbouring schools. Learn together, share assets, and copy what works.

Two Mile Ash School’s approach shows that when leadership, partnership and infrastructure align, schools can become powerful drivers of cultural change, embedding active travel into everyday life. Creating safer streets, healthier children, and a community that moves together.

Insights:

- Leadership from within the school is essential
- Active travel interventions are most successful when embedded in curriculum and culture
- Partnership support can strengthen sustainability
- Celebrating small wins builds momentum
- Data tracking helps show impact and secure ongoing investment



Uniting the Active Travel Movement

For more information or support in developing active travel in your school, please contact:

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