



Giant Walking Bus 2013

evaluation report

Prepared September 2013



About Giant Walking Bus

[Giant Walking Bus](#) is an annual event co-ordinated by Brake, and sponsored in 2013 by [Churchill Car Insurance](#), involving primary schools across the UK celebrating the benefits of walking and encouraging drivers to slow down in their community to protect kids on foot.

Schools take pupils on a march for road safety (in a crocodile of supervised kids, holding hands on safe pavements, or around the school's grounds), which gives kids a voice, helping them call for safer streets for walking. Schools often run road safety activities with the children and communicate road safety messages to parents and the wider community in the run-up and on the day. Kids can be sponsored to take part, helping fund Brake's campaigns and services for families bereaved and injured by road crashes. Brake also carries out a media campaign on the day to promote the importance of children's safety on roads, and communicate the slow down message to the wider public.

Participation

As of September 2013, 72,154 children from 374 schools were confirmed as having marched for safer roads as part of this year's Giant Walking Bus event on 12 June. This compares with a final total of 63,000 children from 351 schools confirmed as having taken part in 2012, although we anticipate receiving confirmation of participation from more of the 62 schools that registered to whom we have not yet been able to speak. Furthermore, 33 schools that were not able to take part as planned in June will instead be holding their march in the autumn.

Registrations prior to the event stood at 604 schools compared with 650 in 2012, but the percentage that actually took part increased from 54% to 58%, likely to rise further as more schools confirm participation. The average number of children taking part at each school also increased from 179 to 194.

65% of participating schools had taken part in the event in previous years. This compares with 64% in 2012, and 53% in 2011, so the Giant Walking Bus has maintained a core number of schools that run the project each year. However there remains a great deal of scope to extend the reach further to new schools, alongside working to maintain commitment from previous participants. Of the schools that took part, 92% indicated they would like to take part again in 2014. 90% of schools that participated in previous years but were not able to do so in 2013 stated that they would like to be contacted about the 2014 event.

Some examples of feedback from schools that took part this year:

St John's Primary School, Bath: *'The pupils were excited they were part of a national campaign and were enthusiastic about encouraging their parents to reduce their speed in built up areas and walking them to school more often to reduce congestion.'*

Wynndale Primary School, Mansfield: *'The children all enjoyed the march and supporting such a worthy cause while learning about road safety, and it was a very positive way to share the message about walking to school with children and parents.'*

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School, Cardiff: *'The children enjoyed participating. Their awareness of road safety has really increased. The day was a really positive experience.'*



Whittle-le-Woods Primary School, Chorley, took part in the Giant Walking Bus for the third time. The children made banners and signs to take on their march and conducted a traffic survey. The school has successfully campaigned for a 20mph limit, now in place, so were keen to get the message out to drivers to stick to it. Their march was attended by the local mayor, councillors, police officers and parents. Children also fundraised for Brake. Regional TV, radio and

two newspapers were in attendance, speaking to teachers and kids about why the march was important.

Teaching assistant Jennifer Hall said: *'We had a fantastic day and were supported by local police officers, a local councillor and the mayor. All staff supported the event and we had parents walking with us too. We now have a 20mph limit outside our school so we need drivers to abide by it, and this was a great way to get the message across.'*

Marketing to schools

Brake again secured significant support from local authorities in promoting the event to schools, with 135 local education or road safety teams agreeing to promote Giant Walking Bus via a combination of targeted emails, articles or information in newsletters and information on websites. Some local authorities took a very active role in ensuring schools enrolled, including: Cumbria County Council, which offered incentives of additional road safety resources for schools that registered; Wirral Council road safety team, which contacted each primary school in its area to encourage them to register, and attended several events and contacted local press to help get coverage; Essex County Council, which kept in touch with Brake to monitor the number of schools that had registered and approached each primary school in the area to encourage further sign-ups; Manchester City Council's children's services team which published a large feature in their 'In Touch With You' magazine, sent to all educators in the city, and featured the event in every edition of their monthly e-newsletter from January onwards and on the news section of their website.

Though many schools did not provide specific details of where they heard about Giant Walking Bus, 46 schools that registered cited receiving information from their local authority. Brake plans to improve its monitoring of where schools hear about the event next year to help better track the success of marketing.

Brake continued to enlist the help of partner organisations, networks and publications to widen the reach of the event, through promotion on websites, in newsletters, via targeted mailings and through features and articles in publications. We secured marketing activity with 44 organisations, including road safety bodies, educator networks, voluntary and community sector networks and education websites and publications, whose communications reaching a total audience of nearly 400,000 people each. We received continuing support from many organisations that marketed the event in 2012, including Road Safety GB, Road Safety Scotland, Road Safety Wales, FOC Advertising, Primary Times, Regional Voices, Support magazine, Skool Link magazine and Action with Communities in Rural England. In addition, we worked with a range of new partners to help promote the event including: PTA-UK, a charity that represents 13,750 parent teacher associations, which provided free adverts in their magazine and featured a news article and events listing

on their website; Transport for London, which included an article on the event, encouraging schools to sign up, in their spring newsletter sent to every primary school across the capital; Head Teacher Update, which had an article about the event in their spring magazine that went to every primary school in the UK; Special, a leading magazine for educators working with children who have special education needs, which ran a feature on the event; The National Association for Primary Education, which highlighted the event in its quarterly newsletter; Teach It Primary, a network for teachers and educational specialists working with primary school children, which posted details on their website and in newsletters; Parenting UK, which ran a feature on its website; Headteacher Update, which provided details on its website and newsletter; the National Children's Bureau, which posted details in its event listing and e-news update.

In addition, Brake continued to encourage registrations through marketing emails to more than 6,000 primary schools on our database, and through regular promotion of the event via educator bulletins sent to more than 7,500 educators across the UK, and Brake's bulletins for supporters and road safety professionals, sent to more than 4,000 and 1,400 subscribers respectively. Directly contacting schools that had taken part in previous years by phone and email proved fruitful.

This year, for the first time, Brake also worked with some of the stand-out schools from 2012 to issue local press releases encouraging other schools within their area to take inspiration from them and register to take part. For the 2014 event, we are planning to do the same again, highlighting our 'star schools' (see below) with local press releases early in the new academic year (and again in January), celebrating the schools' achievements in promoting road safety, and encouraging other schools to register.

Social media marketing has been more prominent this year, with regular, planned posts on facebook and twitter, promoting the event to an audience of more than 2,100 followers on facebook and 4,000 on twitter. Facebook posts with images from previous years' events received a significant number of 'likes' and 'shares' from a range of followers and in particular volunteers, community groups and educators. Twitter proved a useful marketing tool in the months leading up to the event, with road safety organisations, educator press and Brake supporters retweeting and responding to promotional and marketing tweets with links to the website and press releases. Many of the organisations that helped to promote the event through newsletters, websites and member mailings were also active in tweeting about the Giant Walking Bus, notably Primary Times, Sustrans, Primary Teacher Update, Teach It Primary and Road Safety GB.

Resources for participating schools

Each school that registered for the Giant Walking Bus was provided with a free resource pack containing (see sample resource images, right): a checklist to help schools plan their day effectively; posters promoting key safety messages to families such as 'cross safely, belt up, slow down, hold hands'; a poster on cycle safety; a banner to be held at the front of the march bearing the message 'slow down in our community'; certificates and



stickers for each child; sponsorship envelopes and paying-in slips for schools fundraising.

Schools were also provided a web image (right) and text to promote their involvement via websites and newsletters.

Structured phonecalls and emails also directed schools to Brake's dedicated Giant Walking Bus web pages, which provide a step-by-step guide to taking part in the event,

example road safety activities, case studies of schools that have taken part and links to teaching resources.



We received positive feedback from schools about the resource pack, which was rated 8.2 out of ten overall. Suggestions to improve the pack mainly focussed on requests for more posters or banners, or posters on other road safety themes such as seatbelts or parking, or suggestions to include a poster promoting the school's involvement in the event.

Comments about the resource pack included:

Central Park Primary School, London: *'The children especially enjoyed wearing the stickers and holding banners, something we have not done before.'*

Hope Primary School, Liverpool: *'The resource pack was excellent. The children all loved their certificates and took it in turns to hold the banner on our march.'*

Schools also rated the Brake website highly, with an average score of 8.7 out of ten and a number of positive comments about the sample activities, case studies and photos. There were not many suggestions for improving the website, although some teachers reported difficulty finding resources for use in assemblies or lessons (some improvements to the lay-out of these pages have since been made).

Feedback about the Brake website included:

Haydonleigh Primary School, Swindon: *'It was really useful to see what other schools had done in previous years and get plenty of ideas what we could do as this was our first year taking part.'*

Stratton Primary School, Bude, Cornwall: *'The information you provided was very helpful, especially the website, which helped us to plan the march, and we provided a link to it on our website so parents could find out more about Brake and the Giant Walking Bus.'*

Communication with registered schools

Brake's community engagement team kept in regular contact and provided over the phone and email support to schools once they registered. This was provided via a series of four planned and structured phone calls and follow-up emails for each participant, except where schools registered close to the day, in which case calls were condensed. These aimed to build enthusiasm, and help schools effectively plan their march along with road safety and fundraising activities. These communications focused on: confirming details about the event, including how many children were taking part; ensuring they had the necessary number of adults to supervise and insurance and risk assessment procedures in place; going through the

contents of the resource packs and other resources available online; suggesting ways to promote road safety to pupils, parents and the wider community; establishing if they were able to fundraise or donate to Brake and offering fundraising ideas; getting permission to publicise the event via Brake's local press releases. This communication was complemented by five monthly countdown e-bulletins, sent from February onwards, providing schools with reminders about planning their day, ideas and tips on running a successful event, signposting to resources and highlighting positive case studies from previous years.

Some examples of feedback on Brake resources and support provided to participating schools:

Chester Blue Coat CE Primary School: *'I really liked the checklist of things I needed to do in the run up and on the day. It meant I felt prepared and the event would be safe.'*

Haydonleigh Primary School, Swindon: *'This was our first year so we didn't really know what to expect or how to plan so it was really helpful to be able to talk to someone at Brake and to receive the update emails. Next year we'll be confident to run an even bigger march and fundraise too!'*

Incentivising and recognising schools

This was the first year Brake has not attempted to break the world record for the largest simultaneous walking bus in multiple locations. This decision was taken due to the increased amount of evidence requested by Guinness in support of the record attempt and feedback from schools in previous years about the difficulties involved with collecting this evidence. It is possible that not attempting the record may have impacted on the number of registrations, although this was not cited by any schools as a reason for not taking part this year, and we had only a small number of queries from schools about the record attempt and none of those declined to take part, although one school decided instead to attempt a record for the largest walking bus in Cornwall. Dropping the record attempt did not appear to have an impact on media coverage as this increased from the previous year. Furthermore, it has helped to reduce the administrative burden on both schools and Brake's community engagement team.

Feedback on not having to provide evidence in support of a record attempt:

Wykeham Primary School, London: *'It was much easier to run this year, not having to organise independent witnesses and collect the names of those taking part.'*

Port Elphinstone School, Aberdeen: *'Really glad that Brake has moved away from having to get all the evidence as we struggled with that each year due to data protection.'*

To encourage schools to 'think big' with their event, such as by planning impactful and innovative road safety activities and campaigns, as well as fundraising efforts, Brake introduced a 'star schools' scheme. Schools that went to impressive lengths to fundraise or spread road safety messages to children, parents and the community were shortlisted on the basis of feedback they provided. The efforts of the chosen 'star schools' are being recognised on [Brake's website](#), via planned local press releases and social media posts celebrating their achievements, and via 'star school' certificates issued to each school.



Little Plumstead Primary School in Norwich were one of last year's standout schools. In 2013 they held a road safety assembly, teaching children how to help protect themselves when out and about and highlighting why it is important for drivers to slow down. All pupils held hands and chanted during their march and they made posters to wave. Police officers came along to show their support. Each child was sponsored to take part and altogether raised £1,391.

Nicky Lingley, teaching assistant, said: *'We thoroughly enjoyed taking part again. The march gave our children a voice, helping them tell drivers to slow down and look out for people on foot. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of money that the children raised.'*

Road safety activities by schools

Once again, Brake received a great deal of positive feedback from schools about the activities they ran alongside their march to teach road safety and spread life-saving messages to parents and the community. Of the schools that participated we received the following feedback about their activities:

- 46% ran lessons on road safety or incorporated road safety into the curriculum on the day or in the build up
- 28% got the children making their own posters or banners to take on the march
- 25% held road safety assemblies on the day or in the build up
- 19% were visited by local road safety teams, crossing patrols, or emergency services
- 16% were joined on their march by parents or other volunteers from the community
- 11% are actively campaigning for safer roads

Examples of feedback from schools about their activities:

Wingrove Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: *'We worked on the key messages the week before with support from the local road safety team, who also did an assembly for the children. The children also made flags, posters and banners for the walk with key messages on them. Street wardens, CSOs, the local road safety team, governors, parents and others with a link to the school joined us on the walk.'*

St Michael's Primary School, Salisbury: *'The activities were planned by our school council. Road safety awareness was covered by all classes prior to the march, which linked in with our current campaign to get the current speed restrictions through our village down to 20mph. Children made 20mph-themed posters to be affixed to the perimeter fencing of the school.'*



Rokesly Infant School in Hornsey, London, were joined for their march by Mr Crocodile, the local council's walking mascot. Before the big day, the students worked with a local professional musician to compose a song about road safety and sustainable travel to be used as part of road safety lessons and activities on the day. The children raised £800 for Brake. Acting headteacher Karren Hughes said: *'The walk was very successful with a good turnout of parents to support and supervise. Mr Crocodile added an extra element of fun to the day. The Giant*

Walking Bus is a good way for us to raise awareness and remind drivers about safety around our school.'

Fundraising

Giant Walking Bus is an important fundraiser for Brake, which in previous years has raised significant sums for the charity, through children collecting sponsorship, the school or children/parents providing a donation for taking part, or schools raising funds through other activities, such as 'Bright Days', bake sales or bucket collections at fayres or sports days. When registering to take part, and through regular communications in the lead-up to the event, schools are encouraged to fundraise or donate in aid of Brake's work.

£21,048 has so far been received from 110 schools that fundraised or provided a donation for Brake, of which 61 had donated and 49 fundraised. At least 56 more payments are expected from schools that have confirmed they took part and are providing funds or a donation. Some improvements will be made in 2014 to encourage schools to pay funds more promptly after the event in addition to providing feedback and photos. Based on the average funds raised or donated from schools so far, along with those expected from rescheduled events in the autumn (assuming 50% of rescheduled events take place), the total funds from this year's event are expected to be approximately £34 - £36,000.

The average donation provided by schools is approximately £65, slightly lower than the 2012 average of £70, while the average amount raised by each fundraising school is again slightly lower than in 2012, at £327 compared with £342.

At the end of May the proportion of schools that indicated they would be fundraising was 28%, with a further 39% stating they would donate. As of the end of July the percentage of schools confirmed as having participated who fundraised was 22%, while 28% of confirmed participants have made a donation. These percentages of both planned and completed donations and fundraising are similar to those in 2012, despite the emphasis in communications with schools on possible fundraising activities.

While Brake received a great deal of positive feedback about fundraising activities undertaken by schools, including case studies outlined in this report, 34% of schools that received sponsorship envelopes advised Brake after the event that they had not used the envelopes, but had either run alternative fundraising activities, asked parents to donate a pound for their child to participate or provided a single donation on behalf of the school. Only a relatively small number of envelopes from which we can claim gift aid have been returned (450 so far), although we expect to receive more in the autumn. For schools that did fundraise using sponsorship envelopes, the average amount raised per school was £452, from 28 schools, compared with an average of £203 per school by each of the 21 other schools that fundraised in other ways, demonstrating that this is still a good option for us to encourage among schools, although we need to ensure envelopes are only sent to schools committed to fundraising in this way.

Of the schools that didn't fundraise, 26% cited either competing charitable causes or other large events and outdoor activities such as sports days or school trips in the summer term, 20% opted to make a donation instead, 32% gave no reason, and the remainder gave a variety of other feedback including: not feeling that they had time to co-ordinate sponsorship; not being advised by colleagues/the event co-ordinator of their plans to fundraise; not feeling that the march was a big enough event to encourage sponsorship collection

by the children. Aside from the schools that have rescheduled their Giant Walking Bus for the autumn term, 35 of the schools that were not able to fundraise or provide a donation as planned have advised they will be running a fundraiser for Brake in Road Safety Week or at another point early in the next academic year.



Central Park Primary School in East London ran a host of road safety activities including assemblies and PHSCE lessons, with the children watching videos and being encouraged to think about what can be done to make local roads safer. Throughout the year the school council and has been monitoring parking and is working with the council to try to address parking problems. The children also managed to raise more than £500.

Claire Rozzier, teacher and sustainability lead, said: *'The day went really well. We have taken part for years now and the children are able to understand and talk about why we are doing it and the importance of road safety and relate it to everyday life.'*

Media campaign

To promote road safety through the media linked to this event, Brake issued a press release in each of the 12 main media regions, plus a [national news release](#), flagging up the number of schools and children taking part, and calling on drivers to slow down to protect kids on foot and enable more to walk, linked to our [GO 20 campaign](#). The press releases announced regional results from a Brake survey of more than 11,000 children from 400 primary schools (mostly schools registered to take part in the event) on children's perceptions on road safety in their community. The survey found that:

- three quarters (76%) think more kids would walk or cycle to school if roads were made safer
- more than half (54%) say their route to school needs to be made safer for walking and cycling
- two in three (69%) want more paths, cycle paths and crossings in their neighbourhood they can use to walk or cycle to school, or the park, shops or to see friends
- one in three (33%) report being scared by traffic when walking or cycling in their neighbourhood.

Regional releases also included case studies and lists of participating schools that had given permission to be included. Brake also issued press releases for, or provided press release templates to, 56 schools that were taking part. In the days before the event and on the day itself, Brake staff conducted 51 local and regional radio and TV interviews, representing a marked increase on the previous year, when 14 interviews took place. A total of 68 print articles, including in five national publications and nine major regional titles, about the event were picked up through Brake's media monitoring service (which covers national, regional and some local titles), again an increase on the previous year's 43. From the feedback received so far, 64 schools confirmed they received local coverage for their event.

Twitter also helped to boost coverage of the Giant Walking Bus during the week of the event as 412 followers tweeted and retweeted messages about schools getting involved, and educator press, local newspapers, radio stations, local authorities, emergency services and schools themselves also tweeted in significant numbers, many in response to the regional and local press releases issued by Brake.

The post-event facebook posts featuring images and descriptions of individual school's events have proved particularly popular, and the Giant Walking Bus 2013 photo album, containing photos from 85 local events, has been 'liked' or shared by 130 people.

Gathering feedback from schools

Brake refined its feedback process in 2012 so schools were asked to fill in a short form along with sending funds and photos. This has given us a more detailed picture of activities by schools and provided qualitative and quantitative data to help inform further improvements and promote the event. We received 200 forms with information about activities schools ran as well as ratings and comments relating to the resource pack and support Brake provided. We also gathered the same feedback in full from 124 schools by over the phone, meaning 324 out of 348 participating schools have provided the feedback requested. This compares to 293 last year. We also received photos from 92 schools, compared to 83 in 2012.



St Joseph's RCVA Primary School and Victoria Lane Academy in Coundon, Bishop Auckland, teamed up to hold an extra large Giant Walking Bus event and get the message out to drivers to slow down in the community. The children made banners and took whistles and drums to give their march impact. They were joined by PCSOs who helped to teach the children about road safety. The march attracted the attention of the regional TV and a local radio station. Mel Hutchinson, learning mentor at St Joseph's RCVA Primary school, said: *'The kids really loved it and the Giant Walking Bus has definitely become an annual event for us now.'*

Churchill partnership

This year's Giant Walking Bus event was sponsored by Churchill, whose sponsorship covered the production and postage of resources for participating schools, staffing costs, and much of the promotion of the event. This critical funding means funds raised by participating schools and children go towards Brake's wider work supporting families affected by road crashes and campaigning for road safety.

As part of this partnership, Brake also supported Direct Line Group (DLG) to introduce the project as an option in its community volunteering programme. Brake offered opportunities for staff to use a designated day of volunteering to help schools within their local area to get involved in Giant Walking Bus event. Briefing documents and resources were developed by Brake to outline volunteering opportunities and provide a step-by-step guide to engaging educators in the project.



YESsmethwick - a partnership between Shireland Collegiate Academy and a group of primary schools in Smethwick in the West Midlands - co-ordinated a Giant Walking Bus event involving seven schools. The student council organised the march and associated activities themselves. Children designed placards to take with them on their march, focusing on key road safety themes including 'GO 20'. They were joined by local police and road safety officers, while parents helped to supervise. The giant march took the children on a four-mile route through Smethwick town centre to spread the 'GO 20' message.

Developing Giant Walking Bus in 2014

As part of its annual review of this project, Brake is exploring ways to improve and expand the Giant Walking Bus in 2014, by developing resources, website information, communication with schools and extending the reach of promotional and marketing activity. Initial plans for development are outlined below, aimed at building on existing work conducted every year to deliver the event.

Increased and earlier promotion to increase registrations:

- Aim to increase the number of education and road safety teams within local authorities and police and fire services that promote the event to local schools, by contacting them earlier in the year and at regular intervals ahead of the event. We can also highlight examples of how other councils and emergency services have promoted the event and been actively involved.
- Encourage registrations earlier in the academic year, including by the use of local press releases celebrating the participation of this year's 'star schools' in September and again in the new year, and promoting next year's date as early as possible to previous participants.
- Call and send marketing emails to all schools that have taken part in previous years to sign up for this year's event, reminding of the benefits of taking part and flagging up changes that make participation easier, such as dropping the world record attempt.
- Activate Brake's volunteers and supporters to promote the event to their local schools by providing them with info and materials to disseminate, and explaining how they can support local events.
- Continue to develop the range of national and regional partnership organisations promoting the event, including approaching networks of community organisations (e.g. WI groups, rural community groups) who can be encouraged to support, help supervise and fundraise alongside marches, as well as simply encourage schools to sign up.
- Improve monitoring of where schools heard about the event, including making drop-down options on the online registration form more specific and ensuring our team members ask this question.

Improved support and resources for participants:

- Refresh the content of resource packs and develop new resources where useful, including possibly a hard-copy poster for schools to promote participation in the event to parents and the community.
- Further develop case studies on participation on our website and communication with schools, to provide increased inspiration and examples of awareness-raising and fundraising activities.
- Encourage more schools to opt in to having a local press releases issued to promote their event, by including this as an option on the registration form; asking the question on the phone prior to the event, explaining how it can help spread the message; pro-actively phoning schools that have let us know of exciting plans for the event, to urge them to have a press release issued.

Increase funds raised:

- Provide a clearer list of fundraising options and advice, to encourage a greater proportion of schools to raise, and help each school to raise more. This should make clear which options tend to help schools to raise more, and which are quickest and easiest if they sign up later in the day. Ensure the former options are enthusiastically promoted to schools signing up earlier in the year through phone support and countdown bulletins, including clear guidance on how to fundraise.
- Utilise the positive and widespread media coverage of the event to appeal for public donations in support of the event and Brake's work campaigning for safer roads for kids and supporting bereaved families.
- In phone calls and emails in the build up to the event, stress the importance of receiving funds and feedback promptly after the event and ensure that the most appropriate post-event contact at the school is recorded on the log for greater ease in making contact quickly afterwards.
- Review quantities and distribution of printed resources to ensure value for money, including producing fewer sponsorship envelopes and ensuring they are only sent to schools that need them by asking more detailed questions about fundraising activities.