

EDUCATION TRANSPORT

Over the past 12 months Metro's Education Transport team has co-ordinated transport to and from school for more than 50,000 West Yorkshire pupils.

To help those pupils and their parents find out about schools' services, apply for travel passes, get the most out of public transport and enjoy some fun stuff, Metro launched its generationM web site at www.generationm.co.uk.

By the end of March 2007, 150 purpose-built, low-floor, easy-access **Mybus** vehicles, fitted with seatbelts and CCTV cameras, were transporting over 9,000 West Yorkshire primary and secondary school pupils to and from 130 schools in the Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield districts every day.

Through consultation with pupils, parents and teachers, **Mybus** has been adapted to serve three Special Educational Needs schools. Travelling by yellow bus is giving greater confidence, independence and enjoyment to pupils, many of whom formerly travelled to and from school by taxi. This work with Special Educational Needs schools gained Metro the Accessibility Award at the national UK Bus Industry Awards in November 2007.

In January 2008, David Blunkett and fellow members of the national Yellow School Bus Commission visited St Theresa's Primary School in Leeds to see **Mybus** in action.

The commissioners were impressed to hear that an average of 68% primary **Mybus** pupils formerly travelled to school by car and that their parents were saving up to 54 minutes and driving around 30km less every week without the school run.

David Blunkett and his colleagues described their visit, which was their first opportunity to meet junior school pupils and teachers involved with a yellow bus scheme, as excellent. Mr Blunkett also praised the enthusiasm and dedication of Metro staff involved with **Mybus**.

Junior SAFEMark training is for year six pupils who are likely to be using public transport on their own for the first time when they start secondary school in September. Almost 8,000 year six pupils have benefited from Junior SAFEMark workshops since Metro introduced them to West Yorkshire in 2004.

Over the last seven weeks of 2007's summer term, Metro provided Junior SAFEMark training for over 1,800 year six pupils from 56 West Yorkshire schools.

Another seven of the county's secondary schools achieved SAFEMark, the awards scheme that rewards schools for taking public transport seriously. This brings the total with the award, or in the process of completing the scheme, to 28.

Metro also continued to encourage bus usage by young people through the popular SchoolPlus tickets.

