A record number of school pupils in Cumbria will be getting on their bikes and scooters for a national travel-to-school challenge during March. Around 40 schools – the highest number ever - have signed up for this year’s Big Pedal event, which encourages children, parents and staff to choose two wheels for their journey to school. Last year nearly 30 Cumbrian schoolsclocked up over 14,000 cycling and scooting journeys during the Big Pedal fortnight. Beetham was named the top performing small primary school in England in 2014, following on from Crosby-on-Eden’s identical accolade in 2013.

Pupils will be aiming to repeat the winning formula shown in the last two years, when Cumbrian primaries topped the national league tables for the numbers of two-wheeled journeys recorded in a fortnight. Beetham head teacher Wendy Nicholas said: "We never done anything like it before and it had a really positive effect on everyone. The children were more awake and ready to learn in the morning and we think it also affected attention span."

Keith Little, Cumbria County Council Cabinet member for highways and transport, said: "More and more schools are taking part in the Big Pedal, which is a fantastic way to encourage families to think about ways of getting school without using the car. We’ve had the top performing small primary school for the past two years, so Cumbria will be going for a hat-trick of successes this year."

The Big Pedal event runs from 2-20 March and schools can log their journeys on the Big Pedal website and compete against other schools across the country. For more information, visit www.bigpedal.org.uk

The national event is organised by Sustrans, with support in Cumbria from the county council’s Active Travel team. Many schools which took part last year reported busier bike sheds for the rest of the year too.

Cumbria’s top performing small and large primary schools will each receive a cycle minipod, while the top secondary school will win a trip to the National Cycling Centre in Manchester for a group of students.

In total 32 primary schools and six secondary schools are taking part in this year’s Big Pedal, including:

**Allerdale** - Ashfield Junior, Broughton Primary, Kirkbride Primary, Netherhall, Silloth Primary, Nelson Thomlinson Junior.

**Barrow** - Cambridge Primary, Greengate Junior, South Walney Junior, Victoria Junior,

**Walney, Yarlside Primary.**

**Carlisle** - Crosby on Eden Primary, Cummersdale Primary, Great Corby, Inglewood Infant, Longtown Primary, Newman, Pennine Way Primary, Warwick Bridge Primary, Yawdale Primary.

**Copeland** - Distington Community, Montreal CE Primary, Seascale Primary, St Benedict’s Catholic High, West Lakes Academy.
Eden - Plumpton Primary, Warcop.

South Lakeland - Beetham Primary, Burton Morewood Academy, Castle Park Primary Kendal, Dean Gibson Primary Kendal, Flookburgh Primary, Hawkshead Esthwaite Primary,

Heron Hill Primary Kendal, Storth CE Primary, St Oswald’s Primary, Burnside and The Queen Katherine, Kendal.