

Feel Good Field Trips



AVANTI
WEST COAST





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Foreword

Andy Mellors, Avanti West Coast MD

At Avanti West Coast, we believe travel can inspire, educate, and transform lives. Through our Feel Good Field Trips initiative, we've helped young people access opportunities they might not otherwise experience.

Since launching Feel Good Field Trips, we've welcomed over 5,250 children and 850 staff on 215 trips to 60 destinations, covering over 50,000 miles on the West Coast Main Line. For many, this has been their first train journey or visit to these iconic locations, and witnessing their excitement has been truly rewarding.

This initiative aims to break down barriers and broaden opportunities, connecting young people from diverse backgrounds to new places. We've aimed to inspire curiosity, ambition, and a love for learning by connecting them to some of the cultural and educational offerings along our route.

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the Railway, a significant milestone in reflecting how railways have always connected people and created opportunities. Initiatives like Feel Good Field Trips continue that legacy, inspiring future careers in rail.

I want to thank the teams and individuals who've made this initiative a success, especially Community Rail Lancashire and Dave Savage for their support. I also acknowledge Jo Buckley, our Community Manager, for her dedication in bringing this vision to life. Thanks to our colleagues at Avanti West Coast, the schools, and the hosts who've supported these trips—you've played a vital role in creating unforgettable experiences for thousands of children.

Looking ahead, we're committed to investing in the next generation, empowering young people across the West Coast to dream bigger and achieve more. The journeys we facilitate today are planting seeds for brighter futures tomorrow, and we're proud to be part of that.

Andy Mellors

Foreword

Richard Watts, Community Rail Lancashire (CRL)

Community Rail Lancashire (CRL) has been delighted to support Avanti West Coast in the delivery of the Feel Good Field Trips project. This has been a great opportunity for us. To take over 5000 young people on a memorable field trip over the last two years has taken meticulous organisation and team work.

We were delighted to welcome Dave Savage to the CRL Team to lead the Feel Good Field Trips project. He has developed a great rapport not just with the Avanti Team but also with other train operators, community rail partnerships and experience providers. His enthusiasm and commitment has been infectious and what is more we not only took 5000 young people on a field trip but nearly 5300—a great achievement.

On behalf of CRL I would like to thank Avanti West Coast for entrusting this project to us, for their unwavering support and encouragement. We look forward to developing other innovative projects involving young people in the future.



Overview

Feel Good Field Trips: Connecting children to new opportunities

Feel Good Field Trips was developed by Avanti West Coast as part of their mission to make rail travel accessible to school children across the UK. This initiative aimed to provide free train trips to school groups, empowering students aged 4 to 18 to explore new experiences and destinations. Rooted in the Avanti Schools Programme, Feel Good Field Trips strived to bridge gaps for young people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, enabling them to connect with cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities across the West Coast Main Line (WCML).

By offering free end-to-end experiences and removing financial and logistical barriers, the trips promoted equal access to travel and discovery, offering schools the chance to integrate enriching trips into their students' learning journeys. The programme aspired to inspire curiosity, confidence, and an understanding of rail safety, setting the stage for children to embrace future opportunities.

Since its inception in January 2023, Feel Good Field Trips has made a significant impact:

5,250 students
have participated, accompanied
by 802 staff members, creating
countless memories.

215 trips

have taken place at 60 unique
venues across the UK, ensuring
a variety of learning experiences.

Students and staff have collectively taken

**450 Avanti West Coast
train journeys, traveling
over 50,000 miles**

along the WCML, including travelling across other TOCs.



These figures underscore the initiative's success in delivering meaningful, educational, and enjoyable experiences to students, often reaching those who may not have had such opportunities otherwise.

What was included in a **Feel Good Field Trip**?

Every Feel Good Field Trip was thoughtfully designed to ensure both safety and enjoyment for students and staff.



George the Poet hosted pupils from Ashbury Meadow Primary School, Manchester on the first Feel Good Field Trip with a once-in-a-lifetime poetry writing and recording studio production workshop in a London recording studio. Ten pupils aged 10-11 collaborated with George onboard an Avanti West Coast train from Manchester Piccadilly to London Euston in a poetry workshop, which saw them create their very own piece of spoken word art.

The experience included:

- **Rail Safety Talk:** Students learned essential safety tips for lifelong awareness
- **Free travel on an Avanti Train:** Reserved seating ensured a seamless journey, making the train ride part of the adventure
- **Lunch:** Complimentary meals for students and staff added convenience
- **Unique Destinations:** Trips included exciting activities or visits to cultural and educational landmarks along the West Coast Mainline
- **Activity Pack:** Participants received a Feel Good Field Trip booklet, a pen, and a copy of *Arlo's Adventures*, reinforcing rail safety messages

Feel Good Field Trips reflected Avanti West Coast's commitment to inclusivity, curiosity, and opportunity, enriching education and building confidence. This initiative exemplified corporate responsibility, unlocking new experiences and inspiring future generations.

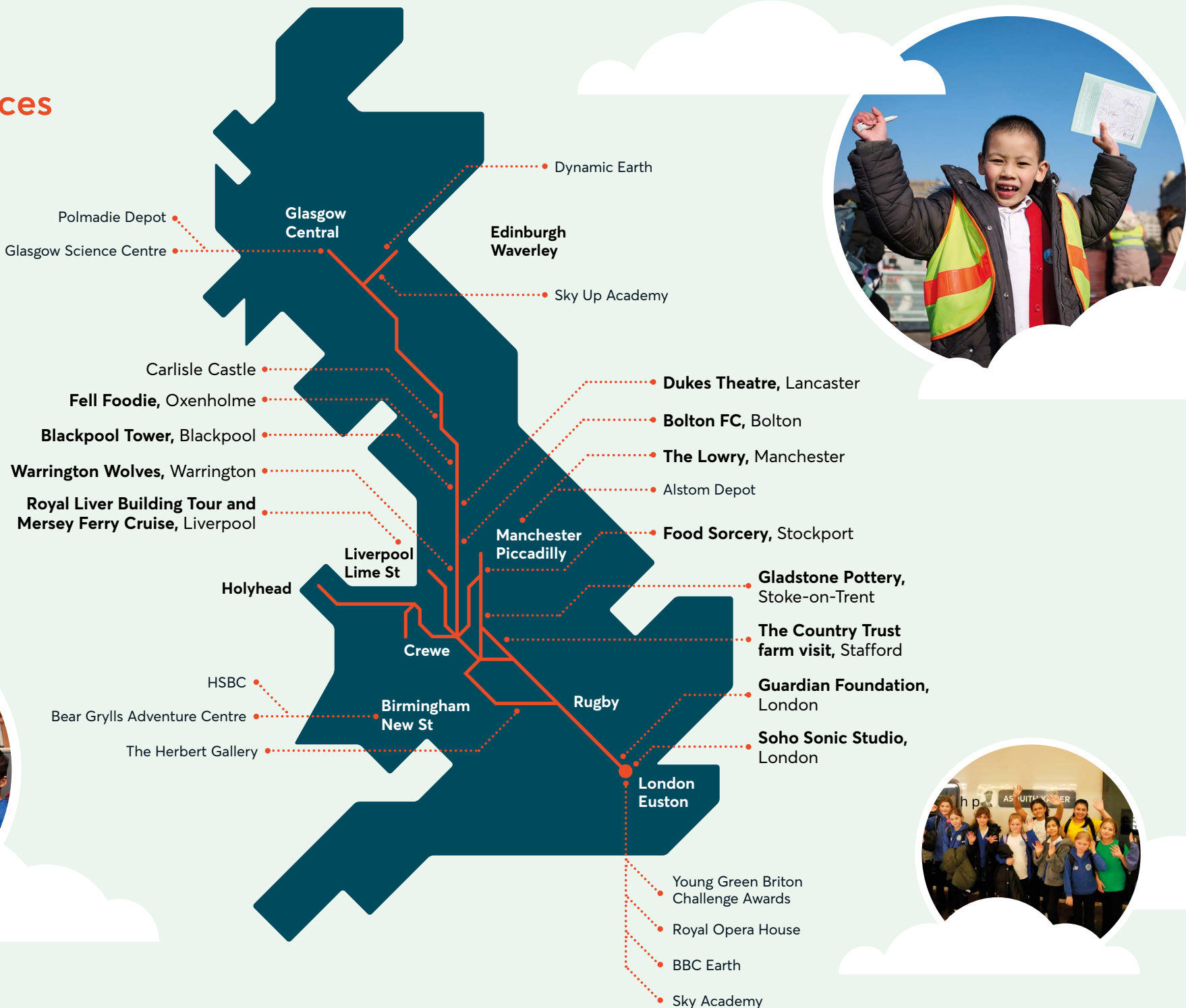
Feel Good Field Trip

Poem by Ashbury Meadow Primary School

*We've been stuck at home, unable to roam,
But now, we're back on track
At times we had the blues,
Now it's time for something new
So put a pen and pad in your backpack
We're going on a journey across Great Britain
Writing down what we see
Poetry helps us express ourselves,
And travelling makes us feel free
We might see some art in Coventry
Or head up North to the Curry Mile
Then to the capital with our Culture Conductor,
To record our poems in style!
Whether it's a school trip or a day trip,
All you need is imagination
The world is your oyster, the train is your spaceship
And your adventure starts at the train station*



Destinations and experiences we've hosted



School children testimonials

Thank you for giving me the best day ever. I was shocked by what the trains were doing and when I saw the lights my eyes lit up and when the scooters done a flip my mind was blown away.

I loved this trip.
Thank you David.
I loved going on ferry.
From Kingsley

I have enjoyed
experiencing new things
like trying out the curry
and naan bread today.

Thank you for this
amazing trip. My favourite
part was the snowdrop ferry.
Thank you

I really enjoyed today.
My favourite thing was going
on the train. It was my first
time going to Manchester.

I enjoyed the adventure
of the ferry and the
underground train.

I really enjoyed going
on the train and have
a chance to make our
own curry.

I enjoyed sitting in a speed
train and going on top of the
Liver Building. I enjoyed also
sitting in a ferry. This was the
best day ever.

I enjoyed every part of
this trip. Very fun and bring
a smile on my face.

Today my favourite thing
was making the curry
because it was fun and
I loved it, it was nice.

I enjoyed eating but
climbing up the mountain
was hard. Larry the dog
was fun too.



Teachers testimonials



I'm writing after our school trip to the Tower of London through the Feel Good Field Trip Project. As a school on the edge of Birmingham, many of our children have limited opportunities outside of school, with few having even visited Birmingham City Centre.

When our Year 6 teacher brought up this trip, I thought it was worth a try—and I'm so glad we did. The trip was a huge success! The children loved the Avanti trains, the underground, and the excitement of London, especially the Tower of London. This project provided an unforgettable experience we couldn't have otherwise afforded.

**Head of School,
St Anthony's Primary School**

The concept of the "Feel Good Trips" is exceptional. It has provided our children with a truly unique experience that I know they will remember for a long time to come. The vast majority of our children will never get the opportunity to ride on a train and particularly with their peers. I can't praise Avanti enough for this innovative project. Well done Avanti West Coast!

**Headteacher,
Anchorsholme Primary School**



This trip was absolutely amazing! There wasn't a single second of the day when the children weren't doing something.

Most of our pupils had never been on a train before, let alone used the underground, in fact none had been to London previously and very few have visited a big city or left North Wales. The experience for them was out of this world, it opened up their minds, inspired them and left them dazzled with delight. As members of staff it was a joyous, positive experience as the trip had been well organised, the trains were stress free and the accommodation went far above our expectations.

**Class teacher,
Ysgol Swn Y Don**

I honestly can't thank you enough for giving our children the opportunity of this experience. Some of our children had never been on a train or visited London and were so grateful for the chance to do this. Many told us at the end of the day that it was the best day they had ever had! The team from Community Rail Lancashire were enthusiastic, patient and truly amazing, the day could not have gone any smoother. Thank you very much!

**Class teacher,
Smith's Wood Primary School**

Next steps

Railway 200

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the modern railway, celebrating its transformative impact on Britain and the world. Railway 200 is a year-long campaign starting in January 2025, honouring the past, present, and future of rail. It invites communities, rail organizations, and others to participate in events highlighting rail's history, sustainability, and societal role.

Railway 200 also emphasizes the importance of education and engagement. School trips and school engagement programs are a key focus, providing students with hands-on experiences that inspire curiosity and spark interest in rail careers. The campaign includes a nine-month festival showcasing international projects and significant upgrades like HS2 and East West Rail.

It will promote skill development, innovation, heritage, and the contributions of railway workers. Key activities include the Railway 200 exhibition train, community events, and commemorative merchandise across the UK. It aims to inspire future generations, attracting volunteers and talent to the rail industry.

Find out how you can get involved here:



Acknowledgements

Schools that have received our support

Belle Vue Academy,
Manchester

Blackburn Central High School,
Blackburn

Broken Cross Primary School,
Macclesfield

Carlisle College,
Carlisle

Castle View Primary School,
Lancaster

Co-Op Stoke Academy,
Stoke on Trent

Dallam Primary School,
Warrington

Dearney High School,
Wigan

Derby High School,
Derby

Doxey Primary School,
Stafford

Duke Street Primary School,
Chorley

East Manchester Academy,
Manchester

Eden Girls School,
Manchester

Edleston Primary School,
Crewe

Finham Park 2,
Coventry

Fishwick Primary School,
Preston

Flimsby Primary School,
Maryport

Fordbridge Community Primary School,
Birmingham

Preston Grange Primary School,
Preston

Harris Church of England Academy,
Rugby

Harris Peckham,
London

Harris Westminster Sixth Form,
London

Hartshill School,
Nuneaton

Holden Lane Primary School,
Stoke-on-Trent

The Hollins,
Accrington

Ince CE Primary and Nursery School,
Wigan

John Henry Newman Catholic College,
Birmingham

Underwood West Academy,
Crewe

King Edward VI Sheldon Heath Academy,
Birmingham

Kings Leadership Academy,
Warrington

Ladybridge High School,
Bolton

Latchford Primary School,
Warrington

Longshaw Community Primary,
Blackburn

Manor Park Primary Academy,
Birmingham

Matthew Moss High School,
Rochdale

Meadow Park School,
Coventry

Mereside Academy,
Blackpool

Moat House Primary School,
Coventry

Monks Copenhall Academy,
Crewe

Morecambe Bay High School,
Morecambe

Moreland Primary School,
London

The Mosslands School,
Wallasey

Northlands Primary School,
Rugby

Nursery Hill Primary School,
Nuneaton

Oasis Academy Media City,
Salford

Oasis Academy Hobmoor,
Birmingham

Old Hall Drive Academy,
Manchester

Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy,
Stoke-on-Trent

Outwood Academy Hindley,
Hindley

Peel Park Primary School,
Accrington

Pleckgate High School,
Blackburn

Richard Rose Central Academy,
Carlisle

Riverside Academy,
Rugby

Rugby Free School,
Rugby

Ryelands Primary School,
Lancaster

Sale Grammar School,
Sale

Sale High School,
Sale

Sandford Hill Primary School,
Stoke-on-Trent

Sir John Newman Sixth Form,
Carlisle

Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy,
Stoke-on-Trent

Sir William Stainer School,
Crewe

Smith's Wood Primary School,
Birmingham

Springfield SEN School,
Crewe

St Anne's Catholic Primary School,
Warrington

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School,
Birmingham

St Augustine's Primary School,
Preston

St Bede's Catholic Primary School,
Chorley

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School,
Wilmslow

St Christophers C of E High School,
Accrington

St James' Catholic Primary School,
Wigan

St John Henry Newman Catholic School,
Carlisle

St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy,
Stoke-on-Trent

St John Wall Catholic School,
Birmingham

St Joseph's Catholic School,
Walsall

St Mary Magdalene Academy,
London

St Margaret's CofE Primary School,
Bury

St Pauls School,
Oswaldtwistle

St Peter's Newman Catholic Academy,
Stoke-on-Trent

St Vincent's School,
Liverpool

St Wilfrid's Catholic Academy,
Stoke on Trent

St.Paul's Catholic High School,
Wythenshawe

Stockland Green Academy,
Birmingham

Underwood West Academy,
Crewe

UTC Warrington,
Warrington

West Coventry Academy,
Coventry

Westcliffe Primary,
Blackpool

Westfield Primary School,
Runcorn

Willow Lane Primary School,
Lancaster

Wisaston Academy Primary and Nursery School,
Crewe

Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn,
Llandudno

Ysgol Swn Y Don,
Colwyn Bay

Ysgol Tudno,
Llandudno

Acknowledgements

Our key venue and hosts

We'd like to thank all our venue hosts and supporters of Feel Good Field Trips. A special thank you for our core venues and hosts that have been a big part of the project, helping with numerous trips and experiences.

- Alstom Depot
- Blackpool Tower
- Bletchley Park
- Bolton FC
- The Country Trust
- The Dukes Theatre
- Dynamic Earth
- Fell Foodie
- Food Sorcery
- Gladstone Pottery
- Guardian Foundation
- Herbert Art Gallery & Museum
- Houses of Parliament
- Liverpool – Royal Liver Building 360 Tour
- Soho Sonic Studio
- The Lowry
- Warrington Wolves



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