

Press Release

29 May 2023

Avanti West Coast on track to deliver Feel Good Field Trips for hundreds of school pupils

- *Feel Good Field Trips connects 1,000 schoolchildren to learning opportunities*
- *Partnerships with local organisations sees more destinations and experiences on offer as part of Avanti West Coast campaign*
- *Hundreds of pupils set to take part in fun and educational days out this summer*

Avanti West Coast is on track to connect more young people to learning opportunities, as it prepares to take hundreds of school pupils on days out this summer for its Feel Good Field trips initiative.

Children from the intercity operator's network of partner schools, which all have high pupil premium rates, will be taking the train this summer for fun and educational days out – marking over 1,500 students to be offered free trips by Avanti West Coast.

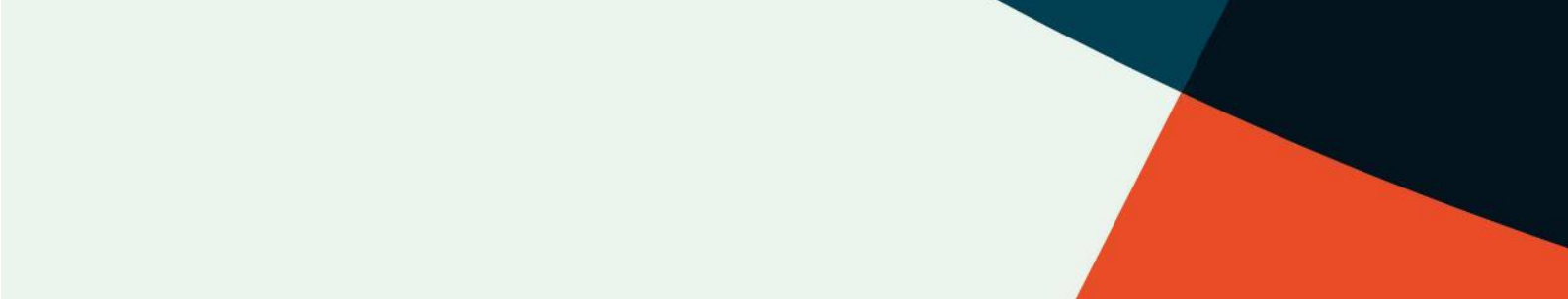
Since launching in April 2022, Feel Good Field Trips – a first of its kind initiative aiming to connect pupils around the country to immersive and enriching learning opportunities – 1,000 children have so far taken part in one of the 40 planned excursions.

The campaign is designed to give up to 5,000 pupils aged between four and 18, the chance to travel by train for hands-on learning, and culturally diverse days out that may previously have been inaccessible for them.

The trips organised have given pupils the opportunity to discover some key destinations on the West Coast – from an outdoor adventure in the Lake District to writing and recording poetry in Soho. Other activities have included trips to Manchester to cook up a curry and visit The Lowry theatre or enjoy a ferry ride on the River Mersey.

Working alongside organisations and Community Rail Partnerships local to the West Coast Main Line, the intercity operator has added more destinations and experiences for its Feel Good Field Trips. These include an insight into Bolton Wanderers Football Club, a trip to the Gladstone Pottery Museum in Stoke-on-Trent, a news and media workshop delivered by The Guardian Foundation, and a tour of the Royal Liver Building in Liverpool.

As part of the campaign, Community Rail Officer, David Savage was recruited to lead the days out and set up opportunities that would have previously been unattainable for the schools involved. David, who works for Community Rail Lancashire, has joined pupils on



their days out. Reflecting on what the campaign has delivered so far, he said: "It's been a real privilege to be able to open up access to such a diverse range of exciting and educational experiences for pupils – many of whom wouldn't normally get the opportunity to travel to these amazing venues.

"The feedback we have received to date has been outstanding and as the train cruises along the West Coast Main Line at 125mph, watching the reactions of children who have never experienced rail travel before is an absolute delight.

"By the end of the summer term, more than 1,500 schoolchildren will have enjoyed a Feel Good Field Trip and we hope to deliver many more in the future."

Andy Mellors, Managing Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "We've loved offering hundreds of school children access to opportunities they would never otherwise have the chance to experience. Seeing the excitement on the pupils' faces as they discover something new has been brilliant and is what this initiative is all about.

"By connecting young people from all backgrounds to places along our route, we hope to broaden their horizons, which is why we're delighted to have joined up with organisations to offer more unique experiences that champion iconic destinations on the West Coast. We look forward to welcoming more children onboard our trains as they take part in these fun days out which they'll remember forever."

The two-year campaign builds on the Avanti Schools Programme, which aspires to connect young people from a range of diverse socio-economic backgrounds to opportunities across the route and follows the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw school trips paused.

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For more information about Feel Good Field Trips, visit: <https://www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/feel-good-field-trips>

To read David's story, visit: <https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/blog/i-believe-field-trips-are-such-an-important-part-of-a-childs-education-it-is-important-for-children-to-see-more-than-what-is-local-to-them>

About Avanti West Coast

Avanti West Coast, operator of intercity rail services on the West Coast Main Line, is a joint venture between FirstGroup and Trenitalia, delivering a cleaner, greener railway that drives the West Coast forward.

We're on a mission to revolutionise train travel. Our refurbished Pendolinos are returning to the rails, with a £117m investment that's delivering best in class comfort. Rebuilt using sustainable materials wherever possible, including tables made from recycled plastic bottles, our upgraded fleet offers 25,000 brand new seats, free Wi-Fi, onboard recycling and much more.

New Hitachi trains are set to replace our Voyager trains from 2023, leading to a 61% cut in carbon emissions. Quieter and roomier, with more reliable Wi-Fi, wireless charging for electrical devices and a real-time customer information system, the new 23-strong fleet is the result of a £350m investment in sustainable travel.

We're tackling climate change wherever we can, from reducing energy and water use to training drivers in eco-driving techniques and sourcing food and drink from local suppliers. Our goal is to be net zero carbon by 2031. We're on track.

For the latest news, visit the Avanti West Coast Media Centre:
<https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/>

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