

Press Release

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Avanti West Coast celebrates 2,500 pupils enjoying Feel Good Field Trips

- *Train Operator's Feel Good Field Trips initiative reaches halfway milestone*
- *Scheme connects pupils to opportunities that may have been inaccessible to them*
- *Children enjoy hands on learning and culturally diverse days out on west coast*

Avanti West Coast's groundbreaking initiative to give children access to fun and educational experiences has reached another milestone – welcoming the 2,500th pupil to take part in its latest day out.

Feel Good Field Trips, launched by the operator in April 2022, has now hit the halfway mark. The scheme 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 have previously been inaccessible for them.

A recent trip by pupils from Beechwood Primary School in Crewe marked 2,500 children taking the train with Avanti West Coast for a unique outing as part of Feel Good Field Trips

A class of 30 Year 3 pupils made the train journey to Liverpool to visit the Royal Liver Building, enjoy a ferry ride on the River Mersey, and explore some of the city's landmarks.

Avanti West Coast Managing Director, Andy Mellors, celebrated the milestone with Beechwood Primary School pupils at the top of the Royal Liver Building with a specially designed banner - acknowledging their participation, as well as the thousands of young people who have benefitted from the learning experiences over the last two years.

Since launching in April 2022, over 100 planned excursions have taken place – from trips to Gladstone Pottery Museum in Stoke-on-Trent, to outdoor adventuring in the Lake District, and art workshops at The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry - with children from Avanti West Coast's network of partner schools, which all have high pupil premium rates, enjoying hands-on learning experiences.

David Savage, of Community Rail Lancashire, who facilitates the Feel Good Field Trips, was presented with a certificate to thank him for his efforts to deliver the days out that offer the opportunity for children to discover key destinations on the west coast.

He said: "I am thrilled that the Feel Good Field Trips initiative has reached a significant milestone having taken our 2,500th pupil on an unforgettable journey to Liverpool. Many of the children I've had the privilege to accompany had never before experienced rail travel or ventured beyond their hometowns.

"The best part of my job is witnessing the children's wide-eyed excitement as they embark on adventures onboard Avanti West Coast's train. Each trip offers a fresh and exhilarating experience. As a former geography teacher, I understand the value of field trips in enhancing students' learning experiences, which is why I'm immensely proud of the positive impact our Feel Good Field Trips have had – not only on the children who participate but also on the schools facing budget constraints and the cost of living challenges.

"I'm delighted we'll be offering even more exciting destinations for our trips and I'm filled with excitement and anticipation to continue providing enriching experiences for students across the West Coast Main Line."

Joining the schoolchildren on their trip to Liverpool, Andy Mellors, Managing Director at Avanti West Coast, said: "It was a memorable experience to be able to see first-hand the opportunities we're offering young people and what it means to them.

"Connecting thousands of school pupils to opportunities they would never otherwise have the chance to experience is what this initiative is all about, so we're excited to have reached this latest milestone and send a big thanks to Dave at Community Rail Lancashire who has made it possible.

"We've loved taking children from all backgrounds to destinations along our route, so they can discover something new, and we cannot wait to welcome another 2,500 onboard our trains to enjoy days out on the west coast."

The 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>

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 2024, 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.

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<https://newsdesk.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/>

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