



# Air pollution and the school run

November 2025

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# About Us

We're a parent-led charity based in South-East London.

We want to see a safe, clean and green school run for every child.





# Impact of the school run on air pollution



# Where has the traffic gone?



# School term time pollution modelling

Using a Breathe London air pollution monitor and TFL bus journey times we analysed data around a Southeast London junction between 7-10am.

We compared the school holidays to school term times.

During school term time there was a:

↑ **56% increase in bus journey times**

↑ **47% increase in NO2**

↑ **22% increase in PM2.5**



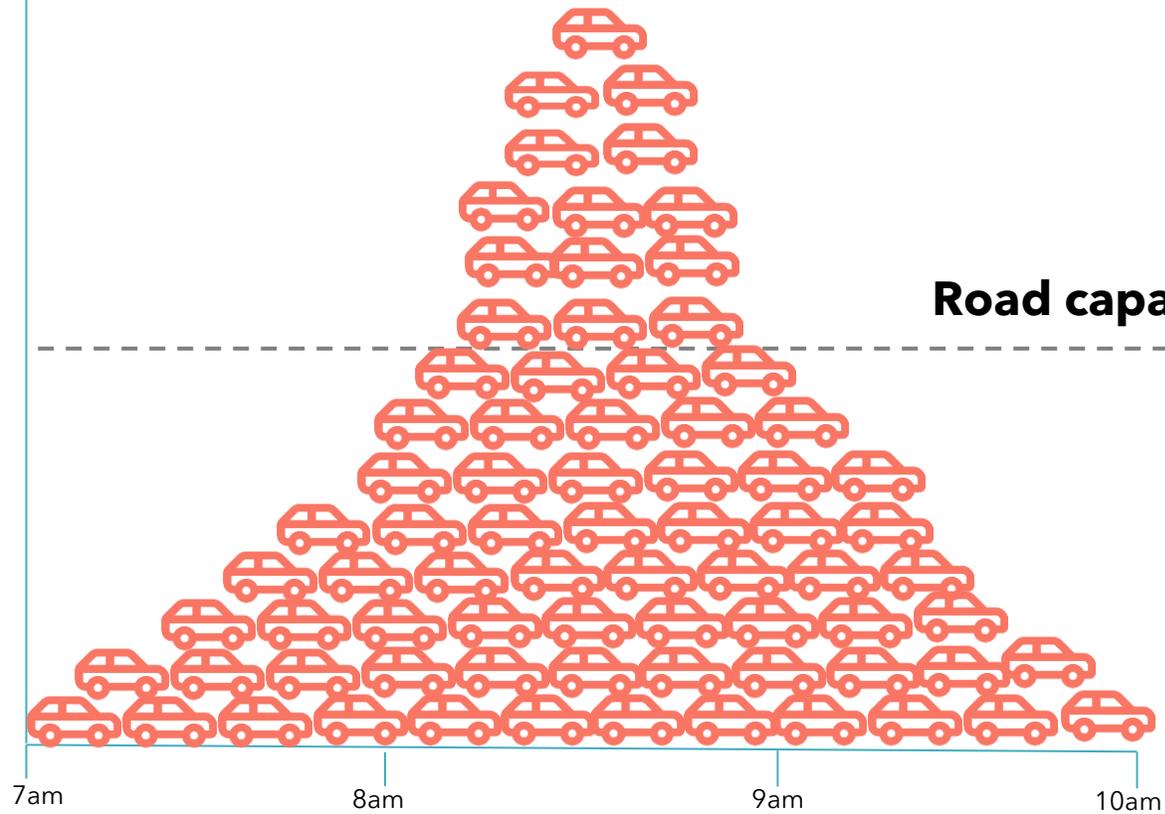
Sources:

<https://www.solvetheschoolrun.org/post/private-schools-driving-a-47-increase-in-toxic-air-pollution-and-extensive-bus-delays>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/jan/14/private-school-run-in-south-london-linked-to-27-per-cent-rise-in-air-pollution>



# Why such a big impact?

# of car trips



Road capacity



Over capacity



Under capacity





Traffic delays are non-linear, which means that when traffic rises to certain levels it becomes unstable.

Add just a **few too many cars at the wrong time** and fast-moving traffic suddenly slows to a crawl; take **just a few cars off of the road at the right time** and traffic speeds and throughput can both increase dramatically. 

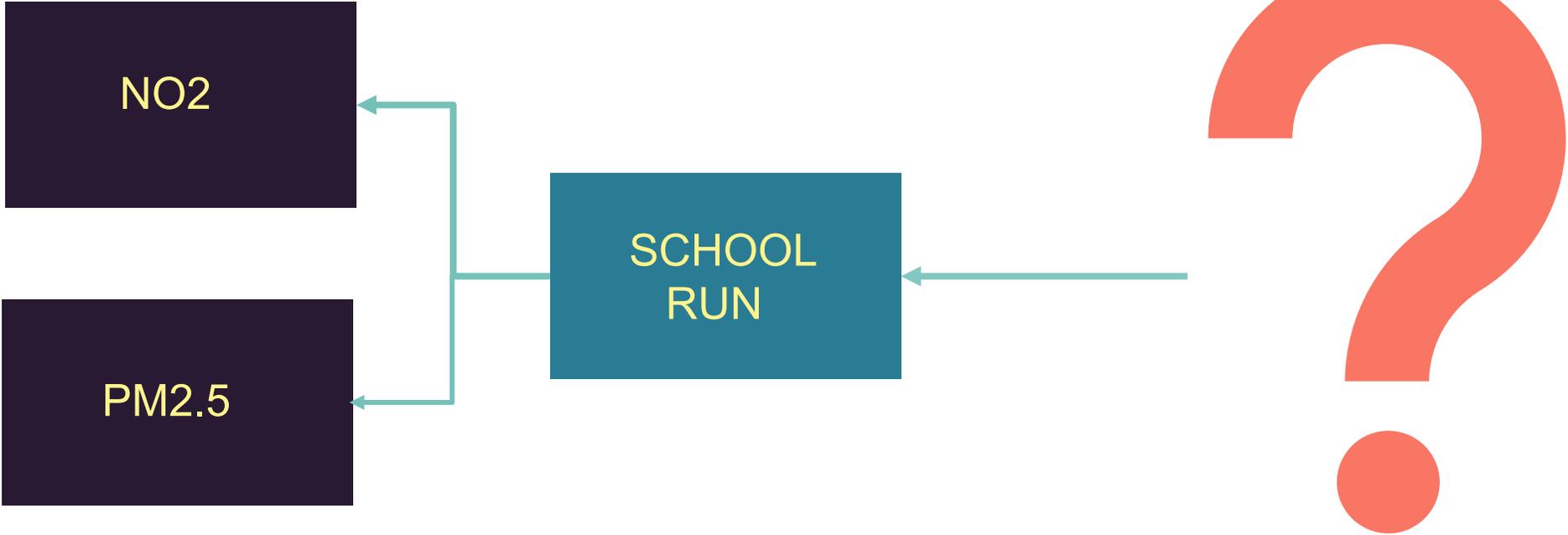
Source: [The Access Almanac](#), University of California.



# What journeys are being driven?



# What journeys are being driven?



Key

Outcome

Driver

# The School Run is...

**25% of morning  
rush hour traffic**



# Key Findings - London

National Travel Survey – our analysis of the survey data

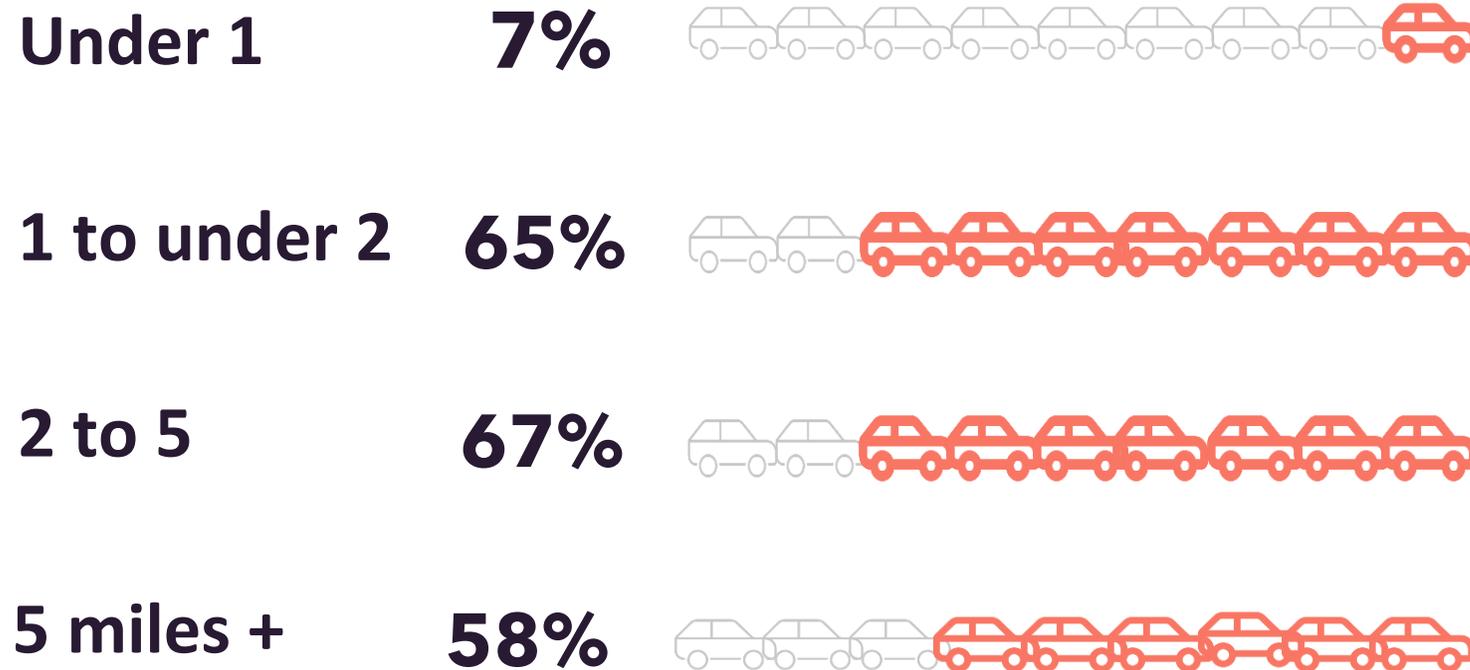
## London Pupils

Primary	Secondary
<b>25-28%</b>	<b>10%</b>

Driving rates are much higher amongst London primary age pupils.

# Key Findings - London

## Distance (miles)      Driving Rate



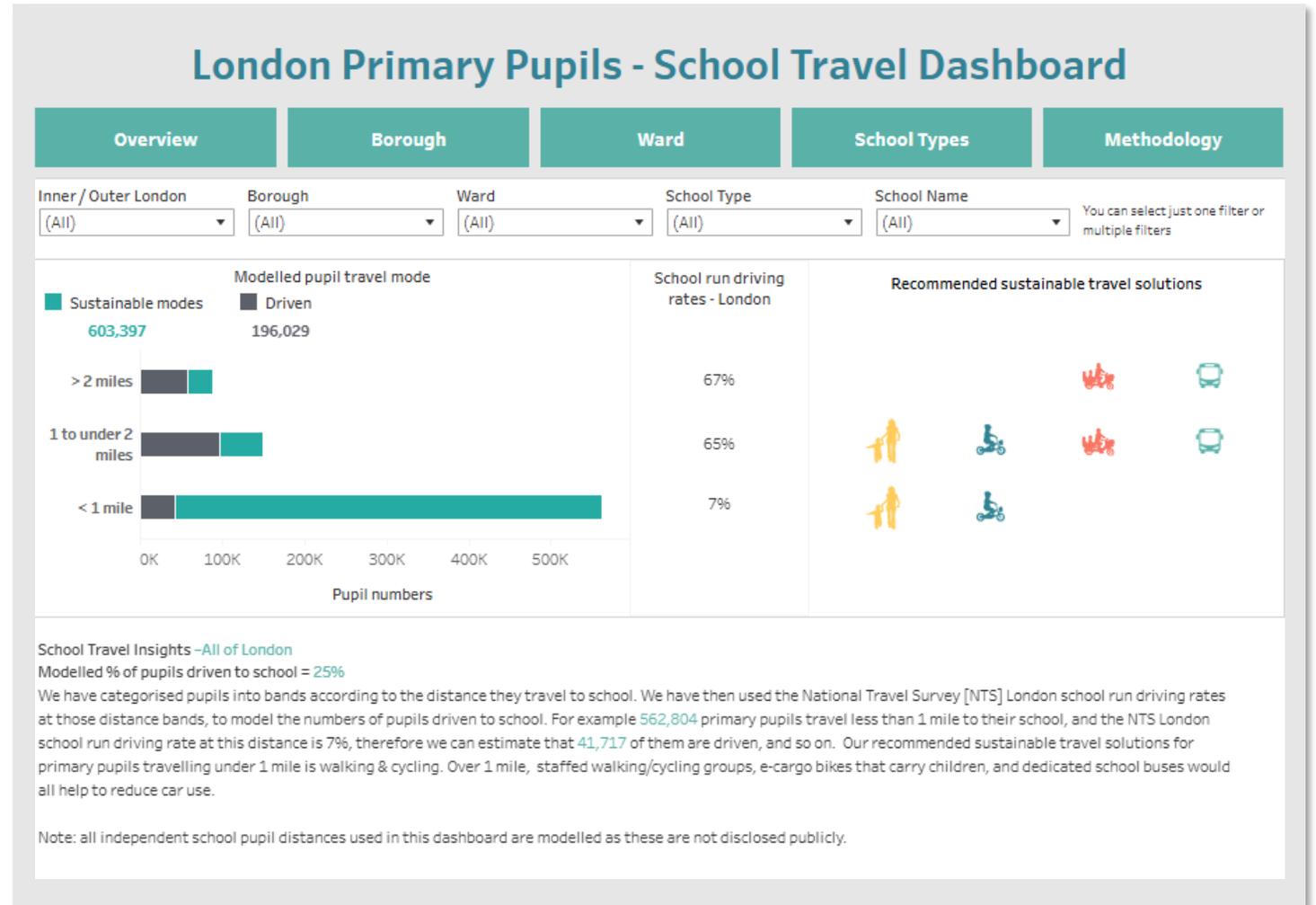
The majority of car trips are taking primary pupils distances to school of 1-2 miles

# London primary school travel data

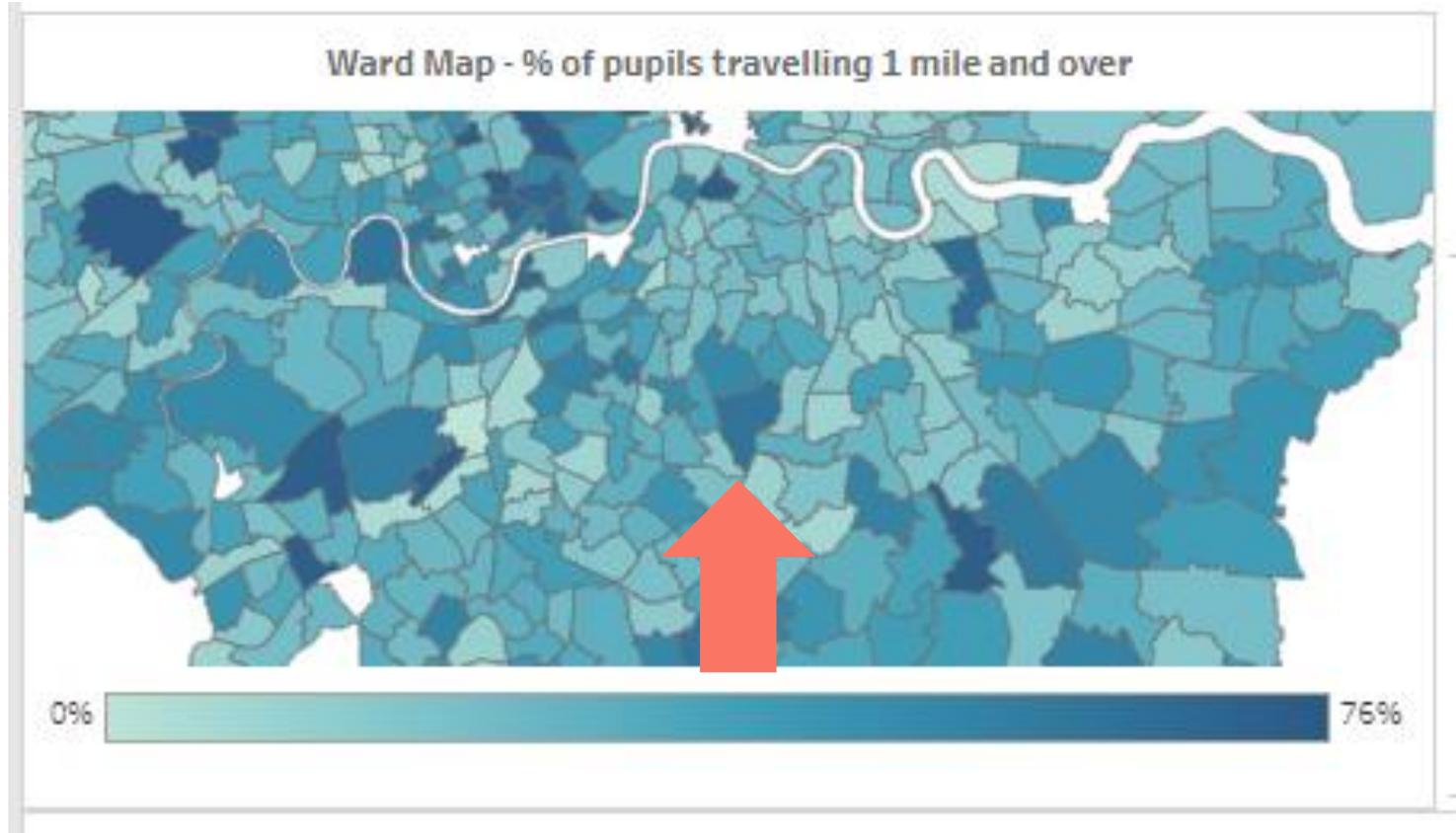


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# Provides school travel insights to inform solutions



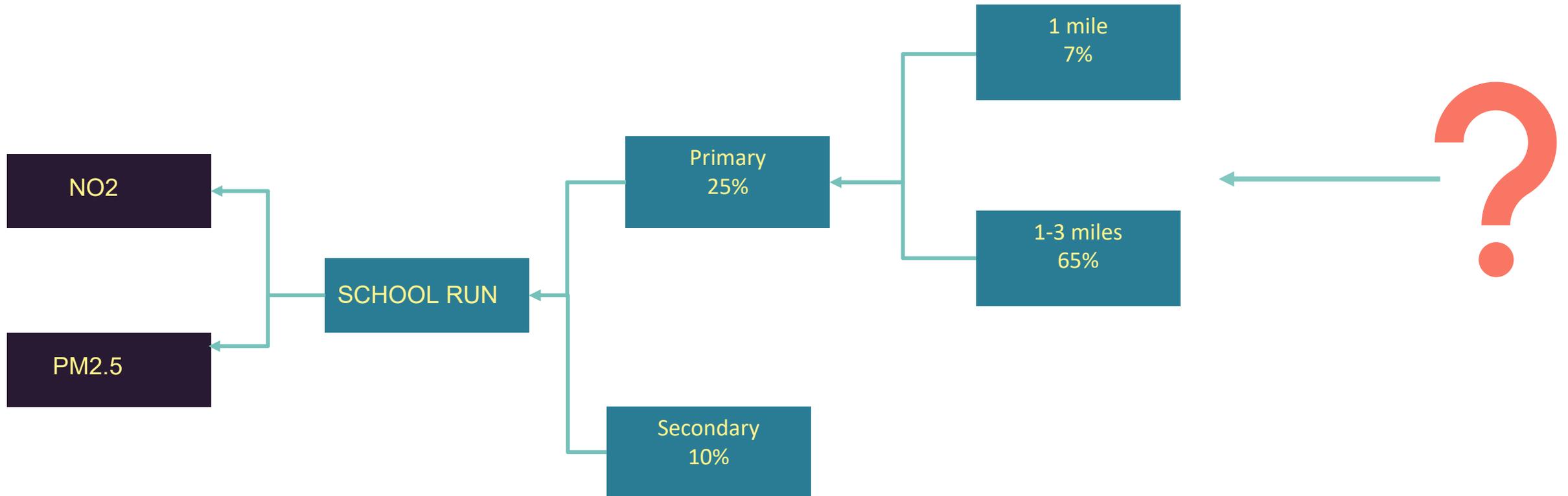
		Total Pupils	Travel <1 mile	Travel 1m+
Catchment Schools	Dulwich Wood Primary School	372	272	100
	Dulwich College Junior	372	104	268
Non Catchment Schools	Dulwich Prep London	841	234	607



**How do we solve them?**



# What are the solutions?



Key

Outcome

Driver

# Solutions

- Make streets safe
- Make travel convenient
- Measure



# Ambitious school streets make the school run SAFE

**BEFORE**



- **3 roads** filtered with **4 ANPRs**
- **2km** of road filtered
- **800 cars per hour** traffic volume
- Primary & SEND school

**AFTER...**



# The convenience of CARGO BIKES

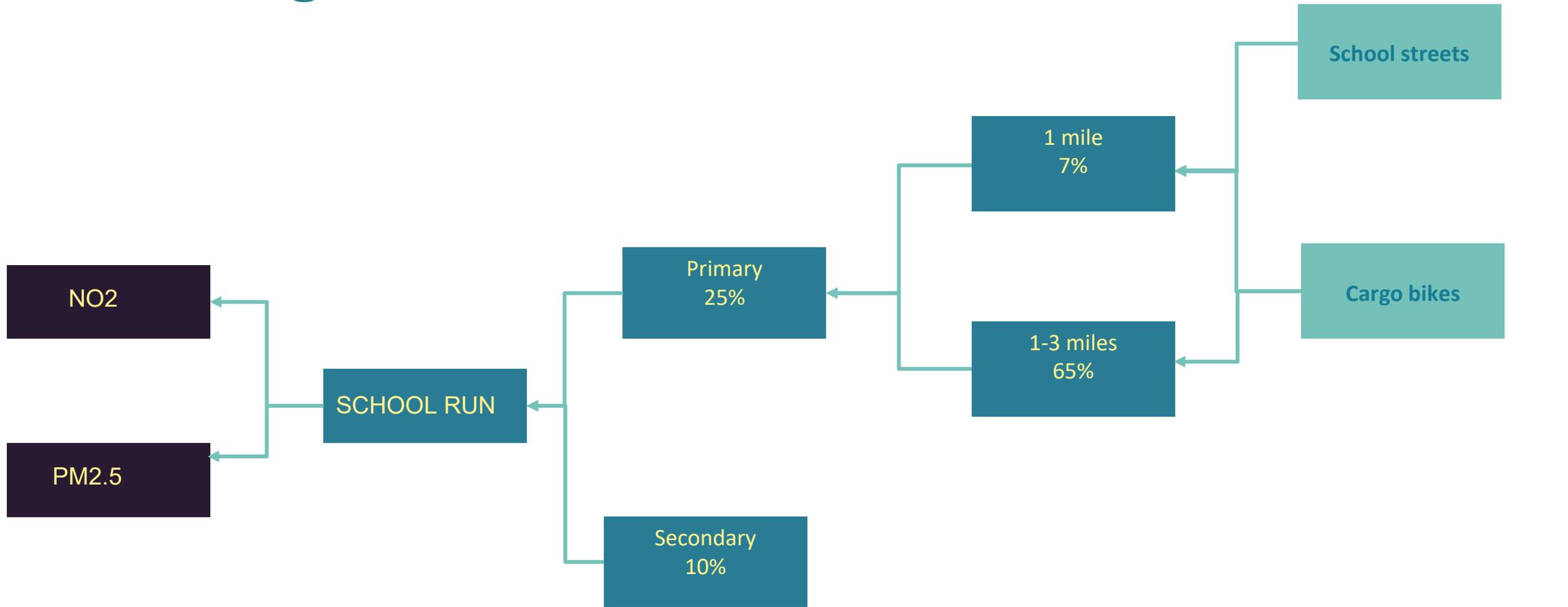
➤ Faster

➤ Safer

➤ Cheaper



# Measuring children's travel to school



## Key

Outcome

Driver

Policy

# How you can help...



Why has the government stopped collecting data on children's active travel to school?



# Summary

- School run has disproportionate impact on air pollution.
- Longer primary school journeys are biggest issues.
- Make streets safe starting with ambitious school streets
- Make travel convenient...cargo bikes
- Help us get better measurement!



# GET IN TOUCH

If you're interested in finding out more, we'd love to chat.



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