



Piloting the Brick-by-Brick[®] programme in Denmark: the birthplace of LEGO[®] bricks

Sarah is a Motivational Specialist who works with children aged up to 16 years old at the Drive School of Motivation in Billund, Denmark. The school supports the social-emotional, and academic, development of children with a range of diagnoses and additional needs.

The Drive School of Motivation, founded by the Drive Foundation, is based in Billund, Denmark, the headquarters of the LEGO Group. One of the school's three core values is 'seriously playful', and it uses play and co-creation to create a positive learning environment where students can develop not just academically but also with regards to their social and emotional skills.

Play Included[®]'s Brick-by-Brick[®] programme, which offers children positive, meaningful experiences in a playful and accepting environment, aligned well with the school's values and mission. Through collaborative LEGO[®] brick play, children have fun, make friends, and develop their communication skills, confidence, and

social and emotional wellbeing.

Cementing a place for Brick Club

In November 2021, four members of the Drive School team completed the Brick-by-Brick[®] programme Advanced Facilitator training, having already completed the Certified Facilitator training. Sarah found the training: "super helpful to guide you and support you. It comes with additional resources and a network of people who can be there alongside you."

Following the successful completion of their training, Sarah and her colleagues launched a six-week pilot of Brick Club (as the programme is known to students)

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at The Drive School. Following the successful pilot, Brick Club is now a permanent addition to the student's timetable.

During the pilot, Brick Club sessions were scheduled into the students' timetable on a weekly basis. The school created a dedicated room for the club to help it become more than just a weekly timetabled activity but somewhere that students actively wanted to go. Sarah says: "They feel ownership of it. It is important to us that the students are really involved in Brick Club and have an opportunity to say how they think it should go."

"Thanks to our dedicated Brick Club room, the sessions take on more meaning for the students; they feel ownership of it and are able to enjoy playing and building together."

Collaboration and communication

COPE is the name of the model of working devised by Drive, which underpins all the work undertaken at the school. During Brick Club, Sarah sees improvements in how students communicate, collaborate, and develop new skills. At the school, students have COPE lessons and Brick Club is a space where they can practice the skills they are developing in these lessons, such as problem-solving, flexibility and emotional regulation.

Sarah also notes that the learning in Brick Club is transferable to other subjects such as English and that learning points can continue to be developed outside of the session by referencing back to scenarios from Brick Club. One example Sarah gives is asking students to remember how they communicated different messages during a Brick Club session to help them generalise the same skills to their English tasks.



Brick Club also provides a space where students can practice turn-taking, sharing and flexibility in different scenarios through the roles of engineer, builder and supplier. "It's not just about social skills, but about being flexible, listening and cooperating," Sarah says.

As well as developing their social and communication skills, students are having fun and building friendships. Two students in particular have developed a meaningful connection through their shared interest in playing with LEGO bricks: "We have seen them playing together a lot when they're not in Brick Club," Sarah continues.

Sarah also credits the relaxed learning environment of Brick Club with helping students to develop skills and have fun, she says: "It's my favourite session of the week. We invite them in here to play not only together but also with us. We (the staff) have fun every week and there is always something that we learn from it."

Most importantly, Sarah has seen how much the students appreciate the club and room: "Seeing them enjoy the sessions of Brick Club together and enjoying the space of Brick Club outside of the particular sessions, is really lovely to see."

Learnings

If you are considering setting up your own Brick Club, Sarah advises that you allow enough time to plan each session but "Don't be afraid of just starting and running the sessions, because everybody has a great time, and grows, learns and develops together."

The Brick-by-Brick® programme is now available in Denmark. Enquire about training by emailing bookings@playincluded.com.

