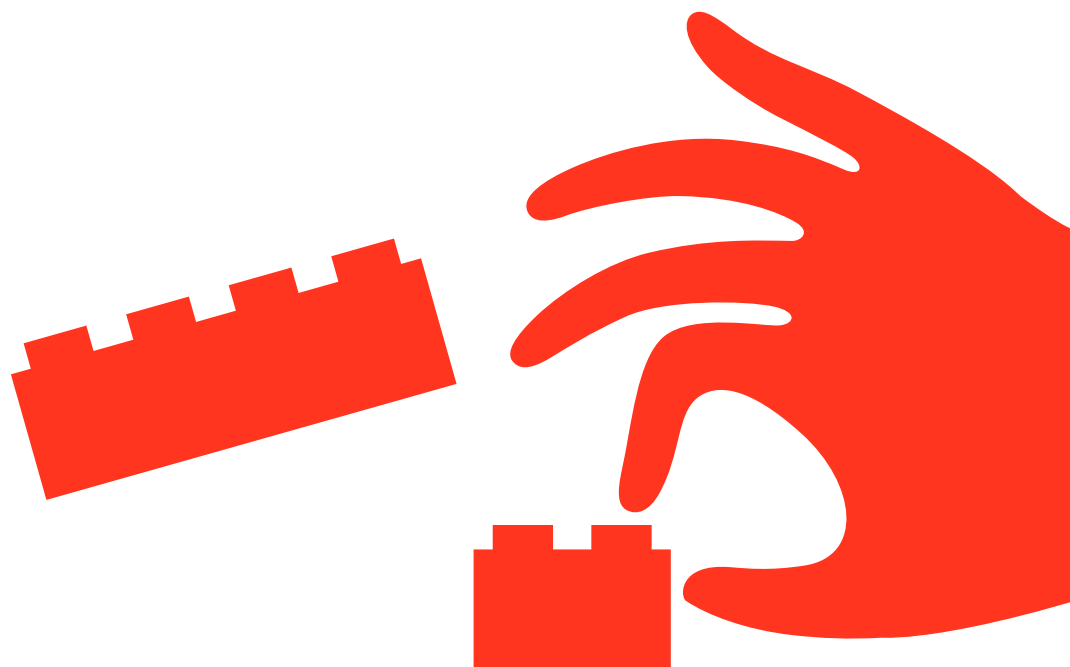


PLAY
INCLUDED



Implementation of Brick-by-Brick[®] programme in a primary school is simple

Suzi Telford teaches children aged 9 to 10 years old at Belleville Primary School, a mainstream state school in Wandsworth, London

Supporting a multitude of needs

In mainstream primary schools, teachers look after students with a range of needs, from emotional and social to registered special educational needs. In more recent years, teachers have noted that they have seen more children needing extra support with anxiety, forming relationships, building self-confidence, and engaging in social interactions with one another following the isolating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In addition to this, many schools, such as Suzi's, host Ukrainian and other refugees who arrive in the classroom with English as an Additional Language (EAL), or with no English skills at all. These students, in particular, may need extra support with making friends and getting to know others. Many teachers are therefore searching for

effective programmes to help all their students, no matter their need, with social and emotional wellbeing.

When Suzi learned about Play Included, the creators of the Brick-by-Brick[®] programme, she recognised that the majority of her students would benefit in some way from the collaborative LEGO[®] play programme:

"I could see that Brick Club would help the students in my class who needed support to manage their anxiety, relationships, and interactions with one another."

PLAY INCLUDED

Interactive, fun and slick implementation

Suzi completed the virtual Brick-by-Brick® Level 01 training course over a few days during the summer holidays, from the comfort of her own home. The course made a good impression: “The trainers made the course very interactive, fun, and slick. I had a really good feeling about the standard and quality of what was being offered and the background research.”

Suzi returned to school in September, ready to confidently set up her first weekly Brick Club; at first offering it as a free extracurricular activity to those children in her class who needed it the most. Suzi noted how easy it was to implement: “I was able to use my classroom as the meeting space and I also ensured that the club took place at a time when staff would still be at work so I had access to other members of staff and appropriate safeguarding measures, meaning the club didn’t incur additional costs.”

As part of the Brick-by-Brick® programme, Brick Club participants build LEGO® sets collaboratively. So, Suzi decided to purchase small LEGO® models as they could be completed by the children within an hour, which allowed for playtime during the session. For the Ukrainian refugees, who have limited English skills, the printable visual resources from Play Included, ranging from word maps to colours and size descriptors, meant that Suzi did not have to develop any additional resources.

Suzi later completed her Brick-by-Brick® Level 02 training course in-person, which gave her the confidence to expand Brick Club and involve more children in each session.



Impact on social and emotional wellbeing

Just a few weeks of Brick Club sessions had a noticeable impact on the children. Suzi noted the biggest improvement in the students was with speech, language and communication: “In the first two weeks, some of our students found it difficult to express themselves or communicate their needs during the LEGO® model building. However, by week three, it was as if everything had just fallen into place – suddenly they were able to have fun.”

Throughout the building process at Brick Club, the children developed confidence and problem-solving skills: “When things went wrong, the children displayed resilience and learned how to handle their frustration. The sessions also helped to improve their fine motor skills, which some of the students had not yet picked up.”

For the Ukrainian refugees, Suzi noted how they were able to benefit too: “The Ukrainian students’ limited language skills meant that at first it was difficult for them to participate in Brick Club. However, thanks to the resources from Play Included, they were able to participate more and more and develop their confidence. All of the children have furthered their social development thanks to Brick Club.”

Future plans

The Brick Club has been so well received by the school and parent community that there is now a waiting list of over 100 students who wish to join the programme. Suzi is hoping to make the club available to the rest of the school with the help of another member of staff.

