

Case study: Darton Academy STEM Club

Overview

Leonie Briggs is a STEM Ambassador, Teacher of Science and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Maths) Lead at Darton Academy in Barnsley. She started the school STEAM Club in 2015 with the aim of igniting a spark in all those attending. It was hoped this would also filter out into the whole school - to encourage them to investigate fantastic STEAM subjects, take on projects, be fully inclusive and hopefully lead to the young people taking on STEAM based careers.

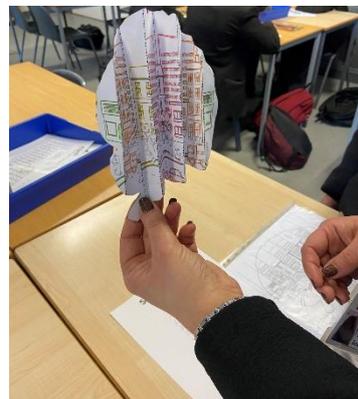


The school managed to secure a small budget to help finance projects and materials for the club and Leonie completed the [STEM Club Quality Award](#) from STEM Learning, which involves working towards a set of goals that ensures the club has a measure of excellence, contributing to the overall STEM subject success of students within the school.

Club structure

Leonie ropes in lots of contacts - including fellow STEM Ambassadors - to join in with the club from Formula 1 to members of the Oxford vaccine team. They really seem to enjoy visiting the club and having a place to share and test projects!

The club currently runs on a weekly basis after school with additional support, projects and materials added to STEAM Club teams plus holiday challenges!



Popular activities include the whole STEAM approach e.g., the Bloodhound Land Speed Record [Desert Wheels Project](#) and whole school STEAM projects visible for the entire community to see.

The club currently has an even male/female split with students from Years 7-10 in attendance.

Impact

Leonie said, "I am always learning! It's great to share ideas with others, especially with the [STEM Learning Network](#) and at [STEM Learning CPD](#) events. I speak to the members of the club – discover their passions and interests – then plan projects around this."

Leonie, continued, "Having a STEAM Club is a place to further STEAM knowledge, spark an interest in future careers and offer opportunities the young people may not have otherwise had. It is also a social and safe place where new friendships are forged, ideas shared, and discoveries are made. I am so proud of them and cannot wait to see what they become in the future."

Feedback

Leonie said, "It's wonderful to hear students talking about the club around school. I receive really positive feedback from parents/careers of those attending and it's even better when they share projects completed at home with me following inspiration from the club."

Student feedback about the club has included:

"I like STEAM Club because you understand things and it is an easy format." Year 8 student

"I like STEAM Club because we study interesting things." Year 10 student

Future plans

The school hope the STEAM club will grow from strength to strength attracting growing numbers, leading to student ambassadors running sub clubs, projects and forging stronger links between industry, local primary schools, and the community.

They are also hoping to gain the STEM Club Quality Gold Award!

Leonie's advice to a school thinking about starting a STEM Club is, "Use the resources around you! Do not be afraid to ask people to talk to and run projects for your STEAM Club, lots of people really like to join in and share their stories."

More information

DEBP are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. We work with employers to develop bespoke programmes to support young people. We manage the STEM Ambassador Hub in North Midlands (Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire) and South and East Yorkshire on behalf of STEM Learning. We are also the Enrichment Partnership for Yorkshire and Humber and support STEM Clubs.

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For more information about STEM Clubs email enrichment-partnership-yorkshire@debp.org