

Dalmarnock Primary School

2019

Case Study



Dalmarnock Primary School, Glasgow, works with their young people to provide a happy, stimulating and secure learning environment that encourages positive working attitudes in all their pupils, and fosters respect and tolerance for the beliefs and opinions of others.

Class teacher, Louise McGinlay hosts daily lunch clubs in the ICT Room where pupils have the opportunity to work on various STEM activities and projects. As a result, the pupils have an extensive knowledge of the world of STEM and regularly participate in STEM trips, initiatives and competitions. They have been involved with Glasgow Science Centre, where pupils won an engineering competition by building a Lego sorting machine and water fountain. Last year, a group of P6 pupils represented the school at the Scottish Learning Festival, showcasing their STEM boxes - a set of boxes which

contain weekly STEM challenges and are coordinated by P7 pupil Lennon, who is responsible for collecting, checking and distributing the boxes each week. Classes are given a different box every week, completing challenges which have been prepared by P7 pupils.

The Pilot of the Young STEM Leader (YSL) Programme has enabled pupils within Dalmarnock Primary School to work towards a series of badges and certificates for their CfE Second Level YSL Award (YSL2) and 7 pupils have now completed this. Every lunch time the YSLs work on their YSL2 Award: from regular completion of the YSL Log, trial runs of their events and the activities themselves, the ICT Room is a real hub for STEM learning and interactions. Louise is helping to influence a love of STEM for many of the YSLs within the school but many are also exposed to STEM outside of school. Sophie is in P6 and would like to be a photographer. Her mum's friend specialises in nature photography and this is something she'd like to do alongside her dream of becoming a vet. Macy is also in P6 and enjoys working with computers to write articles, stories and gaming scripts. She has been influenced by her dad, a Mechanical Engineer who often works on computers to build and organise data in preparation for physical repairs.

Sophie and Macy are the first to complete the YSL2 Award. They worked on a construction task with six P1 pupils and were surprised that the group loved it so much they told everyone about it. The following week more pupils from the class wanted to join and they wished they had been able to increase the numbers to gain experience working with even more people. Sophie has benefited from leading and she feels that she has learned how to start and maintain conversations with people, as well as having learned to enjoy the company of others. She can now organise things better to ensure that everyone involved in an activity has the opportunity to contribute. Macy is keen to do future

activities which involve stations and more active learning, giving pupils the chance to move around, so that she can gauge what they prefer and why.

Morgan, a P7 pupil is interested in engineering and at home often plays with Lego and completes experiments with her mum. She loves the idea of designing rides for theme parks but would also like to work towards finding a cure for cancer in the future. Morgan completed YSL2 by running an engineering club for her friends who missed out on the opportunity to take part last year. Her biggest challenge was working with her peers who are the same age and in the same class. In her first interaction, pupils became distracted and were throwing Lego which meant that Morgan needed to rethink her approach. Instead of enabling pupils to sit in separate groups, she combined them into one group for the second activity, so that she could see more easily if anyone was misbehaving.

Morgan wants to continue running the engineering club but feels she has given P7 the opportunity to attend and now wants to open it up to a different primary group. She feels better equipped to deal with silly behaviour and now knows how she would manage the situation. She feels more confident in her skill to be assertive and now understands the potential risks involved if she is not. Having the opportunity to be a YSL has been “one of the most fun experiences” of her life so far because she’s been able to run new clubs and work with people she wouldn’t normally work with.



Lennon, Zoe and Jayden worked together on their YSL2 Award and continue to run the club with pupils from the Nurture Room. They recognise that the pupils they are working with have additional support needs and their careful planning prepared them for this, making sure they had all the necessary resources ready the day before the activity. During the activities they were careful to be nice to and use “calming voices” when speaking to the participants. They ensured involvement of the participants by communicating to find out their interests which resulted in the YSLs having to learn and develop new skills. For instance, many of the participants wanted to learn origami, something none of the YSLs were proficient in. They used a selection of books and YouTube videos to learn and subsequently, delivered this to the keen participants. The YSLs completed an evaluation and the positive comments received have boosted Lennon’s confidence, showing him that being able to pass on knowledge to and work with younger pupils is a skill he now knows he has. He’s proud to be “able to go out and say I’m a YSL and I can show you how to do this.”

Veronika, Ella and Suki are also working towards their YSL2 and have been running a Science Club for P2 pupils who didn’t have the same STEM opportunities as the other primary classes. They were interested in making the experience fun but they weren’t properly prepared for their first activity and things did not go to plan. When they evaluated their performance, they realised that they had all stayed together and this meant that when the participants finished or became disinterested, they moved to different parts of the room to find something else to do. When they held their second activity, they each took responsibility for a different area of the room and they found that they were able to communicate more effectively, resulting in a better, more fun session. They’ve learned more about themselves too. Ella recognises that she used to be an independent worker and didn’t like sharing her ideas or answers but has had to adjust to working with people. As a result, she feels her confidence is much better and is getting stronger.

P7 Amber is interested in “all of STEM.” She wants to be a teacher, an influence that has come from the excellent teachers she’s had at school and her sisters: one who has just finished a Science degree and is training to become a teacher; the other who currently studies Psychology. Amber decided to join the YSL Programme because she can gain digital badges which will act as a record of her achievements when she goes on to high school next

year. She has been leading a “Sumdog” club for P7 but is already planning her next one which will be a “Glow Club,” also for P7 pupils, where she’ll host activities showing pupils how to use PowerPoint, Word, Excel and Sway. However, she’s keen to run a science club for younger pupils to help to involve them in STEM and would like to do this too.

Amber has also completed the YSL2 Award and has learned a lot on her journey. She really liked having the opportunity to run a weekly club, particularly because she felt she was a “real leader and fully in charge.” While the club was always supervised by school staff, Amber had the main responsibility and was encouraged to make decisions for herself, building her confidence in leading and helping her to accept that having responsibility includes giving instructions and taking charge. She also found the YSL Programme to be a great driving force and when she first started, she was determined to see it through to the end. The YSL Log supported her in this, helping her to think about things, including potential risks, and take notes to make sure she did what she had intended to in each activity.

Louise plans to recruit a new group of YSLs, so that they too can achieve YSL2. Moreover, her current plan involves those who are newly qualified working with the new YSLs to offer guidance and support to devise their own interactions and complete their YSL Logs.

