



Develop Coding In The Early Years A Teacher's Thoughts on LEGO® Education Coding Express

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ASHBURY MEADOW
PRIMARY SCHOOL

"When I saw Coding Express, I knew instantly that it would be a success."

Lauren Millington, EYFS coordinator

CODING SKILLS AND BEYOND

Since September 2014, pupils from the ages of 5 to 16 in the UK have been introduced to coding as part of the computing programmes of study. With a focus on developing computational thinking skills and creativity, this new curriculum is designed to equip pupils with the skills needed to adapt to a rapidly changing world. Not every child will become a computer programmer, but the skills that are developed and applied during the process of learning to code are fundamental and transferable across the entire curriculum; skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CODING

LEGO® Education Coding Express is a new resource from LEGO® Education, which is designed to introduce the foundational skills of coding to the youngest learners. Designed for ages 2 and up, Coding Express engages groups of children in hands-on play using familiar DUPLO® bricks and the construction of a train set. The new 'Action Bricks', a set of special colour coded pieces, can be placed at different points along the track. The train, which includes a colour sensor located underneath the carriage, drives over an Action Brick and performs a different action based on which colour it detects. For example, if the train detects a red Action brick, it will stop.

Young learners are therefore able to start experimenting with the action bricks by adding them to the track and observing what the train does. In terms of coding skills, this activity introduces them to conditional coding and also sequencing i.e 'if the train drives over a red action brick then it will stop'. All of these skills are practised and developed whilst learners are playing with the train and recreating or inventing their own journeys.

WHAT TEACHERS ARE SAYING

We recently spoke with Ashbury Meadow Primary School, a school in Manchester that have been working with LEGO® Education Coding Express with their Nursery children. Here is what Lauren Millington had to say about her experience with Coding Express in Early Years Foundation Stage:

What were your initial impressions of Coding Express?

"Over the years I have had experience of working within a private nursery setting, a reception class and I currently teach a nursery class within a school. LEGO has always been one of the most popular resources and children have always loved constructing, de-constructing and building imaginative play around it. Therefore, when I saw Coding Express, I knew instantly that it would be a success.

How would you describe your overall experience of using Coding Express from a teaching perspective?

LEGO is already a resource our children love and the fact that Coding Express can be used to teach early coding skills alongside their development across the 7 areas of learning within EYFS is amazing. Coding Express really enables me to heighten the elements of learning through play and develop engaging activities. One such activity focussed on planning a journey to a desired destination during our 'Transport' topic. We used the picture cards to build the different settings around the track and the children made their own decisions about where they wanted to go and how they could ensure the train got to the destination.

Coding Express has been particularly effective in supporting our EAL pupils. By exploring the train set and creating journeys, the children have been able to practice talking through planning and explaining instructions that will solve different challenges. Coding Express also stretches my imagination as a teacher in regards to how I can utilise it as a cross-curricular resource. I have found impulsive uses for it when observing my pupils around the continuous provision, making maths links e.g. 'How many passengers are on the train?' and supporting turn taking and sharing.

What was the response from the children?

When Coding Express is available for children, either in the continuous provision or used within a planned lesson, they are always excited and intrigued. They are keen to explore, play and experiment with the different Action Bricks to see what they can make the train do.

WHAT OUR HEAD OF INNOVATION IS SAYING

David Gregory is Head of Innovation for JTRS but before joining the company in 2018, David spent 7 years as head of UK sales for LEGO® Education. Within this role he supported hundreds of schools with the integration of LEGO Education resources into teaching and learning. David is also a LEGO Education Academy Certified Teacher Trainer. We asked David to share his thoughts on Coding Express based on his wealth of experience and knowledge of LEGO Education.

"LEGO Education Coding Express brings a classic train set to life. With additional features that introduce early coding concepts (via the app) to preschoolers. These include sequencing, looping and conditional coding, and develop problem solving skills, critical thinking, collaboration and social and emotional skills".

"Having got my hands on Coding Express at a pre-launch event in Billund (the Home of LEGO), it was clear to see that this is FAR more than just a coding resource and FAR more than a STEAM resource. It is something which sits at the heart of the EYFS framework. It's designed from Age 2+ and is truly versatile. The free additional app allows you to make changes (cause and effect) to the physical action bricks and provides a number of additional learning activities".

"One of the biggest challenges we face in schools, is how we prepare our students for the ever changing, technological world of employment. LEGO Education are now helping us start the journey, from a preschool age".

"Don't miss out!"

All Aboard The Coding Express

LEGO® Education Coding Express is available now! We are offering a number of free hands-on workshops to schools across the UK so, if this is of interest to you, please get in touch. We are also offering 15% off all purchases of Coding Express until the 31st May 2019. Either get in touch for a quote or visit our online shop and use coupon code STEM15 at the checkout. If you would like any further information or have any questions, you can visit our website or get in touch with us.



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