



# Froebelian Futures

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## Practitioner Inquiry Project Report

# Leadership opportunities & reflections

### Project title

Block Play in the Primary Classroom

### Subtitle (if applicable)

Using block play to foster Froebelian principles and practices in the primary classroom

### Your name and role

Elayne Gray (Acting Depute Head Teacher)

### 1. What are the implications of this research for:

- The team/setting as a whole
- Pedagogy
- Resourcing
- Policy
- The sector / your networks / management beyond your immediate setting.

(Please aim to write between 250 minimum and 500 words maximum, using the box below. Please do not disclose the identity of any individuals in your comments, as this form will be part of your colleague's public record of their project).

The Block Play research completed as part of the Froebelian Futures project has supported practitioners throughout our Primary 1 and Primary 2 and leaders throughout the Early Years. We have a committed staff team who were keen to learn further about how to create rich block play opportunities in order to develop and extend the learning of those in the early years.

The research carried out by the lead practitioner has been shared widely amongst the early years staff and also with a practitioner in P6 who was interested in providing block play experiences for learners in the upper primary school. The developments made in Primary 1 and 2 block play areas have seen our early learners work more collaboratively to create symbolic representations and more complex structures. This has helped to develop their mathematical thinking, problem solving and design which are key skills for learning, life and work. As a result there has been a refreshed mindset of a number of practitioners in the avenues which block play can take us and how they can be used to challenge and extend our learners.

Resourcing the Froebelian wooden blocks in both Primary 1 and Primary 2 was costly, however the expenditure has already proven worth it as the open-ended nature of the blocks has provided our learners with endless opportunities to use their own voice within their play; create their own narratives and further develop their logical and mathematical thinking.

**2. What value do you place on practitioner-research – and what more can be done in your setting/locality to enable it to continue as part of routine practice going forward?**

This high quality practitioner inquiry has been hugely beneficial to our establishment, it has allowed our practitioner to develop their own understanding of the importance of block play and the theory behind it alongside enhancing the quality of learning within the early years of our school. Having participated in the research our practitioner has then gone on to deliver professional learning opportunities for colleagues alongside less formal support across the stages in enhancing and developing block play.

The practitioner research has truly allowed us to establish leadership at all levels as the practitioner was able to lead the initiative amongst children and staff and the learners were able to lead their own learning due to the open ended and sustainable nature of the resource.

As mentioned above the investment for the inquiry was hugely beneficial for our establishment and indeed would be for any establishment looking to invest in block play. To continue with similar practitioner inquiries in the future it may be useful if there was a 'lending library' type system where costly ideas could be trialled prior to investment to ensure they will be beneficial for the school.

**3. What have you learned as a leader through supporting this research / programme? (100 words)**

Through supporting this research inquiry I have learned a huge amount from our practitioner. This includes the vast range of possibilities that come from creating enriched and high quality block play spaces. Using open-ended resources and loose parts allows learners to investigate and discover throughout their play, it has provided me with opportunities to reflect upon my leadership and how to observe and assess the vast range of skills that children develop through rich block play environments.

Please save this document as a PDF and share it as feedback with your researching practitioner/colleague **and** with us at [froebelianfutures@ed.ac.uk](mailto:froebelianfutures@ed.ac.uk). Please ask them to upload it to their project report page (Edit > Question 12) as a condition of completing their certificate. If you have any questions about this process please contact us at the email address above.