



Scotstoun Primary School
Session 24-25
Play-Based and Inquiry-Based Learning Position Statement



At Scotstoun Primary, we believe that children learn best when they are engaged, curious, and actively involved in their learning in line with our school values including creativity. Play-based and inquiry-based learning are central to our approach, fostering creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills. By incorporating these frameworks into our curriculum, we create a rich, dynamic, and inclusive environment that encourages exploration, collaboration, and the development of meta-skills. Our aim is to nurture independent, lifelong learners who are empowered to ask questions, seek answers, and construct their own understanding of the world around them.

Key Principles

1.

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning allows children to engage in meaningful experiences that promote both social and cognitive development. At Scotstoun Primary, we provide opportunities for purposeful play that is linked to learning objectives while still allowing pupils the freedom to explore their interests. Play fosters:

- Creativity and Imagination: Pupils are encouraged to use their imagination, create scenarios, and engage in role-play, which helps develop problem-solving skills and critical thinking.
- Social Skills: Collaborative play enables pupils to communicate, negotiate, and work with others, promoting social and emotional development.
- Engagement and Joy in Learning: Through play, children naturally engage with concepts and skills in a way that is enjoyable and motivating, leading to deeper learning and retention.

2.

Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based learning encourages pupils to take an active role in their learning by asking questions, designing, creating and evaluating their own understanding of key concepts. At Scotstoun Primary, we foster inquiry by:

- Encouraging Curiosity: Pupils are guided to ask thoughtful questions, generate hypotheses, and explore topics of interest, empowering them to take ownership of their learning.
- Facilitating Investigations: Teachers act as facilitators, helping pupils design experiments, gather data, and draw conclusions through hands-on exploration and research.
- Critical Thinking and Reflection: Inquiry-based learning challenges pupils to think deeply, analyse information, and reflect on their findings, helping them develop meta-skills such as problem-solving and independent thinking.

3.

The Good Lesson in Play and Inquiry-Based Learning

A good lesson in inquiry-based learning at Scotstoun Primary combines structure with flexibility, allowing pupils to explore within a guided framework. The key elements include:

- Clear Learning Intentions: Teachers outline learning goals through exploration of pupil lead questions, while encouraging pupils to explore how to achieve those goals through play or inquiry.
- Active Engagement: Lessons are pupil-centred, with children actively participating in hands-on activities, investigations, or play scenarios that promote meaningful learning.
- Ongoing Observation and Feedback: Teachers observe pupils in action, offering timely feedback and scaffolding to extend learning, while also using inquiry assessment frameworks to measure engagement and success.
- Reflection and Sharing: Pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their inquiry experiences, share their learning with peers, and discuss the strategies they used.

4.

Collaborative Learning in play and Inquiry-Based Lessons

Collaboration is a key component of inquiry-based learning. By working with peers, pupils develop social skills, learn from others, and engage in shared problem-solving. At Scotstoun Primary, we foster collaborative learning through:

- Group Exploration: Pupils work together to explore materials, solve problems, or conduct experiments, learning from one another's insights and building on each other's ideas.
- Peer Feedback: Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas, explain their thinking, and provide constructive feedback to their peers, promoting a culture of collective learning.
- Teacher Facilitation: Teachers guide collaborative play or inquiry projects by asking open-ended questions, encouraging discussion, and helping pupils to consider multiple perspectives.

5.

Meta-skills Development in Play and Inquiry-Based Learning

Play and inquiry naturally develop meta-skills, and we encourage pupils to be aware of what meta-skills they have used in each lesson or block of lessons. At Scotstoun Primary, we prioritise the development of these skills, recognising their importance in preparing pupils for future challenges. Our approach includes:

- Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking: Pupils are encouraged to explore problems, think critically, and try out different solutions during play and inquiry activities.
- Self-Regulation and Independence: Through self-directed play and inquiry, pupils learn to manage their time, make decisions, and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Creativity and Innovation: Both play-based and inquiry-based learning foster creativity, allowing pupils to approach problems with fresh perspectives, experiment with new ideas, and innovate.

6.

Differentiation in Play and Inquiry-Based Learning

At Scotstoun Primary, we recognise that every child learns differently, and we are committed to providing a differentiated approach to play-based and inquiry-based learning. This allows all pupils to engage with activities that are suited to their developmental stage, interests, and abilities. Our differentiated approach includes:

- **Flexible Play Options:** We offer a variety of play opportunities, from child-led, child initiated and adult-initiated experiences. This allows us to cater to different learning styles, interests, and abilities.
- **Personalised Inquiry:** Inquiry-based projects are tailored to allow elements of pupil choice and they can lead their learning throughout their project or task.
- **Targeted Scaffolding:** Teachers provide scaffolding to ensure that all pupils can access learning, whether through guided questioning, modelling, or differentiated tasks. Through skilled and high-quality interactions this enables learning to move forward.
- **Extension Opportunities:** For pupils who show a deeper understanding or interest, we offer opportunities to extend their play or inquiry projects, encouraging further exploration and discovery.

Commitment to Professional Development

At Scotstoun Primary, we are committed to continuous professional development for our staff, ensuring that they are equipped with the skills and knowledge to implement effective play-based and inquiry-based learning. Staff meet regularly to review provisions and provocations, assessing what needs to stay to reinforce learning and what needs changed to inspire new learning and development. Training opportunities are provided on play and inquiry approaches, strategies for fostering meta-skills, differentiation, and collaborative learning in the classroom.

Conclusion

Play-based and inquiry-based learning are integral to our approach at Scotstoun Primary, fostering curiosity, independence, and a love of learning. Through the integration of these frameworks, we provide a rich, dynamic, and inclusive learning environment where every pupil can thrive. By emphasising the development of meta-skills, collaborative learning, and pupil lead learning, we are committed to preparing pupils for success both in school and beyond.