



GREENHEART
GET SET! 

4. Setting up the learning environment

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‘The most carefully thought-out plans and designs are likely to change at some point on the journey.’

1. Introduction

Whilst many aspects of the Get Set learning environment can be decided from an early stage, such as learning space layout, it is recommended that long-term plans are in place. This will help facilitate setting up the environment and avoid the need to make substantial changes during the year.

Most spaces do not allow for all areas of learning to be covered at all times. It is important to acknowledge that planning for a Get Set environment is less about the actual 'space', and more about the needs of the children and the gaps in their learning.

'The use of space is key to allow children to work more flexibly in their play, as well as encouraging collaboration.'



Example of a Get Set learning environment

2. Key Principals: Enabling Environments

When adopting the Get Set approach, the Reception environment will require less adaptation, with the majority of change being seen in Years 1 and 2. As the programme is designed for a phased introduction, this guide will focus primarily on the Year 1 learning space, as this is likely to be the first requiring significant development.

When first planning for the Get Set learning environment, it is important to understand the underlying principles.

Blended environment

The Get Set Learning space is a blend of true continuous and enhanced provision alongside more formal teaching styles and directed activities. Effective use of assessment and careful planning (see associated Get Set guides), allows pupils to be more independent in their learning choices and better at self-regulatory behaviours.

To this end, the learning environment must effectively blend formal teaching spaces with the capacity for pupils to initiate their own learning. Adaptable resource areas, termed 'Learning Labs', are effectively positioned and have their contents strategically planned to meet the learning needs of the pupils being taught.

An adapted approach to pedagogy (see Get Set guide) ensures that pupils maximise their learning potential through engagement with an enhanced environment. The blended approach ensures pupils are challenged and have full coverage of curriculum objectives, whilst making them more effective and confident learners.

Continuous and Enhanced Provision

The two aspects, continuous and enhanced provision, work in tandem to provide a clear structure for active learning.

Enhanced provision extends learning by enabling children to develop their ideas and interests. They work almost as an extension to existing learning.

New resources, books, equipment or artefacts are made available for a fixed period. These new additions do not replace continuous provision, but add a new dimension alongside.



3. Learning Labs

The environment is divided into multiple Learning Labs that link directly to different areas of the curriculum. Each Learning Lab is a clearly defined area of provision where children independently access appropriate resources they wish to use.

Learning Labs will be determined by the needs of the children and the amount of space in the classroom; however, it is suggested that the following Labs should be prioritised;

1. Writing and mark marking
2. Books and puppets
3. Number and Shape, space & measure
4. Art and design
5. Science and investigation

Additional Learning Labs you may wish to consider include: construction, water, sand, paint and workshop, woodwork, transient art, music, small world, large and small block, and domestic role play.

Resources

The resources we provided in Learning Labs should be:

- Fit for multi-purpose use and 'open-ended' to encourage children to think creatively and offer challenge
- Purposeful and planned to help meet the needs of the KS1 curriculum
- An extension from current EYFS provision
- Stored separately in clearly labelled, front-facing baskets and boxes that are easily accessed on shelving that is at the appropriate height

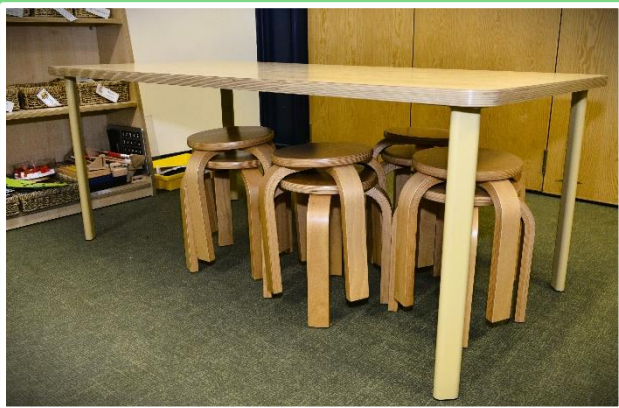


Example of a Learning Lab

4. Formal Teaching Spaces

The need for children to develop formal learning skills and produce written work at a desk space is not to be overlooked as children enter Key Stage 1. A balance of both approaches is essential to ensure children are confident, independent learners who are able to succeed.

In the Get Set curriculum's autumn term, formal learning takes up around 35-40% of the daily timetable, and it is key that the learning space is accommodating to this need. Children will require a 'desk space', but you should be flexible in how this is managed. A Year 1 Get Set classroom will not have space for 15 tables and 30 chairs.



Formal spaces

In order to incorporate formal learning within a Get Set learning environment, consider using:

- Stools instead of chairs so that they can be quickly stacked and stored underneath the table when not in use
- Additional learning spaces for Read, Write, Inc. groups
- A carousel of practical and formal Maths activities for children to access in groups

Throughout the year, the percentage of formal learning will increase, and the environment can be adapted accordingly.

It may be necessary to transform certain Learning Labs to meet the most demanding curriculum needs and add further tables and stools to provide more desk spaces if required.

5. Journey Boards

The importance of the journey board is discussed in Get Set guide **3: Planning for continuous development**. When preparing to include a journey board in the classroom, it is important to consider:

- How accessible it is to all adults and children who will contribute daily to the board
- Its location in the classroom so it is well used and seen, without causing access difficulties



A collaborative area

You may wish to adapt a traditional display board; however, the use of a magnetic board will allow a quick and efficient way to display material that can be reorganised fluidly, as well as promoting the children to access the board independently.

Shelf or hooks by the journey board can be used to display examples work and objects made by the children.

6. Classroom Layout

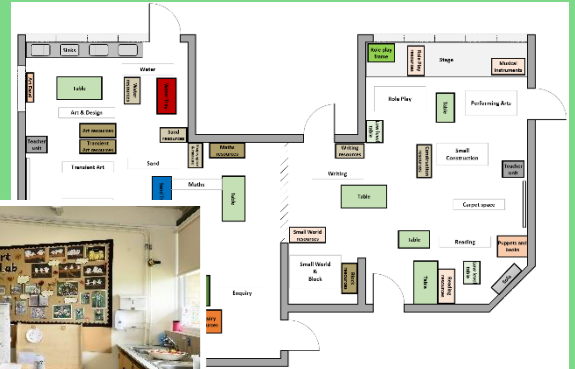
When planning the layout of the Get Set environment, the logistics of the space and its use must be considered:

- **Positions of sinks** – consider which Learning Labs require easy access to sinks and water supply and locate accordingly
- **Floor material** – with a move away from more formal learning, consideration should be given to ensuring the floor covering is suitably robust. The floor must be able to handle the use of sand, water and art resources and be easily cleaned.
- **Fire exits** – health and safety will be a critical consideration when arranging equipment storage areas and learning spaces.
- **Noise** - predict the noise implications of certain Learning Labs, such as Role play and Music, and how best to allocate them to control classroom noise. It is recommended that Learning Labs which are likely to generate noise are separated around the room to reduce their impact.

Classroom Plan

The Get Set environment is one that is under continual review and change.

When planning the learning space, it is important to keep flexibility in mind and have areas designated to facilitate the different types of learning.



7. Outside Areas

The outdoor area is an important part of the Get Set curriculum and should work to extend the classroom, not replicate it. Proper use of an outdoor area can offset overcome classroom limitations such as mess, noise and physical activity, with children able to free explore freely the wonder of nature in all weathers.

When designing the outdoor provision, it is important to remember that even a limited space can be transformed to allow children to actively learn and critically think using the Get Set approach.

Building an outdoor learning space

When designing and resourcing your outdoor space, the following consideration are recommended:

- Large equipment such as bricks, poles, tyres, wheels, and crates allow for 'open-ended' learning and multiple use to develop creativity.
- Learning sheds are a valuable space which can provide books, magazines, comics, writing materials and clipboards for the children to use when their interests allow.
- Inclusion of an outdoor water tray, sand tray or mud kitchen is essential. It is possible to create such areas at a low cost by filling old tyres or using existing tuff trays.
- Store equipment so it is easily accessible without the need of adult support or time consuming set up



Example of a Get Set learning environment

It may be possible for Year 1 to access current outdoor provision being used in EYFS. However, there is likely to be issues regarding access, staff ratios and timetables that will need to be addressed.

8. Suggested Resources

It is valuable to build a selection of open-ended resources that do not have one pre-determined use. This will encourage children to think more creatively, promote choice and encourage imagination. One resource has multiple uses in a Get Set classroom. For example, the use of wooden blocks can be used in the Mathematics lab to represent a day of rain on a large-scale bar chart. Alternatively, in the Construction lab, blocks can be used to construct a London monument. Children must design, problem solve and develop a structure that replicates Tower Bridge.

Other possible suggested open-ended resources include; sand, water, clay, different fabrics, paint, selection of mark marking materials, natural resources such as wooden slices, tubes and blocks, shells, pebbles, stones, dried fruit slices, pinecones, and many more.

Revisiting EYFS resources for some children will ensure there is progression and challenge for all. This can be achieved by incorporating resources into Year 1 Learning Labs or planned for during Get Set, Wow days. For further guidance see the Get Set guide **4: Get Set, Wow! Practical vertical differentiation.**

9. Further thoughts

After planning and the initial setup of the Get Set Learning space, teachers should be prepared to continuously review how pupils engage with the learning environment and adapt the provision accordingly.

Effective assessment and remodelling of the environment is key to ensuring pupils remain challenged and inspired to further their learning.

The learning environment and curriculum opportunities for a pupil should not be limited to that of their year group. The Get Set approach utilises vertical differentiation and opportunities should be planned for children to engage with appropriate learning activities at the most suitable level. Effective planning across the EYFS phase should allow for children to engage with learning opportunities in earlier or later year groups, within appropriately planned environments. For further guidance see the Get Set guide **4: Get Set, Wow! Practical vertical differentiation**.



Appendices and Examples

Example of room layout

