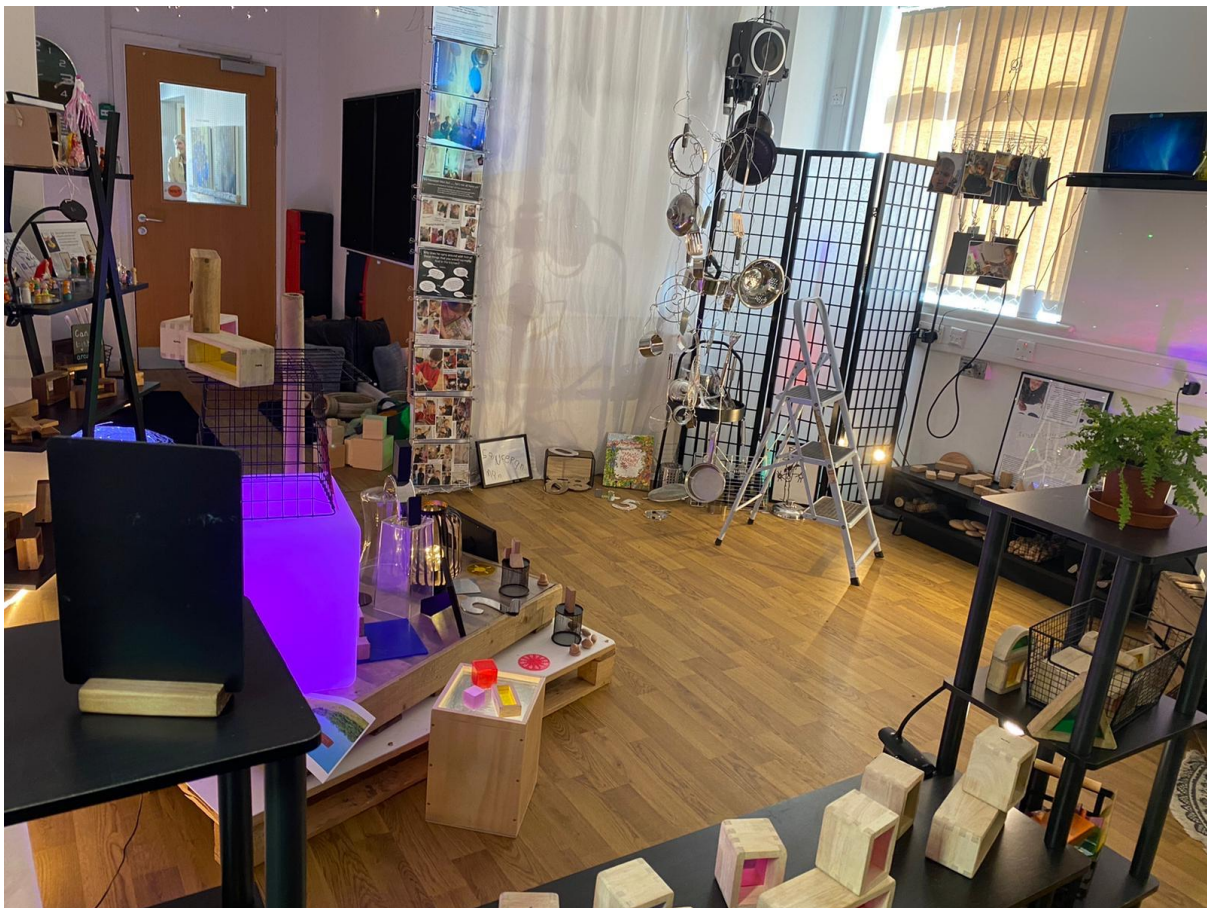


How to run a Continuous Provision environment

In the UK, Continuous Provision is typically seen in the early years with children up to 5 years of age. However, it is being used effectively with older children in schools across the country (Fisher 2020). This document outlines some key considerations for those colleagues introducing Continuous Provision into Key Stage 1 with a particular focus on deepening these children's mathematical learning. Please also see our sister document: '[How does Continuous Provision support mathematical learning?](#)'.

Getting started



If you are moving to Continuous Provision early in Year 1 you will be building on a way of working that the children from Reception are used to. Before introducing it, it is good to make opportunities to observe and discuss with Reception colleagues how their room is organised, how they plan their days, and how they involve other adults in children's learning. Discuss your constraints, the things you want to keep, and those you might have to change., both in terms of your own practice and that of Reception. Consider how you might introduce the children to using their new Year 1/2 space. If you are considering planning Continuous Provision areas from scratch, try to begin with one area and build up gradually,

to avoid overwhelming children and to assess what you and your team can realistically manage.

Adults will need to invest time observing and playing with children within the new areas, so they become informed about the learning possibilities. Regularly reviewing provision is important to acknowledge what is going well (or not) and to consider ways to overcome potential challenges.

Although Continuous Provision will remain largely consistent over time, you will make changes and enhancements, developing the area in response to both the children's interests and to connect with the developing mathematics curriculum. For instance, you might consider adding non-fiction picture books to the blocks, or ten-frames to the small loose parts.

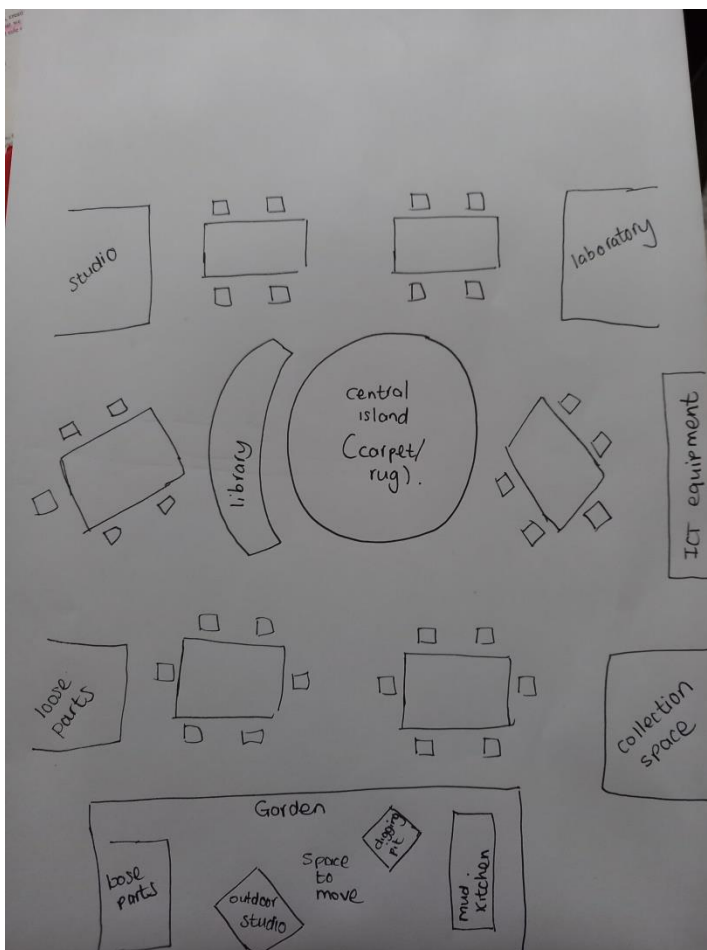
Some practical considerations



- What spaces do you need to accommodate:

- whole class teaching?
- groups / individuals / pairs?
- How many adults will you have working at different times?
- Which areas are fixed? e.g. access to outdoors, water sources, etc
- What noise level will be expected in different areas, avoiding quieter areas alongside those which will potentially be noisier?
- What areas are you considering as Continuous Provision?
- What resources are available for these areas and how will these be stored?

It might help to draw a sketch plan of your space (include outdoors if you have it) identifying the areas you want to create. Play with possible configurations and share these with colleagues. [Here is one Y1 example:](#)



Studio: creative resources

Laboratory: scientific and mathematical resources

Physical resources

Conduct an audit identifying what you already have in the room. (You could use our Continuous Provision posters to audit what you have and might wish to develop.) Considering the children's skills and knowledge you plan to develop will help identify the resources you may need. For example, loose parts can help to develop children's counting,

picture books act as mathematical enhancements to block or small world play. (We have some examples linked to shape, space and measures here: <https://earlymaths.org/spatial-books/>.)

If you're low on, or missing, resources, it may be worth having a word with colleagues who might be able to gift or swap some.

How adults support mathematical learning



A timetable of the routines and rhythms of the day that are consistent and fixed will shape how adults work in relation to Continuous Provision and mathematics. Who is in the classroom and when? How fixed are their roles and at what times? Do you have an outdoor space to include in terms of adult cover?

Year 1 Timetable Autumn

	8:50	9:00	9:30	10:45	11:45	12:00	13:00	13:15-15:00	
Monday	Handwriting	Phonics	English		Review & Story Time	Lunch	Guided Reading	Science	
Tuesday	Handwriting	Phonics	Maths		Review & Story Time	Lunch	Guided Reading	Foundation Subject	
Wednesday	Handwriting	Phonics	English		Review & Story Time	Lunch	Guided Reading	Foundation Subject	
Thursday	Handwriting	Phonics	Maths		Review & Story Time	Lunch	Guided Reading	Foundation Subject	
Friday	Handwriting	Phonics	English		Review & Story Time	Lunch	Guided Reading	Foundation Subject	Assembly

In the Autumn term, maths and English lessons are spread over a whole morning. Each group works on a rotation doing an adult-led task each day. For the rest of their morning, they access provision. A similar setup happens in the afternoons.

Above is an example of a Y1 timetable where continuous provision has been integrated into teaching episodes.

Starting with an area you all feel confident with and slowly building on this will help settle the children. An adult occasionally supporting the areas can help you assess its value. They can play alongside the children, following their leads and modelling adult thinking out loud e.g., "If I buy this, I am wondering if I have enough money left to buy that too?"

The role of the adult is fundamental in creating an environment that promotes autonomous learners. Adults are key in supporting children through conversations, commenting and asking questions that support and guide children's thinking and learning. Examples of these interactions are included on our provision posters. Children's play – including mathematical play - is joyously unpredictable and adults need to be sensitive to the child's mathematical interests, as well as the mathematics being taught.

Adults can also support children to feed back to the rest of the class. With only one or two adults in the Year 1 or Year 2 classroom, there will be less time to observe, and the role of regular times for group and class reflection and review becomes important: *"What have you been working on in the block area this morning?"*, *"Please come and share what you've been thinking and learning with us all."*

Sharing photographs aid reflection on what is taking place for both children and adults, providing prompts for further mathematical exploration and learning. Having a board nearby to display these can be useful in developing children's ideas. Photographs of what the child has been doing mathematically could also be sent home for the child to share with their family.

Reviewing and maintaining the provision

- How will you draw upon observations of all the adults working with the children? Maybe a notebook attached to the new area?
- How might we identify next steps in children's learning? Good places to go for this are Birth to Five Matters (<https://birthto5matters.org.uk>) our Spatial Reasoning trajectory (<https://earlymaths.org/spatial-reasoning-toolkit/>), or the comprehensive Learning Trajectories site (<https://www.learningtrajectories.org>)
- How and when will you evaluate the impact of the changes? A possible timescale is after half a term.

When children become responsible for provision, they will take pride in and value their resources. In Years 1 and 2 it can be effective to have individuals or pairs of children responsible for certain areas. Using pupil voice to help shape provision is important, by asking children which elements of continuous provision they find particularly interesting mathematically, or if there is anything else they would like to see added to the resources available. Including children in discussions about the upkeep of areas and the maintenance and tidying away of materials helps promote their autonomy, self-esteem, and awareness of their environment. Good luck!

Reference

Fisher, J. (2020). *Moving on to KS1: Improving transition into primary school*. 2nd edition. Oxford: OUP