

Playful Pedagogies: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Constructing Meaning

An Oxford Education Deanery Event

Wednesday 25th March 2026, 10:00-16:30



The
Oxford
Education
Deanery



Join us for a play-based practitioner-focused CPD day to:

- Engage in active play-based activities and reflection
- Learn from researcher and other practitioner insights
- Contribute to collective understanding of how playful approaches can transform pedagogy and policy

Join us on Wednesday 25 March 2026 for a day of exploring how play-based pedagogies can deepen thinking, spark creativity, and help children construct meaning.

The event is tailored for primary practitioners (working with children between 5 and 12 years old), but colleagues teaching younger or older learners are warmly welcome. If you've used playful pedagogies in your classroom or school and would like to share your experience, please contact us to join the roundtable.

Programme

10:00-10:30 **Registration and coffee**

10:30-10:45 **Welcome & introduction**

The opening talk will focus on the pillars of the event: critical thinking, creativity, and the construction of meaning through play-based pedagogies.

10:45-11:15 **Opening talk – Prof Kathy Sylva OBE**

11:15-11:30 **Coffee break**

11:30-12:15 **Workshop 1*: Dramatic play – Dr Faidra Faitaki**

*The workshops will involve 20-minute presentations of research findings on the topic, with 20-minutes hands-on engagement in playful learning activities, and 5 minutes for discussion, questions, and collective sense-making. Active participation required.

12:15-13:00 **Workshop 2*: Learning through songs – Dr Cate Hamilton**

13:00-14:00 **Lunch**

14:00-14:45 **Workshop 3*: Play & AI – Dr Sara Ratner**

14:45-15:30 **Workshop 4*: Policy into playful practice: A culture of play – Jasen Booton**

15:30-15:45 **Coffee break**

15:45-16:30 **Practitioner roundtable & roundup**

The Practitioner Roundtable will involve contributions from current practitioners. It will cover the perceived effects of playful learning on critical thinking, creativity, and/or learning, as well as relevant implementation considerations/suggestions.

Throughout the day, we will gather participants' insights, experiences, and critical reflections to inform a collaborative think piece on playful pedagogies in policy and practice. Your contributions will help shape our collective understanding of how playful approaches can transform educational frameworks across institutional, governmental, and community settings. This emerging work will examine the tensions, opportunities, and innovations at the intersection of play, learning, and policy implementation.

