

OPAL Newsletter

October 2024

What is OPAL?

We are launching the OPAL Primary Programme to enhance playtime by promoting physical activity, social skills, cooperation, creativity, and enjoyment. This program acknowledges the changing nature of childhood, as many children now spend six hours a day on screens and only five hours a week playing outside. OPAL has been tested in over 800 schools worldwide, winning awards for improving students' experience. By enriching playtime—20% of their school day—OPAL aims to give children back meaningful opportunities to learn and grow. Schools using OPAL have reported more student enjoyment, fewer disputes, and improved behavior.

Reflect on your own childhood: what types of play did you enjoy? This program strives to provide those valuable play experiences for today's children.

Want to be involved?

Become a Parent Play Champion!

Support our school's journey to enhance outdoor play.

As a Parent Play Champion, you will:

- Promote the importance of play to parents and stakeholders
- Build community connections to source skills and donations
- Help engage parents in play events and share outdoor play sessions
- Provide feedback from parents to the OPAL Working Group

Interested? Speak to Miss Bradley or Mr. Lynch for more information!

Want to find out more?

Please follow this link to look at the OPAL website where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk

Please follow these links to explore OPAL in action at different schools.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l427pLSNRGQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HWz3-wjmbyY>

wjmbyY



As we improve play opportunities for your children, you may find that we are asking you for resources and are making changes about how the children use the school grounds.

They may use more of the grounds, for more of the year. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like. The experiences we as a school are fostering is essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on



health and safety, wellbeing and development.



We will be supported by OPAL for 18 months and there will be an opportunity to come and talk to the OPAL mentor at your child's school. If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website (www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk), where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

In the coming 18 months you will be invited to events where you can come and see for yourselves what is happening and have the opportunity to join in too.

I can't be a Parent Play Champion but still want to support, can I?

We're looking for donations to enhance our playtimes. If you have any items such as hats, plastic crates, frying pans, a buggy, plastic tubes, small digging tools, or wooden planks, please send them into school.

Got a special skill? Access to a digger? We'd love volunteers to help us create a sand pit and digging area on our school grounds.

Your support will make a big difference!

We would love to hear your thoughts about our current lunchtimes. Please take a moment to complete our parent survey:

<https://forms.gle/gdPquNRiJVnwiumJ8>

We're excited about this project and hope you will support us in our efforts to enhance playtime for all children.

Best wishes,
Mr. Lynch and Miss Bradley