



Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) update

November 2024



Happy 1st anniversary!!

We have now completed our first full year of OPAL play and it has been a great success. More children are loving being outside, no matter what the weather, as there is now so much more to do. Whether it is playing with cable reels and planks, digging in the sand pit, enjoying imaginative play in the small world area or exploring the wooden platforms in the nature area, OPAL is offering a creative and exciting alternative to the regular activities in the classroom. In addition to the areas already being used, over the next term we will hopefully be adding a pipe and mound for crawling through and rolling down!

Through this kind of play not only are children more active at lunchtime, they are also having the opportunity to further develop life skills such as cooperation, team work and problem solving. They are becoming motivated and enthusiastic builders, engineers, explorers and designers.

Wellies are being managed well by the children but please ensure that both wellies and school shoes have your child's name in.

Thank you for your support with:

- Sending your child into school with appropriate warm/waterproof clothing and wellies
- Donating to school unwanted or unused household items
- Supporting the OPAL ethos by asking your child about their play and accepting that they may get dirty! Some parents have been sending in spare clothes with their child for lunchtimes. Please feel free to do this.

And an extra 'thank you' to the parents and relatives who came to our OPAL 'stay and play' just before October half term. There were over 100 extra adults on site to play with!

You can still help us more by donating any unwanted items you may have at home such as:

- ✓ Old vacuum cleaners, microwaves, electronics (we will remove cables and batteries)
- ✓ Kitchen utensils, baking trays, colanders etc for the mud kitchen (no pans needed)
- ✓ Buckets and spades
- ✓ Musical instruments

- ✓ Toy cars and toy garages
- ✓ Small world creatures e.g. dinosaurs, farm animals
- ✓ Scaffold boards
- ✓ Play food as this goes missing regularly!
- ✓ Dolls prams and child pushchairs

It's a good excuse for a pre-Christmas clear out. If you have large items which may be difficult to transport, please let us know as Mr Ryan may be able to assist with his van.

Wellies and waterproofs

To enable all our activities to take place, wellies and waterproofs are vital. We will be talking to the children in our next OPAL assembly about wet and muddy weather boundaries now autumn is changing to winter.

We ask that the children bring their wellingtons to school and place them on the class wellie rack. The wellies must have the child's name in them as there will be a lot of wellington boots in the corridor. Children will change into their wellies in the corridor and change back into their shoes at the end of lunchtime.

Good news!!



Since October last year, we have seen an almost 50% reduction of children coming in for first aid attention at lunch time. We still have a daily number of scratches and scrapes relating to the use of wood, planks, trees and scooters, but the children are visibly more resilient and confident in their ability to keep themselves and others safe whilst playing outside. A reminder that any injuries deemed 'serious' will be phoned through to a contact with parental responsibility for information before collection at the end of the school day.



We appreciate we still have one or two children who are rushing their lunch to get outside to play more quickly! We have discussed this with the children in assembly and with the Midday Meals Supervisors in their half termly meeting. Whilst we attempt to check all lunch boxes are empty, apologies if some get through. Please remind your child to eat as much as they can, scrape their tray or wait for their lunch box to be checked, and wait until they are called by an adult to go in to the hall for lunch. Following these few routines can make lunch time easier for everyone involved.

I am sure some of you will be getting a little envious of all the fun the children are having. You'll therefore be very pleased to have advanced warning of an open play afternoon we have planned for the summer term. **Please keep the afternoon of Monday 9th June 2-3pm free so that you can come and join us for an afternoon of play.**

Thank you for your continued support. Mrs Glen and Ms Moxham

To check out the OPAL philosophy go to www.outdoorplanandlearning.org.uk

