



Dear Parents/Carers,

Introduction to OPAL letter & survey (Outdoor People/OPAL Schools)

We are delighted to let you know that this year we will be focussing on making our playtimes amazing. To help us we have brought in the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Primary Programme, a strategic improvement programme designed to help us improve opportunities for play and make sure our outdoor environment provides the best range of experiences for the children.

This means that soon our playtimes will be getting even more fun and we hope every child will love them.

Did you know that playtime is about 20% of every child's day at school? It is also, for many children, one of the few times that they have to play outside regularly with their friends and without devices.

The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools across the UK and internationally.

OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play. As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include children enjoying school more, more teaching time because there are fewer accidents and arguments, increased physical activity and even children becoming better at maths.

Play is not messing about. It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all of the things that cannot be taught. That is why it is fun.

There are certain things children must have in order to be able to play. These include:

- clothes that they can play in year round.
- things to play with.
- a certain amount of freedom.

As the school improves play opportunities for your children, you may find the school is asking you for resources like old pots and pans and cardboard boxes. We will also be making changes about how the children use the school grounds. The experiences the school are fostering are 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.



Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School

Church Hill, Kingsnorth, Ashford, Kent TN23 3EF

T 01233 622673 E office@kingsnorth.kent.sch.uk W www.kingsnorth.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr Iain Witts

We will be working with Outdoor People, the non-profit that delivers the OPAL Primary Programme across East London and East Kent, for the next couple of years. They will be leading training, supporting our OPAL working group and mentoring the team to help us make our playtimes amazing.

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. See the YouTube channel (OPALPlaytime) and on Twitter (@OPALCiC) for lots of examples of schools that have the kind of playtimes we want for our children.

Find out more about Outdoor People, the non-profit that runs the OPAL programme across East London and East Kent from their website: <https://outdoorpeople.org.uk/>

First though, before we begin the programme, we need to know what you think about playtimes now.

Please complete this survey, by either clicking on the below link or using the QR code

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZTDMWJD>



By Wednesday 19th July 2023

This data will help us 'baseline' where we are now, and plan for and measure the changes across the school over the next couple of years.

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.

We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

Best wishes

Mr Iain Witts

Cath Prisk and Beth Illman, OPAL mentors with Outdoor People, London & East Kent