



# OPaL Newsletter

Term 3 - February 2025 v1



## *Play is the highest form of research and child development*

Outdoor Play and Learning (OPaL) is children learning through play.

As you may be aware, we are around 18 months in to our journey of becoming an OPaL play school. We have adjusted lunchtime for the whole school to 12:00 – 13:00, this allows time to eat and play.

Take a minute to think about playtimes when you were at school. What were your favourite games to play? Were there many adults or just other children? What did you do? Did you like den building, quiet reading skipping, football, being creative with chalk, playing in the mud?

Children learn to make their own decisions, risk assess their own activities, are creative and use their imaginations to create games and play. They also learn how to share, reason and exchange. Support friendships with others. Learn to take turns and practice fine motor skills, while creating independence and resilience, in the fresh air, while playing and having fun.

As we progress on our OPaL journey, we would like to share with you where we are now and our next steps:

### **Activities currently available:**

- Scooters
- Dressing up
- Tyre play
- Quiet reading shed
- Lower quieter area
- Small world area
- Duplo / lego blocks
- Sensory shed
- 'The train' – created by year 6 for the joy of all year groups
- Skipping
- Outdoor speaker with age appropriate music for all children
- The MUGA is now open with Netball & Dodgeball and Football & Basketball alternating weekly managed by our Sports Captains

### **Activities for the future:**

- Colouring and creative table
- Reintroduce the music corner with pots and pans
- Water play area
- To reopen the apparatus (H&S)
- To reopen the spiritual garden (H&S)
- Sand pit area
- Den building
- Mud garden
- Create a 'stage' for performing arts
- Board games area
- To create/purchase wellie boot storage areas for each classroom
- And much more

### **Support provided at lunchtime:**

- Play Rangers support the 4 minute tidy up process across the school
- Sports Captains manage structured games in the MUGA
- Support staff and senior leader supervision
- Year 6 table monitors
- The 'Year 6 Train' monitors

### **Community Support Received:**

- Local council provided yellow fencing
- Wickes provided paint
- Manpower provided by Pete & Fraser from the Parish Council
- PFA
- Guttering kindly donated by Wolseley Plumbing & parts

When children are unable to get outside to play eg in wet weather, children are less regulated and less able to concentrate, therefore impacting negatively on learning.

To ensure that children can play outside **everyday** they need to be warm, dry and comfortable, with the right clothing for summer and winter.

## This is where we would like your help - our parents and community

To encourage children when the mud garden and sand pit areas are created, only children who have wellies and waterproof clothing will be able to play in these areas. This is where we ask that you provide these items to keep in school.

Please could we ask that you provide your child with a pair of named wellington boots to keep in school. Also a waterproof (not showerproof) coat and if possible trousers.

We are working with the local community and businesses, and parents by asking for donations of any materials for our topic next term: **Construction**

### Good quality:

Crates, tubes, funnels, sturdy planks of wood, tarpaline, nets, corrugated tubing, guttering, cable drums, ropes, pegs/clips

Here are a few of our ideas for the children to create using the above donations.



**NOW**

**Please bring in:**

- \*Named waterproof clothing
- \*Construction Materials



**NEXT**

**From Term 5, please bring in:**

- \*Named Waterproof clothing
- \*Named Wellie Boots
- \*Construction Materials

