



Onslow Infant School

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Introduction to OPAL & Resource Request

Dear Reception Parents and Carers,

What is OPAL?

In what ways do you think you benefited from playtime? Thinking about your own childhood, what did you like playing at school or at home? Children today do not have the same freedoms we once did, so we want to give children back time to really enjoy and learn from play. After all, it's a child's basic human right. The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools and has been used in Spain, Canada, France and New Zealand. The programme has also been adapted and used in schools in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria under the Play Friendly Schools project. In 2018, OPAL won first prize in an EU-funded award for the best active school's programme in Europe and two UK national playwork awards. In 2019, OPAL was awarded a quarter of a million pounds by Sport England to bring the programme to many more schools.

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. One reason the school is carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed, and many children no longer get their play needs met out of school.

- Average screen time per day is six hours.
- Average outdoor play time per week is five hours.
- Percentage of UK children who only play outdoors with other children at school is 56%.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour. 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, while also having so much fun. There are certain things children **must** have in order to be able to play. These include:

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

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 our school is 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. 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.






























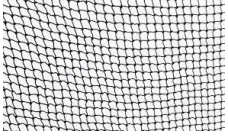




Date for your diary: Friday 28th November 2pm

We are going to hold a parent playday for parents and carers to come and see OPAL in action. More details to follow soon.

Resources for the Playground

We are always on the lookout for second hand resources in order to help improve our outdoor areas. We want areas that promote creativity, exploration and independence and are looking for a variety of everyday objects to help promote this. Below is a list of things that we need in school. If you have any of these, please bring them in and hand them into the office. Resources need to be in good condition with no broken parts. We will be accepting donations starting from next week. Please also email us if you have something else, not listed below, that we might want.

<p>Wooden or plastic crates</p> 	<p>Wooden cable reels (please email us before dropping off)</p> 	<p>Plastic drain pipes or guttering</p> 	<p>Plastic tea sets</p> 
<p>Wooden planks</p> 	<p>Play Sand</p> 	<p>Wood offcuts/branches/logs</p> 	<p>Play food</p> 
<p>Children's garden tools</p> 	<p>Large fabric sheets for den building</p> 	<p>Dressing up clothes & accessories (we also love 'real' clothes and accessories for role play)</p> 	<p>Dolls and prams/pushchairs</p> 
<p>Small World figures/animals</p> 	<p>Wooden/wicker baskets</p> 	<p>Vintage suitcases</p> 	<p>Wallpaper rolls</p> 
<p>Balance Bikes or ride on vehicles</p> 	<p>Children's helmets</p> 	<p>Tricycles</p> 	<p>Seeds & bulbs</p> 
<p>Sit on sand toys</p> 	<p>Old, small electrical items (for role play)</p> 	<p>Large garden games</p> 	<p>Tarpaulins</p> 

<p>Astro turf (or cut-offs)</p> 	<p>Foam noodles/pipe covers</p> 	<p>Pots and pans</p> 	<p>Nets</p> 
<p>Large storage (please email us before dropping off)</p> 	<p>Steering wheels/bike wheels</p> 	<p>Cones</p> 	<p>Storage boxes with lids</p> 

Best wishes,

Mrs Pardoe

Deputy Head Teacher