

OPAL Newsletter

Autumn update



OPAL stands for Outdoor Play and Learning and is a programme endorsed and supported by Sport England.



"To ensure that every schoolchild has an amazing playtime every day with no exceptions" (OPAL)

Dear Parents and Carers,

The OPAL programme is an exciting journey that we're undertaking over the next 12-18 months with OPAL to develop the playground and play of the children .

What has happened already.....



Stay and plays - The Autumn term has seen the first whole school stay and play sessions; where parents were invited to stay for an hour after school to experience their children's current play time and to talk to staff about plans for the playground. The stay and plays were well attended and it was wonderful to be able to welcome parents into the playgrounds. Lots of ideas and feedback were received as well as many requests for more stay and play sessions - something that was echoed across the federation! Thank you to our Governors and Parent's Associations at Sebright, Daubeney and Lauriston for their support, hard work, and enthusiasm.

Surveys - Across the federation we sent out surveys to discover what our children, parents and staff thought of playtimes and their playgrounds. Thank you to everyone who completed their surveys - your responses are so important and very much appreciated.



OPAL Play Team - Since June 2021, the play teams in each school have undergone many changes; there are now three teams of wonderfully creative and enthusiastic members of staff who have come together to put forward ideas and find creative solutions. They are supported by a wider team of colleagues, City Year and parent representatives.

OPAL Pupil Teams - All three schools now have their pupil play teams in place. Thank you to the class teachers and learning mentors for facilitating the selection process.

Federation Play policy - This has been drafted and will be presented to the governors soon.

OPAL web page - Each school now has a page dedicated to OPAL (under the curriculum tab) where everyone can keep up to date with all the exciting developments in each school, read more on OPAL and find out how they can help their school in their OPAL journey. From next term, this will include a link where donations can be made.



Activities - Since October, the playgrounds in all three schools have seen the gradual introduction of new activities and resources. These include chalks, playdough, boxes, drawing, music, skateboarding and table tennis which the children are really enjoying!

Storage - Large weatherproof storage boxes for new playground resources have been ordered - some have already arrived! These will be placed in the playgrounds and gradually filled with various resources for children to access during playtimes.

Spring Term plans.....

Across the federation exciting things are being planned for the playgrounds - mud kitchens, sand pits and tyres being just some of those things!

We will be putting new storage boxes into the playgrounds.

The OPAL Pupil Play Team will be getting involved in play assemblies and taking on playground responsibilities.

OPAL training and opportunities for staff to visit other OPAL schools.



Mud kitchen created by the talented Mr Kimpton at Sebright!

How can you help.....

As we work towards making our playtimes more exciting, no matter what the weather, we will need some equipment to help us to do this.

Donations of any of the following would be greatly received:

- Crates / wooden pallets
- Decking boards
- Cable drums / reels
- Large cardboard boxes
- Pans/ bowls/ spoons/ plates (plastic or metal).

Donations of wet weather clothing that no longer fits your children:

- wellies
- waterproof trousers
- raincoats

Additional large storage:

Visit our school's OPAL page and donate towards helping us purchase additional storage so we can have a larger variety of items for children to play with.

Please bring them to school where there are designated OPAL donation boxes or call and let us know where we can collect them from.

Across the three schools, it has been great to see how interested the children are in their playgrounds. They have asked lots of questions and put forward some very clear ideas on the changes they would like to see happen. Here are some of their ideas.....

"Some grass so we can roll around?"

"Swings"

"Monkey bars"

"A big climbing frame"

"Somewhere quiet that looks nice"

Thank you to our Heads of School - Ms. Corpe, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Logan for dedicating the time and resources needed to make these changes possible.

Let's keep working together to create amazing experiences and make play times fun!

Yours sincerely,

Amrika Luchmee
Federation OPAL Playworker