



OPAL Newsletter

Spring 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 CIC)



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to an action-packed Spring edition of the OPAL newsletter! It's a little longer than usual as so much has happened since January that it's been quite a task fitting it all in!

Across the federation, the OPAL teams have been busy making playtimes fun by adding a range of new resources to playgrounds supported by weekly play assemblies and lots of staff dedication. The focus this term was on providing children with items they can use to develop their creative and collaborative skills as well as enabling them to take calculated risks within a safe environment.

Since our our last update in Autumn....

Stay and plays - In response for more stay and play sessions, the Spring term has seen the next set of whole school stay and play sessions; where parents were invited to stay for an hour after school to experience their children's play time, see what new activities have been introduced and talk to staff about playground plans.

OPAL Play coordinators took part in play work training together in February, shared ideas about their playgrounds and support each other in finding solutions to playground challenges.



Surveys - Across the federation, links to online surveys are being sent out to children, parents and staff.

Please let us know what you think of playtimes and the recent changes to the playgrounds since December. Share your thoughts on having crates, tyres and fabrics in the playground 😊

Surveys are quick and easy - we really need everyone to respond as your feedback plays an important role in shaping current and upcoming playground plans.

OPAL Junior Play Team - The OPAL Junior Play Team in each school meet regularly to try out the new resources, decide upon the rules of usage and how to look after the resources. They also feedback on how well activities are going, discuss any issues and work with the OPAL team to find resolutions.

In the Summer term, the Junior Play Team will be involved in play assemblies and taking on playground responsibilities with the help of hi-vis tops, badges and notebooks. Follow their progress in our summer update!

Daubeney:

Join us for Stay and Play on
Weds 4th May (3:30- 4:30pm)
Mon 20th June (3:30pm- 4:30pm)

Sebright:

Join us for Stay and Play on
Thurs 19th May (3:30- 4:30pm)
Thurs 9th June (3:30-4:30pm)

Lauriston:

Join us for Stay and Play on
Tues 3rd May (3:30- 4:30pm)

OPAL web page - Each school's website has an OPAL page (type 'OPAL in the search bar) with lots of playground pictures, updates on current and new developments, play assemblies presentations and how to help your school with their OPAL journey. This now includes a link to Scopay where donations can be made.

Sebright and **Daubeney** School's SCOPAY link went live in February - it's now quick and easy to make a donation whilst paying for lunch money or trips. Just look for 'OPAL Fundraising' on Scopay.



Here's a quick recap of what we had in the playground in December 2021:

Drawing, Large chalks, Music, Playdough, Skateboarding, Lego, Football, Box of toys and Table tennis in the hall.

OPAL Donations:

Thank you to our wonderful parents for donations of toys for the KS1 playground, skateboard for KS2 and the OPAL information board for the staffroom!

Stay and Play:

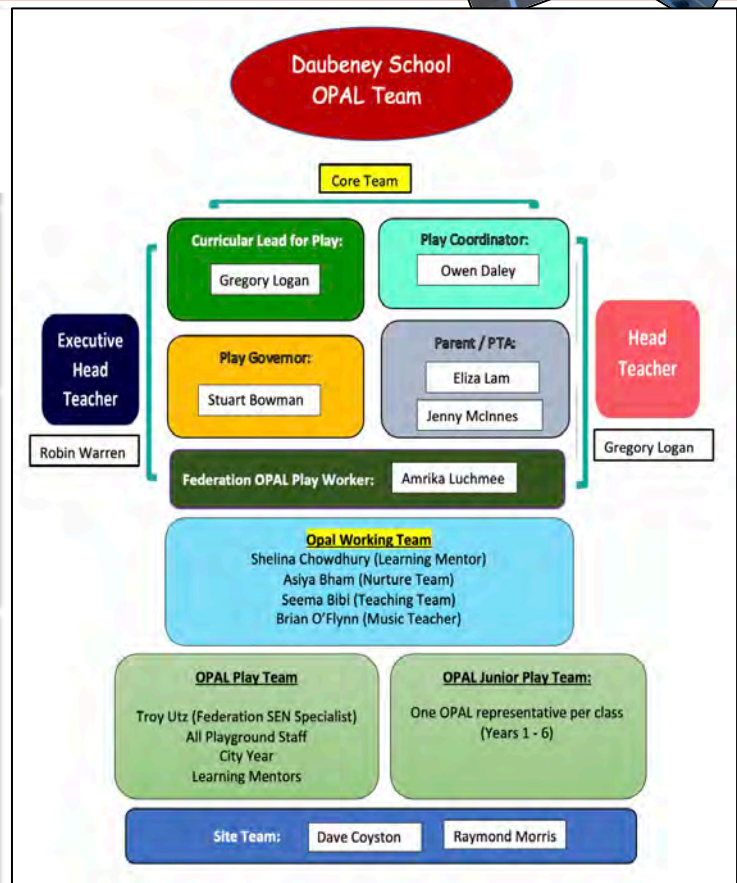
Our second stay and play took place on 2nd March and was well attended. We raised a total of **£287.16** towards our total of **£540** to build a sand pit in the big playground. Thank you very much for your donations.

We need your help:

Please let us know if you have links with builder's merchants or other companies.

To build a sandpit and create other playground activities, we need:

- Lengths of decking planks/scaffolding boards
- Wooden sleepers *Lots of play sand (30 tonnes!)



Since January, there have been so many exciting resources added to the playgrounds.

Go kart tyres



Skipping ropes & Crates



Large Tyres



Giant spinning tops



Large crates



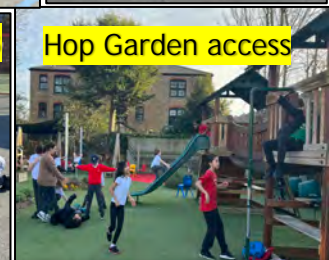
Cardboard boxes



Fabrics



Scooter boards



Hop Garden access

Balance boards

Children's thoughts:

"Scooter boards are so much fun, but there are not enough - its causing problems so can we have more?"

"I love playing with crates and fabric"

"Playtime is great - I have so much fun!"

"Hammock and swings in the Hop garden please"

Head of school, Mr Logan says:

"During the Spring term, it has been a delight to see our OPAL provision go from strength to strength culminating with a red-carpet walk"

Daubeney's OPAL Play Coordinator, Owen Daley says:

"The new resources have transformed playtimes and Mr O'Flynn's skateboarding is unique to Daubeney. Overall, the hard work done by the OPAL team has transformed existing visions of play at Daubeney".

Daubeney's OPAL Working Team say:

"Children are using their imagination more - we have seen brides, kings and many variations of Julius Cesar!"

"The atmosphere in the playground is electric".

"Everywhere you look children are happy"

"Children are developing skills they never knew they had".

"It's great to see children of different age groups playing together".



Sebright Primary School



Here's a quick recap of what we had in the playground in December 2021:

Drawing, Large chalks, Music, Lego, Cardboard Boxes, Large tyres, Small tyres, Football and Kingball.

OPAL Donations:

Our SCOPAY link also went live in February - it's now quick and easy to make a donation whilst paying for lunch money or trips. Just look for 'OPAL Fundraising' on Scopay

Stay and Play:

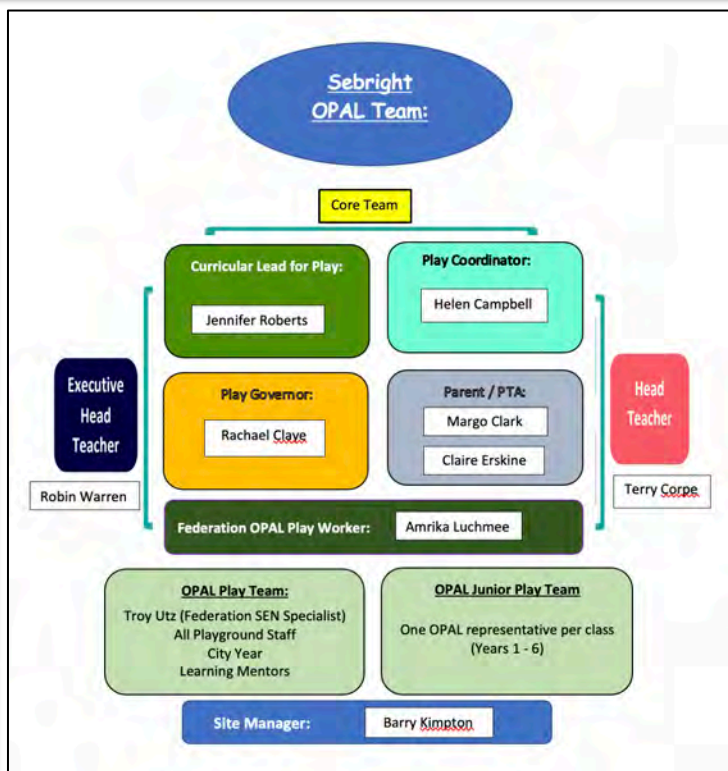
Our most recent stay and play took place on Thursday 3rd March and was well attended - it was lovely to see so many parents and children enjoying the playground. Thank you very much for all your donations - we have raised £40 so far.

Donations needed:

- Stacking chairs
- Lengths of decking planks / scaffolding boards
- Lego
- Toys

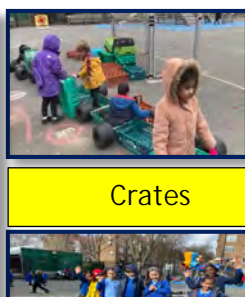
Please bring in or call and we can arrange to collect.

Since January, there have been exciting resources added to the playgrounds.



Focus:

We are raising money for a fantastic storage shed with lots of exciting possibilities for play!



Crates



Fabrics



Quiet spaces: boards games, reading area and drawing spaces

Sebright's OPAL Coordinator, Helen Campbell says:

"I am excited by the changes so far in our playground. It's great to see the children really playing, using their imagination and really coming out of their usual characters. It's been fantastic!"

Some of the children's thoughts:

"I really like playing with the crates".
 "Playtime is better now".
 "Can we have some pegs?"
 "Crate racing is so good!"
 "Thank you for the crates"
 "I like the soft fabric"

Head of school, Ms Corpe says:

"Our Stay and Play sessions have been amazing with so many parents staying to explore our playgrounds and join in the fun. We are seeing more children interacting, negotiating games and playing happily together with crates, tyres and experimenting with the normal playtime equipment. Ms Campbell has been amazing setting up areas in the playground for the children, including quiet spaces for board games, arts and crafts, as well as reading areas. A big well done to all the staff in the playgrounds for supporting the children, Ms Roberts for leading on OPAL, Ms Luchmee for sourcing equipment and Mr Kimpton for keeping the equipment safe and available for use".

Summer Term plans: Sand pit * Scooter boards * Giant spinning tops * Balance boards * Construction resources

Here's a quick recap of what we had in the playground in December 2021:
Large chinks, Music, Football, Kingball, Hoops and Go-kart tyres.

Stay and Play:

Our next stay and play will be on Tuesday 3rd May (3:30- 4:40pm).

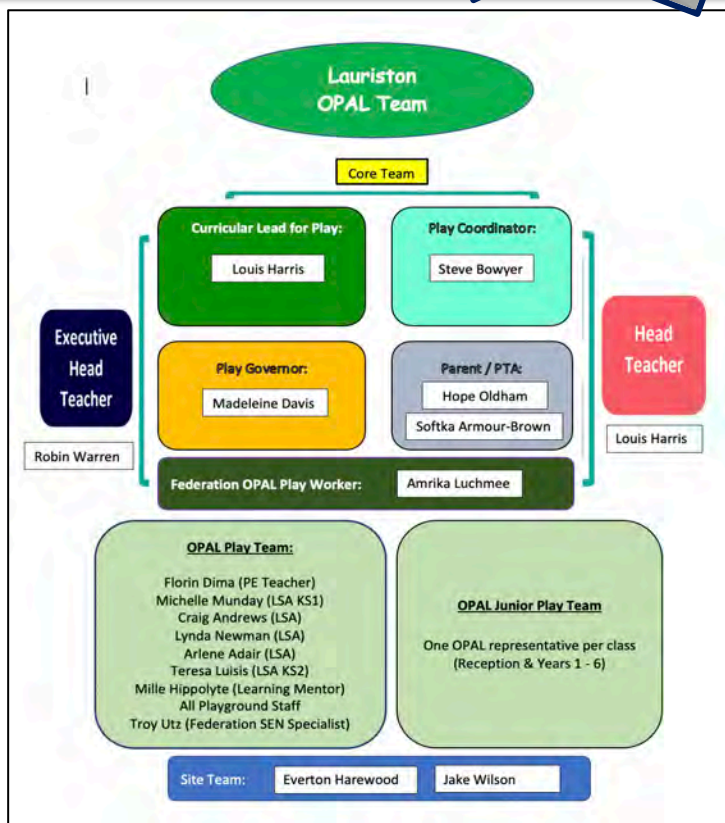
OPAL Donations:

Donations can be made using the 'Make a donation' link on our OPAL web page.

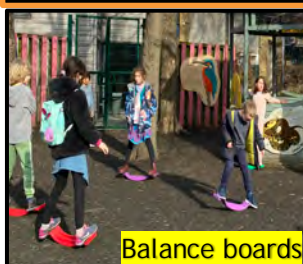
How can you help:

We need donations of Stacking chairs (plastic), lengths of decking planks / scaffolding boards, and dress up clothes. Please bring into school or call and let us know where we can collect from.

Lauriston's talented site team - Everton & Jake created a mirror wall and two large outdoor chalkboards!



Since January, there have been so many exciting resources added to the playgrounds.



Balance boards



Pallets



Scooter boards



Large Tyres



Skipping ropes



Small Tyres



wooden blocks



Giant spinning tops



Crates



Fabrics

Basketball hoops

The children are really enjoying the new resources - here are some of their thoughts:

"I love the crates and the tyres"

"The fabrics are so lovely - I like to wrap them around me".

"It's fun being pulled along on the scooter boards!"

"The big tyres are great for hiding in".

"Thank you for all the lovely stuff".

"Playtimes are better now than they were before".

Lauriston's OPAL Coordinator Steve Bowyer says:

"I have had the pleasure of being part of the OPAL team at Lauriston School this year and have enjoyed seeing how well the children have taken to the new activities and the fun they are having. I would also like to thank Amrika for all her support and hard work so far!"

Head of school, Mr Harris says:

"Watching the evolution of our play provision has been a joy! There is a great range of resources and activities on offer and the children are having great fun. Through our play provision, children are learning how to negotiate, manage risk, develop creativity and build their collaborative skills. We are really looking forward to seeing what the summer term will bring".

Summer Term plans:

Sand pit * Mud kitchen area * Construction items * Large Lego.

How can you help.....

As we work towards making our playtimes more exciting, no matter what the weather, we would like your help

Donations of any of the following will always be happily received:

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

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.

Thank you to the following companies:



Homerton tyres, Sky Tyres Services, Karting Nation (Mile End), Kapital Karts (Dagenham), St Margaret's Hub (Streatham Food Bank) and the Children's SCRAP Store (Hackney) - *your donations have been making our playtimes great!*



Our executive head, Mr Warren says:

"I am delighted by the transformation in our children's play and outdoor experiences. It is an absolute joy to see children being children and having opportunity to be creative and use their imaginations. We have seen a high level of engagement and cooperation between the children. This also benefits children of all abilities and needs and reinforces our commitment to inclusion.

The whole OPAL enterprise fits entirely with my vision for creative, open ended and child centred learning. Happy children makes for happy and confident learners. A big well done to the many people involved in the OPAL projects across the Federation. This cannot happen without the commitment and hard work from everyone to make a difference to our children".



I hope you have enjoyed reading about all the exciting playground activities that have taken place this term. Thank you to our Heads of School - Ms. Corpe, Mr. Harris, and Mr. Logan for their continued dedication to making playtimes amazing for every child!

See you at the next stay and play 😊

Amrika Luchmee

Federation OPAL Playworker



An exciting journey that we're undertaking with OPAL CIC to develop the playgrounds and play of children!

