Terrace Road Primary School

OPAL Play Newsletter - Issue 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to share some wonderful news about playtimes at Terrace Road Primary School. Over the past few months, staff have been working together to develop our playtimes as part of the OPAL Programme (Outdoor Play and Learning). This newsletter is the first of many updates to keep you informed about the exciting developments happening on our school yard.



What is OPAL?

OPAL stands for Outdoor Play and Learning.
It is a nationally recognised programme that helps schools improve the quality of playtimes for all children.

Research shows that high-quality play is incredibly important for children's development.

- Physical health and fitness
- Confidence and resilience
- Problem solving and creativity
- Social skills and teamwork
- Emotional wellbeing



Children spend around 20% of their school life at playtime, so it is important that this time is rich, engaging and meaningful.

Through the OPAL programme, we are developing play opportunities that allow children to explore, create, invent, build, collaborate and take safe risks.





Terrace Road Primary School

Exciting Changes on the Yard

During our recent staff development day, teachers and support staff worked together to reimagine our play spaces and create new zones across the yard.



Some of the exciting areas being developed include:

- Role Play Village — a space for imaginative play, storytelling and creativity using fabrics and props
- The Ultimate Climb — an area designed for climbing, balancing and physical challenge
- Loose Parts Area — a space where children can build, design and create
- Creative Corner — chalk drawing, art and design
- Game Zone — spaces for structured games and challenges
- Ball Court — active sports and ball games

These zones will continue to grow and develop as we introduce new resources and listen to children's ideas.

Introducing Big Loose Parts

Over the next few weeks, we will begin introducing large loose parts onto the playground.



Loose parts are open-ended materials that children can move, combine, design and build with. These may include items such as:

- Crates
- Wooden pallets
- Cable reels
- Large tubes and pipes
- Fabric and tarpaulins

Loose parts allow children to build dens, design obstacle courses, create stages, invent games and work collaboratively.

Research from play experts shows that loose parts play helps children develop:



- Creativity and imagination
- Engineering and problem-solving skills
- Communication and teamwork
- Independence and leadership

Most importantly, it allows children to lead their own play and explore their ideas freely.

Play Rangers and How You Can Help



Play Rangers

We have also introduced a group of pupil leaders called Play Rangers.
These children will help:
Set up play areas
Support other children in joining games
Look after equipment
Share ideas to improve playtimes

Play Champion Award

Each week, we will also celebrate a Play Champion Award to recognise pupils who show excellent teamwork, creativity or kindness during play.

How You Can Help

We are always grateful for donations that can support play. Over the coming weeks we may ask for items such as:

- Old pots and pans
- Suitcases
- Tyres
- Fabric or tarpaulins
- Crates
- Fabric or tarpaulins
- Dress-up clothes

Looking Ahead

This is just the beginning of our OPAL journey. Over the coming months you will see even more exciting developments as we continue to improve our play spaces and respond to children's ideas.

Our goal is simple:
to make playtimes the best they can possibly be for every child at Terrace Road Primary School.

Thank you for your continued support.
Warm regards,
Terrace Road Primary Opal Team