



## Play - the unteachable curriculum



The way children learn the things that cannot be taught



**We are very excited to be undertaking a joint playground development project with the infant school and the support from an organisation called OPAL.**

**OPAL stands for ‘outdoor play and learning’ and is a strategic improvement programme designed to help us improve opportunities for play and make sure our outdoor environment provides the best range of experiences for the children. We started this 18 month project in September 2023 and are due to be fully up and running by February 2025.**

**Below is more information about OPAL and why we feel this is a fantastic project to undertake.**

*Did you know that playtime is about 20% of every child’s day at school? It is also, for many children, one of the few times that they have to play outside regularly with their friends and without devices.*



*The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools across the UK and internationally.*



*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.*

*There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include children enjoying school more, more teaching time because there are fewer accidents and arguments, increased physical activity and even children becoming better at maths.*





*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. That is why it is fun.*

*There are certain things children must have in order to be able to play. These include:*

- *clothes that they can play in all year round.*
- *things to play with.*
- *a certain amount of freedom.*

*If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website ([www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk](http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk)), where you will find lots of useful information.*

### **Our Play Zones ..... so far (May 2024)**

- 1. Adventure Playground**
- 2. Reading House - a quiet space with books, colouring**
- 3. Log Cabin - a creative space**
- 4. Log Cabin Garden - digging and mud kitchen**
- 5. The Stage - singing, dancing, listening to music**
- 6. The Sail - small world play**
- 7. Slackline**
- 8. Construction**

We play on the field with the tyres and make a maze around the goals.

You can make friends with people you will see when you start at the juniors.

### **Our OPAL Journey so far.....**

#### **September 2023 -**

- Joint CHI & CHJ staff training (including Coombe Connections and lunchtime staff) about the OPAL project

#### **October 2023**

- appointed an OPAL working party which includes both Headteachers, 2 Curricular Leads for play, 3 Play Coordinators, a Play Governor and we will be looking for involvement from parents and further meeting with our OPAL mentor about this.

#### **Ongoing**

- Playteam meets regularly to discuss play zones, equipment needed, and next steps

We can play in the juniors and it's fun!"

#### **November 2023**




- Play policy in place
- Assemblies started to introduce children to the new play areas
- children began playing on areas of both school sites eg dancing on the amphitheatre and playing with small world under the Junior Sail.
- Parent, staff and children surveys completed about their thoughts on the importance of play.

I like the stage and the music because I like dancing.

We've got lots of cars to play with and you can be creative in the small world with the blocks.

### December 2023

- Grounds meeting with OPAL mentor and field opened up for infant and junior children to play with tyres.
- Appeal to school community to help resource play:-



**OPAL Outdoor Play And Learning project (with CHJ).**  
PLEASE CAN YOU HELP!

We need donations (second hand or new) to help resource our play areas:  
[small world toys - dinosaurs, cars, animals, trains, trucks, natural building blocks etc](#)

cable reels, pallets, kitchen utensils like pots, pans, wooden spoons, spatulas etc

Thank you for your help!  
For more information about OPAL see [www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk](http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk)

***Thank you so much for your support and for sending in no longer wanted toys ! The children are loving playing with them in the Small World Area.***

### January 2024

- Regular assemblies to introduce new play zones - to remind the children of Article 31 the right to play and to ensure the children use the areas effectively and are Ready, Respectful and Safe.

CHI 28.2.24 CHI

We have more places to run in.

I like how we can climb some of the trees.

## February 2024

- Development 2 Meeting with the OPAL Working Party and risk management training for all staff - this is all about risk benefit and encouraging play leaders to assess “does the benefit of this play activity outweigh the risk?”

## March 2024

- We formed our Rights Respecting Ambassador group - with children sharing the United Nations Rights - including Article 31 the right to play.



## April 2024

- The Rights Respecting Ambassadors had several meetings and wrote our Play and Learning Charter



## Our Children's Play and Learning Charter

Ready ..... Respectful ..... Safe .....



We have the right to ensure everyone enjoys playtimes by making sure .....

- ★ We have different play zones for children to explore and find their style of play
- ★ We think about and manage the risks so we can keep everyone safe
- ★ We use good manners - saying, “please”, “thank you” and “sorry”
- ★ We include everyone in the play
- ★ We listen to each other and talk about our problems to solve them
- ★ We use kind words and have kind hands and feet
- ★ We respect each other’s boundaries “Please stop! I don’t like that”
- ★ We share our ideas and equipment
- ★ We all help tidy up and take care of our play equipment and our natural environment
- ★ We think about each others wellbeing
- ★ We have fun!

Every child has the right to:-



You get to run around and, if you have a brother or sister in the juniors, you get to see them.

- Our OPAL Play team are talking with builders to get best value quotes to replace three broken sheds with one large shed (accessed from both CHI and CHJ)



playgrounds) on a concrete base to store our outdoor play resources. This is the type of thing we are aiming for:-

- PTA cake sale to raise funds for equipment raised £210 eg tuff trays and stands and wooden blocks for small world area, sweeping brushes, an outdoor radio for dancing on the stage


## May 2024

- The Rights Respecting Ambassadors visited each class and shared the Play and Learning Charter.

## NEXT STEPS

- June - CHI to introduce OPAL play zones at all play times - this involves resourcing different play areas with hoola hoops, colouring and crayons, digging equipment etc. and rearranging our staff play duty rota
- Secure best price for new storage shed for play resources and (hopefully!) build during the summer holiday.
- Create a display board in the playground for our Play and Learning Charter (paint on marine ply?)
- Build welly storage - our builders have been saving us pallets - will need a team of volunteers to sand down pallets and fix to walls
- Appoint an OPAL Playworker in Coombe Connections (our breakfast and after school club)
- Create signage for the zones
- Our School Council have requested a giant chalk board
- September - Development 2 Meeting with the OPAL Working Party and Staff

The school will use the Health and Safety Executive guidance document ***Children's Play and Leisure – Promoting a Balanced Approach (September 2012)*** as the principal value statement informing its approach to managing risk in play. In doing so, the school will adopt a risk-benefit approach as detailed in *Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012)*.

 OPAL play policy.docx