



# Orchard Primary and Nursery School

Head Teacher Ms A Prodger  
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Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

We are about to launch our exciting new project to make our playtimes even better, in conjunction with Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) CIC. In 2018, OPAL won the best active schools' programme in Europe award and has been cited in two parliamentary reports as delivering outstanding practice. OPAL is working closely with Sport England to promote more active childhoods, which is one of the many reasons we are improving our playtime, as well as to improve opportunities for socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination, teamwork and enjoyment for your child.

We strongly believe that: **"Play is freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. Play can be fun or serious. Through play children explore social, material and imaginary worlds and their relationship with them, elaborating all the while a flexible range of responses to the challenges they encounter. By playing, children learn and develop as individuals, and as members of the community."** (Children's Play Council 2001).

The project will start on **Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024** and our hopes are that it will change the way we think and how we play together.

To facilitate this project, we launched the Opal Bingo before half term asking for donations of loose parts. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. We are pleased to inform you that we have received lots of fabulous loose parts and thank you so much for your support already. All of these items will enable the children to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime. If you have any more donations please bring them into school as soon as possible.

**From Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 all children will require a pair of Wellies in school.** All children will wear wellies at both break times and lunch times. This is a mandatory part of participating in the project and is now part of our school uniform. You will see wellie storage around the school ground and children will be learning how to use these correctly and safely from next week. We would like to thank everyone for supporting us with this already.

There will be more information to follow at a parent's Opal stay and play session later in the year when you will be invited to come and play with your children. We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Alison Tilstone  
Deputy Headteacher  
Opal Curricular Lead for Play





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