



Dear parents/ carers,

OPAL update:

Our lunchtimes are improving through our work with OPAL! Please see below some of the things we have done and then there is some more general information about OPAL.

What have we done so far?

- Opened up more areas for all children to play
- Started to get significantly more resources for play – some already available at lunchtimes – some to come in time
- Approached local businesses to help improve the grounds
- Had built storage for the play equipment and had re-built the stage area
- Had donated a large number of lockers for welly storage

Next steps:

All children now need wellies at school every day. These need to be named. These will be stored in labelled lockers. From Monday, only children with wellies will be allowed onto the field on muddy days. Please bring these to school in a bag ready.

We suggest that every child has a change of trousers and socks for when things ‘go wrong’ at lunchtime. These should be named and labelled and in a carrier bag on their peg.

Further assemblies and work with the children on making good choices about their play at lunchtimes when the ground is wet and to play properly with the equipment given.

And

Can you help? In January, we will be making some mud kitchens out of pallets – ready for the children to play with. Can you donate your skills and DIY expertise to help Miss Harvey and Mrs Stewart? Tea, coffee (and maybe even biscuits) will be provided! Please let the office know if you can help.

We hope they will end up looking a bit like this.....

Thank you for your patience while we work through any challenges while we implement these exciting opportunities for your children.





More about OPAL:

In what ways, if any, do you think you benefited from playtime? Thinking about your own childhood, what did you like playing at school or at home? Children today don't have the same freedoms we once did, so we want to give children back time to really enjoy and learn from play. After all, it's a child's basic human right.

The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools and has been used in Spain, Canada, France and New Zealand. The programme has also been adapted and used in schools in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria under the Play Friendly Schools project. In 2018, OPAL won first prize in an EU-funded award for the best active school's programme in Europe and two UK national playwork awards. In 2019, OPAL was awarded a quarter of a million pounds by Sport England to bring the programme to many more schools.

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.

One reason the school is carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed, and many children no longer get their play needs met out of school.

- Average screen time per day is six hours.
- Average outdoor play time per week is five hours.
- Percentage of UK children who only play outdoors with other children at school is 56%.

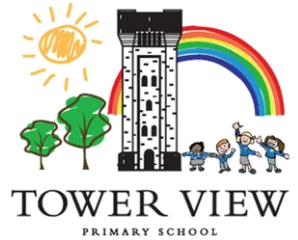
There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour.

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, while also having so much fun. There are certain things children must have in order to be able to play. These include:

- Having clothes that they can play in.
- Having things to play with.
- Having a certain amount of freedom.

The school will be supported by OPAL for 18 months and there will be an opportunity to come and talk to the OPAL mentor at your child's school. If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website

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(www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk), where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

We will use more of the grounds, for more of the year. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like. The experiences the school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on health and safety, wellbeing and development.

In the coming 18 months you will be invited to events where you can come and see for yourself and play alongside your children!

Best wishes

Head teacher: Mr G Lobb

OPAL Curriculum Leaders for Play: Miss A Harvey and Mrs P Mafham

OPAL Play leader: Mrs S Stewart

OPAL Mentor: Mrs A Masini