



Dear Parents,

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme

We are about to start a programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

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.

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. 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.

As we improve play opportunities for your children, you may see changes in how the children use the school grounds. The pupils will use more of the grounds, for more of the year. We will also be asking for donations of natural objects and pre-loved toys. Look out for the donations letter w/c 14<sup>th</sup> October.

NJK will be supported by OPAL for 18 months and there will be an opportunity to come and talk to the OPAL mentor, Nancy Low, at school. 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 and several videos about the programme.

We will be delivering a presentation to parents on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November when we are launching OPAL to the whole school, more details will be sent nearer the time. In the coming 18 months you will be invited to events where you can come and see for yourselves what is happening and have the opportunity to join in and play!

We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtimes for all children.

Kind regards,

Mrs Dean  
Headteacher

Mrs Bilsland  
OPAL Curriculum lead

Mrs Goode  
OPAL Co-ordinator