NJK School Newsletter

'Together, with the love and joy of God, we will discover, develop & maximise our unique potential.'

Friday 9th October 2026

NJK Primary School Achieves Prestigious OPAL Gold Award

We are delighted to announce that Norton Juxta Kempsey CE Primary School has been awarded the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Gold Award following a successful onsite assessment on Tuesday.

This outstanding achievement recognises two academic years of dedicated work to transform play opportunities for all of our pupils. Through careful planning, investment in resources, staff training and a commitment to enriching children's experiences, we have created a play environment that promotes creativity, independence, inclusion and wellbeing.

The OPAL programme is widely recognised as one of the leading school improvement programmes for play in the UK. Achieving Gold status places NJK amongst the very best schools in the country for the quality of its playtime provision.

Throughout this journey, pupils and staff have embraced new opportunities for imaginative play, problem-solving, teamwork and exploration. Whether building dens, creating games, enjoying outdoor adventures or making use of our wide range of loose parts and play resources, children across the school have benefitted from richer and more meaningful play experiences.

Following the assessment, OPAL Director Michael Follett praised the school's achievement:

"Changing the culture of an organisation is not easy, but you have done it, to become one of the best schools in the country for the quality of your playtime provision.

Along the way I am sure you have had ups and downs dealing with the common issues of rain and mud, tidying-up and broken loose parts, but the fact that you have gained an award proves you have succeeded in transforming playtimes for all your children."

This award is a testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of Mrs Bilsland (OPAL Play Lead) and Mrs Goode (OPAL Play Co-ordinator) our staff, pupils, governors and families, whose support has been invaluable throughout the process.

We are incredibly proud of this achievement and look forward to continuing to provide engaging, inclusive and high-quality play opportunities that help every child thrive.

Congratulations to everyone involved in this wonderful success!



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A message from Mrs Leeming, NJK Library Leader...

We are delighted to invite you to join your child in the school library in the mornings to share the joy of reading together. Starting next week, the library doors will be open every weekday morning from 8:45am 9:00am for our morning reading session.

This is a wonderful opportunity to step out of the morning rush, explore our selection of books, and enjoy a quiet story with your child before the school day begins. Research shows that sharing books together drastically improves literacy skills and fosters a lifelong love for reading.

Morning Library Guidelines:

- Arrival: Please enter and depart through the Main Reception
- Supervision: Parents and carers must remain with their children throughout the session, however a member of staff and Year 6 Library Leaders will also be on hand to offer advice
- Activities: You can read library books, return books, or help your child choose their school reading books

We want to make our library a resourceful hub for our school community and we cannot wait to welcome you. There is no need to book a slot, please just come along whenever you are free!

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Sneak is the Word of the Week for pupils in Rowan and Hazel.



Less



Less is the Word of the Week for pupils in Willow Class.

Miffed is the Word of the Week for pupils in Oak and Ash.



Anticipation is the Word of the Week for pupils in Maple and Elm.

