



Seven Stars Primary School

OPAL Launch Letter

Dear Parents,

We are in the process of launching an exciting new project to make our play times even better, in conjunction with OPAL. (<http://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/>). OPAL has won the best active schools' programme in Europe award and been cited in two Parliamentary Reports as outstanding practice. OPAL is working closely with Sport England to promote more active childhoods.

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"** (Play Council 2001).

The project began just prior to half term and we hope that it will change the way we think about play and how we play together. This change in mind-set does involve changing our ideas about how dirty children get at school! We need to accept that our climate brings a lot of rain and mud and in order for our children to enjoy being outside, they will at times get muddy! We are asking parents to send their children to school with a spare set of clothes and a pair of wellies they can leave in school. We are also asking for your patience if your child comes home muddy. Try to remember that if they come home dirty, they have most likely had a LOT of fun and their learning has been enhanced by the power of play!

To facilitate this project, we will need to buy some new resources, move some things around on the playground and we will also require some loose parts. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime:

Wellies, coats, spare clothes your children may have grown out of

Suitcases of any size and type

Anything on wheels/castors

Plastic milk crates

Briefcases, especially hard cased ones

Road signs and cones

Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, worktables, wooden spoons, chopping boards

Tools like spades, trowels and brooms

Tubes of various sizes and various materials



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Buckets
Nets and ropes
Keyboards
Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
Foam sheets / body boards
Wooden pallets
Metal frames
Cable drums
Guttering
Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
Pegs (to help to set up dens)

If you are able to help us in sourcing any of these items, we would be extremely grateful. **We would be especially grateful for any support with storage for our playtime equipment. We are looking for plastic boxes, bins with lids and most importantly outdoor storage such as sheds.** We will be approaching local businesses to support us, so if you have any good contacts or know a business that may be willing to donate, please do let us know.

The main contacts in school for this long-term project are Miss Moor and Mrs Walsh.

There will be more information to follow at a parent's 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,

Mr Mitchell

Mr Mitchell & The Play Team