

21st May 2025



Dear parents/ carers,

We are excited to let you know that next year, we will be focussing on making our playtimes and lunchtimes more purposeful and exciting; allowing children to push out into the deep and explore all aspects of play.

To help us with this challenge, we have brought in the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Primary Programme. This is a strategic improvement programme designed to help us improve opportunities for play. It will support school to make sure that our outdoor environment provides the best range of experiences for the children and ensure our staff feel even more confident in helping all children have a constructive and exciting playtime.

Did you know that playtime is about 20% of every child's day at school? It is also, for many children, one of the few times that they have to play outside regularly with their friends and without devices.

The OPAL Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 1000 schools across the UK and internationally. OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, 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 productive as possible.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. These include children enjoying school more, an increase to teaching time due to fewer accidents and arguments, increased physical activity and an improvement to children's learning and development.

As the school improves play opportunities for children, you may find the school is asking you for resources like old pots and pans, palettes and all sorts of wonderful but random objects.

We are also adding wellies to our school uniform policy. This means that every child from Nursery to Year 6 will need a pair of wellies which will remain in school, ensuring children can access the field all year round.

Once our OPAL Programme is in place at St Andrew's we look forward to inviting parents and carers in for a hands-on learning experience. This will allow you to get the chance to see OPAL in action and join in yourselves. Please keep an eye out on Dojo next year for more information.

If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk, where you will find lots of useful information. I have also attached OPAL's parent guide to play, for more information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Wheatley.

Thank you for your continued support.

St Andrew's Staff.