



Opal Newsletter

March 2023



Opal Launch

WELCOME TO OPAL PLAYTIMES AT APPLETON.

Dear Parents and Carers,

The OPAL programme is an exciting journey that we're undertaking over the next 2 years with OPAL to develop the playground and the playtimes of the pupils here at Appleton Primary School.

OPAL stands for Outdoor Play and Learning and is a programme endorsed and supported by Sport England.

Opal's vision is that every child in every school experiences high quality play every day - with no exceptions. We completely endorse this vision and over the next weeks and months we will continue to enrich the playtimes of our pupils. This change in mind-set does involve us being aware that it is ok for children to get a little bit muddy while playing outside due to the sometimes wet and windy climate that we live in. In order to stay as dry and clean as possible we are trying to gather a supply of outdoor wear so that children can continue to have as much fun as possible while on our OPAL journey.

Despite the bad weather, we have already implemented some new changes this week, such as an area for den building, crafts trolleys and an outdoor music area. Here is just a snippet of some of the comments we've heard already:

- Child Y2: "That was the best playtime!"
- Child Y6: "I can't wait for the summer already!"
- Child Y5: "I loved making music with the pots and pans!"
- Staff member: "Playtimes already feel so much more positive."
- Staff member: "It was lovely to see children experiencing new activities."

WHAT'S NEW THIS WEEK?

- Music area
- Craft trolleys
- Den building



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Play Assemblies

One of the first changes the children will encounter will be our new Play Assemblies. These will take place regularly and will be where new items and areas of play will be introduced to the children. We will ask them;

How could we play with this?

What risks could there be?

Is this something you would enjoy playing with?

Our Play Assemblies will also see the introduction of the 'Golden Welly Award' whereby a child who is seen to be using equipment respectfully, sharing equipment or managing risks appropriately will have the chance to win the 'Golden Welly Award' for their class.

How can you help?

To facilitate this project, we will need to buy some new resources, move some things on the playground and gather plenty of loose parts. Loose parts are materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play. If you feel that you are able to help in sourcing items (listed below) or feel that you could support us with larger donations such as outdoor storage such as sheds, then please let us know. We will also be approaching some local businesses to support us so if you own a business, have any good contacts or just know of a business that may be willing to donate, please do let us know.

Donations of any of the following would be greatly received:

- cable drums / reels
- plastic milk crates
- tools like spades and trowels
- buckets
- real world dressing up clothes
- swimming pool noodles

Donations of wet weather clothing that no longer fits your child/children:

- Wellies
- Waterproof trousers
- raincoats

Keep an eye out for our next newsletter where we will be giving you a sneak peek to how our playtimes are going and what exciting items are arriving next!