

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Lammin (BSc Hons QTS)

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3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Subject: OPAL Update – Playtimes to the Next Level!**


Spring is in the air and since launching OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) in September, we have been on a mission to transform playtimes—and what a difference it is making! The children are singing, dancing, building, role-playing, and generally embracing the freedom to play in ways that spark creativity, teamwork, and pure joy!


**What We Have Achieved So Far:**


- **More Play Opportunities** – From den-building to makeshift mud kitchen, the playground is filled with exciting new ways to play and explore.
- **Expanding Play Spaces** – We are making use of more areas across the school grounds, and soon we hope to open the field for even more adventure!
- **Feel good vibes** – Thanks to your kind donations we have been able to purchase a large (both in size and sound output) speaker that can be used in all weather for the children to sing and dance along to.
- **Improve systems** – The unsung hero of our success has been to use money to purchase high quality and durable small satellite storage to put around the site. This has been vital in improving tidying up time.



**How You Can Help:**


We would love your support in gathering more play resources, particularly the following items:

 **Old Electronics** – Landline phones, keyboards, monitors, printers, radios, stereos, cameras — anything that allows for imaginative role play (no mobile phones, tablets, or anything with batteries, please).

 **Kitchen Items** – Toasters, kettles, sandwich makers, food processors, coffee machines, microwaves (for creative, unplugged play only!).

 **DIY Materials** – Pipes, guttering, sanded decking, furniture small wooden cable reels—safe, sturdy items that can be used for construction and problem-solving play.

 **Large drainage pipes**  – *This is our holy grail!* If you have any contacts in construction (e.g., Wavin, large building firms) who could help us source large pipes big enough for children to crawl through, please let us know! This has been difficult to source so far, so if you or someone you know has contacts in farming or construction we would love to hear from you!

 **Wheeled wonders** – balance bikes (no pedals), trikes, scooters, desk chairs, buggies, prams, wheelchairs, red wagons, fishing trolleys, luggage, Trunkis.

Keep reading to find out the next stage in our OPAL journey...

## What's Next?

- **The Sandpit and Welly Storage Area** – Wellies really are the key to unlocking stage 2 of our plan and we have secured help from Wincanton to assist with the building of some storage, which means children can leave wellies at the school and access the field in all weather. A large sandpit construction is in the pipeline (pun absolutely intended!) and will be a fantastic addition to our outdoor space, allowing children to be creative with sand play and construction. We may need volunteers who have spades, strong backs and wheelbarrows, look out for specific dates, coming soon.
- **More Loose Parts for Open-Ended Play** – The more varied our play materials, the more imaginative and engaging playtimes become, we have started to receive weird and wonderful items that are beginning to fill our limited storage space. The children's imaginations are incredible and they can create magic out of nothing. Remember we can give a second life to almost anything you would otherwise be tipping – if you are unsure, see Mr Johns at the tunnel gate before or after school, chances are he wants it! Your rubbish is our treasure!
- **A Storage Shed Fundraiser** – To house all our fantastic play resources, we are working towards a large storage shed. This shed will be able to keep our wonderful donations safe from the elements and ensure their life is extended. A bid has been submitted to the council and we eagerly await their decision. If you work for a company that is feeling particularly charitable and would like to donate to this cause, please make yourselves known to Mr Johns or the office.
- **Tescos Stronger Starts** – A final push for those blue coins in all Chippenham and Lyneham Tescos. Although we are guaranteed some funding we are in a competition with two other schools to secure more. The top school will receive £1500 in comparison to the third school who will receive £500 – every coin counts so please encourage friends, family, neighbours, even strangers to support our cause... and if your little ones happen to pick up more than one – I won't begrudge them that!

If you can donate anything, please drop it off at the **OPAL donation point between the music block and the PE/Huff and Puff shed.** If you have a lead on drainage piping, please get in touch—we will be forever grateful!

Thank you for your continued support. OPAL is already making a huge impact, and with your help, we can take it even further!

Yours sincerely

*Matt Johns*  
Curriculum lead for play

*Ben Butterfield*  
Assistant Deputy Head

*Jo Reynolds*  
Assistant Deputy Head

*Caroline Tiller*  
Lead MDSA

Ivy Lane OPAL Steering Group

