



Opal Playground

Dear Families,

We are excited to announce that we are working to launch our OPAL journey in Autumn 2022.



It has long been recognised that play is fundamental to a child's health, happiness, development and well-being. Research has also shown that children spend 20% of their time in school playing.

Knowing this, has led us to reflect upon how playtimes at Archibald could be improved and in the spring of 2022 our OPAL journey began.

The OPAL vision is that ***“every child in every school has an amazing hour of high quality play every day”*** and as a school we share this vision and recognise the enormous benefits play has on a child's life.

We are now developing the OPAL approach and hope to work with our school community to improve our play provision. Our school grounds are smaller in size with a traditional play yard, an area for Forest School and a small grassed area. Whilst we have developed these areas to date, through our OPAL project our

school site is being transformed to offer the highest quality play experiences whatever the weather building on what we currently offer.

The school site will be divided into zones and fundamental to our approach is that children will have the opportunity to play wherever they want, with whoever they want. Our children will have the freedom to explore and play in their own imaginative ways, experimenting, problem solving and having fun using a wide range of available resources which will be different in each zone.

The OPAL programme rationale is that

“...better, more active and creative playtimes can mean happier and healthier children, and having happier, healthier, more active children usually results in a more positive attitude to learning in school, with more effective classroom lessons, less staff time spent resolving unnecessary behavioural problems, fewer playtime accidents, happier staff and a healthier attitude to life”.

Our school also acknowledges the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 31, and supports the child’s right to play. We believe play provision should be:

“Welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.”

As the school improves play opportunities for your children, we would like to begin by asking you for resources, known as ‘spare parts’. Our initial wish list is at the bottom of the email however going forward it may include resources such as:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tyres• Pots/Pans/Kitchen utensils for a mud kitchen• Pushchairs• Suitcases• Milk Crates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large bean bags to sit on• Bikes/scooters/skateboards• Helmets• Corrugated pipes• Tarps• Dolls
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In addition, we are currently looking at making changes about how the children use the school grounds. They may use more of the grounds, for more of the year. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like. The experiences the school is fostering are essential for children’s physical and mental well-being and health and are in line with all current good practice advice on health safety, well-being and development.

If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme please have a look at the OPAL website <https://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk/>.

We hope to add the OPAL parent booklet onto the school website as soon as possible whilst a paper copy will also be sent home in the new school year.

Finally, we are also hoping to be able to invite you to an OPAL meeting in the autumn term.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Johnston
OPAL Leader

Mrs Turner
Headteacher

Donations

We are looking for donations of the following:

<p>Small World: Dinosaurs Jungle Animals Farm Animals Sea Animals Minibeasts People Figures</p>	<p>o</p> 
<p>Small World: Trucks Vehicles Tractors</p>	
<p>Construction: Duplo Wooden Building Blocks</p>	
<p>Natural Resources: Corks Pine cones Conkers</p>	
<p>Wheels: Balance Bikes, Scooters</p>	
<p>Metal Items: Colanders, Sieves</p>	
<p>Water Items: Jugs, Buckets, Plastic tubing, Funnels</p>	

Playsand:



Wooden games:



If you have something you are able to donate, please let us know via Office@archibaldfirstschool.co.uk

Thank you in advance