



Dear Ash Families,

Your children's school is about to start a programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, co-operation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

The OPAL Outdoor Play and Learning Programme is the result of over 20 years testing and development in over 700 schools and is now used in Canada, France and New Zealand as well as across the UK. Work has started to adapt the programme for schools in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria. In 2018, OPAL won first prize in an EU funded award for the best active school's programme in Europe and two UK national playwork awards.

OPAL is based on the idea that as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play, and 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 good as possible.

There are many proven benefits for schools which carry out the OPAL Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment of school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, less accidents and greatly improved behaviour.

As the school improves play opportunities for your children, you may find the school is asking you for resources and is making changes about how the children use the school grounds. The experiences the school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental well-being and healthy and 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: [www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk](http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk)

Best wishes,

The Ash Team and Kate Smith (OPAL Mentor)