



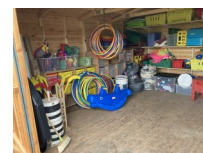
# OPAL OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING

# at English Martyrs'

It has been a busy term already for the OPAL team who have been working hard to further enhance our Play offer at EMCPS. The team have worked really hard to organise the spare parts shed as well as source new items and replenish popular equipment such as; suitcases, scooters, bikes and small world toys.

Children now have more independent access to the items they want to play with and just as importantly, know where to put them back!

*We are always looking to add to our loose parts resources, please think before you throw out any old; toys, bikes, scooters, pots and pans, dressing up clothes etc. we can put them all to good use!*



*Our Organised and accessible shed!*



*Some of our Y6 Opal Prefects*



Our Pallet Village is always popular and provides opportunity to build and construct, create runways and tunnels or even a stage for performing songs and dance! We are always amazed at what the children come up with.

There are also so many physical and health benefits with children lifting and moving items as well as the cooperation and teamwork involved to create the fantastic constructions.

*We would love to develop this area further - if you work in industry and could supply new pallets /cable reels or would like to come and help the children construct and make exciting things out of the pallet wood—then please do get in touch with us [opal@emcps.co.uk](mailto:opal@emcps.co.uk).*

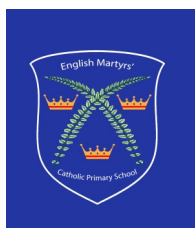
*We would also welcome large sheets of material for den building and shelter.*



In our Friday celebration assembly, we acknowledge those pupils who have embraced OPAL throughout the week. One of our latest OPAL star Award winners, Kiera was commended for supporting younger children to use the bikes and wheeled equipment.



AMAZING! We have been so pleased and proud to see children learning how to ride a bike on our middle field, during lunchtime. What an achievement , the hard work has paid off!



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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”.

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There are so many benefits to having OPAL at our school. We highly recommend reading 'The Power of Playtime' to find out even more about OPAL and how children across the country are learning, developing and above all having fun through their play. Click [HERE](#) to access your free copy online.

## Did You Know?

We see first hand, the benefits of OPAL but here are some interesting facts to show just how important quality play can be!



Children attend primary school for seven years. Of those seven years, around 1.4 years will be spent outside actively playing, making 'playtime' by far the most dominant element within the curriculum. Unlike sport and PE lessons, children's active play can claim 100% engagement, provided it is delivered with the right expertise, consistency and understanding of children's social, emotional and environmental needs.

### More teaching time

Most schools report ten minutes more teaching time per teacher with happier, more creative, and well exercised children who settle to classes much more quickly.

### Improved behaviour

OPAL schools report up to 80% decreases in use of behaviour policies and 90% drops in senior leadership time spent in resolving playtime issues.

### Faster core skills development

Children at OPAL schools rapidly develop creativity, imagination, cooperation, resilience, stamina and confidence.

### Inclusion

OPAL's approach makes play better for every child, every day...no exceptions!

### Happiness and wellbeing

Play is a human need and a human right. Children and staff at OPAL's schools report feeling less stressed and happier, and more excited about school.

Mrs Jeremiah and Mrs Morrison set weekly challenges for our pupils. This might involve den building, water challenges, assault courses or even mud pie contests! Our OPAL notice boards on the shed keep us up to date with any of the challenges or important messages!



We love playing in all weathers at English Martyrs'; however, in order to play on the middle field, during wet and snowy weather - children must wear wellington boots. We do have some spares in school but require children to bring in their own from home and ideally, leave them in school.

Mrs Leatheart Kindly donated a red flag to show us if it is a welly day. The flag was originally her fathers who worked as a signalman on the railways, many years ago! Thank you!



# OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY

We will celebrate Outdoor Classroom Day next term on 18th May. Watch out for updates about our plans for a fun-filled day outdoors!