OPAL Newsletter

Summer 2 update

OPAL stands for: Outdoor Play and Learning.

"To ensure that every schoolchild has **an amazing playtime every day** with no exceptions" (OPAL)

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we step into the final half-term of the year, we're also approaching the exciting conclusion of our 3 year journey with OPAL. We're thrilled to announce that our OPAL assessment is scheduled for Thursday 10th July 2025, and we are proudly aiming for either the Gold or Platinum Award. This milestone will mark a significant achievement, but our journey doesn't end here. We remain fully committed to continuously improving and enriching play opportunities for all our children.

Thank you for being part of this exciting adventure!

What has happened already...

OPAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024-25

- Reduced behaviour incidents
- Reduced medical incidents
- Skates and Heelies
- Performance area with music
- Large loose parts for building
- Water wall
- Music wall
- Lawn
- Zen garden
- Board game area
- Large garden sofa
- Prams and suitcases
- Circus skills equipment
- Enhanced mud kitchen
- New bikes and scooters
- Home corner area
- Active zone
- Mindfulness art area

The Power of Play: Imagination in Action - This half-term, our learning spaces have been alive with creativity as children of all year groups immerse themselves in dramatic, symbolic and role play. From transforming a simple block into a mobile phone to re-enacting real-life experiences with friends, the children are using abstract thought and imaginative props to explore and express their understanding of the world.

Whether it's collaborating to stage a play, inventing songs and dances, or stepping into the roles of characters and community helpers, every moment is a chance for self-expression and deep learning. These playful encounters encourage our children to communicate, emphasise and dream—reminding us that in play, there are truly endless possibilities.

Exciting Changes in our Outdoor Play in the Future - Thanks to your valuable feedback in our recent surveys, we're thrilled to announce some exciting upcoming changes! We're planning to re-wild our front planters to bring more nature into our space. We plan to introduce fun new features like a traversing wall, in-ground trampolines, cosy hammocks and a hill area complete with a slide. These additions will be designed to create a more playful, relaxing and engaging environment for everyone to enjoy. Stay tuned for more updates!

OPAL Play Update: Traversing wall
We're excited to announce that a brand new traversing wall will soon be installed by professionals. This exciting new addition offers a safe and fun way for everyone to challenge themselves both physically and mentally.

The goal is to travel sideways across the wall, not upwards, helping build strength, coordination and confidence.

Safety First: In line with our risk-benefit assessment, helmets will **not** be worn. If children leave the designated area with a helmet on and climb on fixed equipment, the helmet can become caught, leading to serious injury such as strangulation.

Peers will be encouraged to spot each other for safety and support.

Next week - we will be reviewing how the skates and Heelies are going at school. We'd love to hear your thoughts! If you would like to share your views or feedback, please email us at:

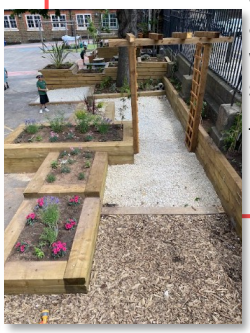
admin@fossdene.greenwich.sch.uk

Your opinions are valued and appreciated. Thank you for being part of the conversation.

Travis Perkins
Your local Timber & Builders Merchant

A big thank you! - Again, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Travis Perkins for your kind donation of Astro-turf, wood, compost, pebbles and delivery of all. Your generous support has enabled us to build a variety of exciting playground activities and create a beautiful flower garden, a large social sofa and lawn for the children to enjoy. Without your support, we would not have been able to create these wonderful, engaging spaces that inspire play, creativity and connection with nature.

Thank you once again for making a difference in our community!



Thank you to our generous donors - Thanks to the incredible support from both our previous and new donors, we've been able to further develop our loose parts area. This has given children a wider variety of materials to explore, sparking their imaginations and encouraging collaborative play.

Your role play donations have also made a huge difference, providing more opportunities for children to engage meaningfully in creative scenarios.

From having more resources, we've seen a noticeable reduction in behavioural issues, as children are more engaged and cooperative.

A special thank you to everyone who has donated plants for our zen garden. This beautiful, calming space has become a sensory haven, helping children to relax and connect with nature. Through tending the garden, children are gaining lifelong skills in caring for both their local environment, mental health and the planet.

How you can help…

As we continue to make our playtimes more exciting, no matter what the weather, we will need some equipment to help us to do this.

Donations of any of the following would be greatly received:
Pans / bowls / spoons / plates (plastic or metal) / chairs /prams / skates / skateboards / suitcases on wheels / dolls / teddies / board games / books / toys / dressing up clothes / planks of wood / tyres / fabrics / old carpet / laminate flooring.
Remember, what one person considers worthless or unwanted, another may find valuable or desirable...

Donations of wet weather clothing that no longer fits your children:
Wellington boots
Waterproof trousers
Raincoats
Socks

Free summer time activities...

AHOY! Children's Gallery: The Cove - A free outdoor playground at the National Maritime Museum, featuring a ship, compass roundabout and Kraken tentacles.

Visit the Sky Garden for free: Enjoy the breath taking views of London from the Sky Garden, one of the city's most stunning public spaces. Admission is free, but booking online is required. Don't miss your chance to see the capital from above!

Staying safe in the summer sun - As the hot weather sets in, we want to make sure all children stay safe and comfortable while enjoying their time at school and at home.

Please send your child to school with a water bottle, wearing a sun hat. Ensure shoulders are covered—no strappy tops or sleeveless shirts. Apply sun cream before your child arrives at school. We recommend a high-factor, long-lasting sunscreen for the best protection.