

## Intent

At South Wonston Primary School, we believe that outdoor play is not only vital for physical health, but central to a child's holistic development, happiness, and lifelong love of the outdoors.

Our intent is to provide a rich, inclusive and purposeful outdoor play environment where children can explore, imagine, move, create, and collaborate freely. We aim to ensure that every child experiences the full joy and benefit of outdoor play, every day.

Through the OPAL approach, we intend to:

- Foster a deep love and appreciation for the outdoors, encouraging children to engage fully with their environment in all weathers and seasons
- Support the development of core life skills such as movement, collaboration, resilience, imagination, creativity, engineering, and risk management
- Offer access to a broad variety of play types including:
  - Locomotor play (running, climbing, jumping)
  - Imaginative and symbolic play
  - Constructive play (building, engineering, den-making)
  - Social/cooperative play
  - Dramatic and fantasy play
  - Exploratory and sensory play
- Reduce playground conflict and behaviour incidents by offering more engaging, stimulating, and inclusive play options
- Improve wellbeing and emotional regulation, equipping children with better social and emotional tools
- Free up staff time by reducing the number of disputes requiring adult intervention, allowing more time for high-impact teaching and leadership
- Embed play as an essential and celebrated part of the school's ethos, not a break from learning, but a vital form of learning itself

## Implementation

To bring this vision to life, South Wonston Primary School will follow a structured, evidence-informed approach grounded in the OPAL model. Key steps will include:

### Audit & Observation

- Conduct a comprehensive baseline audit and observation of current play spaces and behaviours
- Identify underused areas, zones of conflict, supervision blind spots, and opportunities for richer engagement

### Action Planning & Resourcing

- Use OPAL assemblies, training and decision making to create and prioritise high-impact, inclusive changes to our play provision
- Introduce open-ended resources such as tyres, crates, fabrics, pipes, natural materials and more to support imaginative, constructive and physical play
- Ensure the outdoor space supports all ages and abilities, including quieter zones for reflective play and high-energy zones for movement

### Risk Management & Staff Development

- Train all staff involved in play supervision in playwork principles, OPAL philosophy, and risk-benefit assessment
- Adopt a balanced approach to risk, recognising that positive risk-taking is essential for healthy development
- Create a culture where staff understand their role as facilitators, not controllers, of play

## Phased Roll-Out & Monitoring

- Roll out changes in structured phases (e.g. new zones, materials, routines)
- Monitor impact through behaviour logs, incident records, child engagement, and pupil voice
- Use feedback loops (surveys, reviews, discussions) to adjust provision regularly

## Cultural Embedding & Community Engagement

- Involve children in designing and shaping play areas, giving them a voice and ownership
- Communicate clearly with parents, carers, and governors about the value of OPAL and the benefits of outdoor play
- Use newsletters, social media, signage, assemblies and staff training to embed a whole-school play-positive culture

## Impact

Through our OPAL-informed provision, we expect to see positive, measurable impact across several key areas:

Area	Desired Impact / Outcomes	Evidence / Indicators
Behaviour & Conflict	Noticeable reduction in behaviour incidents, fewer conflicts at playtimes	Behaviour logs, incident tracking, staff reports
Love of Outdoors	Children express joy, curiosity, and enthusiasm for playing and learning outside, in all weathers	Pupil voice, staff observations, family feedback
Social & Emotional Skills	Increased cooperation, empathy, resilience and emotional regulation	Observations, PSHE links, staff feedback
Skill Development	Improved physical skills (balance, coordination), engineering, creativity and risk assessment	Play observations, photo evidence, pupil reflection
Wellbeing & Happiness	Higher levels of joy, engagement and energy during and after playtimes	Pupil and staff surveys, qualitative feedback
Teaching Time	Less time lost to settling down after play, more productive lesson time	Staff feedback, time audits
Staff Time & Focus	Reduction in adult interventions needed; more time available for meaningful interaction and leadership	Meeting logs, SLT feedback, supervision logs
Sustainability & Culture	A lasting, embedded culture of outdoor play and learning that is celebrated and maintained	Policy documents, budget allocation, continuous training and review

Schools implementing OPAL typically report:

- Up to 80% reduction in the use of behaviour policies during playtimes
- Up to 90% decrease in senior leadership time spent resolving playtime issues
- On average, 10 extra minutes of teaching time per day (equivalent to 30 hours per year, per teacher)

By fully embracing OPAL at South Wonston Primary School, we will unlock the full potential of play as a powerful driver for learning, wellbeing, and community. Our children will not only play better — they will live, learn and thrive better.