



The OPAL Approach

The Royal School Wolverhampton



Why Play Matters

Play constitutes approximately 20% of a child's school life, equating to 1.4 years during their primary education.

Recognising the critical role of play, our school has embraced the OPAL programme to:

- Enhance the quality of play opportunities
- Support increasing Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs
- Foster improved learning outcomes.
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At our school, we believe:

Play is not a break from learning — it is a vital part of it.



Our Vision for Play

At The Royal School Wolverhampton, we are committed to developing the whole child.

Through OPAL, we aim to:

- **Build confident, resilient learners**
- **Encourage independence and creativity**
- **Support children's social and emotional development**
- **Create an environment where every child feels included and valued**



What This Looks Like in Practice

- Staff have received specialist OPAL training
- An OPAL working group drives ongoing development
- Pupils take on leadership roles as Play Rangers

Our playtimes have been transformed into rich, engaging experiences that support both wellbeing and learning.



The importance of Play

Play supports every area of development:

- 🧠 Thinking, problem-solving and creativity
- 💬 Communication and language skills
- ❤️ Emotional wellbeing and resilience
- 🤝 Social skills and teamwork
- 💪 Physical strength and coordination

Through play, children develop the skills they need for life now and in the future.



What Play Looks Like at The Royal



Our play offer includes:

- Wheeled play (scooters, balance bikes)
- Large-scale loose parts construction
- Stage, dress-up and performance areas
- Home corners and role play
- Small world play
- Creative zones
- Water play
- Forest school (digging, den building, slacklines)
- Quiet and reflective spaces
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Our playground is now a rich, engaging environment where every child can find their place.

Our Values in Action Through Play

Respect

Children learn to:

- Share space and resources
- Listen to others' ideas
- Care for their environment

Play encourages children to understand and value each other.



Trust

Children are trusted to:

- Make their own choices
- Lead their own play
- Use equipment responsibly

Through this, they develop independence and confidence.

Community

Play brings children together:

- Across year groups
- In different types of play
- Through collaboration and teamwork

Our playground is a place where everyone belongs.



Our Values in Action Through Play

💡 Initiative

Children are encouraged to:

- Create their own games
 - Build, design and explore
 - Solve problems independently
- Open-ended resources inspire imagination and creativity.



⚡ Risk

Children learn through challenge:

- Trying new things
 - Testing their limits
 - Managing risk safely
- This helps build resilience, confidence and perseverance.



Supporting OPAL

We want every child to enjoy rich, meaningful play experiences every day — and your support makes a huge difference.

Being Ready for Play

To make the most of OPAL, children should come to school prepared for outdoor play in all weathers:

- A waterproof coat

Our playtimes can be muddy, wet and active — and that's all part of the learning!

How You Can Help

We welcome your support in developing our play provision:

- Donate loose parts (e.g. pots, pans, crates, materials)
- Encourage outdoor play at home
- Talk to your child about their play experiences

Your involvement helps us create a richer environment for all children.

Upcycled Loose Parts



Baking Pans



Cake Moulds



Ice Cube Trays



Kitchen Tools



Measuring Spoons



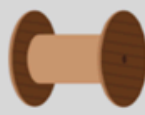
Pots & Pans



Strainers



Baskets



Cable Spools



Cardboard Items



Cones



Containers



Corrugated Pipes



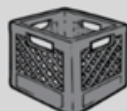
Dress-Up Items



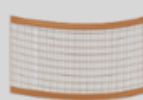
Fabric



Funnels



Milk Crates



Nets



Old Electronics



Pool Noodles



PVC Pipes



Rolling Carriers



Ropes



Shovels & Spades



Sinks & Tubs



Tarps



Tires & Wheels



Wooden Planks