

This time 12 months ago, OPAL was just a plan forming. I don't think any of us dreamed we would come so far so quickly! We've tried to create something for everyone — and we're not done yet. More on that later.

One thing that has definitely warmed my heart is how quickly the children adapted to mixing across the school. The older children take care of the younger ones and happily play alongside them. Occasionally, we even spot siblings playing nicely together!



## OPAL: More Than Just Play

Since introducing OPAL, we've seen incredible benefits that go beyond enhancing playtime. OPAL was introduced to Whinstone to increase resilience, encourage social interaction and physical activity, and give children the chance to explore and enjoy the outdoors.

Not only has it delivered on those aims, but it's also brought about some unexpected and impressive results. First aid visits have dropped by 17.5%, and teachers are no longer spending valuable afternoon teaching time resolving lunchtime issues. This has gone from 20 minutes to zero. Even better, minor playground squabbles have also disappeared completely. It's clear that when children are given the freedom to play, learn, and explore in a well-supported environment, everyone benefits!

## Really Wild

You might have noticed certain areas of grass has gone rogue, I assure you this is intentional our lawn mower is fine. As well as environmental benefits, the presence of nature within a school has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, green spaces (and the colour green in general) promotes calm, mindfulness and emotional regulation. It also makes the best spots for hide and seek!



## Help Please!!

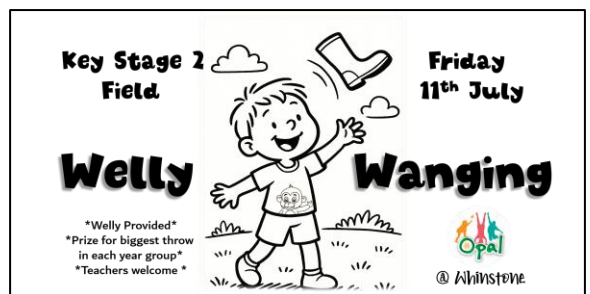
Don't forget, if you are out and about this summer, to look out for any supplies we can use in our dig zone – shells, pinecones, feathers, interesting rocks, ahem... a couple of tonnes of sand.

On that note we'd really love a big sandpit for the children if anyone could help us in any way, or has any contacts who could assist, we're in need of a big hole, lining, sand and sleepers (or similar) to edge it.

## Welly Wanging

We recently held a Welly Wanging contest on the KS2 field. Oliver from 6A achieved the longest throw overall, but we awarded OPAL medals to the top thrower in each year group.

Unfortunately—presumably due to the excessive heat and the excitement of it all—we forgot to take any pictures!



## Pupil Voice

This time of year, we are always glad sad to say goodbye to our year 6's so I have been out and about asking for some OPAL opinions, you will find them throughout the newsletter.

Coming soon...  
We still have lots more plans for OPAL! We're moving the Dig Zone to the back of the KS1 field and planning to introduce some plants, flowers, and bug accommodation to the central rewilded area. We'll also be adding a large shed for welly storage. A Water Zone is in the works, and we've already gathered lots of resources for it. Hopefully, we can get the caravan made safe so it can be opened — but our biggest ambition remains the sandpit!




“It’s amazing, I love it, I will miss all the different things to do”



“OPAL is a good, fun thing”

This year has been a big change for our lunch time staff and we have all had to adapt quite quickly, a big thank you to...



Mr Syson & Mrs Donnelly  
in  
Wheel Zone




Mrs Tomlinson  
in  
Show Zone



Mrs Manning  
in  
Mark Making




Mrs Mallon & Mrs AlaaEldin  
in  
Build



Mrs Thomas  
in  
Zen



Mrs Sanderson  
in  
Gym



Mrs Weller & Miss Roberts  
in  
Dig



Ryan  
in  
Football



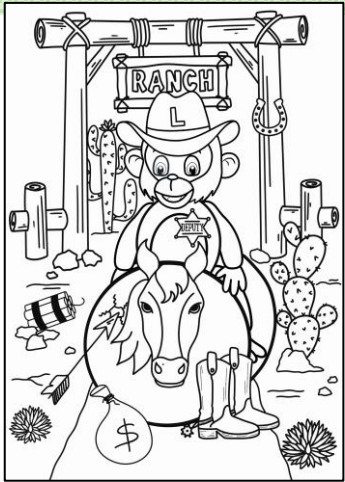
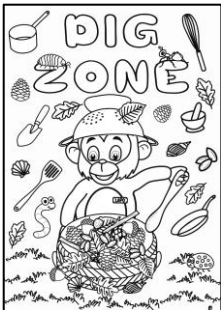
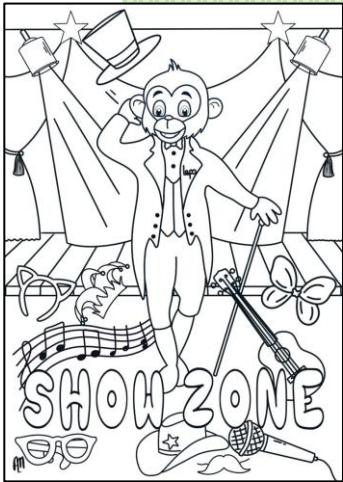
Mrs Fellows & Mrs Brown  
in  
Small World

Also, thank you to Mrs Mohammadi, Miss Davies, Mrs Wade & Mrs Phelps for looking after other areas.

“It’s really fun, the best part is that if someone doesn’t have a friend to play with, they can still find something to do with other people”

Mrs Fellows & Mrs Brown  
in  
Small World

Colouring Fun  
If you’ve heard your child talking about Lapo, our OPAL mascot, you might want to head to the school website. Mrs Woodley has kindly agreed to add all our Lapo colouring sheets to the OPAL page so you can print them at home.



# Photo Gallery



"OPAL is the best thing I have ever experienced in school. I will be sad when I leave"



"OPAL is great, there is something for everyone, lots of different things to play with"



"I love the Dig Zone, you can play with mud and not get into trouble"





Have a fantastic summer!!

THANK YOU!!

THANK YOU for your donations and support so far.  
See you next term - Team OPAL (Mrs McGough, Mrs Godwin & Mrs Wilson-Dukes)