



OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Programme

At Whinstone Primary School, we are proud to follow the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Programme, which supports our commitment to high-quality, inclusive, and creative play for all children. The OPAL approach helps us ensure that playtimes are purposeful, enjoyable, and enriching—promoting physical health, social skills, imagination, and emotional well-being.

To maintain and develop our OPAL provision, we have established an OPAL Working Party. The function of this group is to run, evaluate, improve, and reflect on all aspects of outdoor play within the school. The working party meets regularly to review progress, gather feedback from pupils and staff, and make informed decisions to enhance play opportunities across the school grounds.

The OPAL Working Party includes:

The Play Leader

The Play Coordinator

The Headteacher

Members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

A School Governor, who acts as our Play Champion

Together, this team ensures that Whinstone Primary's OPAL provision continues to evolve and provide the very best outdoor play and learning experiences for our children.





OPAL Play Leader – Role Description

Whinstone Primary School

Purpose of the Role

To provide strategic leadership and oversight of the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme, ensuring high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable play provision across the school. The Play Leader drives the long-term vision for play, coordinates whole-school involvement, and ensures OPAL remains embedded in school culture and practice.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the strategic development of OPAL across the school, ensuring alignment with school values and improvement priorities.
- Maintain a clear long-term vision for play and ensure the programme evolves in response to school needs and OPAL guidance.
- Monitor the overall impact of OPAL and identify opportunities for further development.

Coordination of the Play Team

- Lead and coordinate the Play Team, ensuring consistent, high-quality play work practice.
- Provide direction, support, and guidance to staff involved in delivering OPAL.
- Facilitate regular Play Team meetings to review progress, share updates, and plan improvements.

Coordination of the OPAL Working Party

- Chair and coordinate the OPAL Working Party, ensuring representation from across the school community.
- Oversee action planning, progress tracking, and communication between stakeholders.
- Ensure Working Party actions align with the strategic aims of the OPAL programme.

Operational Oversight & Documentation

- Maintain key OPAL overviews, action plans, and strategic documents, ensuring they remain accurate and up to date.
- Oversee the organisation of rotas for lunchtime play, ensuring adequate staffing and coverage across all zones.
- Ensure all OPAL documentation is accessible, current, and used effectively to support decision-making.





OPAL Play Coordinator – Role Description

Whinstone Primary School

Purpose of the Role

To provide day-to-day operational leadership of the OPAL programme, ensuring that play provision is safe, engaging, well-resourced, and continually improving. The Play Coordinator ensures that the practical elements of OPAL run smoothly and that children experience high-quality play every day.

Key Responsibilities

Operational Leadership of OPAL

- Lead the daily implementation of OPAL across the playgrounds.
- Ensure all play zones are active, engaging, and well supervised.
- Support staff in delivering effective play work practice.

Resource Management

- Maintain, organise, and replenish OPAL resources, ensuring they are safe, accessible, and well-resourced.
- Lead the development of new play opportunities by sourcing, creating, or adapting resources.
- Oversee storage systems and ensure resources are returned, rotated, and maintained.



Play Zone Development

- Improve and expand play zones in line with OPAL principles and school priorities.
- Work with children and staff to identify new opportunities for play.
- Ensure zones remain stimulating, inclusive, and varied.

Risk–Benefit Assessment

- Carry out and oversee daily rapid risk–benefit assessments of all play areas.
- Ensure staff understand and apply risk–benefit thinking consistently.
- Report any concerns promptly and ensure actions are followed up.

Play work Practice Oversight

- Support staff on the playground to deliver high-quality play work.
- Model effective play work approaches and provide informal coaching where needed.
- Monitor the quality of play provision and identify areas for improvement.



Governor Play Champion – Role Description

Whinstone Primary School

Purpose of the Role

To champion, support, and challenge the development of high-quality play at Whinstone Primary School, ensuring that OPAL remains a strategic priority and that the governing body maintains strong oversight of its impact.

Key Responsibilities

Championing Play

- Advocate for the importance of play as a driver of wellbeing, behaviour, social development, and learning.
- Promote OPAL within the governing body and ensure play remains visible in strategic discussions.

Support and Challenge

- Provide constructive challenge to school leaders regarding the quality, safety, and impact of play provision.
- Support the school in maintaining momentum and ambition within the OPAL programme.

Monitoring and Oversight

- Receive regular OPAL updates, observations, and reports from school leaders.
- Visit the school to observe play in action and understand the lived experience of children.
- Use insights to inform governance discussions and help shape future priorities.

