



September 2024

I am delighted to inform you that this academic year, we will be focusing on enhancing the lunchtime play experiences for all our pupils at Warden House Primary School. To this end, we have agreed to work with the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Primary Programme, to support and guide us in expanding the opportunities for play, enriching our outdoor environment, and empower our staff to ensure every child enjoys an exceptional playtime every day.

Did you know that playtime constitutes approximately 20% of a child's school day? It is often one of the few occasions when they can freely play outside with their peers, without the use of digital devices. The OPAL Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in more than 1,000 schools across the UK and internationally. It is based on the premise that, in addition to formal learning, children also acquire valuable skills and knowledge through play.

The proven benefits of implementing the OPAL Primary Programme in schools include increased enjoyment of the school experience, more teaching time due to fewer accidents and disputes, enhanced physical activity, and even improved academic performance in subjects such as Mathematics. Most importantly, it is simply great fun for the children.

As we embark on this exciting journey, we are likely to request your support in providing a range of donated resources such as old pots, pans, and cardboard boxes to enrich the play experiences where possible. (We will confirm details in due course so please do not send anything in just yet!).

Additionally, you may notice changes in how the children are allowed to use the school grounds. We are excited about this as we have fantastic outdoor spaces at Warden House that we are not yet using to their full potential. These modifications are essential for fostering the physical and mental well-being of our pupils, in line with current best practises in health, safety, and child development.





We will be working closely with Outdoor People, the non-profit organisation that delivers the OPAL Primary Programme across the region, for the next two years. They will be providing training, supporting our OPAL working group, and mentoring our team to ensure the successful implementation of this initiative.

To better understand your perspectives on the current state of playtimes, we kindly request that you complete a brief parent survey ([click here](#) to access this) by 22nd September. This data will help us establish a baseline and plan for the changes we aim to implement over the next 18 months.

If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website, where you will find lots of useful information. See the YouTube channel (OPALPlaytime) and on Twitter (@OPALCiC) for lots of examples of schools that have the kind of playtimes we want for our children.

During this period, you will be invited to attend events where you can witness the progress first-hand and even participate alongside your children!

I welcome your feedback and any offers of assistance. Please feel free to contact me directly at marina.camilleri-gorman@warden-house.kent.sch.uk.

We are truly excited about this project and look forward to your support in our efforts to enhance playtime for all the children at Warden House Primary School.

Yours sincerely,

Marina Camilleri-Gorman
EYFS Leader and OPAL Coordinator

