



OPAL Long Term Development Strategy



1. Commitment

Our school is committed to ensuring that high-quality play is embedded at the heart of school life. We will refer to this strategy when making decisions that impact children's play and outdoor provision.

We aim to provide strong strategic and operational leadership to sustain and develop an engaging, inclusive, and stimulating outdoor environment that supports all pupils.

2. Rationale

We believe that all children have the right to rich, meaningful play opportunities that allow them to explore, create, take risks, and develop socially and emotionally.

Through OPAL, we recognise that:

- High-quality play leads to **happier, healthier children**
- Improved play supports **learning behaviours and engagement**
- Play reduces behavioural incidents and increases wellbeing
- Outdoor provision enhances **creativity, resilience, and independence**

Our approach ensures play is:

- Inclusive and accessible to all



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- Rich in opportunity and challenge
- Embedded across the curriculum and school culture

OPAL LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

1-Year Development Plan (Foundation Phase)

(Establishing provision, zones, and engagement)

WHEN	WHAT (Key Actions)	WHY (Intended Impact)
Year 1	Develop key play structures including mud kitchen, performance/stage area, and social spaces	To create engaging, diverse play opportunities that appeal to all pupils
	Introduce new play zones including rough and tumble, cycling, digging, and small world play	To broaden the range of play types and support physical, imaginative, and social development
	Establish Forest School access during lunchtimes	To promote nature-based play and wellbeing
	Create walkways and improve site access (including pond repair and fencing)	To ensure safe, sustainable, year-round use of outdoor spaces
	Introduce tree climbing opportunities and sensory/craft areas	To develop risk-taking, creativity, and sensory engagement



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WHEN	WHAT (Key Actions)	WHY (Intended Impact)
	Develop parental engagement through stay-and-play events and build days	To strengthen community involvement and understanding of play
	Introduce environmental projects such as planting events	To foster responsibility, sustainability, and connection to nature

3–5 Year Development Plan (Embedding & Expansion Phase)

(Sustaining, enhancing, and extending provision)

WHEN	WHAT (Key Actions)	WHY (Intended Impact)
Years 2–5	Develop permanent outdoor structures including sheltered areas, rope play, climbing equipment, and welly storage	To enhance durability, accessibility, and all-weather play opportunities
	Continue landscaping development, including varied terrain and improved site topography	To provide increased challenge and engagement for all age groups
	Create pathways to enable year-round access to all areas of the field	To maximise outdoor usage regardless of weather
	Extend provision to include greater challenge for older pupils	To ensure progression and sustained engagement across key stages



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WHEN	WHAT (Key Actions)	WHY (Intended Impact)
	Embed regular parental engagement (build days, stay-and-play events, community use)	To strengthen partnerships and increase sustainability of OPAL
	Develop maintenance plans for plants, structures, and outdoor areas	To ensure long-term sustainability and safety
	Improve winter provision to maintain outdoor access throughout the year	To ensure continuity of play opportunities in all seasons
	Increase use of school grounds by the wider community	To extend the impact of OPAL beyond the school and promote community wellbeing

Long-Term Vision (Beyond 5 Years)

- Outdoor play is fully embedded within **school culture and curriculum delivery**
- All staff are confident and skilled in **facilitating high-quality play**
- Pupils demonstrate **high levels of independence, creativity, and resilience**
- The school site becomes a **community hub for outdoor learning and play**
- Play provision continues to evolve through **pupil voice and innovation**



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Monitoring & Evaluation

To ensure the success of this strategy, the school will:

- Conduct **termly reviews** of OPAL provision
- Gather **pupil and parent voice**
- Monitor **play engagement and behaviour**
- Review **safety and risk-benefit assessments**
- Evaluate the **impact on wellbeing and learning behaviours**

Conclusion

This long-term strategy ensures that OPAL is not a short-term initiative, but a sustained approach to improving children's experiences, wellbeing, and development through high-quality outdoor play.