

Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)

What is the OPAL programme?

The OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) programme supports schools to develop their outdoor play provision. It is the only programme of its kind that has been independently proven to sustainably improve the quality of play in British primary schools. Provision aims to support children in engaging in high quality play across the 16 different play types.

Why is Branfil taking part in the OPAL Programme?

Children attend primary school for seven years. Of those seven years, around 1.4 years (20%) will be spent outside actively playing, making 'playtime' by far the most dominant element within the curriculum.

What does OPAL look like at Branfil?

At lunchtimes, children have access to:

- Wheeled play including scooters, buggies, carts and trailers
- Fixed climbing frames
- Water play
- A large sandpit
- Role play areas including small world
- Den building resources
- Sports activities facilitated by our sports coach e.g. basketball, multi-skills, football, table tennis
- Reading areas
- Social spaces
- Music, instruments, stage, dressing up clothes and props
- Creative zones for colouring and craft
- Access to loose parts for child directed play such as planks, crates, cable drums, tyres and cardboard
- Mud kitchen (wellies and protective clothing provided)
- Woodland area



How does it work?

Children and staff attend Play Assemblies each fortnight where they discuss the risks and benefits of different equipment and types of play on the playground. We have a Play Policy and a Play Charter which staff and children agree to follow. You can find copies of these on our school website, on the Curriculum and Learning tab then the OPAL page.

How can I get involved?

Parents/carers are invited to Play Events which occur termly so you can see OPAL in action. Also, on our school newsletter, parents/carers can find information about what donations of resources we are asking for currently. If you think you can help in any other way, please get in touch!