

## **Our OPAL Journey so far!**

We are currently on a **12–18 month journey** to transform our playground and enrich children’s play experiences. We started in the Autumn Term 2025.

This includes developing spaces, introducing new resources, and supporting children to lead their own play in creative and imaginative ways.

## **Why Play Matters**

Play is essential for children’s development:

- **Learning through play** – problem-solving, language, creativity
- **Physical development** – strength, coordination, fitness
- **Social skills** – teamwork, cooperation, communication
- **Emotional wellbeing** – reducing stress and building resilience

Play is not separate from learning —










 **it is how children learn best.**

## **What Does OPAL Look Like at Yorke Mead?**

Children from **Year 1 to Year 6** can choose where and how they play across the playground.

We provide a variety of **zones and resources**, which may change depending on children’s interests:

### **Play Zones May Include:**

-  Tyres and planks
-  Mud kitchen and café
-  Water play area
-  Small world play (dinosaurs, cars, fantasy)
-  Sports and games
-  Creative and chalk areas
-  Performing arts (music, drama, dressing up)
-  Quiet and board game spaces
-  Den building with crates, materials and boxes

All areas are supervised by our team, ensuring children are **safe while having the freedom to explore.**

Children are encouraged to:

- Be responsible for equipment
- Help tidy up
- Dress appropriately (wellies and old coats recommended!)

### **Celebrating Play**

Our OPAL Play Team (including staff, governors and parents) regularly reviews the programme.

We also hold **Play Assemblies** where we:

- Celebrate positive play
- Introduce new activities
- Reinforce expectations

★ Children can even earn the **“Golden Welly” Award** for outstanding play!

### **How You Can Help – Our Wish List**

To make playtimes even more exciting, we welcome donations of:

- Suitcases
- Plastic crates
- Wooden pallets
- Cable reels
- Fabric (sheets, curtains, etc.)
- Old pushchairs or wagons
- Buckets and containers
- Dressing-up clothes (good condition)
- Small toys (cars, dolls, dinosaurs, etc.)
- Pots, pans, utensils (metal or plastic)

We also welcome donations of:

- Wellies

- Waterproof trousers
- Raincoats

🔗 If you can help, please bring items into school — thank you for your support! Or if you want to donate financially, please do so via the FOYM link on The School Gateway.

### **Final Thought**

*At Yorke Mead, we believe:*

***“Play is the child’s classroom outside.”***

*Through OPAL, we are creating a playground where every child can thrive, explore and enjoy their time at school.*

### **The OPAL working group**

Headteacher	Ms Pollard
Governor	Charlotte Gomes
Parent representative	Natalie Carpenter
Curriculum Lead for Play	Linda Walke
Play Co-ordinator	Liam Thompson