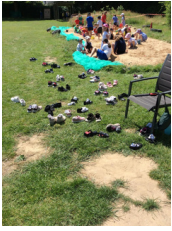




# OPAL Newsletter



July 2024



What a year we have had! We are very proud of how far we have come on our OPAL journey and we are looking forward to continuing to enhance and develop play at Brookside. This half term we have enjoyed lots of 'green welly' days on the field and taking our shoes and socks off in the sandpit!

## Nature Project supported by Saint Gobain

We have now welcomed two working parties from Saint Gobain to continue to build biodiversity, habitat creation and planting at Brookside as part of a funded Nature project. They have planted hedgerows, installed a bird hide (2 more have been purchased and will be built in the Autumn), created some bug homes, sown wildflower seeds, built bird boxes, planted trees, bluebells and wild garlic and built hedgehog houses. This is a long term project and we are excited about what is to come. The top corner of the field by the sandpit mound is our first 'wild' area. The grass is to be left to grow with wildflowers, a small woodland (which has been planted using the Miyawaki technique), bird boxes and a hedgehog house. As soon as the ground has settled we will open up the area to the children.

Our plans for the next phase include planting more trees and opening up and clearing out our pond area. If you have any pond management expertise, or know anyone who has, please let us know! We also plan to create a nature/sensory garden next to the bungalow. We will keep you posted on all developments.

## Fundraising

Our 'Break the Rules' day this half term raised nearly £400. We are going to buy some waterproof trousers of varying sizes but we have also already bought some hammock chairs for the children to use in quiet areas.

We will continue to fundraise for OPAL next term (some children have already suggested some new fundraising ideas!) and we really appreciate all your support.



# What are LOOSE PARTS?

Loose parts are items that can be used to facilitate different kinds of play, or any material that a child can manipulate for playful purposes.

## Natural Loose Parts



## Upcycled Loose Parts



## Summer Holiday clear-out

Over the summer break, if you are having a clear-out, please keep OPAL in mind! We always need loose parts to enhance the play for our children. Don't worry about things being in perfect condition, we will check items over thoroughly before making them available to the children.

## Help with large loose parts

You may have noticed a canoe in our large sandpit, the children love it! We would love anything similar, another kayak, a small boat, or any other large transport item you think we could use!

We were very kindly given some large wooden cable reels, which the children love playing with. We would love to get hold of some large plastic cable reels too, or large plastic crates.



## Rangers

We are pleased to have enrolled many of our Year 5 children to be OPAL Rangers. They support children in their play, help to tidy and take photos of great things! The children always choose whether they want to be a Ranger that day, and they could just do it for 5 or 10 minutes at a time. The children just collect a cap when they want to be a Ranger.



## Offers of help

Thank you so much for all your offers of help going forward with OPAL.

Specific projects we would love help with are:

- building an outdoor clothing store with pallets
- installing a water butt
- building some outdoor den tarpaulin storage to protect resources from the elements!

If there is anything at all you can help with, please let us know by emailing us on:

rclark@brookside.notts.sch.uk  
s.evans@brookside.notts.sch.uk.

Thank you!



## Updated Amazon Wish List

Thank you so much for the donations we have received from the Amazon wish list so far. Just a reminder, these things could be new or used, and don't have to come from Amazon, the list is just to give you an idea!

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/58P8HKYM7ZQ2/ref=hz\\_ls\\_biz\\_ex?scrlybrkr=32d5309f](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/58P8HKYM7ZQ2/ref=hz_ls_biz_ex?scrlybrkr=32d5309f)

## Open Session for Parents

We had a fantastic afternoon on Wednesday 17th July when we welcomed nearly 100 extra family members to share in our OPAL playtime. Thank you so much to all who were able to come and, to those who couldn't make it, there will be more!



Thank you so much for all your amazing feedback following the open session, and thank you to those who have completed the online survey. The link is still live, so if you haven't had time to do it, please click [here](#).

