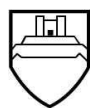
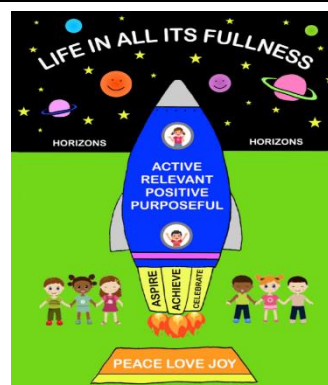


## Stratford-sub-Castle CE VC Primary School Newsletter



Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025

*Life in all its fullness John 10:10*



Our theme for assembly this term is

### Generosity

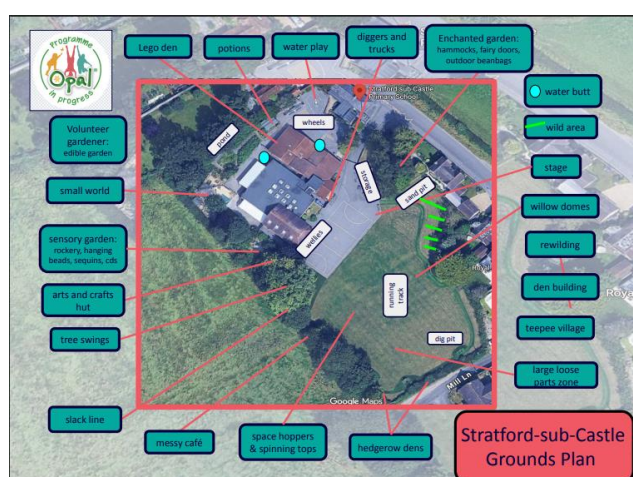
*'God loves a cheerful giver'*

*2 Corinthians 9.7*



### Help needed!

Below you will find information about our exciting new playtime programme OPAL. For this programme we would like the children to be able to use more of the school space other than just the playgrounds and field. Below is an idea of what we would like to develop over the next 18 months.



In order to prepare for our launch of OPAL after half term we need some help to tidy some areas of the school that we currently do not use and make them safe for the children use. This involves tidying up our 'Golden Garden' at the back of the school to create a sensory garden, removing weeds and rotten wood, painting and digging. We also need help treating some of our wooden outdoor furniture, taking down and moving some fences and making some storage and a stage area! If you are able to provide any wood, pallets or tools that would be very helpful.

We are having a Team Stratford 'Tidy up' day on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2025, from 09:00 until 16:00**. If you (parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles etc) would be able to offer some help with any of this, please can you complete the form below.

<https://forms.office.com/e/JAqZmizYyV>

I would be grateful even if you could only offer an hour of your time on that day. Hopefully, together we can get lots done and improve the area for the children to use more freely. I am happy for the Y5/6 children to be involved in this day but only if they are able to do some of the jobs (this will not be a day where they can play at school).

## OPAL

### Outdoor play and learning

We are about to start a programme to improve opportunities for physical activity, socialisation, cooperation, coordination, resilience, creativity, imagination and enjoyment through improved play.

Thank you to those of you who completed our parent play survey at the end of the last school year. It was really interesting to hear your thoughts about how play has changed from your experiences and the way you felt you benefited from playtime. I'm pleased many of you continue to offer your children those play experiences and get outside as much as you can with them.

It is interesting to think about the ways that play has changed over the years. Children today don't have the same freedoms we once did, so we want to give children back time to really enjoy and learn from play. After all, it's a child's basic human right.

The Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL) Primary Programme is the result of over 20 years of testing and development in over 800 schools and has been used in Spain, Canada, France and New Zealand. The programme has also been adapted and used in schools in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Austria under the Play Friendly Schools project. In 2018, OPAL won first prize in an EU-funded award for the best active school's programme in Europe and two UK national playwork awards. In 2019, OPAL was awarded a quarter of a million pounds by Sport England to bring the programme to many more schools.

OPAL is based on the idea that, as well as learning through good teaching, your children also learn when they play. As 20% of their time in school is playtime, we want to make sure that this amount of time (equivalent to 1.4 years of primary school) is as good as possible.

One reason the school is carrying out this programme is that childhood has changed, and many children no longer get their play needs met out of school.

- Average screen time per day is six hours.
- Average outdoor play time per week is five hours.
- Percentage of UK children who only play outdoors with other children at school is 56%.

There are many proven benefits for schools that carry out the OPAL Primary Programme. They usually include: more enjoyment at school, less teaching time lost to disputes between children, fewer accidents and greatly improved behaviour.

Play is not messing about. It is the process evolution has come up with to enable children to learn all of the things that cannot be taught, while also having so much fun. There are certain things children **must** have in order to be able to play. These include:

- Having clothes that they can play in.
- Having things to play with.
- Having a certain amount of freedom.

As the school improves play opportunities for your children, you may find the school is asking you for resources and is making changes about how the children use the school grounds. They may use more of the grounds, for more of the year. Your children may get a bit messier, be exposed to more challenges and have greater freedoms to play where, with whom and how they like. The

experiences the school is fostering are essential for children's physical and mental wellbeing and are in line with all current good practice advice on health and safety, wellbeing and development.

The school will be supported by OPAL for 18 months and there will be an opportunity to come and talk to the OPAL mentor at your child's school. If you would like to learn more about the OPAL Primary Programme, please have a look at the OPAL website ([www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk](http://www.outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk)), where you will find lots of useful information and several videos about the programme.

In the coming 18 months you will be invited to events where you can come and see for yourselves what is happening and have the opportunity to join in too.

We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all the children.

### **Welcome & Information Evening for Parents of Reception Children**

We are holding a **"Welcome /Q&A Session for New Parents"** on **Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September at 18:00** in the school hall. At this session, we will answer any of your questions now that you have had a chance to get into the swing of things! Mrs Waters will give a short presentation, including information regarding early reading and our phonics scheme, and there will be a chance to ask questions.

**Please can Parents of children in reception complete the form by following the link below by Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> September to let us know if you are coming or not.**

<https://forms.office.com/e/EHVCKgm3nY>

### **Phonics and early reading** **(Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)**

Miss Smith has created a video to explain our phonics scheme, Essential Letters and Sounds, and how we teach reading at Stratford. If you are interested, please go to the school website. Follow the link below

<https://stratford-sub-castle.wilts.sch.uk/parent-workshops/>

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Miss Smith through the [admin@stratford-sub-castle.wilts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stratford-sub-castle.wilts.sch.uk) email.

### **Message from Reverend Suzie**

St Lawrence Breakfast Church - come to the Reading Room on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> September for a relaxed atmosphere, delicious breakfast, a thought for the day and a craft. (For this session bring a toy animal or if you prefer some information on an endangered species). We hope to see you there! (The doors open at 9.45am and we finish at 10.30am).

Best wishes

*Justine Watkins*

## 2025 -2026

### TERM 1

EVENT	DATE
Parents Meeting for EYFS	Wednesday 24.09.25 @ 18.00
Harvest Festival in Church for KS2	Wednesday 15.10.25 @14.15
ALL BREAK for HOLIDAY	Tuesday 21.10.25
Teacher Development Day 3	Wednesday 22.10.25

### TERM 2

ALL BACK TO SCHOOL	Monday 03.11.25
No clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Monday 03.11.25
Parents' Evenings (In person)	Wednesday 05.11.25 Thursday 06.11.25
Clubs commence	w/b Monday 10.11.25
No Clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	From w/b Monday 08.12.25
Dress rehearsal to school: Infant Nativity in School Hall	Tuesday 09.12.25
Infant Nativity in School Hall to families (Butterfly Class)	Wednesday 10.12.25 @ 09.15
Infant Nativity in School Hall to families (Owl Class)	Thursday 11.12.25 @ 09.15
Christmas Bazaar (FOSS)	Friday 12.12.25
School Carol Service in St. Lawrence Church Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.	Wednesday 17.12.25 @14.15

No Night Owls on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 School finishes at 13:15

## 2025 -2026

### TERM 3

EVENT	DATE
Teacher Development Day 4	Monday 05.01.26
No before/after school clubs <u>except</u> Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Monday 05.01.26
ALL BACK TO SCHOOL	Tuesday 06.01.26
After school clubs commence	w/b Monday 12.01.26

Primary School Deadline for EYFS September 2026/ 2027 ( <a href="http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk">www.wiltshire.gov.uk</a> )	Thursday 15.01.26
Y6 Parent Workshop – Year 6 SATS TEAMS meeting	Thursday 22.01.26
No Clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Monday 09.02.26
Open Door afternoon. Come and look round the school and see displays, books and classrooms!	Tuesday 10.02.26 Thursday 12.02.26
ALL BREAK for HOLIDAY	Friday 13.02.26
<b>TERM 4</b>	
ALL BACK TO SCHOOL	Monday 23.02.26
No clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Monday 23.02.26
Parents' Evenings (Online)	Wednesday 25.02.26 Thursday 26.02.26
Clubs commence	w/b Monday 02.03.26
National Offer Day: SECONDARY	Monday 02.03.26
No Clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Monday 23.03.26
School Easter Service in St. Lawrence Church: Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6.	Thursday 26.03.26 @14.15
No Night Owls on Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	

<b>2026 -2026</b>	
<b>TERM 5</b>	
EVENT	DATE
ALL BACK TO SCHOOL	Monday 13.04.26
No clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls.	w/b Monday 13.04.26
National Offer Day : PRIMARY	Thursday 16.04.26
Clubs commence	w/b Monday 20.04.26
Key Stage 2 SATs Week/Assessment Week.	w/b Monday 11.05.26
No clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls.	w/b 18.05.26
Class Photographs	Wednesday 20.05.26
ALL BREAK for HOLIDAY	Friday 22.05.26
<b>TERM 6</b>	
Teacher Development Day 5	Monday 01.06.26
ALL BACK TO SCHOOL	Tuesday 02.06.26
No clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls	w/b Tuesday 02.06.26
Clubs commence	w/b Monday 08.06.26
Meeting for Parents of new intake September 2026	Wednesday 17.06.26
Induction Session 1: Year R September 2026	Tuesday 23.06.26
June Fayre	Friday 26.06.26

<b>Induction Session 2: Year R September 2026</b>	<b>Tuesday 30.06.26</b>
<b>Sports day</b>	<b>Thursday 02.07.26</b>
<b>Induction Session 3: Year R September 2026</b>	<b>Tuesday 07.07.26</b>
<b>Reserve Sports Day</b>	<b>Thursday 09.07.26</b>
<b>No Clubs except Early Birds and Night Owls</b>	<b>From w/b Monday 13.07.26</b>
<b>Family Open Evening – all welcome</b>	<b>Thursday 16.07.26</b>
<b>Leavers' Service in St Lawrence Church</b>	<b>Wednesday 22.07.26</b> <b>@ 09:00</b>
<b>No Night Owls on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2026 School finishes at 13:15</b>	