



Dear Parents and Carers,

## 🌸 Celebrating Our OPAL Playtimes! 🌸

We are thrilled to update you about our school journey with the **OPAL Primary Programme**—an award-winning project designed to make playtime the best time of the day!

### What is OPAL?

OPAL stands for Outdoor Play and Learning. We believe that play is a child's right and essential for their health and happiness. Since children spend 20% of their time in school playing, we want to ensure that time is packed with creativity, adventure, and joy.

### Why OPAL?

Childhood has changed, and many children have less freedom to play outside than in previous generations. By adopting the OPAL philosophy, we are:

**Encouraging Independence:** Children choose how, where, and with whom to play.

**Boosting Physical Activity:** Children are more active, engaged, and happier when they have access to varied play opportunities.

**Improving Social Skills:** Through imaginative play, children learn to cooperate, team-work, and solve problems.

**Embracing All Weather:** We believe there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing! Children will be outside in all conditions.

You may notice some of the following:

**More "Messy" Play:** Your children might get a little dirtier. This is a sign of a wonderful, creative playtime!

**"Loose Parts" Play:** We are creating a treasure trove of non-traditional items for play, such as tyres, crates, tubes, and den-building fabrics.

**Welly Request:** To make sure everyone can enjoy all areas of the school ground, please ensure your child has a pair of **named wellies** and a **waterproof coat** in school.

### What do the children say?

Tallis Reception- " I like playing with everything!"

Theo Reception- " I just like all of it!"

Reggie Reception- " I like playing on the grassy bank and making stuff. I don't like Forest School!"

Charlie Year 1- "You can play with all the toys"

Emily Year 6- "You can play anywhere and I like the accessibility to all the playgrounds"

Rudi Year 5- "you can play anywhere and there's lots of activities"

Quinn Year 5- "Dressing up!"

Max Year 4 "I love the tyres and crates to build houses and camps"

Lily & Daisy Year 4 "Opal play is so good! We have everything and Forest school and it helps if people are sad or tired. Thank you for OPAL play"

### A Massive Thank You

A special thank you to all the parents and families who have already donated items and supported OPAL. Your support helps us create a magical, imaginative environment where our children can thrive.

***Let's make playtimes the best times!***

### **Watercress Farm – BE together family session**

Children from Years 1-4 have been enjoying regular trips to watercress farm on the Belmont estate as part of the 'Seasons and how they change' project. If you would like to experience this for yourselves, Watercress Farm are running a BE together family session for children aged 5+ on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April. This is a community event, including a wildlife walk and camp fire, which allows you to enjoy a nature connection with your family. For more information and to book tickets, please see: <https://fixr.co/event/be-together-over-5s-family-day-tickets-745402303>

### **Online Parent/carer sessions – An Introduction To Anxiety**

Mental Health Support Teams were established by the NHS to support schools. They help them to develop ways to look after the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, as well as the wider community, including staff and parents/carers. The team are now delivering online sessions, which are free to join, and the next webinar will be looking at anxiety. For more information and to book a place, please see their online registration form [here](#).

### **Inset days for academic year 2026/2027**

Our inset days for the next academic year have now been set, as follows:

Thursday 3rd September 2026

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2026

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2026

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2026

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2027

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2027

These and other important dates are available in the calendar section on our website at [www.corckerne.co.uk](http://www.corckerne.co.uk)

### **Polite reminders and useful information:**

- Reminder: Children are parents' responsibility from the time we hand over at the end of the day. Please do not allow children to play on any equipment before and after school.
- **Safeguarding:** should you wish for your child to be collected from school by another adult. You must notify the office no later than **2:30pm** on the day. We cannot allow anyone to collect a child without their parent's permission.
- We ask that **no mobile phones** are used or seen by adults or children whilst on school premises, at any time.
- Please remember that Crockerne C of E Primary School has a **no nuts** policy.
- All children in Reception, year 1 and year 2 are entitled to a free school meal as part of the Universal Free School Meal campaign.
- **If you claim qualifying benefits your older child may be entitled to Free School Meals. Please follow the link to see if you are entitled.**  
[https://ems.n-somerset.gov.uk/CCSCitizenPortal\\_LIVE/en](https://ems.n-somerset.gov.uk/CCSCitizenPortal_LIVE/en)
- Breakfast club is available daily from 7.30am and must be pre-booked on  
<https://app.parentpay.com/>
- After School Club is ran by My Shine from 3:15pm – 6:00pm All information for this is found directly with My Shine. Visit <https://myshine.co.uk>
- **Westward Drive** is now a **School Street** which is a road where a school temporarily closes to become a pedestrian and cycle zone during the school's opening and closing times.  
**The School Street operational times on Westward Drive are 8.30 - 9.30 am & 3.00 - 4.00 pm.**

### **Dates for diaries and INSET days 2026**

#### **Term 4 – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February to Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026**

#### **Upcoming dates for March 2026**

Mon 23<sup>rd</sup> March – Watercress Farm Trip – Oak Class

Tues 24<sup>th</sup> March – Class Photos

Mon 31<sup>st</sup> March – Watercress Farm Trip – Birch Class

Mon 11<sup>th</sup> – Fri 15<sup>th</sup> May, Y6 SAT's week

**Bank Holiday** Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

Mrs Rees – Acting Headteacher

Mrs Bray – Headteacher

Mrs Crutchley – Assistant Headteacher

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