OPAL – launch letter

Dear Parents,

Thank you all so much for completing the OPAL play survey. We have shared surveys with our children, our staff and our parents and have created a play action plan based on incorporating as many of your suggestions as possible.

After a brainstorming assembly at the end of September with our children, we have now started to upgrade our provision with some small wins based on their suggestions eg chalk, music, space hoppers, horse-themed toys and Lego/Knex. Our project will take up to 18 months though to become fully established and resourced. We hope, over time, that it will change the way we think and how we play together. To support this project, we have started to buy new resources, move some things around on the playground, and in the Spring/Summer terms, we will add our den building and our loose parts provision. Loose parts are any materials that can be easily moved, combined, and incorporated into children's free play.
As you know, schools are short on funding and any help or donations you can offer would be hugely appreciated.
The items we are looking for will enable us to enjoy a wider range of play experiences during playtime (see below for some examples):

- Suitcases of any size and type
- Anything on wheels/castors
- Plastic milk crates/supermarket delivery crates/plastic bread trays
- Briefcases, especially hard-cased ones
- Road signs and cones
- Kitchen pots, pans, baking trays, work tables, wooden spoons, metal spoon/ladles, chopping boards
- Tools like small spades/shovels, trowels and brooms
- Tubes of various sizes and various materials
- Buckets
- Nets and thick ropes
- Keyboards/torches/laptops/calculators/mobile phones/desk phones/webcams/cameras that are no longer working
- Fabric (large sheets/brightly coloured fabric)
- Foam sheets/bodyboards/camping roll mats/yoga mats
- Wooden pallets
- Metal frames
- Cable drums

- Guttering
- Noodles (the type you use in the swimming pool!)
- Hats/scarves/jazzy shirts/elasticated skirts/waistcoats/wedding dresses/character costumes
- Pegs (to help to set up dens)
- Small world toys eg toy dinosaurs etc
- Construction toys eg Lego or Knex

We will be putting out some donation bins by the school gates to collect any items that you are able to donate. If objects are very large, such as wooden pallets, we will ensure someone is available to help you carry them into school.

More information will follow at a parent's session later in the year, when you will be invited to come and play with your children. We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

Yours sincerely
Mrs Helen Hadley