



Telford Infant School

Strategic Plan for Play

Strategic Intent

Telford Infant school recognises high-quality outdoor play as a fundamental entitlement for all children. We believe that playtimes are a vital part of the school day and provide rich opportunities for children to develop physically, socially, emotionally and cognitively. We aim to ensure play is inclusive, child-led, well-resourced and supported by skilled adults.

This aligns with:

- EYFS Statutory Framework
- OPAL principles and Quality Award criteria
- Ofsted focus on personal development and behaviour

Rationale

Our school believes that all children need opportunities to play that allow them to explore, manipulate, experience and affect their environment. We believe play provision should be welcoming and accessible to every child, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, economic or social circumstances, ethnic or cultural background or origin, or individual abilities.

Strategic Aims

In relation to play our school aims to:

- Ensure play settings provide a varied, challenging and stimulating environment.
- Allow children to take risks and use a common-sense approach to the management of these risks and their benefits.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop their relationships with each other.
- Enable children to develop respect for their surroundings and each other.
- Aid children's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.
- Provide a range of environments that will encourage children to explore and play imaginatively.

- Provide a range of environments that will support children’s learning across the curriculum and learning about the world around them.
- Promote independence and teamwork within children.
- Build emotional and physical resilience.

Play Across the year groups

Reception (EYFS)

In Reception, outdoor play is an integral part of the curriculum and aligns with our play principles. Children engage in extended, open-ended play that supports all areas of learning, particularly Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development.

Year 1 and Year 2 (KS1)

In Key Stage 1, playtimes provide continuity from the EYFS. Children access a wide range of child-led outdoor play opportunities that support social development, physical confidence and problem-solving, complementing the taught curriculum.

Play Environments and Resources

The school will develop outdoor environments in line with our play principles, ensuring children have access to a wide range of open-ended, loose-parts and natural materials. Play spaces will offer challenge, managed risk and opportunities for imaginative, cooperative and physical play.

This includes:

- Loose parts and den building
- Wheeled play and large-scale construction
- Mud, sand, water and natural materials
- Zoned areas for different types of play

Risk, Safety and Policy Alignment

The school adopts a risk-benefit approach to play. Children are supported to manage risk appropriately, developing confidence and responsibility while ensuring safety through clear expectations and consistent supervision.

Adult Role in OPAL Play

Adults are trained to support play effectively by facilitating rather than directing play, modelling positive interactions, supporting conflict resolution and ensuring inclusion. Staff understand when to observe, intervene or step back to enable high-quality child-led play.

Inclusion and SEND

Play provision is inclusive by design. Reasonable adjustments are made to ensure children with SEND, EAL or additional needs can participate fully, with staff supporting access, communication and engagement.

Behaviour and Wellbeing

High-quality playtimes are a proactive strategy for improving behaviour and wellbeing. By offering engaging and meaningful play opportunities, children experience fewer conflicts, improved relationships and increased readiness for learning.

Staff Development and Culture

The school is committed to developing a positive play culture. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, receive training to ensure a consistent approach to play, shared language and clear expectations.

Pupil Voice and Play Leadership

Children are actively involved in shaping play provision through pupil voice, feedback and play leadership opportunities, (through our OPAL champions and Sports Ambassadors), ensuring play reflects their interests and needs.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact

The impact of the play strategy will be monitored through playtime observations, behaviour data, pupil voice, wellbeing indicators and staff feedback. Progress towards OPAL accreditation and quality improvement will inform future development.

Review

The play strategy is reviewed annually to ensure continuous improvement and alignment with OPAL principles and statutory guidance.

****This strategic plan for play should be read in conjunction**

with the school Play Policy.**