

# St Matthias Church of England Primary School



Wordsworth Rd, London N16 8DD

Tel: 0207 254 1148 • Fax: 0207 275 9215 • Email: [admin@st-matthias.hackney.sch.uk](mailto:admin@st-matthias.hackney.sch.uk)

Executive Principal: Sian Davies • Head Teacher: Lucy Blewett

September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to let you know that this year, we will be focussing on making our playtimes amazing.

To help us, we have brought in the OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning) Primary Programme, a strategic improvement programme designed to improve opportunities for play.

This means

- training our fabulous staff who look after children at play times, lunch times and in wraparound care in the professional practice of playwork;
- developing our playground to be a lot more fun, including places to do art, dig, dress up, make dens, dance, climb and relax - as well as better organising ball games;
- appointing a Curricular Lead for Play from our senior leadership team;
- appointing a Play Coordinator who will lead this from our play team;
- having a 'play rangers' team of children; and
- asking you if you can help - bringing in stuff, helping build things like mud kitchens and raising money

Schools that do OPAL - and there are nearly 2000 of them across the UK - report far fewer accidents and behaviour problems at lunchtime because children are having lots more fun. That then means children and staff are happier - and more learning is done!

You can see an OPAL school in action here:

- Morningside in Hackney: [What is special about an OPAL Playtime? Come see...](#)
- St Michael's Catholic Primary School, Surrey: [A Perfect \(every day\) playtime at St Michael's, Ashford](#)

Before we begin the programme, we need to know what you think about playtimes now.

- **Please complete this [survey](#)**
- **By Monday October 6th 2025**

This will help us know where we are now and plan for and measure the changes.

When we are ready, we will invite you in to see what is happening, but if you would like to be involved from the start or have stuff to donate to play with, please let us know now.

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

Best wishes

Clem Harrison

Play-Coordinator

Cath Prisk, Nikki Bedwin, and Gráinne Pickles, OPAL mentors with Outdoor People

PS We will be working with Outdoor People, the non-profit that delivers the OPAL Primary Programme across London and Kent. You can find out more about Outdoor People from their website: <https://outdoorpeople.org.uk/>.

