



Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Jackie Chambers
Deputy: Mr Jon Gambell
Chair of Governors: Mrs Rebecca Emson



Nurtured We Flourish

☎ 01622 859261

Email: office@harrietsham.kent.sch.uk

Website: www.harrietsham.kent.sch.uk

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Playtimes at Harrietsham



Dear Families,

As we enter the mid-way point this academic year, the Harrietsham team have been reflecting upon the successes and next steps required as we enter a new phase of development with our OPAL playtimes.

As you know, we fully support the OPAL vision: **‘that every child has an amazing hour of high-quality play every day – with no exceptions’**. Playtimes make up 20% of a child’s time at primary school – that’s equivalent to one full day every week. For this reason, we are working hard to plan for, resource and evaluate the quality of our play provision. We appreciate that play is fundamental to our children's physical and mental well-being and to their development.

We are pleased with the progress that the school has made so far. We now have opportunities for our children to take part in one or two sporting activities each day and we have dressing-up opportunities, small world play, mud-kitchens, sand pits and arts and crafts activities available for our children to play with each day.

However, it has become apparent, from the rapid growth of the school, that the playground has become increasingly busy, which as a consequence reduces the options on the use of space and limits the quality adult interaction that we would like to see in developing play. For this reason, we have worked hard to prioritise fundraising which has allowed us to make more land secure and available for our children to use every day at the back of the school. We are looking forward to the grass becoming established so that we can open up the new playing field to all of the children every day – we know that the additional space will enable us to offer a far greater range of play types for our children and we can’t wait for the prospects that this will bring.

In the meantime, though, we would like to offer a greater range of play provision on our playground for all of our children to enjoy. Some of the play types that we are keen to offer include: a greater range of physical sporting activities, den building opportunities, an area for play on wheeled toys and water play. In addition, we would really like to provide more opportunities for our older children to take responsibility and to develop leadership qualities through their support of our younger children.

In order for this new proposal to take shape we will be increasing the time window for lunch times and spacing the classes and year groups out at any given time. We are confident that these changes will bring about the desired

outcomes specified above; however, with any new initiative it will be closely monitored and evaluated as the term progresses.

Please see an outline of the new lunchtime plan below:

- Year R, Year 2, Swallows, Eagles and Hawks will have their lunch hour between 11:30 and 12:30pm. The children in Eagles and Hawks will be buddied with a reception child each, to support them to become more independent in the dining hall.
- Year 1, Year 3, Nightingales, Kestrels and Herons will have their lunch hour between 12:30 and 1:30pm. The children in Kestrels and Herons will be buddied with a Year 1 child each, to support them to become more independent in the dining hall.

We are sure that you will see the benefits that having half the number of children on the playground at any given time will give to our children. It will enable us to safely open up new play provision for all of our children, whilst allowing quality adult interaction to support with this new play.

Looking ahead to the summer terms, we will be planning to open the field space and introduce many more opportunities for physical and creative play.

Should you have any comments at all, please do contact your child's teacher, who will be happy to discuss with you the staff decision to split playtimes in this way until we have the space provided by the new playing field.

Kind regards,

Jackie Chambers
Headteacher

