

3rd February 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,



OUR LAUNCH OF OPAL PLAY AT LUNCHTIMES - 30.01.23

Please find attached a newsletter from the Opal team regarding the launch this Monday. The children have absolutely loved all the play activities that have been available to them this week at lunchtimes. We are already hearing from teachers that children are much more focused and settled for their learning in the afternoon after their playtime at lunch. They have also enjoyed having more time in the fresh air and learning how to be creative with play.

Thank you to our great team of staff for their involvement in the programme.

Music Service



Please find attached details of the music offer for:

- Musical Beginnings Extra: for children 0-4 years old who have SEND. Term-time Tuesdays at Oldham Music Centre.
- SEND Music Group: for children 8-13 years old who have SEND. Term-time Monday evenings 5.30pm-6.30pm at Oldham Music Centre.

Both groups are free of charge as they are financially supported by Oldham Council.

Early communication and language skills

DfE has launched a second burst of promotional media activity which will run to February half-term – a time when families are likely to be spending more time together and so a great opportunity for them to see how easy it is to fit fun, effective activities which really boost children's development into their everyday routines.

The campaign will involve national paid media and search advertising to encourage parents to chat, play and read more with their children. The campaign includes a new video of a bounce and rhyme session in a library in Leeds.

<https://twitter.com/educationgovuk/status/1618147939913711618>

https://twitter.com/BH_StartForLife/status/1616745190076588032.

We wish to share the new messaging and [resources](#) with families over the coming weeks.



Food Vouchers - February half term holiday 2023

You may have read in the local media that Oldham Council has been allocated £2.4m of funding to support vulnerable residents through its Household Support Fund. Some of this funding will be used to cover food voucher support for children eligible for means tested Free School Meals over school holidays.

We want to ensure that those eligible for free school meals on the grounds of low income receive a food voucher to cover the holiday at a rate of £15 per eligible child.

The most effective way of ensuring vulnerable families receive the vouchers that can be used in the Oldham supermarket of their choice is via a third-party online hub – known as WONDE.

WONDE is a data integration company already used by many schools in Oldham who offer a free school meal voucher system. This voucher system has a live link to your school's data therefore automatically recognises the students who are eligible for Free School Meals. The system should be quick and easy to use and produces the vouchers that can be used in most Oldham supermarkets.

If your child is entitled to income based free school meals, please look out for an email and/or text confirming that your voucher has been issued.

For more information go to: <https://help.evouchers.com/hc/en-gb> This includes a step by step guide of how to access the vouchers (once your school has issued them to you).

If you have any questions, please contact the school in the first instance.

For any families that are really struggling for food and provisions over the school holiday, please visit the Oldham Council website www.oldham.gov.uk/wecanhelp which lists financial support and benefits that are available for residents.

Young Carers

Oldham Council is refreshing its Carers' Strategy and needs help. We would like unpaid carers to get involved to help create a new Carers' Strategy, which will outline our priorities and support for unpaid carers across the borough over the next three years. Residents' views will help to shape the strategy and support we offer locally.

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200244/caring_for_someone/508/oldham_carers_services

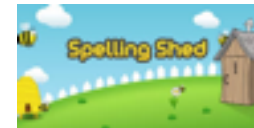
Let's get reading - BOOM Reader



"If you are going to get anywhere in life you have to read a lot of books." - Roald Dahl

Well done to all the children and families who have logged onto Boom reader. We are pleased to announce the most home reading logs recorded on Boom reader this week.

Position	Name	Reads at home
First Place	Zakariyya Bin-Jahid Class 5	25 home reads with a parent
Second place	Rubaab Ali Class 11	11 home reads with a parent
Third Place	Raja Ahmed Class 4	8 home reads with a parent



Spelling Shed Winners

Place	Total points awarded for correct spellings	Child
1st	202,431,157	Saif Iqbal Class 10
2nd	61,877,932	Haroon Mohammed Class 6
3rd	60,347,554	Zakariya Hassan Class 6

TT Rockstars - CELEBRATIONS!



The most accurate Class	Class 11
The most active class	Classes 4, 5 and 6
The most improved speed	Devine Ojoman (Class 11)
The most active player	Islah Akhtar (Class 4)

Word Aware

This week's word is 'cascade'. Please encourage your child to use this word when out and about and complete the activities, which Miss Varley will share on Class Dojo.



Attendance

Well done to classes 5, 6, 9, 11 and 12 for achieving over 95% attendance last week. Attendance is certainly improving and we are working closely with families to support this. A reminder that school begins promptly at 8.40am.



Dates for next week:

Year 4/5 Bike-ability letters have gone out and there are spaces available - see Class Dojo
Friday 10th February - Finish for half term - Return to school Monday 20th February

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Opal Is In Full Swing

OUR FIRST WEEK OF OPAL AT ALEXANDRA PARK

Here is just a snippet of some of the comments we've heard:

(I've heard this a lot): "It's been the best playtime I've ever had."
Child Y3: "if you want something quiet but fun, you can use ribbons and wool to weave on the fence and then other children can continue after me."

Child Y4: "Love playing with all the fancy dress equipment."

Child Y5: "I enjoyed playing with my friends from other year groups."

Parent: "I've heard so much about Opal play, they love it."

Staff member: "Took me back to my childhood."

Staff Member: lovely to see all the children engaging and supporting each other even if they are from a different class or year group.

Staff member: "It's been so lovely to feel that buzz around the school it feels like a different place."

Head Teacher: "The children and staff are having so much fun!"



What we've Spotted At Lunchtime

Wow, where do I start? We have had the most amazing start to our Opal journey at Alex Park. The children have fully immersed themselves in their play and I think one of our favourite parts is seeing the different year groups integrated together and sharing their play.

There has been so much creative play taking place and there has been a real buzz at playtimes. The 30 tyres we have introduced have been a huge hit! These were introduced to the children in our Launch assembly and each year group was then given the opportunity to play with them in their own way. The children have ensured that the staff join in as much as possible and some staff are getting a little too excited.



Musical Beginnings Extra

When: Every Tuesday during term-time 11am-11.45am
Where: The Lyceum Building
Who: Children 0-4 years old who have additional needs and their parent/carer

The Musical Beginnings Extra classes are free of charge.

Musical Beginnings provides young children with excellent musical opportunities including singing, rhymes, action songs, dancing, stories, musical appreciation and exploring instruments.

Research shows that children's speech, language and communication skills are improved through the use of music. Social skills such as listening, turn-taking and co-operation are all central to the session. The main focus though is a fun, musical experience for the children and adults plus a support network for parents/carers.

The session will be led by a fully qualified music teacher

To book a place click here: www.oldham.gov.uk/music_centre_application
or scan the QR code



To find out more, please contact the Music Service
musicservice@oldham.gov.uk

Parking: Sainsbury's (free up to 3 hours for customers of the store)

Metrolink: Oldham Central directly outside the Lyceum

The entrance to the Lyceum is on Firth Street at the rear of the building.

Many musicians... one harmony



Music Group for children with SEND

Monday evenings (term-time only) at Oldham Music Centre

For young people aged 8-13 years old who have Special Educational Needs or a disability

Free of charge (funded by Oldham Council)

Come along to

- explore and learn to play a musical instrument, find your singing voice
- create music with other young people in a group
- have fun
- develop your self-confidence

AUTUMN TERM 2022: Samba and Djembe drumming 5.30pm-6.30pm

Exploring pulse, rhythm and musical texture using a variety of percussion instruments.

SPRING TERM 2023: Vocal Project 5.30pm-6.30pm

“Find your voice” through a range of musical genres including popular, music theatre and classical repertoire.

SUMMER TERM 2023: Toot your Flute 5.30pm-6.30pm

A first step into playing a woodwind instrument. Participants will learn to play the toot (plastic flute) and will be provided with an instrument for the duration of the project to take home to practise.

Venue: Oldham Music Centre, Lyceum Building, Union Street, Oldham OL1 1QG

Find out more: angela.preen@oldham.gov.uk

Register: www.oldham.gov.uk/music_centre_application

You can sign up for one, two or all three projects!



Many musicians... one harmony

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