

Opal Long Term Plan 2026 – 2027

NURSERY OPAL	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Our overarching 'enquiring minds' themes	Me and My Community	Starry Night	Marvellous Machines	Ready Steady Grow	Creep Crawl and Wriggle	Big Wide World
Characteristics of Effective Learning	Playing and exploring: Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Children who actively participate in their own play develop a larger store of information and experiences to draw on which positively supports their learning Active learning: Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties. They are proud of their own achievements. For children to develop into self-regulating, lifelong learners they are required to take ownership, accept challenges and learn persistence. Creating and thinking critically: Children develop their own ideas and make links between these ideas. They think flexibly and rationally, drawing on previous experiences which help them to solve problems and reach conclusions.					
Overarching Principles	Unique Child: Every child is unique and has the potential to be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Positive Relationships: Children flourish with warm, strong & positive partnerships between all staff and parents/ carers. This promotes independence across the EYFS curriculum. Enabling environments: Children learn and develop well in safe and secure environments where routines are established and where adults respond to their individual needs and passions and help them to build upon their learning over time. Learning and Development: Children develop and learn at different rates. We must be aware of children who need greater support than others. PLAY: At Stanhope Barrington, we understand that children learn best when they are absorbed, interested and we understand that active learning involves other children, adults, objects, ideas, stimuli and events that aim to engage and involve children for sustained periods. We believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and therefore, we are proud that our EYFS setting has an underlying ethos of 'Learning through play'. PLAY is essential for children's development across all areas. Play builds on children's confidence as they learn to explore, to relate to others around them and develop relationships, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.					
General Themes	New rules and routines Family and experiences Let's be friends Games in the classroom People who help us Autumn Harvest	Day and Night Bedtime Routines Nocturnal Animals People Who Work at Night The Night Sky The Moon and Stars Exploring Light and Darkness Healthy Sleep and Wellbeing Wonder, Discovery and Imagination	Machines Around Us Technology in Everyday Life How Machines Help Us Electricity Magnets and Materials Inventions and Inventors Machines Then and Now Exploring and Investigating Problem Solving Change Over Time	Growing and Changing Plants and Seeds Where Food Comes From Healthy Eating Exercise and Wellbeing Looking After Our Teeth Life on a Farm Baby Animals Caring for Living Things Seasons and Growth Exploring Nature and the Outdoors	Minibeasts and Insects Exploring Habitats Life Cycles Caring for Living Things Body Parts and Features Growth and Change Survival and Basic Needs Comparing and Classifying Nature and the Environment Outdoor Exploration Observing and Investigating	Where I Live My Home and Family Exploring Our Local Area Different Places Animals and Their Homes Plants and Nature Weather and Seasons Looking After Our Environment Exploring Outdoors

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		Shadows and Reflections				Adventures Around the World
PSED	Play with increasing confidence on their own and with other children. Increasingly begin to follow rules, understanding why they are important. Develop friendships with other children.	Notice and ask questions about differences, such as skin colour, types of hair, gender, special needs and disabilities, and so on. Safely explore emotions beyond their normal range through play and stories.	Select and use activities and resources, with help when needed. This helps them to achieve a goal they have chosen, or one which is suggested to them. Become more outgoing with unfamiliar people, in the safe context of their setting. Show more confidence in new social situations. Play with one or more other children, extending and elaborating play ideas.	Do not always need an adult to remind them of a rule. Develop appropriate ways of being assertive. Talk with others to solve conflicts. Talk about their feelings using words like 'happy', 'sad', 'angry' or 'worried'. Begin to understand how others might be feeling.	To be able to play in a group with friends and make up ideas of things to do and games to play. To begin to manage feelings and talk about emotions. To understand how others might be feeling. Develop their sense of responsibility and membership of a community. Feel strong enough to express a range of emotions.	To be ready for new experiences. To learn how to be assertive. To be able to follow rules and know why they are important. To begin to find solutions to quarrels and rivalries. To be able to follow the rules without an adult reminding me.
Communication and Language	At Stanhope Barrington we know that spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning, which is why we work hard to promote a language-rich environment. The number and quality of interactions the children have with adults and their peers throughout the day is a priority focus and by planning inspiring provision that meet the interests of the children, children can develop their vocabulary and spoken language. Our staff build language effectively by commenting, questioning and echoing back what children say with new vocabulary added. Children are read to daily and engaged in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems. Children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate.					
	Understand and act on longer sentences like make teddy jump or find your coat. Understands and uses simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where'. Listen to simple stories and	Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens. Use a wider range of vocabulary, e.g. Diwali, samosa, festival etc. Sing	Understand a question or instruction that has two parts, such as "Get your coat and wait at the door". Understand 'why' questions. Uses a wider vocabulary and longer sentences of 4-6 words. Continues to develop and sing a repertoire of songs.	Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story. Learns lots of new words and use them in their play. E.g. Farmer, Zookeeper. This could be linked to role-play areas	Starts a conversation with adults and friends. Enjoys listening to longer stories and can remember what happens in them. Understand a question with two parts like "Can	Be able to talk about thoughts even when they disagree and can discuss this using words and actions. Uses longer sentences of four to six words

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	understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures. Use language linked to daily routines and themes.	a large repertoire of songs. Joins in with actions.			you get your coat and wait by the door please?”. Uses talk to organise play e.g. “Let’s go on a bus...you sit there... I’ll be the driver”.	when talking. Understands when asked questions like “Why do pirates need a ship?” and “How can we mop up the juice?”.
Physical Development	Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.					
Fine Motor Skills	Funky fingers activities Threading, cutting, weaving, playdough, Fine Motor activities. Manipulate objects with good fine motor skills	Funky fingers activities Develop muscle tone to put pencil pressure on paper Use tools to effect changes to materials Show preference for dominant hand	Funky fingers activities Begin to form letters correctly Handle tools, objects, construction, and malleable materials with increasing control Encourage children to draw freely. Holding Small Items / Button clothing / zips Cutting with scissors	Funky fingers activities Daily set up Hold pencil effectively with comfortable grip Draw pictures that are recognisable	Funky fingers activities Develop pencil grip and letter formation continually Use one hand consistently for fine motor tasks Cut along a straight line with scissors / Start to cut along a curved line, like a circle	Funky fingers activities Form some letters correctly Cut a shape out using scissors Begin to draw diagonal lines, like in a triangle / Start to colour inside the lines of a picture Build things with smaller linking blocks, such as Duplo or Lego
Dough disco Squiggle while you wiggle	Up and down movement Arches, circles and spirals	Upwards and downwards lines Spirals and figure of 8	Side to side lines Squares, diagonal lines, triangles	Squiggle/Dough Disco	Squiggle/Dough Disco	Squiggle/ Dough Disco
Gross Motor/PE Availability of outdoor equipment throughout the year	Draw lines and circles using gross motor movements Hold pencil/paint brush beyond whole hand grasp Pencil Grip Taking shoes off and putting them on/ Role play dressing up Use of outdoor climbing frame	Revise the movement skills they have already acquired: rolling, crawling, walking, jumping, running, hopping, skipping, Climbing alternative feet up the ladder Balance moving along a bench/beam	Confidently and safely use a range of large and small apparatus indoors and outside and in a group. Landing safely, use of ropes, climbing frame, wedge, balance along benches in hall	Throwing and catching skills – aiming at targets Developing balancing skills	Ball skills – throwing, catching, kicking, controlling. Using different sized balls- aiming at a target Dribbling I can join in with a game.	Team games – working together I can join in with a game. Follow the rules of a game. Sports day practice team events

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		Large movements using streamers and paintbrushes.				
Literacy- Writing	Enjoy drawing and making marks which have meaning. Light scribbles are produced with the cylindrical or palmer grip, pencil held in the palm, movement from the shoulder; the arm and the hand move as a unit. Making lines up/down, side to side Hold scissors – make them open and close Termly drawing writing assessment – development of drawing skills progress documented. Draw a person/themselves	Start recognising their name. Enjoy drawing and mark making with meaning. Digital grip – all four fingers are holding the pencil, movement comes mostly from the elbow. Horizontal lines, vertical lines and circular lines are able to be copied – Squiggle wiggle Snip paper or malleable materials	Four finger grip – movement from the wrist, zig zagging lines, crossed lines and simple humans can be drawn with this grip Snip paper moving forwards	Evidence of early writing – symbols to represent letters Holds scissors in a thumb up position	Form a selection of recognisable letters Cuts in a straight line	Tripod grip – triangles, circles and squares can be copied with this grip.
Literacy- Reading	Enjoy sharing books Look at pictures and name familiar items Join in with songs and rhymes Notice print in the environment Understand how to hold a book and look after it Understand what a book is and what it can tell us	Listen at carpet time, continuing to develop learning behaviours. Enjoying stories, experiencing new vocabulary and discussing our learning. Recognise the covers of some favourite books, start pretending to read by turning pages and making up stories	Engage in conversation about the stories that we are learning incorporating new vocabulary and what they've seen in books Beginning to develop an understanding about the five key concepts of print. Recognise often seen words like signs and logos	Focus on the five key concepts of print: • Print has meaning • The names of different parts of the book • Print can have different purposes • Page sequencing • We read from left to right Ask questions Recognise words with the same initial sound.	Focus on the five key concepts of print: • Print has meaning • The names of different parts of the book • Print can have different purposes • Page sequencing • We read from left to right Ask questions Recognise words with the same initial sound. Retell own simple story using new vocabulary.	Predict what happens next/how a story might end.
FOUNDATIONS for Phonics	Foundations for Phonics develops children's phonological and phonemic awareness through fun, engaging games and nursery rhymes. Developing these skills in Nursery lays the best possible foundations for learning phonics in Reception. There are two aspects to Foundations for Phonics: 'Rhyme time' and 'Tuning into sounds'. Rhyme time explores rhyme to build up a bank of shared language, develop children's understanding of the world and familiarity with the sounds in words. Tuning into sounds teaches phonological and phonemic awareness through games.					

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Little Wandle Rhyme Time and Tuning into Sounds	Rhyme time games covering: • Listening • Syllables • Rhyming • Alliteration • Sound knowledge.	In each session the children have a sound focus and play What's in the box? (Learn the sound) and a sound game: Voice sounds, Name play, Bertha the bus, play with sounds (Practise the sound). The sound games focus on awareness of sounds in general. Blending focus. Blend from the box (Blend with the sound) and oral blending games: Can you do the actions? Can you touch your ... ? What's that noise? (Practise blending) The oral blending games focus on awareness of sounds in general.				
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Nursery Rhymes	Baa, Baa, Black Sheep Humpty Dumpty Wind the Bobbin Up Miss Polly Had a Dolly I'm a little Teapot	Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star Hey, Diddle, Diddle Jack and Jill Incy Wincy Spider	Three Blind Mice Hickory Dickory Dock Pat-a-cake Down at the Station Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary	The Wheels on the Bus Old McDonald The Grand Old Duke of York Hickory, Dickory, Dock	One, Two, Buckle My Shoe Ring-a-ring-a- roses Mary had a little lamb 5 Little ducks	A Sailor Went to Sea Row, Row, Row Your Boat 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I Caught a Fish Alive Round and Round the Garden
Maths	Maths in Nursery. Children develop confidence in counting and build a secure understanding of numbers to 5, including the relationships between numbers and the patterns within them. The learning environment provides frequent and varied opportunities for children to develop and apply their mathematical understanding through play and practical experiences. A range of manipulatives, including small pebbles, counters and five frames, are used to support counting, subitising and number recognition. Mathematical vocabulary is explicitly taught to provide children with a strong foundation of knowledge and to prepare them for the expectations of Reception. Throughout the year, children are given rich opportunities to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics, including shape, space and measures. At Stanhope Barrington, Nursery mathematics follows the guidance of White Rose Maths and Karen Wilding's early Years Maths, which is enhanced through practitioners' professional knowledge to deepen and extend learning. Mathematical concepts are taught through a range of approaches, including whole-class teaching, small-group adult-led activities, one-to-one support and carefully planned enhancements within continuous provision.					
Number	Take part in finger rhymes with numbers. Develop counting-like behaviour, such as making sounds, pointing or saying some numbers in sequence.	React to changes of amount in a group of up to three items. Count with 1-1 correspondence to 3, move each object as count Count in everyday contexts, sometimes skipping numbers – '1-2-3-5'. – children	Compare amounts, saying 'lots', 'more' or 'same' Recite numbers past 5	Say one number for each item in order: 1,2,3,4,5. – 1-1 to 5 Show 'finger numbers' up to 5.	Experiment with their own symbols and marks as well as numerals. Solve real world mathematical problems with numbers up to 5.	Know that the last number reached when counting a small set of objects tells you how many there are in total ('cardinal principle'). Link numerals and amounts: for example, showing the right number of objects to match the numeral, up to 5.
Numerical Patterns	Climb and squeeze themselves into different types of	Build with a range of resources.	Develop fast recognition of up to 3 objects, without having to count them individually ('subitising')	Compare sizes, weights etc. using gesture and language - 'bigger/little/smaller', 'high/low', 'tall',	Understand position through words alone – for	Notice patterns and arrange things in

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	spaces. Complete inset puzzles.	Explore weight, shape and size.	Show fingers up to 3 Keep track of counting without touching or seeing object, count jumps accurately Know different compositions of 2/3	'heavy' Compare quantities using language: 'more than', 'fewer than'. Make comparisons between objects relating to size, length, weight and capacity.	example, "The bag is under the table," – with no pointing. Describe a familiar route. Discuss routes and locations, using words like 'in front of' and 'behind'.	patterns. Talk about and identify the patterns around them. For example: stripes on clothes, designs on rugs and wallpaper. Use informal language like 'pointy', 'spotty', 'blobs', etc. Extend and create ABAB patterns – stick, leaf, stick, leaf. Notice and correct an error in a repeating pattern.
Understanding of the World	There are lots of special people in their lives, including family and friends. All families are special and unique. We should care for the environment. For example, rubbish needs to be put in the bin. We are part of a community. A community is a group of people who live together or share a space. We can see our reflections in mirrors and other shiny surfaces.	The environment changes through the day and the year. The stars and Moon are always in the sky but the Sun's bright light hides them in the daytime. In the winter, the evenings get darker earlier. In the summer, the evening stays lighter for longer. Lights, candles and fireworks are used in many types of celebrations. Different clothes are worn for different types of weather. There are many ways people and animals stay warm in the winter.	There are different man-made features in the immediate environment, including the school grounds, local streets and the place they live. A shop is a place where people go to buy things with money. A supermarket is a type of shop that sells food, drink and other products. Different materials can be used for construction. They have different properties. The world has lots of different landmarks and places.	Plants and trees are living things. Turnips, carrots, potatoes and parsnips are root vegetables that grow under the ground. Beans are edible seeds that grow on plants in pods. Seeds need water, air and warmth to germinate. Plants need water, sunlight, air and warmth to grow. Parts of a plant include flower, petal, leaf and stem. Caterpillars eat until they are fully grown, then they become a pupa. A butterfly emerges from a chrysalis Butterflies have wings, legs antennae and a rolled up tongue for drinking nectar	Exploring invertebrates that live in gardens and the local environment. Animals such as snails, spiders and insects live in gardens, fields, parks and woodlands.	Learning about the global community to which we belong and explore how living things, communities and climates differ around the world.

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		Shadows are made on sunny days. They can be big or small and can change shape and size.				
Religious Education	Introduce Big Picture Unit F1 Creation/God Why is the word God so important to Christians?	Unit F2 Incarnation Why do Christians perform Nativity plays at Christmas?	Faith Around the World	Unit F3 Salvation Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?	Links to different world faiths (subject to change and integrated throughout the year) Links to different world faiths	
Expressive arts and Design	Begin to sing the melody, pitch and tone of well-known nursery rhymes and songs. Simple prints can be made using fingers, hands, feet and found objects. Use all their senses in hands on exploration of natural materials	Sculpture - Explore ways of changing the shape or texture of malleable materials. Paper and fabric can be cut and torn and joined together using glue. A variety of resources, including blocks and construction kits can be used to create 'small worlds' and objects linked to their interests.	Drawing –Buildings and People A human body normally includes a head, body, arms, legs, hands, feet, fingers and toes. Instruments can be played in a variety of ways to create different sounds. They can be played quickly, slowly, loudly or softly.	Use a range of media, tools and techniques to create images, express ideas and show different emotions. (Inspired by Seurat) Say how their artwork is the same or different to someone else's.	Primary colours – red, yellow and blue. Cooking –Cooking –Healthy pizzas and fruit muffins.	Leaves, twigs, flowers and pebbles are natural materials and they can be used to make patterns and pictures. The same sound can be played repeatedly, which will make a pattern.
Special Events	Autumn Walk Autumn soup & bread making Harvest Festival Apple Picking Stay and Play Halloween Fire service visit Bonfire Night Remembrance Day Road Safety Week Diwali Christmas/Advent		New Years Eve Chinese New Year Shrove Tuesday Mental Health Awareness Week Post a Letter Internet Safety Day British Science week Mother's Day Ramadan Holi Easter		Father's Day Sports Day Eid-Al-Adha Earth Day International Day of Play – Live Play Along	
The Opal Learning Zone curriculum is heavily weighted towards the Prime Areas of Learning, sensory exploration, routines, communication and relationships, which aligns more closely with the developmental needs of 3-4 year-olds.						

Assessment Opportunities

Autumn

- Parent chats
- EYFS progress meetings
- Communication and Language focus observations

Spring

- Development checkpoints
- Key-person reviews
- Parent chats
- EYFS moderation discussions

Summer

- Transition information
- EYFS team review



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