

13th September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to the new school year, we trust you have had a happy and relaxing holiday. It is lovely to hear how smoothly the children in each school have returned to their learning routine after the summer break.

You will be aware that at the very end of the summer term, following a consultation period, the governing boards of both schools decided that Thorpe Hall Primary School would join the Opossum Federation (Dawlish and Newport schools).

This is an exciting development and opportunity for the pupils, parents and staff of all schools and one, which we anticipate, will further strengthen the links between our neighbouring communities.

Each of the schools in the federation has its own unique identity, strengths and challenges. By working in partnership, we aim to draw on the strengths of each to enhance further success and support each other to address the areas we need to develop. Senior and Middle Leaders have already begun working together to explore possibilities for collaboration, to share skills and expertise and this will continue and extend over the coming terms. It is unlikely that pupils and parents will see many differences initially, as the three schools will continue their day-to-day patterns as before, however you may see some new faces on the playground and in meetings.

The decision made by the Thorpe Hall governors to federate follows the resignation of their long standing Head Teacher, Paulette Houghton. Paulette gave many years of dedicated service to Thorpe Hall; we offer her grateful thanks and very best wishes for a happy retirement. Governors have appointed Ms Susan Biggar as the Interim Head of School, during this period of transition. I am sure that the Thorpe Hall community joins me in wishing Ms Biggar every success as she establishes herself in this role. Mrs Ashley Perridge and Mrs Mariette Bester remain in their roles as Head of School at Newport and Dawlish respectively.

The Opossum federation continues to work closely with Oakhill Primary School, in a Soft Federation, maintaining close links between governing bodies and sharing members of the leadership team across schools. We look forward to continuing this partnership in the coming year, further developing links across all four schools.

As Chair of the Opossum Federation governing board, I hope you will continue to support the school staff, leadership team and the governors as we work together to create positive learning experiences and outcomes for all our pupils.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maria Meehan".

Ms M Meehan
Chair of the Governing Board