

The Opossum Federation Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers

In a term of only five and a half weeks, we have once again managed to pack in a remarkable amount of amazing classroom learning, educational visits and enrichment experiences. This half term's assessment shows some fantastic progress in Reading, Writing and Maths learning in all the Opossum schools, which shows that every day truly counts. We hope you will enjoy the photos and updates in this newsletter, which highlight the range of experiences and opportunities the children have been part of.

At the very beginning of this term, Dawlish Primary School received a visit from Ofsted to review the school's progress since its last inspection in 2015. We are very proud to report that the school has been graded as Good in all areas, with a particular recognition of the Outstanding work of the school in Personal Development and Welfare. The partnership work of the Opossum federation was also acknowledged as a significant strength of the school. Congratulations to Mariette Bester and the Dawlish team and a very big thank you to the staff across the federation for their support. You can find the full report on the Dawlish School and Ofsted websites.

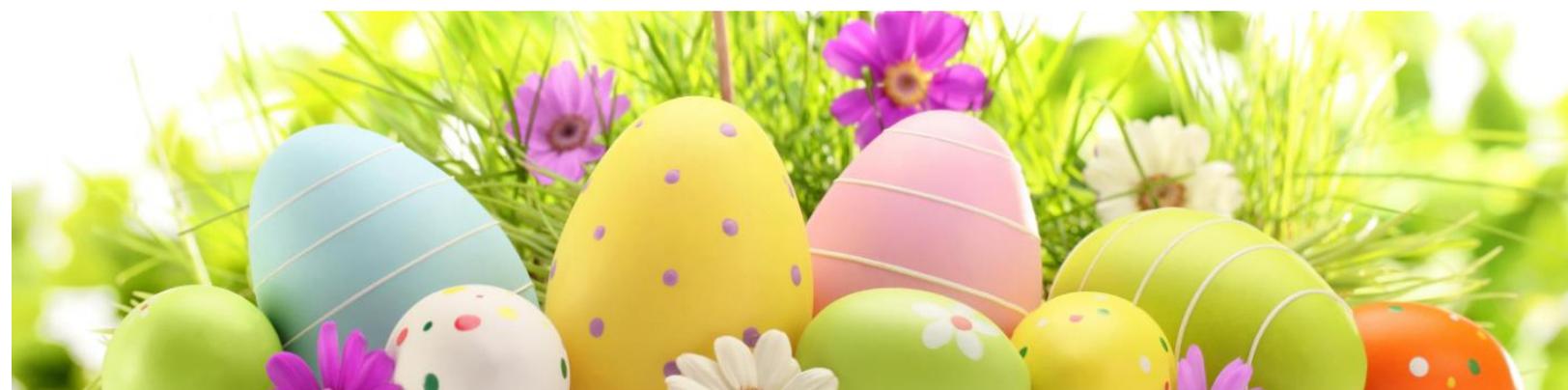
This term has not been without its challenges – not least of which has been the unseasonal weather. Your support and understanding during the school closure day on Thursday 1st of March is greatly appreciated. We are pleased that we were able to keep closure to a minimum and appreciate the effort made by the pupils and staff, to enable a usual learning day on the Friday.

We can be hopeful that the longer days, blossom and blooming daffodils will soon be accompanied by some warmer weather as we begin the summer term.

The Spring holiday period includes the Christian festival of Easter. We wish all those celebrating, a wonderful Easter, and to all Opossum families, a very happy holiday.

Prue Barnes-Kemp
Senior Executive Head Teacher

Lisa McIntyre
Executive Head Teacher



Spring Term Events

Opossum Nursery have had a busy Spring term. They have been learning about 'People Who Help Us'. PC Hume visited the children and spoke about how we can keep ourselves and others safe. Children enjoyed coming face to face with a real police officer!

The EYFS children across the Federation have had the opportunity in helping to look after the ducklings and chicks. They waited patiently for them to hatch and it was a very exciting time! Once they had hatched, the children observed them eating, swimming and growing.

Thorpe Hall Trips

Royal Veterinary College Visit - Alder class had a great time at the Royal Veterinary College. They worked to identify the bones using resources in their private museum, and became vet students in lab coats and with stethoscopes in an anatomy lesson with the two cows. –

Tina and Brie.



Circus Workshop – The children at Thorpe Hall were lucky to have an amazing circus performer come to year one to teach them some new tricks and skills. They practised juggling, balancing on the tightrope, spinning plates and walking on stilts. They even balanced feathers on noses! At the end of the day, Sam the Circus man performed for them, which was very exciting because his skills were incredible!

Forest Visit - Apples and Plums classes walked to the forest to help them with their topic on materials. They collected things with different textures: smooth, rough, soft, hard, crunchy, spiky. The children thoroughly enjoyed squelching and sketching in the squishy mud.

“On Thursday 16th March 2018, we had a guest in the school and he taught us all about space, as it is our current subject in topic. He brought us into a dome and showed us the heart of an astronaut. The heart beat with their blood pumping as they were about to take off which was the scariest part. Then he showed us the following planets: Jupiter, Saturn and Mars and told us facts he also showed us the space station and how they eat, drink and go to the toilet”.

By Faeem



Year 3 went to the Natural History Museum on Wednesday 14th March to support their topic on footprints from the past. *"I did the Dino Investigations. It was great because I got to excavate a dinosaur skull and I had to measure it with my team and then try to find out what type of dinosaur it was. We talked about palaeontology, zoologists, archaeologists, and the difference between them all. We also looked and sorted out fossils from rocks and were able to touch fossils that were millions of years old. We even got to touch some fossilised poo!"*

By Millie



Newport and Dawlish Trips



This term year 3 have been learning about pastoral farms and the environment the farms need in order to be sustainable. The children were able to transfer their knowledge from last term and discuss the main features of a farm based on their trip to Surrey Docks Farm. In addition, children had the opportunity to research both arable and pastoral farms and then write a non – chronological, report detailing the location of the farms and the crops or animals they produce. As part of the unit, children were asked to create one of the farms. The children put in a lot of effort to build their 3D farm and used a wide variety of resources.



As part of the Science Topic about electricity, Year 4 visited the Science Museum. It was a fun, interactive day where children got to visit the Wonderlab. They watched a live show called What Makes a Fire? and found out how explosions help us in our everyday lives. Later, children explored and became scientists, as they discovered how electricity powers our lives and our homes—and where it comes from. They also found out about the world of generators and wires behind a plug socket and tested their knowledge of how to use electricity safely.

The children in Year 1 visited the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, home of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), the Prime Meridian of the world and London's Planetarium. As part of the visit, children experienced standing astride the historic Prime Meridian where east meets west, and took their place at the centre of the world!





Congratulations

Congratulations to the pupils and staff of Dawlish Primary School who received acknowledgement by Ofsted of the Good education offered at the school.

Farewells and Welcomes

As the term ends, we say farewell to the Newport Year 2 teacher, Ms Eloise Lee and Ms Razwana Akhtar from the Opossum Nursery. We wish them well for the future.

For the Summer term we will welcome back Ms Nicola Forsyth who will resume her role as SENCO for Newport School.

Attendance and Punctuality

As we approach the summer term, we would like to remind Parents/Careers to ensure children are dressed appropriately for the temperature on the day and that the children are also equipped with a water bottle.

During the summer period, many children will suffer from hay fever and other allergies. Whilst we appreciate that this can be uncomfortable, it is rarely an acceptable reason to miss school. It is important that all children attend school regularly to make the most of every learning opportunity.

Please remember that the schools do not authorise absence for illness directly before and after holiday periods without appropriate evidence. We recognise that pupils have regular termly breaks throughout the year, which are good opportunities for families to take holidays or visit relatives abroad; therefore, we do not authorise term time absences. The term dates and INSET days for 2018-2019 have been agreed by the Governing Body and are published on the schools' websites – these may assist you with forward planning for family holidays.

Good punctuality is essential for children to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital to form good habits for later life.

We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:

- Ensuring that their children get up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school.
- Ensuring their child has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning.
- Discussing any issues of lateness with staff to ensure this does not become a habit.

We thank you for your support on these matters.



Save The Date

The following are dates to look out for in the upcoming Summer Term:

16 th April	First day of Summer Term
18 th April	Year 4 Sleepover – Parents Information Session
19 th April	Newport and Dawlish – Nurse Drop in
23 rd April	British Tea Party
25 th April	World Book Night- Reading Supper (5pm)
26 th April	Federation Coffee Morning at Dawlish (9am)
27 th April	Year 5 & 6 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (8:50am)
3 rd May	Polling Day – School Closed
4 th May	Year 1 & 2 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (9am)
7th May	Bank Holiday- School Closed
8 th May	LAMDA Exam
11 th May	Year 4 Sleepover at Newport
11 th May	Year 3 & 4 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (8:50am)
14th May	KS2 SATs Week
22 nd May	Year 6 parent's Edinburgh trip meeting (5pm)
28th May	Bank Holiday- School Closed
29th May- 1st June	Half-Term- School Closed
4 th June	First Day Summer 2 Term
5 th June	Year 5 Parent's SATs Information Session (5pm)
11th June	Year 1 Phonics Screening Test Week
11 th – 15 th June	Year 6 Cycle Training
20 th June	Reading Breakfast (8am)
22 nd June	Year 5 & 6 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (8:50am)
22 nd June	Federation Eid Event and Fete
26 th June	Whole Class Photographs
27th June- 29th June	Year 6 Edinburgh Residential
28 th June	Federation Coffee Morning (9am)
29 th June	Year 3 & 4 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (9am)
4 th July	Reception Class Sports Day at Newport School (10am-11:30am)
5th July- 6th July	Year 5 Gilwell Park Residential
6 th July	Year 1 & 2 Learning Workshop and Coffee Morning (8:50am)
9 th July	Year 1, 2, 3 Sports Day at Leyton Cricket Field (9:30am-12pm)
9 th July	Year 4, 5 & 6 Sports Day at Leyton Cricket Field (1pm- 3pm)
12th July	Open Evening - Early Closure (1:30pm)
13th July	INSET Day- School Closed
18 th July	Forever Curious Exhibition – Time TBC Leavers Assembly (2pm)
20 th July	Last Day - Early Finish 1.30pm

View other important dates on the school website, such as planned education visits, by visiting each school website. Keep an eye out for trip reminder emails which will inform you of all planned trips and what arrangements you will need to make. **Please note that we have also uploaded the Term Dates for the Academic Year 2018/19 onto our school websites.**

Looking for More Information?

The school websites offer a wealth of information; you will find important dates, news updates, Home Learning projects, and links to other helpful websites. We encourage parents to regularly check the school websites for information, in particular 'Important dates' and 'Home Learning Projects'.

Term Dates 2017-18

Summer Term		
16 th April- 25 th May	Summer Term 1	
7 th May	Bank Holiday	School closed
28 th May – 1 st June	Half-term break	School closed
4 th June- 20 th July	Summer Term 2	
	Early finish on the last day of school (1:30pm)	
12 th July	Open Evening (Early closure 1.30pm)	
13 th July	INSET	School closed

Term Dates 2018-19

Autumn Term		
3 rd September – 19 th October	Autumn term 1	
28 th September 2018	INSET Day	School closed
22 nd October – 26 th October	Half term break	School closed
29 th October – 21 st December	Autumn term 2 - Early closure on the last day of term	
23 rd November 2018	INSET	School closed
21 st December	Nursery Closed	Nursery Closed
24 th December – 4 th January	Christmas break	School closed

Spring Term		
7 th January – 15 th February	Spring term 1	
25 th January 2019	INSET	School closed
18 th February- 22 th February	Half term break	School closed
25 th February – 5 th April	Spring 2 -Early closure on the last day of term	
8 th April – 22 nd April	Easter break	School closed

Summer Term		
23 rd April- 24 th May	Summer term 1	
6 th May	Bank Holiday	School closed
27 th May – 31 st May	Half term break	School closed
3 rd June- 19 th July	Summer term 2 - Early closure on the last day of term-	
22 nd July	INSET	School closed
23 rd July	INSET	School closed