



# The Opossum Federation Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the first edition of the Opossum Newsletter for this term and for 2019; we hope the New Year has started well and for those who set resolutions, that they are successfully being enacted. As always it has been a busy start to the term and we are again impressed by how quickly our pupils settle back in to their daily routines after the Winter break.

As you may be aware, Ofsted is currently consulting on proposals for changes to the education inspection framework; Education inspection framework 2019: inspecting the substance of education. The proposed changes will apply to all education inspections. There are also specific proposals relating to early years, maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools, and further education and skills providers.

The consultation document, and other supporting material, is available from the Ofsted website; <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education>. The closing date for this consultation is 5 April 2019. The updated framework is due to be in place for the start of the new academic year in September 2019.

We share the delight of many members of the community that Waltham Forest is the first ever London Borough of Culture, giving us the chance to experience and celebrate world-class culture on our doorstep. The GLA reports that; the Mayor's London Borough of Culture award aims to bring Londoners of all ages and backgrounds together by placing culture at the heart of local communities, as well as shining a light on the character and diversity of London's boroughs and show culture is for everyone. Now more than ever, the Mayor wants Londoners to get to know each other and feel part of our great city. Thanks to this new award, all Londoners will now have the chance to be part of something extraordinary. The 2019 programme is aimed to deliver a year of exciting cultural activity across the borough, and the council have an ambitious target of having 85 per cent of households participate, attracting half a million visits. More than 12,000 local people backed Waltham Forest's application from across the borough's diverse communities. Drawing on this diversity was a key strength of Waltham Forest's bid and we are pleased that our schools are already involved. To this effect we have appointed both staff and governor Borough of Culture representatives. Many members of our federation and families were present at the launch, "Welcome to the Forest" early in January. We will keep you posted on events that we are involved in and we encourage all stakeholders to take part in this exciting initiative.

The dates for the upcoming academic year 2019-2020 have been agreed with the statutory 5 INSET days by the governors and these have published on each school's website and also appear within this newsletter. We hope that this early notification will enable families who may wish to take holidays in the coming year to book travel within the set holiday times.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff for their work this half term and the pupils for their engagement. We look forward to welcoming all staff and pupils back to school on Monday the 25th February 2019.

Have a restful and enjoyable break,

Prue Barnes-Kemp  
**Senior Executive Head Teacher**

Lisa McIntyre  
**Executive Head Teacher**



## Topics and Trips

### Nursery

The Nursery Spring one topic was 'Nursery Rhymes'. During this term the children have learnt to sing, say and act out favourite nursery rhymes such as 'The Wheels on the Bus,' and 'The Teddy Bears' Picnic'. The children particularly enjoyed making a class bus where they worked together to paint boxes and find materials to make a bus for the role play areas.



This term our nursery children and their families have thoroughly enjoyed working together at home to create arts and crafts linked to each nursery rhyme. We have some delightful displays in all of our settings showcasing all the wonderful learning we have done at home and during the nursery sessions! Most exciting of all, was the Teddy Bears Picnic. The children have enjoyed writing shopping lists, packing the picnic baskets and writing invitations to their teddy friends to join in all the fun. The Opossum nursery teams and the children have had a fantastic time learning new songs and sharing home learning activities.

### Reception - Animals

The Reception Spring one topic was 'Animals'. During this term the children have learnt about different types of animals including safari animals, pets, sea animals and dinosaurs. The children particularly enjoyed visiting the local libraries to find information books on the animals they wanted to know more about. Most exciting of all was dinosaur week, the children enjoyed looking at dinosaur skeletons, making information posters, creating fossils and measuring dinosaur footprints. The children became dinosaur experts; sharing information about dinosaurs, as well as asking questions to build on their existing knowledge. The children asked some excellent enquiry questions, such as these from Thorpe Hall: *What are fossils? Was it a rock or a volcano that killed dinosaurs? Is a T-Rex's tooth the same size as mine?* By the end of the week the children had all the answers to the questions they asked, and we truly do have Reception children who are experts with recalling dinosaur facts!



### Year 1 Science Dome

This half term year one were lucky enough to visit the space dome, an interactive tent informing us all about space. Children learnt about the planets and the first people on the moon, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin; their footprints are still there because the moon has no wind! The children also discovered that soon there will be a new mission to the moon – perhaps it will be one of them on the next Apollo mission.

*"We saw planets at the space trip. We saw Neil Armstrong. I really liked it" Travis, Year 1 Dawlish*  
*"I liked when we saw all of the planets." Anisia, Year 1 Dawlish*

### Year 2 Fire Station Visit

Year 2 visited the local fire station to learn about fire safety, as part of their topic learning on the Great Fire of London. They were taken on a tour of the station, got to handle some of the equipment, see inside a fire engine and hear about how to keep safe. *'I loved having a go using the hose. It was very powerful, there was lots of water coming out' Y2 pupil, Newport.* *'You must never play with matches, they can start a fire which is very dangerous' Y2 pupil, Newport.*

### Year 3 - How Green Are We?

This term Year three have been learning about being eco warriors and the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Classes from Dawlish and Newport took the train to Surrey Docks Farm to learn about recycling and composting. It was a city farm which meant that composting was really important. The children were able to ask lots of different questions and even got to plant their own cress seeds – which have grown successfully! This was a



fantastic day out for all children, staff and parent volunteers. The children learnt a lot and were able to use their knowledge in Topic lessons to follow.

*“I thought the trip to the farm was really good because we learnt about composting, and we also got to feed the animals. We saw snails, woodlice, goats, sheep and cows. I had a fantastic day at the farm!” – Elijah, Year 3 Dawlish.*

Oakhill Year 3 went to the Crystal - a recycling centre in Walthamstow.

*The crystal was good because it convinced me and my friends to recycle much, much more - Evie  
I think the trip was interesting because they got their energy from turbines and the sun shines on solar panels and that gives them energy. We went to the crystal because we are learning about recycling - Freddy*

*Going to the crystal was fun because it's showing that, on buildings we can grow food and we can use electric cars and also we could make our own energy- Adam*

The children in year 3 participated in an eye-opening workshop delivered by Echo2 in partnership with Thames Water. The workshop related to the topic this term of ‘How Green Are We?’ The story of Frankie the Flamingo provided an insight into issues that affect our local community due to water wastage. The children were given practical suggestions to incorporate into daily life.

*“At the end of the workshop they gave us these timers that’s the time you should have your bath and shower for and they gave us really cool top trump cards,” Eva from Thorpe Hall.*



### **Year 3 Engineering Programme**

A selection of pupils from Newport and Dawlish primaries are taking part in an Engineering Programme to design and create an electronic vehicle, using wood and other materials. This project is developing skills in Design and Technology, creative problem solving and Literacy. Engagement with project work and understanding of the work of an engineer is having a positive impact on children’s self-awareness and confidence, team work, and social skills. At the end of the project, the children involved will be invited to a celebration event taking place at a venue in London. We look forward to seeing the pictures of the final outcome of the project in the Summer 2 newsletter.

*“I like the engineering programme because it is fun and I get to learn new things. Also because we can get to try out how our cars that we make work. Recently we have made the frame and stuck on card triangles to the edges so it will be strong and sturdy” Tahani, Dawlish*

### **Year 4 Mayan Workshop**

Year 4 children participated in a workshop to support their learning on the topic of Mayans. The workshop was led by the Time Master who took the children back in time 4000 years. The Time Master helped the children understand the structure of Mayan society including the fact that kings had diamonds in their two front teeth. At the end they made a pyramid from the poorest jobs to the easiest jobs and used action that the people who did the jobs would use.

*“I really enjoyed it and by the end we know everything we need to know” Selena, Oakhill*

### **Year 5 British Museum**

As part of the Year 5 History and Literacy topic on the Greeks, we visited the Greek section at the British Museum. Classes took a tour around Ancient Greece as they explored facts about Odysseus and Sparta, which they used to create their own Greek stories when they got back to school. *‘The British Museum was fascinating; I learnt that in the city of Sparta, women played active lives, helping them to become stronger women’ Y5 pupil, Newport.*

## Year 6 Science Museum



Year 6 visited the Science Museum in South Kensington. We were lucky enough to also visit the Wonderlab Equinox Gallery.

*"At the museum, we entered the gallery. It was so cool! There were so many activities! One of my favourites was the friction slides. In groups of six we went down three different slides with a mat (so we wouldn't get friction burns.) We slid down three materials: plastic, turf and wood. We then had to decide which slide was the fastest- I thought the plastic slide was the fastest. I would definitely recommend that you visit the Science museum"* Alayna, Oakhill

## Events

### Federation Pupil Parliament

This half term the Pupil Parliament have been working hard preparing for the Waltham Forest Borough of Culture celebrations. The four Opossum schools met and collaboratively came up with some creative and interesting ideas that will enable us all to celebrate the diverse nature of the borough and our four schools. It was fantastic to see pupils working collaboratively, and interesting to see the range of creative ideas that the members of Pupil Parliament came up with. These ranged from profiles of prominent Waltham Forest residents to a carnival, celebrating the diversity across the federation and the borough itself. We look forward to sharing our ideas with the teachers who will be planning the learning activities. Pupil Parliaments in each school continue to give the pupils a voice as they actively represent the ideas of each year group. We look forward to continuing this work next half term.

### LAMDA

Pupils across the federation enjoy their LAMDA learning. *"When you do LAMDA it feels like you're an actor in a movie!" Year 4 pupil, Dawlish.* Their focus is on learning poetry or prose off by heart and performing it with clear diction, enthusiasm, actions and facial expressions. They also learn the meaning of any unfamiliar words, which boosts their vocabulary. Thirty pupils at Newport completed an exam in December and we are happy to report the results: thirty distinctions! A number of pupils from across four schools will have the opportunity to take exams in the summer term this year. *"My opinion of LAMDA is that it is very educational and when I grow up I want to be an actor."* Year 4 pupil, Dawlish.



### KS1 Saturday School

KS1 Saturday School commenced this term. One hundred and one pupils from across the federation have seized the extra learning opportunity which takes place every Saturday morning, where they practise key skills; reading, writing and numeracy. This helps them to develop confidence in key skills and consolidate the learning they have been doing during the week.

### Reading Breakfast

Thank you to everyone who attended Reading Breakfast, it was lovely to see many of you there. We have received lots of positive feedback from parents and children, for instance Edward in Year 5 at Dawlish says *'The reading breakfast made me feel excited because I don't normally get to go to them.* This is always a great opportunity to promote the joy of reading and meet with staff members. We hope to see you at the next reading breakfast!

### **Reading Roadmaps**

We are very pleased to introduce this new reading initiative across the schools this term. Reading Roadmaps are designed to promote a love of reading for pupils in each age group. Children have the opportunity to choose books from the set and tick off the stop on their road map when they have finished. The books are all recently published titles and the map offers suggestions for follow up – *If you liked \_\_\_ book, try \_\_\_\_*. We have been able to provide this initiative due to your contributions during the Winter Bazaars; we thank you for your generosity in supporting these events, which have enabled us to purchase this programme. Some schools have already started using these books and the children are showing great excitement and enthusiasm for reading them. All children in Years 1-6 will be able to access the roadmap books over the coming half term, please keep a look out for them.

### **RE Day**



This half term the focus for RE day was ‘Important Stories in Religion’. It is so important that children identify the similarities and common morals between religions and begin to understand how we are all similar rather than focusing on what is different; what better way than through stories! Children across the schools learnt about stories from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism and made comparisons of the stories identifying common themes and moral guidance. Stories included The Temptation of Buddha, Jonah and the Whale, The Good Samaritan and many more. *We learnt about a story from Islam where a man was building a religious house, he was missing a brick and the angel Gabriel gave him a brick but it was black from the sins of the people. The building is in Mecca, it is important to Muslim people. Zain, Y6 Oakhill.*

### **Chinese New Year School Meal**

A special meal was cooked to celebrate Chinese New Year on the 6<sup>th</sup> February. This year, 2019 is the Year of the Pig. Children were delighted by different tastes from the kitchen, choosing from: lemon chicken, beef chow mein or vegetable spring rolls with sweet and sour sauce.

*“I didn’t know you could cook pineapple and it would taste good – I like it” Thorpe Hall pupil*

### **Governing Body**

The Governing Body met this half term at the end of January. We received the termly Senior Executive Head Teacher’s report, presented by Prue Barnes-Kemp and had the opportunity to consider key updates, developments and events from across the schools. We spoke about the unexpected closure of Newport School at the start of the term, due to a boiler issue, and expressed our gratitude to Mrs Perridge and the team at Newport for the way they worked together to make arrangements which enabled the school to re-open at the earliest opportunity. We also expressed thanks to Mrs Bester and the Dawlish staff and catering team who accommodated the Newport year 6 classes during this time. This challenging situation was made easier by the strong collaborative team working evident across the federation. We also offer our thanks to parents/carers for your support and understanding during an event which may have caused inconvenience for some. Safeguarding training for all governors was delivered at this meeting. It is important that all governors have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues and the schools’ processes for managing them. Our link governors for safeguarding also meet regularly with the designated leads from across the federation to discuss updates and an overview of safeguarding within the federation. Finally, the Governing Board approved the term dates and INSET days for next year (2019-2020); these are available on each school’s website for your reference.

## Sports Events

### Boccia

On a cold yet sunny Tuesday in January, our excited Dawlish and Newport students set off to Leytonstone Leisure Centre to take part in a new sport event called Boccia. This unique sport (similar to boules) requires players to use their hand and eye coordination to throw red or blue leather balls, as close as they can to a white target ball.

Everyone enjoyed taking part in Boccia. Alfie, from Year 5 at Dawlish said, *‘This is a great event and I felt very happy to be going.’*

Haroon told us that, *‘you should try this sport because it’s fun to do and I will never forget about this event.’*

Congratulations to Newport who after some close matches came third in the competition. The participants were very proud of their bronze medals on returning to school, well done!



### Active Literacy and Numeracy

Some children from Year 4 had the pleasure of attending the borough ‘Active Maths and Literacy’ festival this half term at the Peter May centre. The games were led by sports leaders from local secondary schools. They played many active games that also improved some of their grammar and spelling skills including: fronted adverbials, verbs and extended sentences. Children from Thorpe Hall created the most valuable word of the day – for 36 points. Well done to all who participated.

### Swimming Gala

Thorpe Hall children were incredibly excited to be attending their first Swimming Gala. The event was organised as if the children had just walked into the Olympics- our school names were on the competition board, sectioned lanes for each team and everyone eager to dive in! The teams had a fantastic time with Billy from Thorpe Hall commenting: *‘Everyone had smiles on their faces and we all tried our best.’* Two members of our team had individual successes in their races with Niveesh coming second in the freestyle race and Yana coming third in the backstroke. Congratulations!

### Girls’ Football

Dawlish and Newport Year4 teams took part in the event at Leyton Orient. Both teams played well with Newport just losing in the semi-finals. Congratulations to Lucy at Newport who was the tournament’s top scorer.

### Sports Hall Athletics

Teams of pupils from Years 3 and 4 took part in the indoor athletics competition at Peter May stadium. Events included obstacle relay races, standing long jump and javelin. The children who took part enjoyed the competitive element of the event and the variety of skills they had the opportunity to demonstrate. Kaela (Year 4, Oakhill) said *‘It was really fun. I was proud of my classmate who fell but ran again’*. Malachi (Year 4, Oakhill) liked the relay because... *‘I ran with Year 3 boys as a team and Ralph loved the over/under relay races.’* The results of the competition should be announced very soon.

## Hi 5 Netball

It was that time of year again for the teams to return to the 'Redbridge Sports Centre' for the annual Hi5 Netball Competition. This time around Thorpe Hall took two teams and some of members had their first taste of representing the school. Before the event started, Layla motivated the teams by saying: *"Remember we are here to have fun so don't worry about the results!"* The pep talk worked as the teams performed well and showed fantastic fair play on and off the court.



## Tri Golf

Tri Golf involves a range of games and activities which develop early golf skills and earn team points. The children in Year 2 at Oakhill explained how the competition works;

*There was a bench and you hit the ball over the bench and I got them all -Theo*

*In 'Dominoes' you hit the ball on the cone and you get points for your team - Archie*

*If you get a white cone you lose 2 points and yellow one is 10 points, green is 5 and blue is one point - Musa*

*Bullseye is a target a bit like archery, if you hit the middle you get more points- Idrees*

Congratulations to Thorpe Hall for coming third in this competition!

## Quick Sticks Hockey

This event is one of the most anticipated in the sporting calendar. The newly renovated Feel Good Too I've Farm Fields in Leyton was the venue for the event. Although a fantastic location, some children were disappointed that it is no longer at the Olympic Stadium. The children showed some brilliant teamwork and played every game with the desire to win. Despite the cold, everyone came away feeling accomplished and relishing the chance to play more hockey in upcoming months.

*"Some games were so fun because it was close the whole time." Thorpe Hall pupil*

## Curling

This half term, Years 3 and 4 had the exciting opportunity to take part in a Curling competition, held at Leyton Leisure Centre.

Children were very excited to learn new skills and work together in a team activity. All children tried their best, showing resilience and team work as they competed with other schools in the borough.

In Year 4, Kamran from Dawlish enjoyed the day because he was able to take part in a new sport and Ismail in Year 3, remarked on how heavy the stone was, making it a challenge to slide the stone towards the target.

All children enjoyed the afternoon and would like to try it out again. It was great afternoon of sport and all the students enjoyed trying something new from the Winter Olympics.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Callum Fester, Class teacher at Dawlish School, on the safe arrival of his new baby daughter. Best wishes to the Fester family.

## School Nurse

Each half-term there is an opportunity for parents to come along to NHS nurse drop-in session to discuss any health and well-being related issues or questions they have in regards to their child/children. Check your school bulletin for dates and times. Email reminders will always be sent to parents informing them of the upcoming drop-in sessions. Be on the lookout!

## Save The Date

A number of exciting events and important dates are coming up next half term. Keep a close eye on your school website and the weekly bulletins to find dates for your diary.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

First Day of Spring Term 2

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

World Book Day Reading Breakfast – Dress Up as your favourite book character (parents/carers are welcome to dress up too!)

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

Open Evening – Early Closure 1.30pm

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

Easter Bonnet Parade 9-9.30am  
Last Day of Spring Term- Early Finish

## Attendance and Punctuality

As always, the schools monitor children's attendance closely to ensure that everyone is able to take advantage of all learning opportunities and achieve their very best. As we end this half term, the rolling attendance for pupils in Years 1-6 is:

Dawlish	Newport	Oakhill	Thorpe Hall
97.3%	96.8%	96.6%	97.0%

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, this is known as persistent absence and is an extremely serious concern and may result in onward referrals or court action. If you are experiencing difficulty with regards to attendance, please contact the Head of School as there may be support we can signpost you to.

## Online Safety

As we know, there are many helpful and exciting uses for the Internet, but we are also very aware of the possible dangers of engaging online with people we don't know. Alongside this newsletter we are sending a parents' guide to 'Catfishing', a term to describe people who create fake online profiles, misrepresenting who they really are. We encourage you to read the guide and, as always, to closely monitor your child's Internet use and limit screen time over the holiday period.

## 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/carers to regularly check the school websites for information, in particular 'Important dates' and 'Home Learning Projects'. All the information you need to know from your child's year group can be found in year group pages.

## Holiday Activities

Looking for fun local events and activities over the holidays? Please follow this link to the Waltham Forest council events page <https://www.walthamforest.gov.uk/events>

**Find us on:**  
[www.dawlishprimary.co.uk](http://www.dawlishprimary.co.uk)

**Find us on:**  
[www.newport.waltham.sch.uk](http://www.newport.waltham.sch.uk)

**Find us on:**  
[www.oakhillschool.org.uk](http://www.oakhillschool.org.uk)

**Find us on:**  
[www.thorpehallprimary.com](http://www.thorpehallprimary.com)



**Find us on:**  
[www.opossumed.org](http://www.opossumed.org)



### Term Dates 2018-19

<b>Spring Term</b>		
7 <sup>th</sup> January – 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Spring term 1	
<b>25<sup>th</sup> January 2019</b>	<b>INSET</b>	<b>School closed</b>
<b>18<sup>th</sup> February- 22<sup>th</sup> February</b>	<b>Half term break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
25 <sup>th</sup> February – 5 <sup>th</sup> April	Spring 2  Closure on the last day of term- <b>1:30pm</b>	
8 <sup>th</sup> April – 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	<b>Easter break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
<b>Summer Term</b>		
23 <sup>rd</sup> April- 24 <sup>th</sup> May	Summer term 1	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>	<b>School closed</b>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> May – 31<sup>st</sup> May</b>	<b>Half term break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> June- 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Summer term 2  Closure on the last day of term- <b>1:30pm</b>	
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> July</b>	<b>INSET</b>	<b>School closed</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> July</b>	<b>INSET</b>	<b>School closed</b>



## Term Dates 2019-2020



<b>Autumn Term</b>		
2 <sup>nd</sup> September – 18 <sup>th</sup> October	Autumn term 1	
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	INSET Day	School closed
<b>21<sup>st</sup> October – 25<sup>th</sup> October</b>	<b>Half term break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
28 <sup>th</sup> October – 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Autumn term 2	
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November 2019	INSET Day	<b>School closed</b>
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> December – 3<sup>rd</sup> January</b>	<b>Christmas break</b>	<b>School closed</b>

<b>Spring Term</b>		
6 <sup>th</sup> January – 14 <sup>th</sup> February	Spring term 1	
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	INSET Day	<b>School Closed</b>
<b>17<sup>th</sup> February- 21<sup>st</sup> February</b>	<b>Half term break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> February – 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Spring 2	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> April – 17<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>Easter break</b>	<b>School closed</b>

<b>Summer Term</b>		
20 <sup>th</sup> April- 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Summer term 1	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>	<b>School closed</b>
<b>25<sup>th</sup> May – 29<sup>th</sup> May</b>	<b>Half term break</b>	<b>School closed</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> June- 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Summer term 2	
Friday 10 July 2020	INSET Day	<b>School Closed</b>
Monday 20 July 2020	INSET Day	<b>School Closed</b>

