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Dear Parents and Carers,

My governors' newsletter this term looks a bit different from usual, as we've been thinking hard on the Governing Body about how to communicate around strategic questions. This has led to a longer than usual set of thoughts, which I have set out separately.

Governing Body news includes the appointment of Phil Cornish as a parent governor. Phil is a teacher at Hailsham Community College and we are really pleased to have him on board, with his knowledge and enthusiasm.

We have lots of thanks to give out to staff too, for their hard work.

We'd like to give special thanks to teachers for taking part in a project led by our governor Lizzie Overton, in which teachers have open discussions with groups of pupils about aspects of school life, with governors observing. The aim of this is for the school to be in a better position to respond to pupils' needs, and for teachers to develop different relationships with their pupils. This is the second time we have run the project, and with additional guidance from Lizzie, everyone involved agreed that it was a richer experience.

We are grateful to Vicki Brown for stepping up into role of Acting Deputy, with her usual calm and professional aplomb.

We congratulate Zena Budd on achieving levels of Good Development in EYFS, which are consistently improving and above national. It is in recognition of this and other good practice that governors assessed our EYFS provision as Outstanding when we looked at our Self-Evaluation Form. Self Evaluation is something that all schools have to do, and accurate self evaluation, with a good grasp of progress data and other indicators, is something that OFSTED inspectors will judge the school on and so it is in school leaders' interests to self assess as accurately as possible.

The rest of this letter (the attachment) aims to open up more communication around strategic questions which our governing body looks at.

This is in response to the discussion at the Parent Forum in October. I'm aware that it's taken some time for me to respond. This is because the issue is complex has required some thought as to the best way to respond, and I've also wanted to be able to talk to parents at school when I've been in to help me with my response. It's also a long letter as a result of this, but we have tried to structured it so that you can read as much or as little as you would like, depending on what interests you; it has been difficult to describe what our plans and options might be without including some context and history.

The letter covers three elements: national/local context, historical context, and current strategy and developments. There is a development still to come and I will keep you informed in future letters about the work we have done on strategic questions.

I have put in a couple Questions and Answers along the way, which are questions that people have asked me directly, or at a Parent Forum. I will attempt to answer further questions in future letters, but if there is something you particularly want answered, please email me at dkong@laughton.e-sussex.sch.uk

We will be convening a parents' group in the next couple of terms, led by Anthony Lilley. Anthony has experience in the field of strategic development, and in chairing groups and has offered his expertise for a period of time to help form links between parents and governors on a strategic basis.

Governors are interested in forming a parent group that can work with governors on a sustainable basis, and we are looking at developing the idea of using a "Parent Champion" or "Parent Network" model to do this. We will be giving more information on this next term.

I hope you all have a very happy Christmas and come back well rested.

Denise Kong

Chair of Governors

