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Dear Parents and Carers

I'm writing in my capacity as Chair of Governors to give you a brief update on the progress our school has made since September 2018 and to talk about the governing body's efforts to secure and build upon that progress in the future.

Since September it has been my privilege to get to know the school intimately through observation of lessons and other activities, conversations and meetings with children, staff and some of yourselves and by reading carefully the reams of paperwork that support the running of a successful school. All that I have seen has only added to my admiration of the children and staff (teaching and non-teaching) and underlined the importance of safeguarding the future of this lovely school.

Clawton School entered into a time-limited Management Partnership with Woolacombe National Support & Teaching School in September 2018 in order to manage effectively changes in the school's circumstances after events of the previous academic year. As a result, Sandy Brown, a hugely respected National Leader of Education, became our interim Headteacher and our staff gained access to the teaching school's high-quality professional training.

Monitoring the effectiveness and value of that partnership governors are confident that the benefits to children are tangible and significant. The school environment has been significantly improved, in terms of security, educational resources and organisation; provision in class, including the pre-school, has been developed by the introduction of additional techniques and resources, the impact already being seen in the quality of the children's learning.

The benefits of partnership have led us to ask how we can protect these developments and the future of the school in the longer term and to that end governors have been researching the partnership options for our school. We are determined to preserve the family-friendly atmosphere in the school and its close local links, at the same time looking outwards for the highest quality approaches and resources available to benefit our children's development and security.

Many schools comparable with us are choosing to become "academies" and to join a "Multi Academy Trust" (MAT). These schools work in close, formal partnership, receiving directly from the Department for Education the funding they would have received from the local authority. Schools within a MAT are able to share resources, training and, if necessary, staff, and some administrative functions are performed by the MAT office on behalf of its schools.

After careful research three MATs were invited to meet our governing board, describing their values, approaches and operations in detail and, while all three were highly professional, it was decided at our last Governors' Meeting to approach a MAT which already includes Woolacombe School and a range of other Primary Schools. Within the MAT, we would retain a Head of Clawton School and the governing board would become a School Committee with responsibility for ensuring high quality provision for the children. Sandy Brown would remain in the background, supporting the new Headteacher and the school would retain control of its name, uniform and day-to-day running and ensure progress, and continuity and developmental needs.

The governing board voted unanimously for this course of action and I would stress the care that has been taken in leading us to this point which also has strong support from the staff working in the school.

I look forward to meeting with you to hear views and answer questions at a meeting that will be arranged for parents and governors on Friday 8th March at 2pm. In the meantime, Sandy is always available if you have any queries or concerns etc.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S. W. Forbes', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Forbes
Chair of Governors