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Dear Parents/ Carers,

To have the opportunity to open a new school and be involved from before the first brick was laid, is a very privileged one.

There are key events that stick in my mind;

Governors' meetings held in the Taylor Wimpey Sales Office, lasting until 10pm and feeling very hungry with the fish and chip van parked in the lay by opposite and the smell wafting through the doors!

Sitting in the Wilmott Dixon site office working through piles of architect drawings deciding where plugs should go etc... etc... I'm still annoyed we missed some at the bottom of the stairwells which mean you need an extension cable to Hoover them!

Amanda Matsangou and I, on a very hot summer day, distributing 150 ice lollies to all the builders on site!

Walking up to the school with Amanda when it was finished. I remember rounding the corner and there was this huge, beautiful building ready for children and I turned to Amanda in a panic as it became real, that I was responsible for everything that was going to happen!

The taster sessions with the children in the small community hut, excited about starting at their new school.

Walking the children up to see their new school before it was completed.

The opening ceremony with all the pomp and ceremony on a glorious September afternoon.

The list is endless and they are memories that still make me cry!

The role of Headteacher is a daunting one. At the beginning of an academic year it is as though there is a huge mountain range to scale, and as Head, your job is to carve a path and lead everyone up to the summit and down the other side safely, effectively and efficiently.

I have to say, I feel very lucky to have been surrounded by people who work so hard, have the children at the centre of everything they do and support the school with so much energy, making the task so much easier for me. I have never worked in a school where all the different

teams: governors, cleaning, site, catering, wrap around and teaching staff, work so hard, care for the children so well and are so friendly with each other.

And you as parents, how often have I thanked you for your support and allegiance in making the school it is. I have never worked in a school where parents have been so supportive and I say this in all sincerity.

I have poured every ounce of energy, every drop of courage and every smidgen of emotion into this school. It has been my 'baby' and I have nurtured it. My aim was always to get the school to a point where the foundations were solid and strong and they are, **because** of the people working in it, **because** of the children who attend it, **because** of the parents who support it and **because** of the beautiful environment the children and staff work and laugh in. I know the school has got strong foundations.

And so... I have decided to retire next Easter and have handed my resignation to Andy, Chair of Governors. It has been a difficult decision and one that has caused many sleepless nights and tears, but it is time that Newton Leys School has a fresh pair of eyes to decide the paths the school will take to continue on its successful journey. Governors have started the process to recruit the next lucky person to lead this wonderful and special school.

I know that I leave it in very safe hands.

Pippa