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Dear Parents/Carers,

We have finally come to the end of what can only be described as an extraordinary year. None of us could have imagined how 2020 would be this time last year. The school has worked hard to adapt to the ever-changing guidelines but I would like to acknowledge how lucky we are at Barham with our school community.

Firstly, enormous thanks to you, parents for the encouraging words, supportive emails and kind gestures. All of us have appreciated your support and trust in sending your children back to school. Your positive engagement has made a huge difference and we are very grateful of the encouragement – it has kept us going, particularly this term which has proved the most challenging yet.

Your children have brought us so much joy. They have adapted well to any changes and shown such resilience. You only need to watch the videos of the Nativity and Christmas service to see how much the children lift your spirits. It has been wonderful to have them all back, filling the school with their chatter and laughter.

Whilst the well-being of children is always our first priority, the fact that most classes have made such good progress since September is also testament to the skills of teachers, teaching assistants and you, parents. Unlike many schools, this year we have had our best ever results for the phonics screening, taken this term in Year 2, and the highest number of children that have passed the Kent Test in Year 6.

The staff have always been a fantastic team but this year they have had to work harder than ever to try and create 'normality' and a sense of fun at school with the restrictions in place. Their commitment and creativity seems to know no bounds. Everyone has had to learn new skills in technology and I cannot thank them enough for adapting and looking for new ways to improve what we offer the children of Barham.

I would also like to pay tribute to Mr Rayner, Mrs Glen and Mrs King in the office and our cleaners, Nathan and Rachel who have had to work flexibly and take on new roles. All of our staff members have worked enthusiastically and shown full commitment despite the stresses and strains in their own lives. In summary, the staff at Barham have been nothing short of amazing.

I would like to wish all of you a peaceful, relaxing and safe Christmas. We look forward to seeing everybody again on Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, at the start of what we hope will be a kinder and brighter 2021.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Al Higgins'.

Alison Higgins

