Danehill CE Primary School
School Lane
Danehill RH17 7JB

Headteacher: Caroline Powell

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November 2026

Danehill Primary School

Notes of meeting with parents and carers – 18.11.26

Parents and carers present: 6 people in the room and 5 external log ins

Present from school:

- **Stephen Long – IEB chair**
- **Jo Warren – Interim headteacher from Jan 1st 2027**

Meeting opened 4.30pm

- Stephen shared the purpose of the meeting:
    - to introduce Jo Warren as the school's new interim headteacher, starting after Christmas
    - give an update on school progress and
    - to give an opportunity for parents to ask questions.

- He explained the process by which Jo has been appointed. He explained that as a maintained school the LA took a lead in identifying a suitable candidate, and that the IEB is very pleased that the LA have found someone with suitable experience.
- Stephen said the appointment is on an interim basis, given it is as yet unclear on what basis the school will be operating in the future, given there is potential to consult on joining Pioneer Federation and numbers of pupils need to recover. This means it is not possible to make a substantive appointment at the moment. The school will continue to work in partnership with Pioneer Federation.

- Jo gave a brief background to her experience. She explained her experience in teaching and leadership. She noted that the majority of this has been in small schools, including church schools, with most recent experience gained in the Weald Federation. Jo said she is excited about the prospect of joining the school and is keen to build on the improvements made in the school to date. To ensure effective handover she is making visits to the school this term, supported by the LA.

- Stephen gave an update on the progress at the school. Visits by the IEB have shown improvements in the school environment, the management of the curriculum and pupils' behaviour, alongside the inclusion of pupils with additional learning needs. A visit by the Diocese last week was equally positive, again pointing out pupils' positive approach to learning, enjoyment and wider development. A visit from the LA safeguarding team was also positive, noting further improvements in the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- Stephen reminded parents that the school is expecting an Ofsted inspection. He explained that pupil numbers remain a concern, but there are positives in the number of families visiting on open days. He also explained that the most positive thing the school can do is be as effective as possible and therefore offer an attractive option to prospective parents and pupils.

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- Questions and comments were invited:
- A parent asked what number of pupils is required for the school to be in a secure financial position, and when will parents know about the future? Stephen explained that the school has typically had approximately 80 pupils but there have been higher and lower figures. If the number is too low to make the school viable in the long run, the LA would need to make a decision on its future. However, he noted that this is a lengthy process and one which involves much consultation, with the LA remaining responsible to ensure the pupils have a high quality education.
- A parent asked if Pioneer Federation may no longer want to partner with the school if numbers were too small. Stephen said that this would of course be a matter for Pioneer, but that they would take a decision after proper consideration, including when any views have been expressed by the local authority.
- A number of parents, while welcoming improvements in behaviour and routines, said they thought that the school's unique character was being eroded. They felt that this character had drawn additional families to the school in the past. Mention was made of the 'enlivened learning' title given the school's curriculum approach in the past. On being asked to develop this, parents noted that the words such as 'curiosity' (the school's values) should be at the heart of the work, alongside collaborative learning.
- A parent mentioned that the possibility for flexible schooling is also attractive to parents and that this should continue to be made available as an option.
- Attendees generally felt the school needed to be 'marketed' for its unique features to enable it to stand out from other local primary schools. One parent asked if Jo and Stephen could attend future open days for reception age pupils and families. This was noted.
- A number of parents asked that Jo should engage as much as possible ahead of January with the wider school community as part of 'getting to know' the school. They identified weaknesses in how well change had been managed at key points such as September.
- Stephen thanked attendees for their comments and commitment to the school. He explained that the more structured approach to the curriculum had been deemed necessary in response to the most recent Ofsted inspection areas for improvement. However, attendees' views would be noted by the IEB and reflected in discussions with leaders. Jo thanked attendees and said she had found the meeting useful.
- Stephen reminded attendees that these meetings are 4/6 weekly, with more meetings set up if required.

Meeting closed at 6.00pm