

Danehill CE Primary School
School Lane
Danehill RH17 7JB

Headteacher: Caroline Powell
Sarah Smith

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29th September 2026

Danehill Primary School

Notes of meeting with parents and carers – 23.09.26

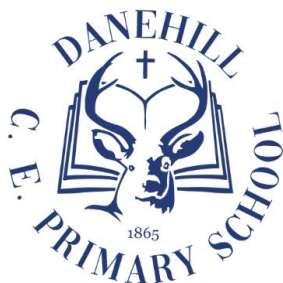
Parents and carers present: 14 people in the room and 5 external log ins

Present from school:

- **Stephen Long – IEB chair**

Meeting opened 4.30pm

- Stephen Long – completed introductions and updated on school circumstances and context. The 2024 Ofsted inspection was noted, including areas for improvement: attendance and curriculum. Note was made of concerns in 2025 around the management of pupil behaviour and meeting the needs of some SEND pupils. During the autumn term a significant number of pupils were withdrawn by families. Spring term saw the IEB replace the governors and some actions to stabilize the school. The spring and summer term saw the school working with Pioneer Federation as part of a soft partnership. The departure of the substantive head in June saw Caroline Powell and Sarah Smith start as interim heads. Note was made of significant changes to curriculum approaches and expectations/support for teachers, improvements to the school site linked mainly to safeguarding, and clarification of policy on key areas like behaviour. The school's budget challenges linked to low numbers were noted.
- Attendees were reminded of the scope and purpose of the meeting: to hear their views, given there are no parents on the IEB. The views expressed will be used to inform the IEB's work in supporting and challenging the school leaders in their work with the school.
- Parents were asked for their views on developments at the school:
- Mixed views were expressed on the changes made to the start of the school day. Some parents were unhappy about the changes where there is no supervised play before the start of school. However, views were also expressed which supported this change and liked the opportunity for pupils to go earlier into classrooms. Parents asked if there could be a compromise where pupils can play supervised by parents. Some also noted a lack of opportunity to talk parent to parent at the start of the day. For clarification, Stephen Long noted that parents talking with each other is purely at their discretion and the front of school in the area inside the gate with garden and benches is ideal for that.
- Parents welcomed the work to tidy up the school and clean classrooms. Parents were supportive of the work to improve safeguarding, such as through more secure gates. However, some felt the gates and new fences were too prominent. Some parents asked if the fences could be decorated by the pupils to make them feel more welcoming.



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- Some parents welcomed the calmer and more orderly approach now evident at the school. Comments were made about a chaotic situation in the school in autumn last year and about some poor teaching in the past. This was not felt to be representative of the whole school.
- Parents noted the high turnover of staff in the past and would welcome more stability now.
- Some parents felt that play opportunities have been reduced, both in terms of time and the games allowed. They would like to know more about the rationale for these.
- A parent said there had been a reduction in the level of pupils' happiness at the school, with changes in rules and expectations. Others did not support this but there was a general view that the school should ask pupils how they are feeling about the changes made.
- Comments were made about parents understanding the changes made to the curriculum approach, with clearer structure. However, some noted the need for the school's 'enlivened learning' approach not to be lost, noting it appears on the school's website. They characterized this as an approach where pupils are centrally involved in making decisions about their learning.
- Some parents spoke about wanting to see more evidence of pupils' creativity around the school. Comment was also made about not being sure how the school's values, as shown on the board in the meeting room, are reflected in the life of the school.
- Parents were concerned about the future viability of the school and keen to support the school, notably by being able to report positively on it to other prospective parents. However, some felt there was a need for greater clarity for them about the reasons for changes at the school so that they could do that more effectively.
- Parents were grateful for how hard staff at the school are working to move things forward. They cited the opportunities to meet and talk with staff as much valued.
- Parents felt it is important to know who will be leading the school after Christmas, both for their confidence and that of any prospective parents. They asked if parents would be involved in appointing any successor. Stephen Long noted this would depend on whether the appointment is interim or permanent, and that a decision on that has yet to be reached. He asserted that the school is working closely with the LA and its improvement partner.
- Parents were concerned that the school makes effective use of open days to attract new parents and keen to help if they can. In their view these would need careful management so that the full picture of the school can be given.
- A parent asked why there were no school leaders present at this meeting, and some noted wanting more opportunities to engage with leaders on changes. Stephen Long reiterated that these meetings are for parents. Notes are shared with the headteachers, but the meetings are to enable parents to speak directly to governors. Operational leaders such as headteachers typically liaise with parents via separate meetings and communications. This is the expectation at Danehill.

Stephen Long thanked attendees and noted there will be further meetings such as this on the termly cycle.

Meeting closed at 6.00