



Dear Danehill School Community,

As you are aware, Danehill Primary School will enter into a one-year partnership with The Pioneer Federation from June 2026. This partnership is intended to provide support for the school and will include a period of consultation to consider the possibility of formally joining the federation. Any decision to federate would be made following this initial partnership period.

Pioneer is an 8 school Federation. All our schools are small primary schools with less than 115 on roll.

<https://pioneerfederation.co.uk/>

We have enjoyed visiting the school and have also been working with Mrs Jones and the Danehill Governors over the last few months in preparation for the partnership.

We wanted to write to you to introduce ourselves- **James Procter, Kayleigh Vile, Caroline Powell, Alice Briley** and **Sian Leahy**.



James Procter began leading the Pioneer Schools in 2012. Since that time, there have been rapid and sustained school improvements and all our schools are now categorised by Ofsted and/or Local Authority as Good/Expected Standard+ and by SIAMS as outstanding. James will be at Danehill for half a day a week and will coordinate/ manage the Pioneer partnership team. His focus will be the strategic developments of the school and he will be working alongside Mrs Jones and Governors to continue the school improvements.

Kayleigh Vile is the Headteacher at Chiddingly Primary School and a Pioneer Cluster Lead Headteacher. She will be supporting at Danehill for half a day weekly with a focus on teaching, learning & curriculum.

Caroline Powell is a Pioneer Consultant Headteacher (previously Groombridge St Thomas Headteacher until January 2026) and has been supporting Danehill since April. From June she will be supporting at Danehill weekly and will focus on streamlining infrastructure within the school.

Alice Briley is the Headteacher at East Hoathly Primary School and Pioneer Cluster Lead Headteacher. She will be supporting at Danehill for half a day a week with a focus on teaching, learning & curriculum.

Sian Leahy is the Pioneer Inclusion Lead. Sian is a very experienced SENCo. She will be mentoring/coaching staff linked to SEND provision at Danehill.

Each of our schools have retained their uniqueness and benefited from working closely together. Pioneer Schools have had successful Ofsted inspections in the last 2 years. Please see the reports on our websites. Effective inclusion, curriculum design and collaboration have come across as consistent strengths. *'Excellent/exceptional pupil behaviour, a focused, calm and caring environment, ambitious, inclusive and well-designed curriculum and strong leadership at all levels with staff & pupils benefiting from the very effective collaborative working across the Federation of schools.* We believe that there should be a central focus on creative, innovative and engaging teaching that develops a love and interest in learning. Our vision is for children to value learning as a creative endeavour that underpins their aspirations for great futures and to ensure that we are all focused on seeing opportunities and believing that anything is possible. We love seeing the children in the Federation finding their learning exciting, particularly when they actively explore concepts, apply skills, ask questions and are motivated by independent discovery.

Our partnership philosophy is about retaining school community uniqueness and building strength through effective collaboration. Danehill Primary will also be in partnership with Pioneer from June 2026 and we believe that with all nine small schools working collaboratively, we are stronger together. We will be actively developing staff links across the schools to share resources, talents and reduce workload. We look forward to pupils meeting across the Federation- through trips and events.

The next 2 paragraphs are from Mr Stephen Long - Chair of Governors.

The work with Pioneer offers a great opportunity for the school to receive support from an effective group of schools as it seeks improvement and growth. Support provided during Term 5 has shown how well this could work, so the governors are very keen that we develop this further. As we have said in the many meetings held with staff and parents, not only will the partnership work hopefully bring improvement and a secure future for the school, it will also enable us to hold the consultative process that considers joining the federation formally. The Interim Executive Board (the governors) will remain responsible for the oversight and monitoring of Danehill during this time.

The new leadership team will work to align the Danehill curriculum with the Pioneer curriculum structure. As well as the teaching and learning collaborative benefits, there will also be economies of scale benefits from working with Pioneer.

We plan to get to know the Danehill staff even more next term and look forward to getting to know you and the children at Danehill. We will set up an opportunity for you to meet the Pioneer partnership staff in person and details will follow early next term.

We are looking forward to working alongside the Danehill team and developing a strong collaboration. We will be sending out a newsletter termly to keep you up to date with partnership developments.

Yours sincerely,



Mr James Procter
Executive Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Mrs Kayleigh Vile
Chiddingly Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Alice Briley
East Hoathly Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Mrs Sian Leahy
Pioneer Inclusion Lead
Pioneer Federation



Ms Caroline Powell
Pioneer Consultant Headteacher
Pioneer Federation



Mr Stephen Long
Chair of Governors
Danehill IEB