



Year 10 Headteacher's Question Time

Tuesday 19th October 2021

1.15 p.m. – 1.55 p.m. – G10

Panel: Mrs Cooney, Miss Millward, Mr Goetschel

Guest: Year 13 Student Leader for the Community

The students were welcomed to the Headteacher's Question Time session and the following questions were directed to the panel.

Would it be possible for students to use the green space around school at break and lunchtimes?

Mrs Cooney: At this point it is too dangerous as the grass is very slippery and not everyone has grips on their shoes. The ground is also wet and muddy and the mud would be walked into school if students walked in this area. During the summer months it may be possible when the ground is drier but teachers do not get paid for breaktime and lunchtime supervision of students and we would need more members of staff to ensure students safety and we would also need to make sure that it doesn't interfere with PE lessons.

Upon arriving at Lordswood, what was the first thing that you wanted to change?

Mrs Cooney: I wanted to change some of the classrooms, such as the yellow room upstairs which is like a corridor rather than a room. I want to make sure that all rooms are a great learning environment for students. It would be good to be able to buy nice furniture and chairs but the financial implications need to be balanced with the cost of ensuring the school can continue to afford high quality teaching staff.

What are your favourite and least favourite things about Lordswood?

Mrs Cooney: the students and staff are my favourite things. The students are polite and want to work hard and are able to hold really good conversations. The staff are amazing, offering to run clubs in their own time which is not part of their job. The team of support and teaching staff are all passionate about the school. The least things I like is the location of the school as the travelling time from home is very long and also being in a residential area I get a lot of complaints from residents about parents driving dangerously and parking across peoples driveways.

How do you balance time between home and work? Do you have any tips?

Mr Goetschel: the key is prioritising. Any teacher will have a 'to-do' list and will never get to the end of it. You can make a list and try to tick off four or five tasks each day. Make sure that you do make time for yourself too. Give yourself a cut off time for working on the tasks and don't worry if you don't do everything that you plan to. It's about having a routine and sticking to a structure.

Mrs Cooney: I allocate times for tasks and time limits for completion and schedule these onto my i-pad calendar. I get up at the same time each morning and leave school at the same time in the afternoon as evening time is family time when I do not do any work.

What were the main reasons for Lordswood joining the King Edward MAT?

Mrs Cooney: many of the decisions were made before I started at Lordswood. We are a one school academy trust and over the last couple of years the government has been saying that stand alone MATs need to be part of a Trust. King Edward is Birmingham based and let's schools retain their independence which is important as some national chains make all the decisions. We will also gain advantages such as discounts on services, for example in finance and HR, so we will make some financial savings and will receive support while staying true to LGS.

Are we going to have a new uniform when we join King Edward?

Mrs Cooney: at this stage I have no idea. King Edward will be included in the Lordswood Girls' school name and the school logo will change. At this stage, the uniform will be discussed by School Council to obtain their views. I do think that the Lordswood school uniform looks really smart and blazers could possibly be an option too.

Why aren't we allowed to wear our coats around school?

Mr Goetschel: wearing your uniform makes you look smart whereas coats and hoodies do not. You can wear coats to come to school but you need to take these off once you actually enter the school. If coats are worn in corridors then teachers would not know whether you are actually a student if they cannot see your uniform. Also lessons would start late if you have to take your coats off in the classroom.

Mrs Cooney: post-16 students have to wear a lanyard which needs to be visible for safeguarding and security reasons and we would not be able to see this if they were wearing a coat. It makes the process very clear if we adhere to all students taking off their coats when they enter the school building.

As an all girls' school, could we have free sanitary products in the toilets?

Mrs Cooney: there is a small amount of government funding for sanitary products and we did put them into the toilets but they were used for sticking them onto students' backs and throwing them around the toilet area.

Mr Goetschel: we could put a box of these in GA6 and the main reception also have a box.

Mrs Cooney: we need to make these more visible; review tutors will be reminded of where they are located.

Miss Millward: we can also put a notice in the toilets advising of the location of the products.

Why do we not have a prayer room in school?

Mrs Cooney: I am not adverse to this idea but we would have to decide how this would work as every room in school is currently in use at every point in the day so there is no space for a prayer room. Also, a lot of the rooms have windows and there would be no privacy. Sufficient staff to supervise would also be required so I have to consider all the logistics of this.

What inspired you to become Headteacher at Lordswood Girls' School?

Mrs Cooney: I have always wanted to be a teacher and after the first couple of years of teaching it made me realise that I wanted to become a Headteacher. I worked with a number of Headteachers but did not want to take up this role while I was too young, so for the past 18 years I have collected the knowledge that I need to be able to do this. Lordswood aligns many of the beliefs I have. I always thought that I would never want to work in a single sex school but I love doing this.

What have the Wednesday lesson timings changed?

Mr Goetschel: the pandemic had a massive effect especially on mental health. The Wednesday timings changed as during the telephone calls that were made to students during lockdown, mental health was expressed by both students and teachers. Registration was extended by 15 minutes and the end of school had to be changed due to the dream programme which was launched for mental health reasons in particular.

The Headteacher thanked the students for their brilliant questions and for making her feel so welcome at Lordswood.