



**Year 11 Headteacher's Question Time
1.15 pm – 1.55 pm on Tuesday 5th October 2021**

Panel: Mrs Cooney, Miss Millward, Mr Goetschel, Mrs Verma

Miss Millward warmly welcomed the students to the first Headteacher's question time session this year and the students asked the following questions.

Why did you choose to come to Lordswood Girls' School?

Mrs Cooney: I have worked in a wide range of schools and I really enjoyed working in my last school which was a single sex school. I have found the staff and students very friendly at Lordswood. It is more multi-cultural than at my last school but this what I find so enjoyable about the school. The student behaviour and output is great and there was nothing that made me feel that I did not want to join Lordswood.

Why isn't the board of teachers in school more diverse?

Mrs Cooney: I was pleasantly surprised at how diverse the teaching staff are as we have a high proportion of men and staff who have different cultural and religious beliefs and different interests. We also have some disabled staff. Diversity is not always just about race. When we advertise vacancies we can make it clear in our prospectus, photographs and information pack that we welcome applications from everyone as we actively welcome a wide range of people with different beliefs.

Do you feel pressure to maintain the reputation of the school? In particular in terms of exam grades as we are known for our outstanding results so is there pressure to keep these up?

Mrs Cooney: I feel a massive amount of pressure. All our staff want students to achieve as highly as they possibly can. The last two years has made this difficult and year 11 students have never had a normal year 10 experience. I am always open to any suggestions on how we can improve our results.

What are some changes you would like to make in the future?

Mrs Cooney: I have worked in many schools and one of my roles was in a special measures school where a lot of the time, change was made just for the sake of it. I am currently sitting and watching what we do to decide on what I need to do to protect the school and students and how we could improve and make the school a better place for both staff and students. If you have any ideas of the changes you would like then please email me with your suggestions.

Why aren't sets mixed ability?

Mrs Verma: some sets are mixed ability, such as Humanities. All students cover exactly the same curriculum but they have to do this at the correct pace for them to make sure that they can enjoy their lessons. Interventions can also be put in place if necessary. It is also a good way of making new friends. The student said that she finds it interesting to work with people who she knows and if she is struggling she can ask for help or can help others if they are struggling.

Would you consider teaching British Sign Language in school?

Mrs Cooney: I would love to have British Sign Language taught in school as I learnt sign language when I was around your age, but the curriculum is very full and there is no GCSE approved courses for BSL. There always has to be a pathway from KS3 to KS4 and then to KS5. If the government recognised BSL as an MFL, we would be able to include this in our curriculum as I think that it is a really important skill. The student said that she learnt BSL when she was younger but didn't use it for a while and forgot what she had learnt but she would love to do this again to be able to speak to the hard of hearing.

Having become the new Headteacher, what measures are you taking to ensure that students remain happy in school?

Mrs Cooney: my key aim is for all students to remain happy. I will need to protect the Achievement Co-ordinators time, the pastoral team, Place2Be, behaviour and mentoring and the external services that come into school to support our students. We need to also look at extra-curricular activities now that COVID restrictions are easing. Choirs and peripatetic music lessons are being discussed so that they can restart. Lunchtime sports clubs and performances are all being arranged as there are a lot of things that students enjoy which provides them with an opportunity to socialise as it is not just about working hard, although that is obviously important.

What was your previous school like and how is it different from Lordswood?

Mrs Cooney: my previous school was also a girls' school and was very similar to LGS. The students were well behaved and loved to study. The difference with LGS is the multi-cultural aspect of the school which is lovely as everyone can talk about their own beliefs and opinions. The only real difference is the colour of the school uniform but otherwise it is scarily similar to my previous school and I do feel completely at home here.

How do you stay so energetic throughout the day?

Mrs Cooney: I really do love my job. I always eat breakfast, drink lots of water and have lots of sleep as I go to bed at 9pm each night.

One of the students said that she cannot eat or drink so early in the morning.

Mrs Cooney suggested that perhaps the student could eat at school at 8am after she has been up for a while or could get up earlier to allow more time to eat.

When can we start debate club again? Would we be able to compete with other schools?

Mr Goetschel: I have spoken to Mr Lovejoy about this and he is happy to discuss this with you. The issue is finding a room large enough for all the different year groups because of COVID restrictions. We do have the Loudspeaker magazine which can be used for written debates and discussion of controversial issues. When the situation improves we could invite another school to visit so that we can compete against each other.

The student said that she will speak to Mr Lovejoy as there are a number of students who would like the debate club to continue.

Additional question raised:-

Could we study English language in the sixth form?

Mrs Verma: English Language and English Literature 'A' level was offered previously but there were only two small courses taking place. English Literature is more highly recognised as a skill by employers and universities than English Language and this is why this subject is offered.

Miss Millward thanked the students for giving up their lunchtime to attend the Headteacher's Question Time and Mrs Cooney thanked the students for the interesting questions and for also making her feel very welcome at the school.