



Year 8 Headteacher's Question Time

Tuesday 23rd November 2021

1.15 p.m. – 1.55 p.m. – G10

Panel: Mrs Cooney, Miss Millward, Miss Briggs, Mrs Verma

Miss Millward welcomed the year 8 students to the Headteacher's Question Time session and the students asked the following questions:-

Can we introduce a culture day where we wear clothes from our cultures and teach each other about our different cultures?

Mrs Cooney: Why do we need only one day to celebrate our culture? We should be free to discuss our culture whenever we want to and you could wear your cultural clothes on non-uniform days. Some people don't know their cultural background or they could be adopted, for example, which could be painful for them if we had specific culture days. You should celebrate your culture every day of the year!

What are your everyday tasks as Headteacher?

Mrs Cooney: The best thing about being a Headteacher is that every day is different. I check every letter that is sent to parents, I sign government forms, staff forms, read information for two hours each day and spend a lot of time looking at budgets to check the best things that we can afford to buy for our students. I also love doing school duties as I get time to speak to all the students. I also attend a lot of meetings such as Lead Professionals meetings, SLT, teacher meetings, staff meetings and I wander around school to see what is going on. I also look at all the educational trips that are arranged to make sure that all students are kept safe.

What is the Library Challenge that is mentioned in the literacy category of the Lordswood Challenge?

Miss Briggs: There is an accelerated reading test each term where you read a book and prizes are awarded based upon student grades.

What is your favourite thing about working in a girls' school?

Mrs Cooney: This is the second girls' school that I have worked in. I always said that I wouldn't like to work in a single sex school but I do love it. I get to mix with students who are going to be the future and have discussions with them on how they can change things. My grandmother always asked me why I would want to go to university as she said that it would be a waste of time as I would only get married and have children. It was only 100 years ago when women had to give up teaching when they got married!

What are your plans for the school's future?

Mrs Cooney: I promised when I first started at Lordswood that I would not make any immediate changes but would just sit and watch for the first term. The teachers will be using more technology in the future so that they will have more time to spend with students. I won't make any changes for the sake of it as I want to make sure that any changes made are for the best. The merger with King Edward is high on the agenda and taking up a lot of my time currently.

Mrs Cooney asked the students what changes they would like to see and they said they would like better boards in the classroom when using projectors. Mrs Cooney told the students that she is looking at finances to check what we can actually afford.

What will be different when we join the King Edward Trust?

Mrs Cooney: Students won't see a massive difference. Lordswood has been looking to join a larger Trust for some time. King Edward was chosen as they allow schools to make their own decisions. The school logo and badge will change and the school name will include a reference to King Edward. There is an opportunity for the uniform to change and the school council will be asking for your thoughts on this. King Edward is a large Trust and we will be able to buy in larger quantities and make savings so we will have more money to spend. There will also be support from finance and marketing so staff should be happier as they will have more support.

When will the school uniform change?

Mrs Cooney: There may not be a change to the school uniform as there may only be a change to the logo but if it does change, then it will not be until September.

Is there any possibility that we could have a gender neutral bathroom?

Miss Briggs: this would need to be a decision made by the Headteacher so please send any suggestions of this type to Mrs Cooney.

Some students may be suffering from bad mental health however they may not want to talk to teachers. Could you introduce a mentoring scheme with older students or set up penpals?

Mrs Cooney: In theory this would be a good idea but we would need to ensure that the mentors are highly trained and are able to give good advice so it would need to be done carefully. There are organisations who arrange mentor training but this is very expensive and we would need to plan for this over a long time.

Why aren't there more design and technology lessons?

Mrs Verma: We used to offer design and technology in the past but it was not popular with the students and no-one chose to study this at KS4. However we are looking at re-introducing aspects of Design & Technology in the future and we are looking at skills that you may need to incorporate them into the curriculum.

What does the school do to celebrate and support the LGBTQIA+ community?

Miss Briggs: We are an inclusive school and Mrs Peniket runs the LGBTQIA support group every Wednesday lunchtime. Last year for Pride raised awareness through PSHE and the Review Tutor programme where they cover historic elements and also celebrate the LGBTQIA community throughout the year.

Can you include pronoun badges onto the school uniform?

Mrs Cooney: it is not something that we have considered but this could be discussed.

The students were thanked for giving up their lunchtime to attend the session and for the interesting questions they had raised.