



Year 9 Headteacher's Question Time
Tuesday 9th November 2021
1.15 p.m. – 1.55 p.m. – G10

Panel: Mrs Cooney, Miss Millward, Mrs Yorke, Mrs Vine, Mr Fox

Miss Millward welcomed the year 9 students to the Headteacher's Question Time session and the following questions were asked:-

Would it be possible to do a wider variety of sports in PE?

Mrs Vine: We do offer 15 sports within the curriculum year. You may not have experienced all of the sports that we offer as some sports will start later on in the year. Football and athletics will be available in summer and we are trying to start a trampoline class later in the year.

Mrs Cooney: I do love trampolining but I don't like to watch as it can be quite scary!

Would it be possible for us to do more practical activities on PSHE days?

Mrs Yorke: We are bound by statutory requirements to teach everything on our curriculum but I am happy to include some other activities once I can confirm that all statutory requirements are in place. Mrs Yorke asked the students what type of activity they were interested in; the students said they would like a sporting event included. Mrs Yorke asked the students to let her know of any other suggestions they may have.

What made you come to this school?

Mrs Cooney: I worked in a girls' school previously although I had always said that I would never work in a single sex school, but I absolutely love it. I have worked in lots of schools and when I saw this Headteacher post advertised, I visited the school to take a look around before I applied for the job. The staff and students were all so nice that I submitted an application form straight away and I have not regretted doing this for a single minute. The teachers really care about the students and Lordswood really does feel like a family.

Are we going to have sports day this year?

Mrs Vine: sports day is currently a work in progress. We will need to check with the venue with regard to COVID restrictions but we are eager to bring the competition element back into sports. If restrictions prevent the sports day taking place at the venue, then we will arrange for a sports day to take place in school.

How are members of staff educated on LGBTQIA+ and pronouns?

Mrs Yorke: We have CPD sessions on a Wednesday afternoon and LGBT is included in the CPD programme.

Miss Millward asked the students if they feel that staff have knowledge of LGBTQIA?

The students said that sometimes the teachers forget to use the correct pronouns.

Mrs Cooney told the students that they should have the confidence to tell teachers that they would prefer it if the correct pronoun is used if the teachers forget.

If a student is struggling with their mental health, what would the school do to help that person?

Mrs Cooney: We offer a wide range of services together with a sliding scale of support from Achievement Co-ordinators, Review Tutors, and Assistant Headteachers. For many of the students this support is sufficient, but there are also 'Place2Be' post boxes that are checked on a weekly basis and there is also a 'Place2Talk' drop in session for students. If you feel you need intensive support your teacher can refer you to these sessions. We also work with Malachi and other external organisations who specialise in mental health issues due to trauma. CAMS and Forward Thinking Birmingham can provide medical support to students if required.

Miss Millward: we also try to include items on PSHE day for students' information.

Why aren't there many vegetarian options in the canteen at lunchtime?

Mrs Cooney: We do offer an equal number of main meat and vegetarian options. The students said that the vegetarian option often sells out very quickly.

Mrs Cooney: Aspens Catering is operated as a business and they have to ensure that they have a balance between food wastage and costs. The meals are shared between the first and the second sittings and the sittings are rotated so that students are not always on the same sitting each week as some menu items do regularly run out. The caterers have agreed to meet with the School Council to discuss the catering menus and we are waiting for them to confirm the meeting date.

How does the Duke of Edinburgh award work? How do you get from bronze to platinum and what activities would we do?

Mr Fox: The Duke of Edinburgh programme is a progressive scheme for 14 to 24 year olds which when successfully completed leads to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. There are four sections to complete at Bronze and Silver level and five at Gold. They involve helping the community or environment (Volunteering Section), becoming fitter (Physical Section), developing new skills (Skills Section), planning, training for and completing an expedition (Expedition Section) and, for Gold only, working with a team on a residential activity. Any young person can do their Duke of Edinburgh award regardless of ability, gender, background or location. Achieving an Award is not a competition or about being first. It is all about setting personal challenges and pushing personal boundaries. Through the Duke of Edinburgh programme young people have fun, make friends, improve their self-esteem and build confidence. They gain essential skills and attributes for work and life such as resilience, problem solving, team working, communication and drive, enhancing CVs, University and Job applications.

Through a licensed organisation like Lordswood Girls' School students (or their parents or carers) pay for a Participation Place and are supported by members of staff that make up the Duke of Edinburgh Team within school through their programmes, helping them to choose their activities, set their objectives and achieve their Award. At Lordswood Girls' School we run the Bronze DofE programme in the year which they turn 14 (Year 9), we are trailing Silver and are looking at doing Gold in the future with Year 12 and Year 13 (Lordswood Sixth Form Centre). For Bronze, it will usually take you at least 6 months to complete the Bronze programme as you should be doing Volunteering, Physical and Skills section for 3 months with one being done for an additional 3 months (6 months in total). It's your choice which one and though you can change your mind later, you should decide which section you want to do for longer at the beginning as knowing how long you're going to do it for will help you choose your activity and set your goals for each section. The DofE programme is normally run as an after school club with eDofE (the Duke of Edinburgh online platform) sessions to update your Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections and training sessions to prepare you for the Expedition element. Other clubs both at lunchtime and after school can work towards the Volunteering, Physical, Skills sections for example Basketball for the Physical Section, Chess for the Skills Section and Fundraising for Ghana for the Volunteering Section to name just a few.

We typically charge about £110 for doing the Bronze DofE programme with us and this is confirmed at the launch event where a breakdown of costs is given to parents and guardians.

If you would like more information please see Mr Fox, the Duke of Edinburgh Co-ordinator at school or check out the DofE website (<https://www.dofe.org/>)

What is going to change when we join the Kind Edward Trust?

Mrs Cooney: At this stage, we are not sure. King Edward will be included in the Lordswood Girls' School name and the school logo will change. The uniform will be discussed at School Council. None of these changes will come into effect until September 2022.

Why do we have to take our coats off in school?

Mrs Cooney: your uniform looks really smart and it is also needs to be visible for safeguarding reasons, which would not be the case if your coat was worn in school and was covering your uniform. You are allowed to wear your coats to come to school but they have to be taken off when you arrive in the school building. Teachers would not know whether you were actually a student if you were walking in corridors with your uniform covered by your coat.

Seeing as world leaders are discussing climate change right now, what will school be doing to reduce its carbon footprint?

Mrs Riley: we were involved in a lot of recycling before the lockdown by recycling paper, crisp packets and water bottles but this had to be stopped when lockdown was introduced but we will look at reintroducing this in the future.

Mrs Cooney: we will also be looking at making sure that lights and computers are always turned off when they are not being used. We will also be investigating using low energy lighting and upgrading the heating system in the future so that we can regulate the heating in each room as the system we have currently is very old and some rooms are very hot and others are cold as the rooms cannot be regulated locally.

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