



Year 9 Headteacher's Question Time

1.15 pm – 1.55 pm on Tuesday 15th February 2022

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

Mrs Yorke welcomed the students and the following were directed to the panel:-

Why do we have the same amount of Spanish lessons as we do science and maths? Shouldn't we have more time for the core subjects?

Mrs Verma: This year, year 9 students have three Spanish lessons in week 1 and three Spanish lessons in week 2. In year 8, students would have been taking three lessons in French and three in Spanish. In future, the number of lessons for languages will decrease and you will only be doing one language so you will have additional lessons in English, Maths and Science.

Is there any way we can stop the canteen from selling plastic bottles as they are so bad for the environment?

Mrs Riley: I have spoken to the Catering Manager and replacing plastic bottles could be an issue. Glass bottles would also mean there would be major recycling that would have to be done. We will be putting a recycling bin in front of the school where the plastic bottles can be placed and we will continue to encourage students to bring recyclable bottles into school.

Is there any plan to renovate the school toilets?

Mrs Cooney: there is a 5 year plan but this has to happen on a rolling programme over time due to the cost of the renovations and we will be looking at renovating all the toilets.

What things are you planning on adding to the school?

Mrs Cooney: the changes planned are mainly things associated with the day-to-day running of the school and we will change things if issues arise. We are working on delivering the right number of lessons at the correct time. Assessments and reports are being looked at so that we can give students more information on where you need to focus. We are looking at the new school uniform and currently obtaining samples of this. There will also be some interschool competitive activities with KEVI. Lordswood is a very good school and I don't want to change things which aren't broken just for the sake of it.

What will the transition from the Year 9 curriculum to the GCSE curriculum be like?

Mrs Verma: It will be a smooth transition as it will be a continuation of the same work that you have been doing for the past few years. The only difference will be for students who have opted for Business Studies and Health & Social Care but you already know these teachers so you will just be learning additional subject content.

Could we introduce pronoun badges for those who don't go by she/her?

Miss Briggs: you are allowed to wear a small, discreet pronoun badge that can be bought from LGBT charities, but we cannot enforce these badges into the school uniform.

Mrs Cooney: If we introduced a pronoun badge we would be acting in a discriminatory manner as if you do not identify as a female then this would mean that we be enforcing students to wear a badge. However, we will not stop you wearing a badge if you wish to do so.

Will I be able to change my options choices?

Mrs Verma: It is worrying that you are thinking of changing your options when they have only just been selected but hopefully you will have made the right decision and will not need to make any changes. If you really dislike a subject that you have chosen, and the teacher agrees that you may be better choosing another subject, then you may be able to change up until the end of the summer term as long as you have evidence to support your change request. If you are having any serious doubts, please let Mrs Verma know now.

If any students have detailed the same subject as their first and second choice, please send an email to Mrs Verma detailing a different subject as the second choice.

Why do we have to go into the cage at lunchtimes instead of being able to go on the grass?

Mrs Cooney: It is a netball court, not a cage, and we have tried to make this as nice as possible for you. We need separate areas for each of the year groups, it is not safe for you to be on the grass as the ground is very boggy and dangerous as it is so slippery. We would also need additional supervision to ensure that students are safe. The staff who supervise you give up their own break and lunch times as this is not part of their job and therefore I cannot direct them to do this. During the summer we may be able to use the field when the ground has dried out but only if we have sufficient staff to supervise students safely.

I know that we talk about LGBTQ+ but why don't we talk about being outed or being pushed out of the closet as it is really important?

Miss Briggs: the PSHE day session covered LGBTQ+ during year 8. Pride was included during the July PSHE day and was included in the student booklet.

Mrs Yorke: we did have a session on diversity in school and some diversity models came into school to speak to students during July.

Mrs Cooney: if anyone is 'outing' people before they are ready, please let us know and we will speak to anyone who is doing this as it is unacceptable behaviour.

Are there going to be new and different after school clubs at some point?

Mrs Cooney: teachers don't get paid for supervising after school clubs so we can only arrange clubs if supervision is offered.

The students said that they would like to join a hockey or trampolining club.

Mrs Cooney: the trampoline requires repair so there can be no clubs arranged until the repairs are completed. With regard to hockey, please speak to Mrs Vine or Mrs Aston to see if this option would be viable.

Mrs Riley: King Edward will be offering some competitive activities and you will be able to be involved in these.

Do you like being headteacher?

Mrs Cooney: It is the best job in the world being a teacher. I love talking to students and staff each day. Sometimes I do have a bad day but know that it is normal to feel that way sometimes. It is never the end of the world and what matters is that you get up the next day full of positivity again.

The students were asked if they had any additional questions they would like to ask:-

Are you changing the school day timings on a Wednesday?

Mrs Cooney: a consultation document has been sent to parents and this will give us a chance to gather information to check what parents think about changing the Wednesday timings to a normal day. Having a shorter day means that you lose a lot of lesson time over the two-year GCSE period. We are obtaining opinions via the parent bulletin and you are welcome to email the consultation email address if you feel strongly about this.

Can the form time be reduced instead?

Mrs Cooney: the form time has been increased as there is a new programme running during this time.

Will the sixth form uniform dress code change?

Mrs Cooney: there is no consultation regarding the sixth form dress code so there will be no changes.

Is the school uniform changing?

Mrs Cooney: possibly, but this will not happen until September. The school will either offer financial assistance towards the change in school uniform or the uniform will be phased in during a year-long period. A uniform generally lasts for two years so after the second year the new uniform will be compulsory for all students.

Mrs Yorke thanked the students for giving up their lunchtime and for asking some great questions and said that it is very interesting for the panel to learn what the students are thinking.