

**Headteacher’s Question Time**

**8.55 a.m. Friday 10th March 2023 - Room F16**

**Mrs Cooney – Headteacher, Mrs Finucane – Assistant Headteacher (Personal Development),**

**Mrs Allport – PA to Headteacher & SLT (note taker)**

**Mrs Cooney welcomed the students to the Headteacher’s Question Time and the students asked the following questions:-**

1. **What is the role of a Headteacher?**

**Mrs Cooney**: The Headteacher role is 20 different roles all rolled into one. It is mainly about shaping the strategic vision and direction of the school. I don’t actually do every little thing myself, but I guide staff to do this by providing help whenever it is needed.

As Headteacher I do whatever is needed to keep the school functioning. This can involve anything from cleaning up sick on the corridors to guiding the Senior Leadership Team, to organising the printing of reports.

The other part of the role is to oversee Human Resources to make sure that we have the right staff in school to teach classes. I have to ensure that we have the correct budgets in place to be able to afford this.

I have to check that school lettings are being arranged safely. I also ensure that we have the technology we need in place for the school to run effectively.

I became a teacher because I enjoy talking to students and I particularly enjoy the breaktimes and lunchtimes duties as these are the times that I can enjoy spending time with you all.

2. **What is something that makes you feel proud of our school and something that you would improve?**

**Mrs Cooney**: I am really proud of our students behaviour, the hard work they put into their studies and the exam results they achieve.

I am also proud of the staff and how hard they work, teaching lessons, marking work and also voluntarily arranging trips for the students.

I would like to improve students’ happiness as since COVID students are not as happy as they were previously. I want staff to give more praise to our students and from next half-term we will be rewarding students by sending praise postcards to their homes.

I also want to improve the systems that we currently have in place in order to remove any barriers that stop people feeling happy.

3. **Why have the question time sessions become whole school instead of individual year groups? As a student, I feel that our voices are being given less of a priority and it demonstrates the lack of genuine interest in how students feel about their school community. Have senior management considered how this may look to students having interaction time reduced by around 80%?**

**Mrs Cooney**: As the previous Question Time sessions took place during lunchtimes, not all students wanted to attend. Some SLT staff attended on the Panel but this meant that they could not do their lunchtime duties which could be a safeguarding risk. As all students previously had to write a question, we had a lot of repetition so we decided that any student can ask a question which they can think about in their own time. This allows for an extended length of time to answer all the questions that are asked and this gives students more voice as previously not all questions were answered as there was limited time to be able to do this.

4. **Which universities do students from LSG often go to and which career do most pupils pursue?**

**Mrs Cooney**: Our students gain places in a wide range of universities across the country.  Popular local choices include University of Birmingham, Aston University, Warwick University and Birmingham City University.  Students are also very successful in gaining places to Russell Group universities, which are recognised as the top universities in the country, these include Oxford, Nottingham, Kings College London, Cardiff, Bristol and Liverpool.

The school website has details of the breakdown of student destinations. Students pursue a range of careers such as science, medicine, dental, health and social care and nursing.

Some students go onto an apprenticeship, get a job or go on a gap year. There is a company coming into school today to talk to students about gap year opportunities.

Our sixth form isn’t too large so the sixth form team know all the students individually and can help them with any questions they may have.

5. **Why do we not do any trips any more as COVID is no longer an excuse? We are all aware that other schools are doing them but not us.**

**Mrs Finucane**: From September a number of trips and events have taken place to Birmingham Hippodrome, Cadburys, Birmingham Law Court, Oxford University, Newman University, Warner Brothers, London Art Gallery, Halloween Party and Ski trip. There have been trips taking place every month which are usually linked to the curriculum. We are currently looking to put forward an offer to years 7,8 and 9 students which will be linked to pastoral and rewards.

**Mrs Cooney**: Unfortunately, we cannot catch up with all the trips that were missed due to COVID. Teachers don’t get paid for organising trips and there is a lot of work involved with booking transport, organising payments, sending letters to parents, making bookings and staff have to be willing to do all these things voluntarily. We also have to assess the impact on your education if you are out of the classroom. If teachers are out the classroom on trips, then they are not in school to teach their lessons and this can be damaging to students’ education. We also have to balance the costs requested from parents due to the recent increased cost of living who may not have enough money in the household. For example, the recent Art trip to London cost £1400 for the coach and we then have to distribute the cost of this trip to parents.

All year 10 students go on a trip during the Summer term and the Geography and History field trips take place during June.

The ski trip is planned 12 months in advance and we are now planning the trip for next year.

6. **What do you aspire the school to be like in the future?**

**Mrs Cooney**: I want the school to be a happy place where students are prepared for when they go out into the workplace. Not all students want to study for the same careers and they need to find their place in the World to make a contribution to society.

7. **Can we bring back the one-way system (so we can only go up on one of the staircases then down on the other)?**

**Mrs Cooney**: The corridors are so narrow and congested and the stairs are so far away from the corridor that a one-way system doesn’t really solve the problem. If we only use the one-way system, lessons would be later starting as staff and students would have to go the long way round the school to get to some of the classrooms.

We have noted ’hot-spots’ such as by Mrs Finucane’s office, so we have located staff there to supervise this part of the corridor.

8. **Why don’t we have school photographs like the professional ones?**

**Mrs Cooney**: This is partly due to cost as this would need to be passed onto parents who may not be able to afford this. We don’t actually need to have professional photographers as the cameras in the mobile phones are now really good. We do want to update the student photographs but we will need to do this inhouse.

**The student asked if they could take the photographs at home and Mrs Cooney said that she would need to discuss this with Mr Nicholas.**

9. **A further question was raised regarding school trips. The student said that although they are aware that year 10 student behaviour isn’t great, students who do behave well just want to be rewarded**.

**Mrs Cooney**: As a year group I am very proud of you all as you have reduced the behaviour points awarded.

Miss Betty is re-writing the behaviour policy as the current one tends to focus upon the negative and we need to include what rewards will be given to hardworking students within the policy. Mrs Betty sent out a survey regarding rewards and Mrs Cooney thanked the students for taking the time to complete the survey. The responses were so mature as the students asked for such reasonable rewards as they said that they would like to be rewarded with a postcard sent home or a call made to parents. Mrs Cooney congratulated the student for having the confidence to ask this question.

**Mrs Cooney thanked all the students for taking the time to submit such interesting and thoughtful questions which would be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team.**