

Youth Council Questions for the DMAT

1. Sixth Form- Is there an update on the future of the Sixth Form provision at the school?

The consultation period has been extended. There have been 40 applications so far but the application window is still open. Each course requires at least 15 students to be viable. Once course selections have been submitted, Mr Smith will collate the information and prepare a report for the Trustees, who will then make the final decision.

The government has released a white paper on post-16 education. In response, the Trust is hosting a meeting with Department for Education representatives, Trust leaders from across the county, Devon County Council officers, and the CEO of Exeter College to discuss post-16 provision in rural areas. Not all post-16 colleges can offer a wide range of subjects, and the challenge is how to provide equitable opportunities while remaining financially viable.

Running the sixth form for 40 students costs between £200,000 and £250,000 if we were to offer all subjects, and this funding would have to come from the budget allocated for Keys stage 3 and 4 students, reducing the resources available for them.

2. IT Upgrade- Is there any further update on the planned IT Upgrade?

The IT upgrade went out to procurement, but the submissions received proposed differing solutions, making direct comparison difficult. The school is now working with an IT specialist to determine which approach will best meet its needs. Tavistock College received a grant to support its IT upgrade; however, Okehampton College did not meet the criteria for funding.

3. Toilet Facilities -Have any improvements been made to the toilet facilities, such as increased cleaning frequency, greater accessibility, or providing sanitary bins in all cubicles?

This was a question that was more suitable for Mr Smith, but the CEO would follow up on this.

5. LGBTQ+ Education and Safety- Has the new section of the curriculum focused on LGBTQ+ education and inclusion been implemented?

The curriculum for all subjects and year groups is available on the school website. It was a question to follow up with School leaders who made decisions about curriculum. There were also some groups like the Art Room group where this could be brought up.

6. Adulthood Education- Can the curriculum include more education on practical life skills, such as paying taxes, budgeting, and opening a bank account?

The government is currently completing a review of the school curriculum as it was not working well for all students. They were also looking at reducing the number of exam papers for each subject. The recommendations from the Curriculum Review Board have gone to the Government, but they don't have to act on them.

7. Red Pens- Why do pupils mark in red pen as it makes mistakes look more obvious?

This was a good suggestion to take to the student council for further discussion.

8. Exam Results- How did the school perform in its most recent GCSE and A-Level results?

The school would like to improve its results going forward. The CEO and school leaders have talked through a strategy to achieve this and will be meeting again in the New Year to see how it is going. The CEO meets with the attendance leads every fortnight and tracks attendance of Years 10 and 11. Attendance is important to improving the results. The school feels a calmer more productive and safer place which is a better environment for learning in. The school is working hard to raise students aspirations of themselves, the more young people believe that they are capable of achieving the more likely they are to achieve.

9. Promise School (OFSTED Report)- The Promise School recently received an unsatisfactory OFSTED inspection. What plans are in place to address the concerns raised and improve performance?

The Dartmoor Academy Trust is working with another Trust with experience of working with a special school to share information and experiences. They are interviewing for a new head teacher. The school is working on improving behaviour and ensuring they have the right sort of curriculum for the pupils who attend. The purpose of the school is not to take pupils out of mainstream schooling and put them in another school in smaller classes with the same curriculum but to ensure they have a curriculum that meets their individual needs. The OFSTED report highlighted the positive adult pupil relationship as a strong point.

10. PE lessons for years 10 and 11 are now only an hour a week- why has this changed?

This would be a school decision which may be to allow time to teach the GCSE curriculum, but she would look into it.

11. AI- can it be used for schoolwork and how is the college using it?

Sparx Maths has been used in schools for many years to support maths learning. Co-Pilot is also available in school and can help with tasks such as letter writing. In the primary school, Olex AI is used because it can mark handwriting and generate images of written work to encourage pupils' writing development.

Top Marks is going to be trialled in our secondary schools for marking, as it can assess work against exam schemes and provide high-quality feedback. This allows teachers to concentrate on what needs to be taught rather than spending a disproportionate amount of time marking.

The challenge, especially for new teachers, is finding the right balance between managing workload and maintaining essential teaching skills. The curriculum is designed to develop children's thinking, and while AI can be a useful tool, there's a

risk that over-reliance may limit opportunities for pupils to build their own cognitive abilities.