

Derby City School Debate Competition 2024

The competition this year was won by a team from Heanor Gate Spencer Academy, who were taking part in the competition for the first time. They narrowly beat Littleover Community School in the final by persuading the judges that “the UK should bring back conscription”. There were some stand out speeches and once again it was incredible to see how the children listened and applied comments given in previous heats and produced well researched and mature speeches. All the finalists were confident enough to try some counter arguments which involves them going “off script”.

Topics included climate change, tourism and space exploration and the children (who range between 13-15 years of age) approached all the topics with enthusiasm and maturity.

Congratulations to all the pupils from all the schools who took part and to the staff who supported and encouraged them and without whom the competition could not run. Particular thanks to the St Martins Horizons sixth form college, who, although they did not take part in the competition itself, welcomed me into their lessons to deliver a session on public speaking where the emphasis was definitely on how to present yourself in everyday life from a job interview to making a complaint about a mouldy loaf of bread ! The main feedback word from the teenagers in that session was CONFIDENCE.

The final was judged by Sue Jennings – Head of Law at Derby University, Oliver Maxwell - President of DDLS and Cllr Alan Graves – Mayor of Derby. The judges were impressed at the standard of debating on display saying “there were some well informed arguments and some of the speeches were better than the some of the third year law students !.”

The competition has, as ever, been organized by the Derby and District Law Society, E4E and The University of Derby Law School. The project is a great example of organizations working well together and what can be achieved with lots of time but very little financial input.

A massive THANK YOU to all the academic staff at the University of Derby, members of DDLS who helped judge the competition, all at E4E, and everyone who gave up their time to make this project such a fantastic success.

Julia Saunders