

Derby City School Debate Competition 2023

The competition this year was won by West Park school who narrowly beat Littleover Community school in the final by persuading the judges that “too many people go to University”. 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” and speaking from the heart which illustrates the confidence that they develop through out the competition.

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.

Congratulations to all the pupils from all the schools who took part and to the staff who supported and encouraged them without whom the competition could not run. Particular thanks to the schools who 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 children on those sessions was CONFIDENCE.

The final was judged by Sue Jennings – Head of law at Derby University, Manesha Ruparel - President of DDLS and HHJ Joanathan Bennett. The judges were impressed at the standard of debating on display saying “there were some well informed arguments and the humour was spot on.”

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, particularly Arshad Iqbal, for his support throughout and help in contacting the schools and everyone who gave up their time to make this project such a fantastic success.

Julia Saunders



The winning team from West Park with the judges



The runners up from Littleover Community School



The winners and teachers from West Park with their teachers and Mike Copestake – High Sheriff of Derbyshire

