

The first year of the Derby City Schools Debate Competition finished on the 7th March 2018 in a close final between City of Derby Academy in Sinfen and West Park School in Spondon. The final was judged by the Mayor of Derby, Cllr John Whitby, President of the Derby and District Law Society, Simon Stevens and Sue Jennings, Head of Law at Derby University. By the narrowest of margins the team from City of Derby Academy were the winners.

The competition has been organized by the Derby and District Law Society, e4e and Derby University Law School. Seven Derby City Schools have taken part in at least two debates each, all the schools had two teams taking part.

Young lawyers from local firms visited the Schools in September to introduce the competition and talk to the children about speaking in public generally. Students from the Law and Business Schools at the University went into the Schools later last Autumn to mentor the children on how to present their arguments and prepare generally.

The debates have been judged by law lecturers from Derby University and Derby solicitors. The competition has been very close with the children debating such topics as whether humanity should fear developments in artificial intelligence and whether animal experimentation can be justified. Sue Jennings said "the amount of work and research the children have done in preparing for the debates is incredible and seeing them develop their skills throughout the competition has been very exciting".

Julia Saunders who is the Administrator of the DDLS said "the enthusiasm of the children and their teachers for this project has been amazing. They seem to have genuinely enjoyed the whole process. Following the final several of the children and schools said that they would encourage more public speaking, set up debate clubs and take part in future events. I hope to run the competition again next year with even more Derby schools taking part."

A massive THANK YOU to everyone who gave up their time to make this project such a fantastic success



The debate in full flow



Judges left to right Sue Jennings, Cllr John Whitby, Simon Stevens



Feedback from the Judges



Runners up West Park School – Spondon



Winners City of Derby Academy - Sinfen