



Social Impact Report 2016–2017



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Foreword

I may say this every year, but it remains true—what a year! The 2016-17 programme has been truly exceptional. Debate Mate's after-school clubs ran in 254 schools, in eight cities across the UK, and we expanded our Accelerate programme to Manchester and Birmingham. In addition to our record-breaking Core Programme, Debate Mate experienced a number of momentous occasions. In October, we hosted the inaugural DebateBox Showcase, celebrating our pioneering programme that combines debating and boxing to engage the hardest to reach students. In March, we learned that we had been nominated for the Yidan Prize for Education Development; it was an honour to be nominated by UCL's Institute of Education and Knowledge Lab. In April, we

were lucky enough to host a debate at the Royal Institution, which was attended by Bill Gates, who listened in while students debated the successes of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and answered questions from the audience. And finally, in 2016-17 we started our project to launch the Debate Mate Online Platform in earnest. We've secured the first round of funding, so before long, we'll be reaching millions of students all around the world—watch this space! The Debate Mate programmes are proven to improve speaking and listening, critical and creative thinking, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills, while developing resilience, self-esteem, empathy, and core confidence. We create engaged citizens, prepared to lead the world.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret McCabe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Margaret McCabe, Debate Mate Founder and CEO

Social Context

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

We all know the statistics: education in this country is unfair. The UK has the lowest rate of social mobility amongst OECD countries (OECD, 2015), which means that children growing up in low-income households are less likely to achieve in school, to attend university, and to find productive employment as adults. By the age of seven, children who are eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) are more than twice as likely as their better-off peers to be behind on expected reading levels. Under the current status quo, 60% of these children will fail to achieve five A* to C GCSEs, compared to only 30% of those not in receipt of FSM, which significantly increases their chances of becoming unemployed upon leaving school (Social Market Foundation, 2016). The most recent data from the Department for Education (2017) shows that only 24% of students eligible for FSM reach higher education by age 19, while the corresponding figure for students from private schools is 85%. The gap between these progression rates has only increased in the last decade.

Growing up in a low-income household affects not only a child's prospects but also their expectations for the future. For example, 91% of children from families with high levels of cultural capital—parents with university degrees, many books in the home, and who regularly visit museums—state that they are expected to go to university, compared to 47% of students from families with low cultural capital (Archer et al, 2013). At Debate Mate, we believe that an important part of tackling social immobility is raising students' aspirations by exposing them to positive role models, empowering them to speak confidently, exposing them to aspirational venues—from the Oxford

Union to the Houses of Parliament—while giving them the resilience to overcome challenges and the motivation to fulfil their potential.

21ST CENTURY SKILLS

The 2016 OECD report on literacy and numeracy skills in young adults found that Britain placed 23rd for literacy and 22nd for numeracy out of 23 countries (Cole, 2016). The lack of skills amongst young people in the country contributes to high youth unemployment, which currently stands at 11.9% (McGuinness, 2017), and the high proportion of young people between 16 and 24 not in education, employment or training (NEET): 11.1% (Powell, 2017). Again, those who are eligible for FSM are vastly overrepresented in these statistics. While 35% of 19-year-olds across the country have experienced some time being NEET, that number rises to over half for students who are eligible for FSM (Powell, 2017). Over a quarter of those experienced a period of NEET of more than 12 months (Powell, 2017).

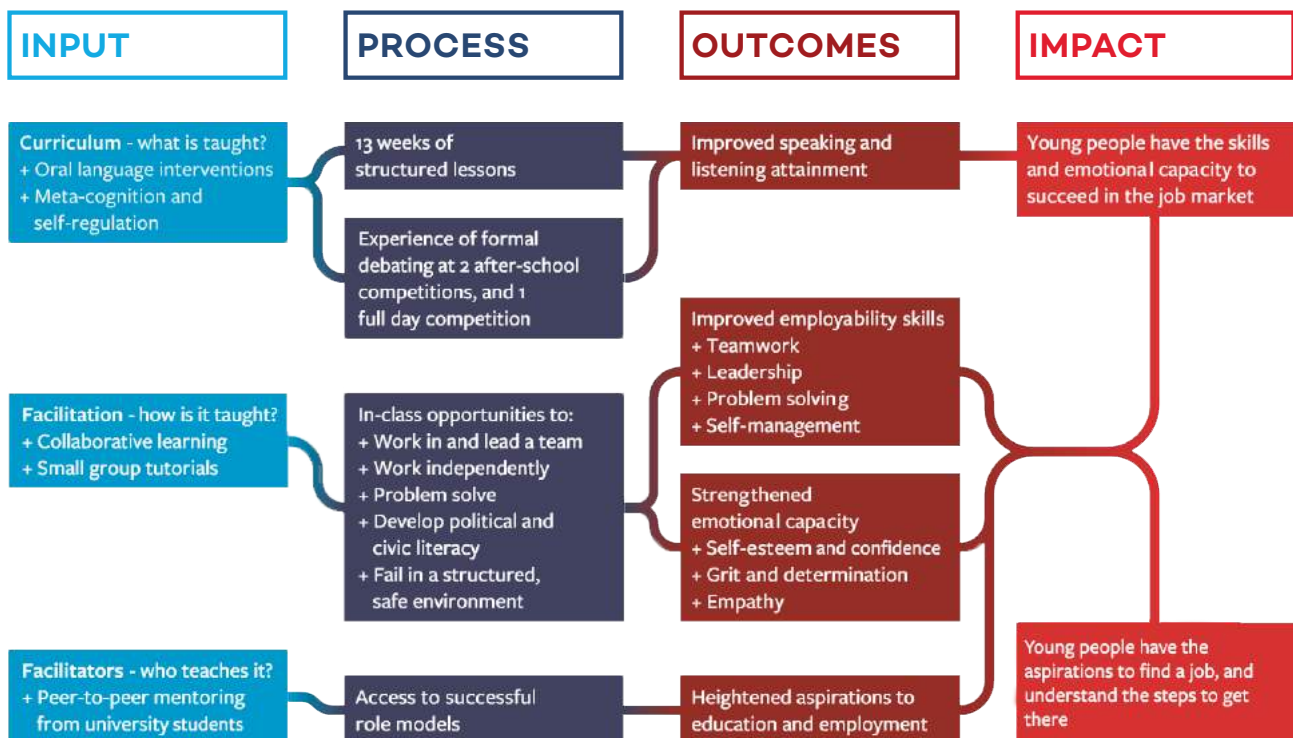
A 2016 survey conducted by the CBI found that businesses have not seen an improvement in school and college leavers' skills in essential areas such as numeracy, literacy, quality of English, and attitudes towards work. In particular, 'businesses see it as a priority for schools to help pupils develop the effective communication skills that are so essential in personal and working life (a top three priority for 38% of respondents). Enabling young people to develop self-management and appropriate personal behaviour (37%) is another important aim' (p. 33, 2016). These are the very skills and attributes that Debate Mate's programmes develop.

OUR SOLUTION

The advantages of debating are widespread and have been highlighted in a joint-report by CfBT Education Trust, the English-Speaking Union, and EdComs (Akerman and Neale, 2011). More recently, the Education Endowment Foundation (Jay et al, 2017) found that incorporating dialogic teaching into classroom practice, where students are encouraged to ‘reason, discuss, argue and explain rather than merely respond,’ had a significant impact on attainment—the equivalent of two months’ additional progress in English and Science for Year 5 students participating in the trial study. Furthermore, debating is a key skill listed in the new English National Curriculum at Key Stage 3, and teaching these skills is vital to helping students develop their speaking and listening early on and to aid them in their GCSE Spoken Language accreditation. Debating is also a way to stretch the most able students, allowing them to develop higher-order thinking skills to fulfil their potential, while providing opportunities to succeed for students who need more support, especially

those who struggle with written work. The use of a peer-led programme raises students’ aspirations and broadens the horizons of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Beyond the values of debating, participation in an extra-curricular activity is also key to employment (Thompson, 2013). By providing a freely accessible extra-curricular programme, Debate Mate gives children from non-selective state schools the opportunity to participate in a fun, competitive activity that develops skills which are transferrable to their academic work and beyond. Through our unique curriculum and our peer-to-peer mentorship model, Debate Mate gives young people communication, leadership, teamwork, and critical thinking skills, while fostering confidence and self-esteem, developing resilience, and raising aspirations. Our goal is to equip students with the confidence not only to speak fluently in front of others but also to aim higher in their academic and professional lives. We believe that all students, regardless of their background, should have access to the benefits of debating and that widening participation in the activity has far-reaching consequences.

DEBATE MATE THEORY OF CHANGE



About Debate Mate

Debate Mate was founded in 2007 in order to combat the problems of social immobility and a lack of employable skills amongst young people in the UK. To tackle these problems, we established a formal debating programme that employs a peer-to-peer mentoring model.

The Core Programme for secondary schools was launched in London in 2008—with 30 schools on the programme initially—expanded into Manchester and the West Midlands in 2009, and then Bristol, Nottingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Leeds in subsequent years. In 2010, the Primary Programme was launched in London, followed by Manchester in 2014 and Birmingham in 2015.

The Core Programme is offered exclusively to non-selective state schools in areas of high child poverty and is comprised of 17 weeks of after-school debating clubs and competitions. The programme is delivered by the UK's best and brightest university students, many of whom are successful competitive debaters. Debate Mate recruits, trains and places these mentors at the beginning of the programme in November. Beyond the 17-week programme, students are encouraged to facilitate their own clubs, ensuring the sustainability of debating at the school even after the mentoring sessions have concluded.

In the last five years, a number of other projects have been established to further the aims of Debate Mate:





- In 2009, Debate Mate Plus was conceived as a way of allowing older students (years 11 to 13) to further develop their debating and leadership skills. The 20-week programme, now called the Graduate School (see Section 6), attracts over 30 students each week in London and the West Midlands with the programme expanding to Manchester in 2017. The Graduate School has supported students to win university-level debating competitions and secure places on the England World Schools Debating team.
- Since 2012, Debate Mate has delivered the Core Programme internationally, with year-round programmes having been run in the USA and currently running in Jamaica and summer programmes running annually in Nepal and Rwanda.
- Since 2012, Debate Mate has been delivering teacher training, student workshops, and bespoke training programmes to schools across the UK and beyond. Notable clients have included Save the Children, *The Economist* and Teach First. In line with our social enterprise financing model, these income-generating activities have helped fund the expansion of the Core Programme, whilst further spreading debating into schools.
- Debate Mate was the subject of an 8-part prime-time television series that aired on Sky 1 in Spring 2015. 'Kings and Queens of Speech' followed the journeys of students from six schools as mentors challenged them to speak confidently and develop life-changing communication skills. In recent years, Debate Mate students and mentors have also been featured on CNN's Amanpour show, The Guardian, Sky News, and BBC Radio 4 and Radio London.
- In April 2017, Comic Relief hosted 'The Big Debate,' inspired by Debate Mate and in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The event brought together Debate Mate students from around the UK to talk about some of the most challenging global issues facing their generation. After listening to the debate, Bill Gates surprised the 300 students in attendance by making an appearance, giving a short talk, and congratulating the students on their achievements. The same year, we also collaborated with Comic Relief for a 'UDL takeover' in which we designed and released competition motions based on the priorities of the Comic Relief in the lead-up to Red Nose Day.

Core Programme

Accelerate Programme

Graduate School

Who



Students of all abilities
from year 4 to 10



Students from years 4 to 10
with serious academic or
behavioural problems



Students in years 10 and above who
have at least one year of experience
on Debate Mate's Core Programme

What



Weekly hour-long sessions with
trained university mentors and two
national debating competitions



Weekly hour-long sessions with
university mentors who have additional
classroom management training



Weekly half-day sessions taught by
top university debaters and held at
a central location in each region

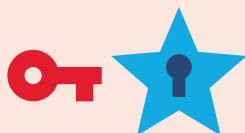
Aims



Accelerate attainment in
Speaking and Listening



Strengthen emotional capacity
by building confidence, self-es-
teem, empathy, and resilience



Develop key employability skills:
leadership, teamwork, critical-
thinking and self-management



Give disengaged students a
disposition towards learning



Develop students' confidence
and desire to participate in
classroom discussions



Help students with their be-
haviour by building effective
communication skills



Cultivate world-class debaters by
providing high-level debate training
and opportunities to compete



Develop students' social leadership
skills through the planning
of community projects



Create career opportunities for stu-
dents through interaction with pro-
fessionals from different industries

Raise aspirations both to education and employment

How it works



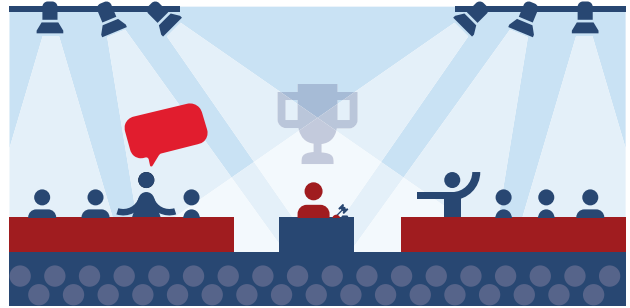
We recruit and train the best and brightest university students to serve as mentors



Mentors are placed in schools in disadvantaged areas to establish extracurricular debate clubs



Mentors use Debate Mate's unique teaching resources to lead 14 weeks of after-school debating workshops



The students then put their skills to the test in two of the largest debating competitions in the UK

Our results



90% of students said they are better able to respond to and respectfully disagree with the ideas of others



96% of students said they feel more comfortable speaking up in class



83% of students said that, when their ideas are challenged, they are better at coming up with new ones



100% of students said they enjoyed taking part in the Debate Mate sessions!

The Core Programme



PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Debate Mate Core Programme provides primary and secondary students from years 4 to 10 with 17 weeks of clubs and formal debating competitions, including the Debate Mate Cup, the Urban Debate League, and the Novice Cup.

Programme Goals

All elements of the programme have been designed with four central goals in mind:

- Goal 1: To accelerate attainment in Speaking and Listening
- Goal 2: To strengthen emotional capacity through building confidence, self-esteem, and resilience
- Goal 3: To develop key employability skills such as leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, and self-management
- Goal 4: To heighten aspirations towards both tertiary education and meaningful employment

In 2016-17, the programme ran in 254 schools across London, Bristol, the West Midlands, Manchester, Nottingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and—for the first time—Leeds. The Core Programme begins with a regional launch event in November, after which the after-school workshops run weekly until April.

The Launch Event

Every year, our Core Programme kicks off with a launch event, which gets students excited about the Debate Mate workshops and competitions to come. The Launch features a show debate by mentors and advanced school students, who demonstrate the high calibre of debating towards which the students can progress. In 2016, close to 4000 students attended launch events in venues across the country.

The After-School Programme and Competitions

Following the launch events, students take part in

1-hour after-school clubs for 14 weeks. Taught in small groups by our trained university mentors, they follow an interactive and fun curriculum designed to develop an array of hard and soft skills while strengthening students' emotional capacity. The remaining 3 weeks of the programme are filled by our two national competitions: the Urban Debate League and the Debate Mate Cup, where students take on both seen and unseen motions. Prepared motions are given to students in advance of the competitions, allowing them to develop research and preparation skills—although they are only assigned sides 15 minutes before the debate—while unprepared motions are shown 15 minutes prior to the debate, encouraging them to think critically and creatively under a time constraint.

The Urban Debate League takes place over two rounds held predominantly at local schools, with some rounds also taking place at key sponsors' offices. The Debate Mate Cup is a one-day competition held at a prestigious university campus in the school's region. Hosting universities include the London School of Economics, University of Manchester, University of Birmingham, and University of Nottingham. In 2017, the Scotland Debate Mate Cup was hosted at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh.

Students from all six regions travelled across the country to compete in the finals of the Debate Mate Cup, held at Nomura offices in London and the Oxford Union, as well as the finals of the Urban Debate League, held at Shearman & Sterling and KPMG offices in London. For the first time, Debate Mate also kept a Novice League table for teams made up of students who were new to debating; the top Novice teams attended a final held at London's City Hall.



Sustainability

An integral part of the Debate Mate model is sustainability. That is, we encourage students to continue debating even after our final competitions. In order to do so, students in each club elect one president and three officers who oversee the running of the debating club once the weekly sessions with mentors have concluded. We do this to provide students with leadership roles in the school community and to foster a culture of debating that extends beyond the 17-week programme. Students become leaders of debating in their schools, teaching younger students and setting up their own clubs.

CORE PROGRAMME DELIVERY

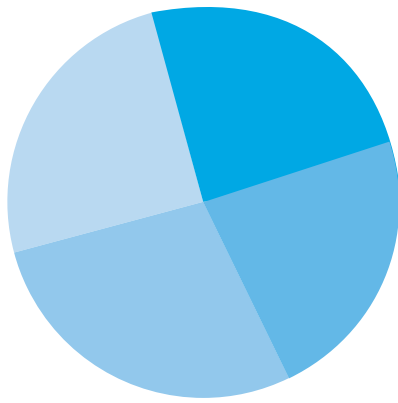
School context

In 2016-17, Debate Mate worked in 96 secondary schools in London, 21 in Manchester, 20 in the West Midlands, 11 in Leeds, 7 in Bristol, 6 in Nottingham, 6 in Glasgow, and 5 in Edinburgh. Our primary programme was made up of 52 schools in London, 23 in Manchester, and 7 in the West Midlands. The profile of our schools reflects our commitment to engaging the most economically disadvantaged communities in the United Kingdom: our schools have an average percentage of students in receipt of Free School Meals in the past six years (FSM-6) of 49%. Our schools also reflect the diversity of the communities we work in, with an average percentage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students of 44%.





Club attendance

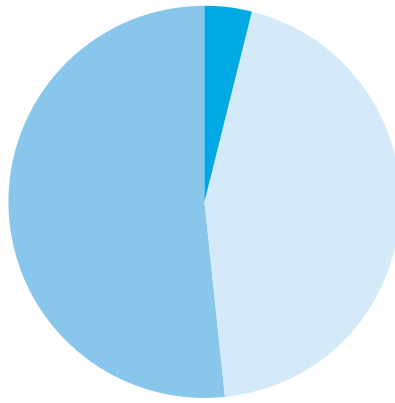
On average, over 5000 students took part in our 2016-17 Core Programme every week, with the average club reaching 20 students a session. Over the course of 17 weeks, the programme reached a total of 7931 students.

Every year, we have a high rate of retention across the programme, with students returning every week to build their skills and take part in competitions. Of all the students that take part in our programme, 70% attend 10 or more of the 14 sessions.






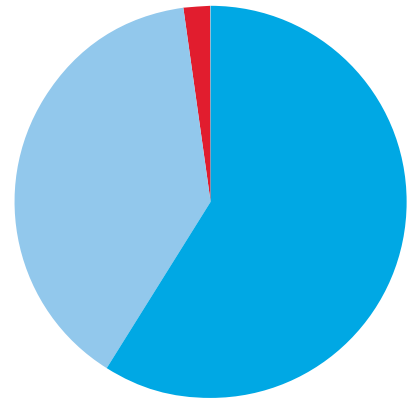
SECONDARY YEAR

24%		Year 7
25%		Year 8
27%		Year 9
24%		Year 10






PRIMARY YEAR

6%		Year 4
52%		Year 5
42%		Year 6



GENDER

61%		Female
38%		Male
1%		Other

Inclusivity

Debate Mate works in areas of high child poverty, with over 40% of participating students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). True to our values of inclusion and equality, 11% of our students have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and 37% have English as an Additional Language (EAL)¹. These statistics are based on a survey of 72 primary and secondary schools, conducted in Week 4 of the 2016-17 programme.

For many students with SEN and EAL, debating provides an opportunity to excel through oral work, which students often enjoy more than written work and assessment. By discovering subjects orally, students are then able to engage with, and complete, written tasks as a natural progression in their learning.

¹ The national averages for these categories are 2.5% for students with a statement of SEN and 15.7% for students with English as an Additional Language.

CORE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Following a consultation with the New Economic Foundation in 2010, Debate Mate designed an evaluation metric for each of the four goals stated previously. We worked closely with New Philanthropy Capital (Coppes and Plimmer, 2013; Kazimirski and Pritchard, 2014) in deciding the level of evidence required for each measurement objective, as well as the tools needed to collect and analyse the data.

Speaking and Listening Metric (Debate Mate Goal 1: Accelerate Speaking and Listening Attainment)

Debate Mate uses a bespoke Speaking and Listening metric designed in consultation with teachers to measure students' hard skills development. The skills assessed in the metric are derived from the new National Curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Department for Education, 2014) as well as the assessment criteria for the GCSE Spoken Language accreditation devised by Ofqual (The Assessments and Qualifications Alliance, 2012). These guidelines were mapped onto the debating skills that Debate Mate teaches to form a unique, holistic metric that tracks student progress continuously from Key Stage 2 up to GCSE and beyond. Debate Mate's metric tracks progress through seven Skill Categories:

- SK1** Collaboration
- SK2** Listen and Respond Appropriately
- SK3** Articulate and Justify an Argument
- SK4** Use of Evidence
- SK5** Structure of Speeches
- SK6** Style
- SK7** Quality of Spoken Language

Each Skill Category is given a level from 0 to 8, describing a wide range of abilities that might be observed in students from Years 4 to 10 (as well

as Scottish equivalents). You can find a sample of the metric at the end of the report in Appendix A.

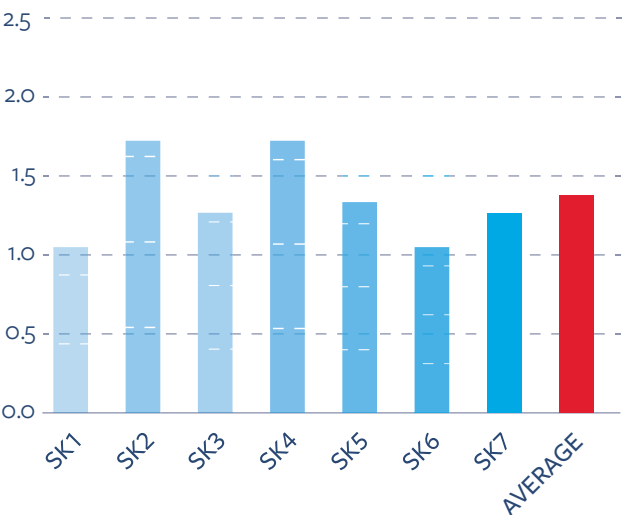
Trained Programme Directors use the metric to assess new students during the first and last debate of the year, usually falling in weeks 5 and 15 of the after-school workshops, and assessment results were moderated by teachers.

The results show that, overall, students make an average of 1.5 levels of progress over the course of the 17-week programme. To explain this figure further, a student averaging a Level 3 will only occasionally engage in group discussion during preparation time, make points that are relevant but not structured, use mainly anecdotal evidence, digress throughout their speech, and read from their notes with occasional hesitations or silences. Comparatively, a student averaging a Level 5 will take a leading role in discussion to encourage collaboration, offer relevant rebuttal to opposing arguments, create a coherent argument that is structured clearly, deliver their speech confidently (using notes for reference only), and successfully use basic persuasive devices for effect.

This is a remarkable level of development within the course of a year, and 98% of teachers have reported that Debate Mate has accelerated their pupils' progress in Speaking and Listening. The results this year are derived from a sample of 152 students from 31 schools in the 2016-17 programme year. All year groups from four to ten (and S1 to S3) are represented in the sample.

Debating has a massive impact on Speaking and Listening skills, as students learn not only to articulate their ideas in a structured way but also to critically respond to other participants'

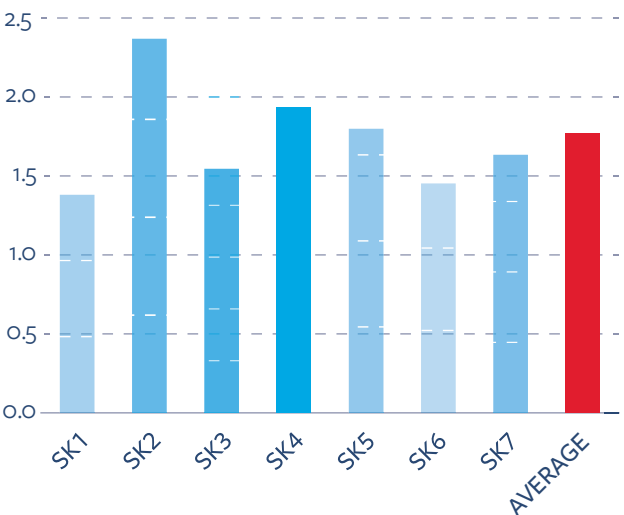
Secondary results — level of improvement



points through active listening and engagement. Good Speaking and Listening skills form the basis of all learning in literacy and are a key aspect of employability – securing a job, maintaining employment, and progressing at work.

Levels of progress amongst primary school students are especially high, with the average rate of increase being over 1.7 levels for students in Years 4 to 6. The greatest rates of progress are

Primary results — level of improvement



achieved in students' ability to listen and respond appropriately and their use of evidence—both of which are highly transferrable skills that will benefit them in other subjects as well as their pursuits beyond school, such as university and employment.

These results were replicated, if not exceeded, by students with statements of EAL and SEN; and students eligible for Free School Meals achieved 0.2 levels of progress above the average.





Soft Skills Metric (Debate Mate Goals 2, 3, and 4: Strengthen emotional capacity, develop employability skills, and heighten aspirations)

To monitor our impact on soft skills, we have developed a student self-assessment survey to collect data on each of our measurement objectives: self-esteem, resilience, leadership, teamwork, self-management, critical thinking, and aspirations. The soft skills metric was designed in consultation with New Philanthropy Capital and draws upon existing literature on each of the characteristics measured.

In line with the Fair Education Alliance's (2015) Impact Goal Three—to 'ensure young people develop key strengths, including character and wellbeing... to support high aspirations' (p.7) —our programmes cultivate crucial 'non-cognitive skills' to address the widening skills gap in schools. Available data show that students growing up in poverty are less likely to demonstrate high levels of perseverance, self-belief, and motivation to learn, which in turn affect educational outcomes (Fair Education Alliance, 2015). To combat this, Debate Mate actively seeks to develop these soft skills, which are crucial to students' academic success, personal well-being, and employment later in life.

"Students have significantly gained confidence in their lessons, to the point where it has been commented on by a number of members of staff. They have changed how they communicate with each other. It has also helped them work more independently as they prepare for competitions with little guidance from teachers."

- English teacher, Secondary, Leeds

² Fair Education Alliance Report Card (2015) p. 7

In 2016-17, our annual student self-assessment was completed by 2158 students, Years 4 to 10, from across the country at our end of year competitions. Of the students who completed the questionnaire, 100% said they enjoyed taking part in the Debate Mate sessions, with 73% of students enjoying it a great deal. Over 30% of students had taken part in Debate Mate the previous year, indicating a high rate of return, and 97% said that they liked their mentors.

‘Since you started debating at school, how have the following things changed?’

Confidence and Self-Esteem



of students said they are more confident giving their opinion on current events and political issues



said they are more comfortable speaking up during class



said they are more confident when placed in challenging or unfamiliar environments

Leadership



said they are more likely to help others when working in a group



said they are more confident that others can count on them



said they are more likely to take a leading role in class discussions

Teamwork and Self-Management



said they are more likely to put their ideas forward



said they are better able to take other people's thoughts into consideration



said they are better able to work with someone who has different opinions than them

Critical Thinking



said they are better able to come up with their own opinions and arguments



said they are better able to respond to and respectfully disagree with the ideas of others



said they have more experience conducting research on different topics

Resilience



said they can concentrate better during debates and public speaking events



said they are better at coming up with new ideas when old ones are challenged



said they are more hard-working

To measure our impact on aspirations, we use a set of retrospective questions that reveal changes in students' attitudes about their future. Of the students who responded, 40% stated that their parents or guardians had not been to university, or that they were not sure, further evidence that interactions with university mentors provide a unique opportunity for them to learn more about higher education. Looking ahead, 91% of respondents said the skills they have gained from debating will help them to succeed in their further studies or training, and 80% said it will help them in the career of their choice. When asked to explain how debating and meeting a university mentor has affected their attitudes towards the future, students responded:

- My mentor has been nothing but supportive and encouraging of everything we do. Not only this, but her success and her determination has inspired me to become as committed and hard working as she is. (Year 10, Nottingham Girls Academy)
- My mentor encouraged me to keep trying and not be afraid of making my voice heard (Year 7, Langdon Academy, London)
- Seeing someone who is going to university and learning something they're passionate about makes me think about how I can do the same (Year 10, David Young Community Academy, Leeds)
- My mentor has inspired me to work hard and never give up (Year 5, Our Lady of Lourdes, Manchester)

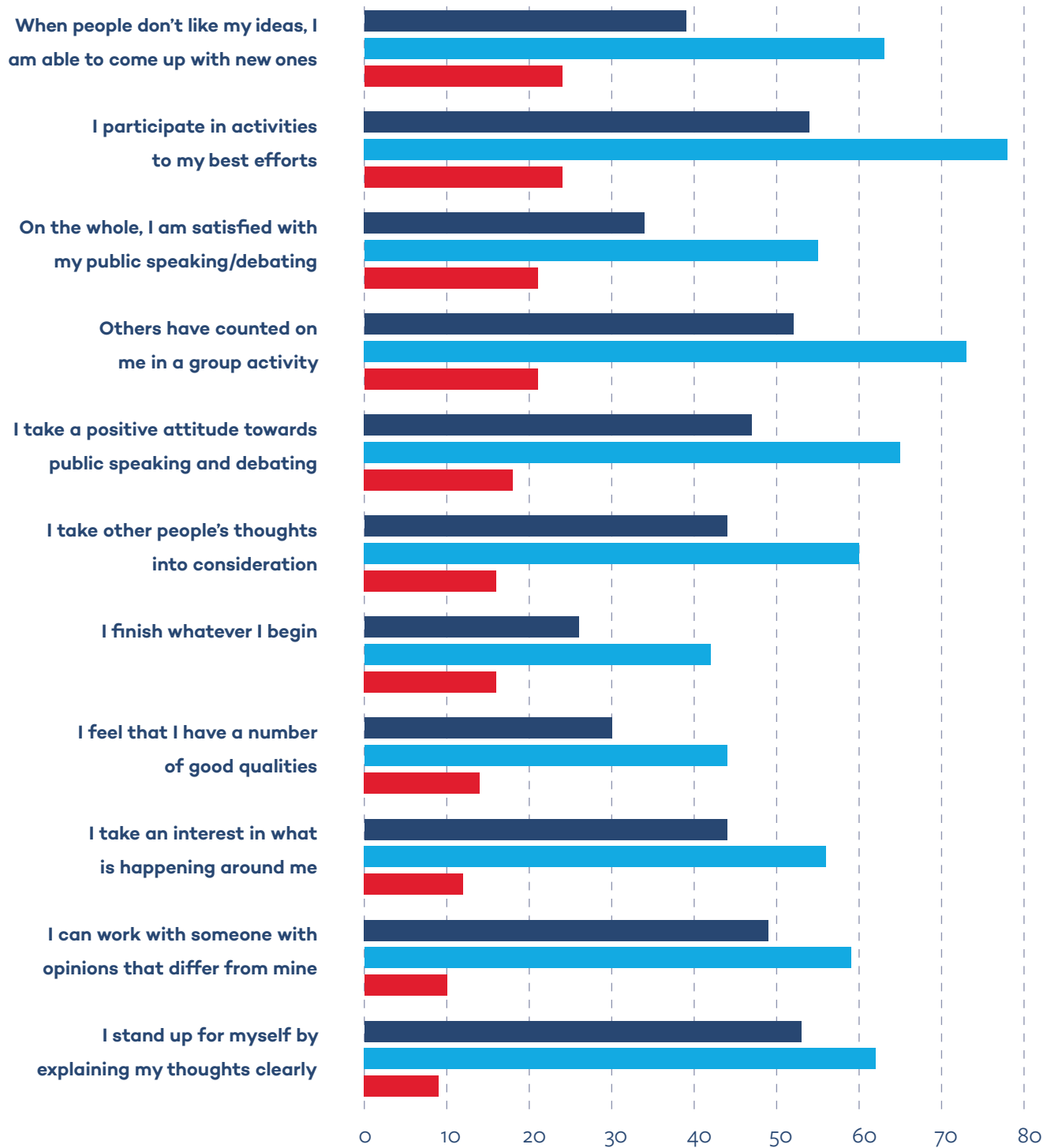
Pre- and Post-Programme Self-Evaluation

In order to meet Nesta's Level 2 Standard of Evidence (Puttick and Ludlow, 2013), Debate Mate piloted pre- and post-programme student self-evaluations in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years to see how students' self-perceptions change over the course of the programme. Students filled out a self-evaluation survey at the launch event in November and then filled out the same survey at the Debate Mate Cup at the end of the programme.

Using this data, we are able to assess students' confidence, resilience, empathy, and soft skills at the beginning and the end of the year and compare the results. In total, we tracked the progress of 100 students from 12 schools over the course of the programme. We analysed the results and found that the programme made a significant positive impact on students' self-perceptions, especially in their attitudes towards working with others, thinking critically, participating in school activities, and speaking publicly (see graph on p17).

Legend

- Percentage of students who 'Strongly Agreed' prior to the programme
- Percentage of students who 'Strongly Agreed' after participating in the programme
- Increase in percentage of students





Teacher Feedback

Beyond our own evaluation metrics, we also collect feedback from the teachers overseeing the programme at their respective schools. This feedback is valuable because of teachers' prior knowledge of their students and the expertise they have in the field. Amongst teachers leading the programme at their school:

98%

said that Debate Mate has accelerated their students' progress in Speaking and Listening

98%

said that their students have gained confidence from the Debate Mate programme

86%

said that students demonstrate better teamwork and leadership skills

Teachers also gave feedback on the sustainability of the programme once the mentoring sessions had concluded in the Spring:

77%

of debating clubs continued or continued to some extent in the summer term

68%

of clubs elected student officers who continued leading the club

When asked how Debate Mate impacted their students, teachers responded:

- "Students' levels have increased by two/three above their peers. For the past two years, Debate Mate alumni have been Head Boy and Girl and part of the Student Leadership team." (RE Teacher, Secondary, Manchester)

- “The programme has raised self-esteem which feeds back into academic achievement and personal welfare.” (EAL teacher, Primary, London)
- “Pupils who attended Debate Mate have been able to transfer their skills into other areas of school life, which has had a positive impact on all of their peers too. The skills they have learnt, they have shared with peers and the impact in lessons has been remarkable.” (Deputy Head Teacher, Primary, London)

Mentor Feedback

The mentoring role allows university students not only to engage meaningfully with children from diverse backgrounds but also to develop their own leadership skills. At the end of the year, we disseminated questionnaires to all participating mentors in order to assess how the programme has impacted them.

Of the mentors who responded:

95%

reported that their teaching ability has increased or increased greatly

90%

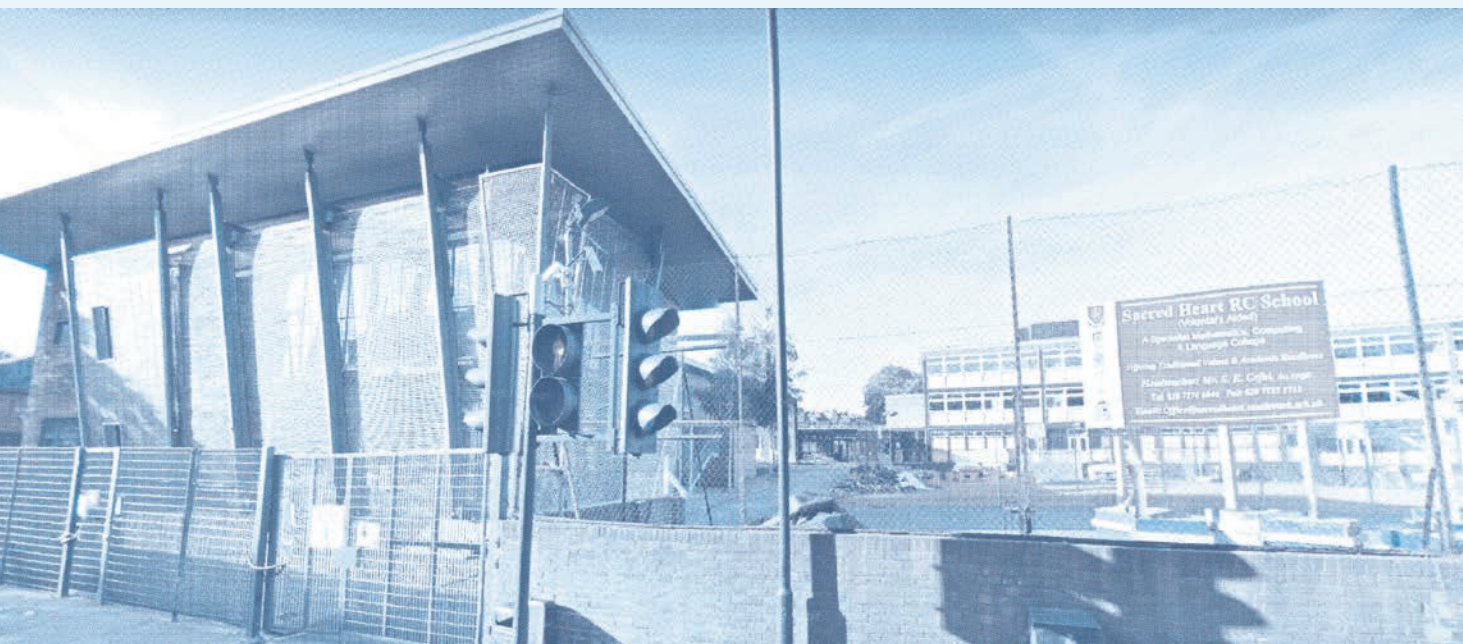
reported that their own confidence has increased or increased greatly

83%

reported that their ability to think on their feet has increased or increased greatly

Following their experiences with Debate Mate, many of our mentors go on to work in education. In the end of year questionnaire, 37.5% of mentors reported that they were considering going into teaching or had already applied to become a teacher. Over 20 former mentors are currently working as teachers in schools across the country.





The Core Programme in Action: Sacred Heart Catholic School

Based in the South London community of Camberwell, Sacred Heart Catholic School has had a remarkable year. In June 2017, the school was awarded a prestigious Pupil Premium Award at the Houses of Parliament in recognition of their effective usage of pupil premium funding to make a difference in the achievements of students. Over half of the students attending Sacred Heart do not speak English as their first language, and 43% have been eligible for Free School Meals in the past 6 years.

As part of their bid for the national award, Sarah Bonar, Assistant Head at the school, emphasised the impact that investing in Debate Mate has had on the most disadvantaged students:

"Sacred Heart's disadvantaged pupils make some of the highest progress in the country at GCSE when Progress 8 is considered. Pupils are actively encouraged to develop skills that help them be both confident learners and improve employability. One big success has been Debate Mate, with a high proportion of Pupil Premium students participating and winning debating competitions at all levels."

It has made a noticeable difference in our pupil's willingness to speak in public and voice an opinion. It is interesting to observe how pupils on the Debate Mate programme are able to listen to counter arguments and argue effectively when required to do so in class."

More than 100 students between Years 7 and 10 were involved in Debate Mate, and over 60 were eligible for Pupil Premium. Ms. Liz Cawley, the Maths teacher who oversees Debate Mate at the school, has noticed the difference that the programme has made in Sacred Heart's school culture. After running a series of debates at school assemblies, she has had teachers from different subjects approach her, asking Debate Mate students to hold debates relevant to the curriculum in order to get students discussing an issue.

Amongst those participating, Ms. Cawley has noticed the programme's impact on students who frequently get into trouble for speaking out of turn. Referring to one student in Year 9, she says, "He's constantly in trouble because if he doesn't see the point of something he will argue back. But he's fantastic when he



starts debating, because suddenly he's got teachers, who have told him off before, praising him for being a part of this... and that's a really positive thing."

In March, the Year 10 team from Sacred Heart won the regional Debate Mate Cup held at Goldsmith's University, advancing to the national Finals day held at Nomura headquarters in London. For the students taking part in the competitions, Debate Mate has given them an opportunity to excel outside of academics and sports. One of the members of the winning team, Precious, says:

"Debate Mate has helped me because now I feel like my words have value, and it's important to express yourself. There's no need to be shy because everyone is equal and everyone's voice and opinions matter."

Ms. Cawley remarked on how Debate Mate has helped Precious to find her place within the

school, empowering her to speak out on issues that matter to her such as feminism and equality. Since joining Debate Mate, Precious has also run for student council, taken part in Southwark Youth Council, and participated in Changemakers, a local youth group that works with decision makers in the borough to advocate for children's safety and well-being. Precious remarks that **"Debate Mate helped me with my confidence and actually going out there and seeking opportunities for young people."**

The Debate Mate programme has impacted different students in different ways, but fits into the overarching vision of the school's head teacher, Serge Cefai: "No matter what your background, no matter where you live or what your income is—if you receive the right support... and you are willing to put in hard work yourself, you can achieve whatever you want to do. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise."

The Accelerate Programme

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Debate Mate's Accelerate Programme targets students who have serious academic and behavioural difficulties. The programme, formerly called the Re-Engagement Programme, grew out of our work with young offenders at HM Prison Feltham, which prompted us to examine how our debating methodology could be used as a preventative measure to help young people who have been excluded from mainstream education or are at risk of exclusion.

In 2016-17, the Accelerate Programme expanded significantly with the support of Big Lottery funding, running in schools outside of London for the first time. After conversations with senior leadership teams and teachers, the programme ran in 10 secondary schools and 5 primary schools in London, 4 secondary schools in Manchester, and 3 secondary schools in the West Midlands. Each school was asked to select a group of students who could benefit most from Debate Mate's peer-to-peer mentoring and carefully tailored lesson plans.

The aim of the programme is to give disengaged students a disposition towards learning and to help them manage their behaviour by teaching them how to disagree respectfully, listen to others, and speak at appropriate times. The programme also develops students' confidence, ability to work in a team, and self-management, fostering a desire to participate in classroom discussions and school activities more generally.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

Accelerate clubs are held during school hours, often as enrichment classes to retain student attendance, and they are led by mentors with additional behavioural management training. The clubs run parallel

to the Core Programme, following a similar syllabus, and students have access to the same competitions. The student to mentor ratio is restricted to 1:10 in order to ensure that students are given sufficient one-to-one time and guidance. Despite the challenges facing many of the students on the programme, participants become remarkably engaged over time, with 18 out of the 22 Accelerate clubs sending at least one team to the Debate Mate Cup and Urban Debate League competitions in 2016-17.

At the beginning of the year, pupils compete against other schools on the Accelerate Programme, but by the end of the year they are expected to compete in teams with and against their peers on the Core Programme. By putting a continual emphasis on professionalism and respect, mentors help pupils to significantly improve their composure, focus, and discipline.

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Across many of the soft skills development metrics, an even greater proportion of students on the Accelerate Programme reported self-improvement as compared to those on the Core Programme, indicating the significant benefits of Debate Mate for these students (see right).

DEBATEBOX

Since Spring of 2016, Debate Mate has worked with the Harrow Club, a West London community centre, to design and deliver a one-of-a-kind programme. DebateBox teaches young people the fundamentals of both boxing and debating, serving as a behavioural intervention for disengaged and poorly behaved students on the verge of falling out of mainstream education. The curriculum combines our Accelerate scheme of work with boxing sessions delivered by



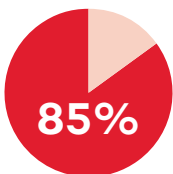
of students said they enjoyed taking part in Debate Mate sessions



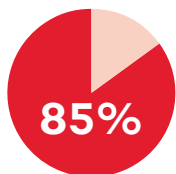
of students said they liked their mentor



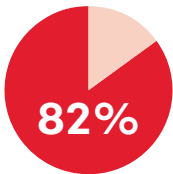
said they are more comfortable speaking up in class



said they are more hard-working



said they are more confident that others can count on them



said they are better able to respond to, and respectfully disagree with others' ideas

the Cuban Boxing Academy. Each week, students arrive at the session in their boxing kit, debate for one hour in the gym and then begin their boxing training. DebateBox focuses on the shared skills needed for both debating and boxing: strategy, discipline, focus, confidence, and quick thinking. By developing these transferable skills, the students make progress in their academic work whilst also equipping themselves for employment. Students compete in our original DebateBox Cup format,

in which teams of four face off in a boxing ring. A judge evaluates both the boxing and debating, and determines a winning team based on the highest combined score. The DebateBox programme was piloted with 12 students from Burlington Danes Academy and, in April 2017, the programme was expanded to reach 50 students across 4 schools in the same area. Following a successful showcase event in October 2017, we plan on expanding the programme even further.





The Accelerate Programme in Action: Norwood School

At Norwood School, a group of ten Year 9 students were taken out of their Period 6 once a week to take part in the Debate Mate Accelerate Programme. The students on the programme were identified as having behavioural issues and being disengaged in the classroom.

Two years ago, Adel was one of those students. Since then, he has not only graduated from the Accelerate Programme, but joined the after-school Core Programme and led his peers to a series of competitive victories across London. His Debate Mate journey demonstrates the impact the Accelerate Programme can have on the attitude and mindset of participants.

Now a mature Year 11 student, Adel looked back on why Debate Mate appealed to him during his first year on the programme: “The competitions are the big thing you’re always leading up to. Yes, you can always practice, and you’ll feel comfortable with your peers, but if you’re gonna be talking to 50 people, you have to adjust.”

Having experienced the competitive element of debating, Adel reflected on his decision to move from the Accelerate to the Core Programme between Years 9 and 10, even when it was no longer compulsory and none of his friends attended. “After one year I thought ‘I’ve really got the hang of this!’ At the end of Year 9 when we had to go, I started noticing that I am learning here; I am actually learning skills, so why would I stop? In Year 10 I had an opportunity to keep learning, so I thought ‘Come, let’s just do it.’”

Adel’s mentor on the Accelerate Programme was named Anna, a Dutch international student at the London School of Economics, and a top European debater. Anna described Adel’s journey on the programme: “Adel had to be convinced he has a talent for debating. He learned he could earn respect not just by being funny, but also by building strong arguments and delivering well-structured speeches. As he gained more confidence in his own skills he asked for the floor more often and started to enjoy the challenge.”



"Where I come from, it's very hard not to get side-tracked into the wrong crowd. so it's all about finding things like Debate Mate to keep you focused." Adel, Year 11

In addition to the key skills focus, the programme aims to get participants discussing current affairs and global issues. Teachers and mentors often comment on how this can be beneficial for the mindset of students on the Accelerate Programme; by introducing students to issues outside of their immediate surroundings, the programme can broaden horizons, raise aspirations, and develop empathy.

Adel spoke about how his increased understanding of the world around him helped his school work: "I have used understanding of motions for creative writing. When I wrote a persuasive piece about how football clubs should receive consequences for football hooligans, I thought, yeah I've done this before in Debate Mate."

Adel's teacher, Mrs. Fooks, gave us an example of how Debate Mate has improved both Adel's confidence and interest in current affairs: "We're running a general election in school and Adel was just so willing to put himself forward. This

is most children's worst nightmare but Debate Mate's given him an extra dimension."

Adel reflected on why he persevered with Debate Mate and the impact it's had on him: "I won't lie, especially from the part of Gypsy Hill where I come from, it's very hard not to get side-tracked into the wrong crowd. So it's all about finding things like Debate Mate to keep you focused. Most Year 7s want to be footballers... and then when they realise they can't play football anymore, they start misbehaving. It's all about staying focused, even if you can't play football. Debate Mate's now been occupying my time like that for the last year and a half."

Finally, Adel told us how he has found the after school Core Programme: "Now I'm with more serious people, because they've chosen to come, they've decided to do something genuinely good for themselves. Now I've got like minded people in the same room as me."

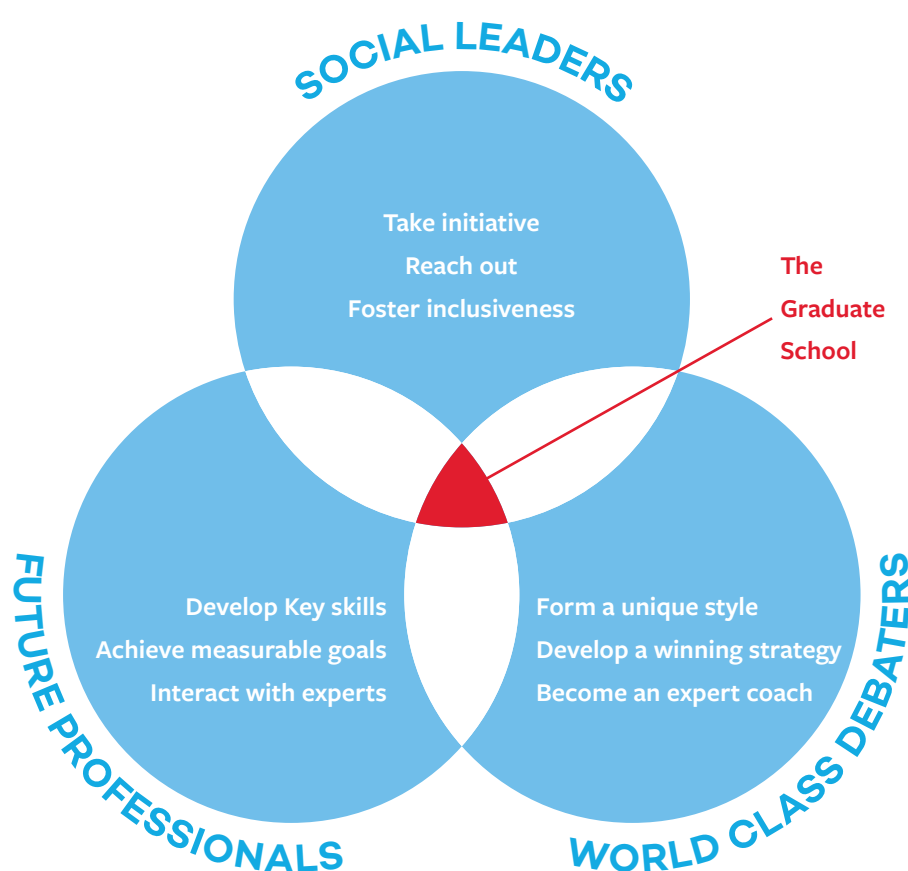
The Graduate School

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Debate Mate Graduate School takes students who have flourished on the Core Programme and provides them with further training to become world-class debaters and social leaders. Beyond providing weekly coaching from top university debaters, the programme encourages students

in years 10 and above to lead projects in their communities while supporting them to achieve their academic and career goals. The Graduate School, in its current form, was piloted in the 2014-15 programme year and expanded into the West Midlands and Manchester in November 2015.

The Graduate School Competency Framework



PROGRAMME DELIVERY

World-Class Debaters

Every Saturday morning, over 30 Graduate School students participate in four-hour sessions during which they receive debate training from world champion university debaters. Through interaction and coaching from a wide variety of mentors, students develop confident speaking styles that

enable them to compete at the highest level. Lesson plans for the Graduate School build on the Core Programme curriculum, developing both technical skills – including deeper critical thinking abilities and a greater command of rhetorical techniques – and core knowledge in areas that range from economic policy, to criminal justice reform, to international

relations. As a result of these sessions, our debaters have excelled in many prestigious debating competitions at both the school and university level.

Over the past two years, more than 60 Graduate School students competed at tournaments, and alongside many individual achievements, teams made Grand Finals at 10 competitions, including Durham Schools, the world's largest residential debating competition and one of the most competitive. In 2016, one of the students, Ife Grillo, was also selected as a member of the England World Schools team, an impressive achievement that represents the first time a student from a non-selective state school has been selected for the team since 2009. In 2017, three Debate Mate students were amongst the top ten speakers at Durham Schools, and Graduate School teams made it to the finals of competitions at SOAS, UCL, Imperial, and KCL, even winning the Novice finals of the UCL Schools competitions.

Social Leaders

In addition to debate training, the Graduate School also encourages students to bring the benefits of debating into their communities. As part of the programme, students organise their own social leadership projects with the support of mentors and Programme Directors. Projects have included a student-run tournament for secondary school pupils new to competitive debate, the 'Thames Invitational', which involved seven schools from across London; a documentary of the year's programme to promote debating to younger students; and a number of student-run British Parliamentary debating clubs in schools.

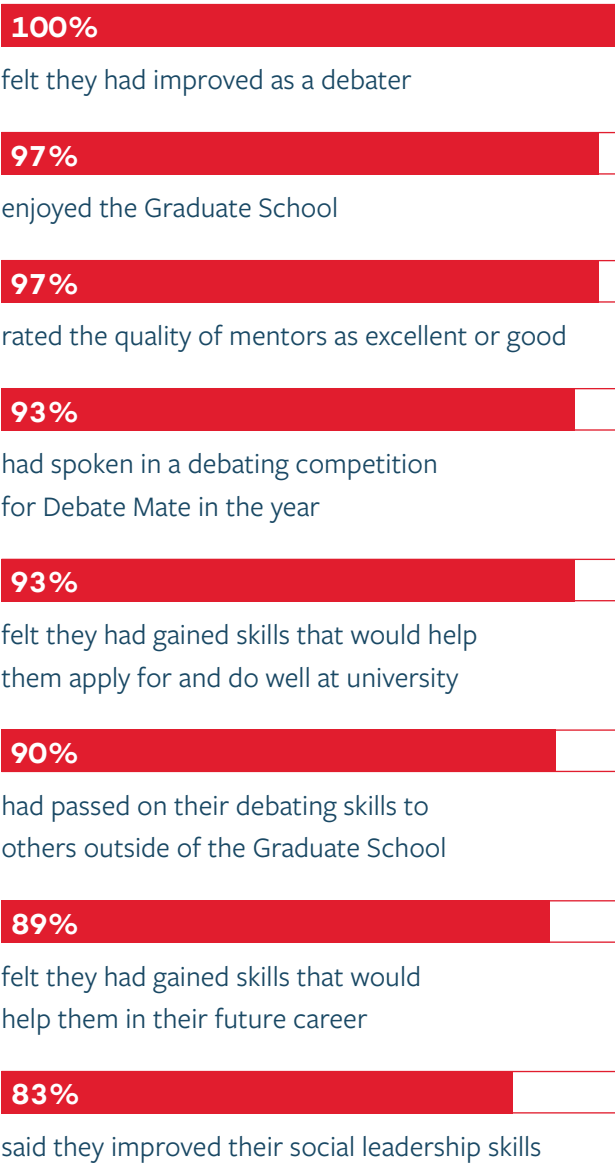
Future Professionals

As students' confidence in debating grows, the Graduate School also introduces knowledge-based components, advancing students' political and social awareness in areas ranging from economic policy to gender and identity. These sessions not only equip students with the knowledge they need to impress

as debaters, but also give them a taste of a diverse range of potential careers and areas of higher education. In 2017, we hosted our first ever Careers Fair at Hiscox offices in London, which saw representatives from top advertising, law, tech, education, and PR firms interacting with our Graduate School students.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

At the last Graduate School session in 2016, we collected feedback and self-evaluations from participating students. Of those who responded:



The Grad School in Action: Florence Adeoye and Gavin Alexander

In 2016, Debate Mate welcomed five former students into our London headquarters as staff members, including two Gap Year Assistants, Florence and Gavin. Hailing from Clapton Girls' School and Bridge Academy respectively, Florence and Gavin joined the team to help coordinate the Grad School before heading off to university. Their journeys through Grad School reflect the way that the programme not only helps improve students' debating abilities but also builds confidence, determination, leadership skills, and close friendships.

Florence and Gavin both started attending Grad School having participated on the Core Programme and been encouraged by their mentors to start attending the Saturday sessions. Thinking back to his first session, with some of the world's best university debaters as mentors, Gavin recounts, "I was excited but terrified at the same time." Gavin stuck with it, and by Year 13 he was one of the most experienced students on the programme, speaking in finals at competitions against teams from Eton and Dulwich. When asked about how he managed to improve so significantly, Gavin says, "It's partly just doing it more, and also realising that in everything you do, you're never going to be perfect. So it's just using that to constantly try to improve." For Florence, taking part in the programme has also been transformative:

"One thing it's shown me is to be brave, because I used to be really shy... I think that's one of the reasons I wanted to do debating. I'm really confident in who I am now."

Both Florence and Gavin feel that attending Grad School helped them to fill gaps in their education and social lives. Comparing it to school, Florence says:

"There's way more breadth in what you learn about. In debates, you talk about

issues like the pros and cons of invading Syria... You don't learn about that in school, not because they don't want to tell you, but it's just not in the curriculum. Especially in state schools, the focus is on making sure attainment is high."

The Grad School community represents an open, inclusive environment for students to engage with new ideas; for Gavin, gaining a vocabulary to speak about LGBT and minority issues has had a big impact: "Those are my favourite debates, because I resonate with them, and I think it's also helped lots of other people in Grad School come to grips with their identity and learn about the world." By Year 11, with the encouragement of mentors and teachers, Gavin was running a British Parliamentary debating club at Bridge Academy, teaching younger students the skills and tools he had learned from participating in Grad School.

When asked about what they've gained from the programme, Florence and Gavin emphasise the friendships and sense of community they've developed over the course of four years on the programme. Florence describes it as "a group of people who meet up every Saturday to get better at debating, and without realizing it, the people become your closest friends. And you watch each other grow up."

Having first met at a Debate Mate uDL competition as Year 9s, Florence and Gavin are now close friends and flatmates. When asked what she would say to a student considering coming to the Grad School, Florence responded "If you're scared, do it anyways. Because you'll come up and think—Oh wow I did that, I didn't know I could do that, I'm much stronger than I thought I was." Gavin adds, "If you set your mind to it, you can find a way to do it." Florence and Gavin will be attending the University of Liverpool and soas next year.



Gavin Alexander (Left) and Florence Adeoye (Right)

The Grad School in Action: Ella Cox

Every year, a cohort of Grad School students move on to further studies at university or the world of work. In 2017, Debate Mate bid farewell to a number of students who have gone on to study at the London School of Economics, University of Bristol, University of Durham, and Yale, amongst others. Ella Cox, who secured a place at Yale University, describes the way debating has shaped her in the last six years:

"Meeting people like [my mentor] Scott, who'd been to Oxford, it breaks down the perception a lot of young people have that it's a very private school dominated place and you won't feel welcome there.

Because you meet all these really inspirational mentors who've been through the process, people who were like you, it makes you more confident to apply to the top unis and not just settle because you might not feel comfortable going to a place like that."

When asked what was the most important thing she gained from the Grad School, Ella said:

"Probably resilience... because there is such a giant pool of people you're competing against, there will always be times when the decision won't be what you expected it to be, or there will always be people who have more persuasive arguments.

But there's a sense of never giving up... I feel like it's a good life skill to have, that despite the fact that there are a lot of people who have had massive advantages to you, you still push through and hopefully something good will come from it. "



Conclusion

In the next academic year, Debate Mate will be celebrating its 10-year anniversary. Since 2007, our programmes have reached tens of thousands of students across the UK, and even more around the world. By carefully monitoring our progress and evaluating our impact, we hope to improve our effectiveness year-on-year and provide even better support to schools already on the programme.

In 2017-18, we will focus our efforts on supporting students past the Core Programme, helping them transition from school to tertiary education and the world of work. In particular, we aim to pilot in-school programmes for those in Years 11 and above that introduce students to more advanced debating concepts while also putting them in contact with professionals and employers from a range of industries through both in-school sessions and careers workshops. Our work in Liverpool and Manchester will be supported in part by Careers and Enterprise Company, allowing us to bring these much needed employability skills to areas identified as 'Cold Spots' in terms of student outcomes.

In order to help students make sense of the complex issues facing their generation, we will place a greater emphasis on equipping mentors and pupils with the content they need to make compelling, factual arguments. We are also looking forward to the continued expansion of our Accelerate Programme, supported by the Big Lottery, into more schools across the country.

Through our Core, Accelerate, and Graduate School programmes, we help thousands of young people speak more fluently, take on leadership roles, work in teams, think critically, and develop self-confidence and resilience. We have now seen the first cohort of Debate Mate students go through university and enter the workforce as successful, self-assured young adults. As we look to the future, we plan on helping many more students achieve their ambitions by providing them with valuable 21st-century skills through debating and peer-to-peer mentorship. We hope you will join us as we continue to develop our programme and reach even more students.



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Appendix A: Sample of speaking and listening matrix¹

LEVEL	SK1. COLLABORATION:	SK2. LISTEN AND RESPOND APPROPRIATELY:	SK3. ARTICULATE AND JUSTIFY AN ARGUMENT:	SK4. USE OF EVIDENCE:	SK5. STRUCTURE OF SPEECHES:	SK6. STYLE:	SK7. QUALITY OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE:
	<p>The student works effectively within the team to prepare their own argument and their team's case.</p>	<p>Speakers are able to reply (rebuttal) and respond (po) effectively to arguments made by the other side. They listen carefully and ask appropriate questions or offer statements (pois).</p>	<p>Arguments and opinions are well structured, developed, coherent and use PEEL.</p>	<p>The speaker uses a blend of factual examples as well as speculation, hypothesis and creativity to support their arguments.</p>	<p>The speaker effectively structures their entire speech for maximum impact.</p>	<p>The speaker uses style effectively to gain and maintain the interest of the listener. Style includes but is not limited to: confidence / delivery (body language / eye contact / tone / pace / volume) , fluency and reacting to pois.</p>	<p>The speaker uses Standard English, vocabulary and persuasive devices effectively. They use appropriate register. Persuasive devices include but are not limited to: rhetorical question/ repetition/ direct address/ emotional appeal/ evocative word choice/ triplets/ humour.</p>
5	<p>Students take a leading role in discussion to develop their own ideas or those of the group. At times they encourage collaboration. At times they may challenge others' ideas.</p>	<p>Student understands the opposing argument and offers a relevant rebuttal; this may be a general response to the opposing side's case.</p> <p>Offers relevant pois, occasionally these may not be succinct or coherent. Responds to pois given.</p>	<p>Student use the PEEL structure successfully and creates a coherent argument. At times one part of the PEEL may lack development.</p> <p>ss summarises the debate, "they said.../ we said..." Creates a coherent argument as to why their side won.</p>	<p>Student uses relevant evidence that supports and strengthens their argument.</p>	<p>Student's speech has a clear beginning, middle and ending. They use signposting throughout.</p>	<p>Student is confident in their delivery. They are quick to recover from any lapses in fluency and use notes for reference only.</p>	<p>Student consistently use formal Standard English and employ appropriate vocabulary for the motion. Student successfully uses basic persuasive devices for effect.</p>
4	<p>Student engages in group discussion, inputting some ideas and is able to create their own argument. Student may express some disagreement.</p>	<p>Student shows understanding of the opposing argument and attempts to provide a response in their rebuttal.</p> <p>May offer relevant pois that are not succinct or coherent. Attempts to respond to pois given.</p>	<p>Student uses the PEEL structure however explanations, examples and link may not form a coherent argument.</p> <p>ss attempts to summarise the debate (their case and / or the other side's). There's not yet a coherent argument as to why their side won.</p>	<p>Student may refer to anecdotal or factual evidence however this may not directly support their argument.</p>	<p>Student's speech has a clear beginning, middle and ending. They attempt to signpost the different parts of their speech e.g. My first point is...</p>	<p>Student begins to make eye contact and there is some variation in tone and pace. There are occasional lapses in fluency. Notes are used as prompts rather than scripts.</p>	<p>Student adapts vocabulary and register for a formal setting but this may not be consistent. Student may attempt to use basic persuasive devices (e.g. rhetorical question).</p>

3	Student occasionally engages in group discussion and attempts to prepare their own argument.	Student acknowledges a point made by the opposing team in their rebuttal and attempts to provide a response; this may not always be coherent or relevant. May offer pois with some relevance. Unlikely to provide a response to pois.	Student makes a relevant point and attempts to complete the PEEL structure in some way. ss makes relevant point(s) that in some way support or summarise their team's case.	Student uses mainly anecdotal evidence which is relevant. Students may attempt to use factual evidence.	Student starts to introduce an argument but may digress. Student attempts to re-introduce structure at another point in their speech.	Student is fluent but occasionally reading from their notes. There may be occasional hesitations and silences. There is no variation in tone and pace.	Student adapts vocabulary and register for a formal setting but this may not be consistent.
2	Student plays little role in the group discussion. They sometimes try to input ideas but these have already been said or are off topic.	Student acknowledges a point made by the opposing team in their rebuttal but does not provide a response to it or reason for why it is wrong. May offer pois with limited relevance.	Student makes points that are relevant to the motion but are not developed with examples, explanation and link. Summary Speaker (ss) makes points that are relevant to the motion. These may not support or summarise their team's points.	Student uses anecdotal evidence with some relevance.	Student starts with a relevant statement and attempts to introduce an argument. Students may digress and their speech may lose focus.	Student is audible but relies heavily on their notes. They will be hesitant and lack confidence; there may be periods of silence, or long stutters.	Language is largely informal, with some attempt to adapt vocabulary for the formal setting (e.g. This House...).
1	Student plays hardly any role in the group discussion, and has limited input of ideas even when prompted by another student or teacher.	Student attempts to make a rebuttal but it is not relevant or appropriate. Most likely no pois offered.	Student makes points that are not relevant to the motion.	Student attempts to use evidence but it may be irrelevant or incorrect.	Student starts with a relevant statement after which, there is little structure.	Student is audible at times but has little confidence or fluency in their delivery.	Language is very informal and vocabulary is limited. They speak in complete sentences.
BELOW LEVEL	Does not plan or participate in team discussion.	No attempt to rebut or poi throughout the debate.	Does not make any points.	No evidence is used.	No structure to speech.	Speech is inaudible.	Very basic language used and some incomplete sentences.

1 The full metric runs from Level 1 to Level 8. Levels 1 to 5 of the metric are published here.

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