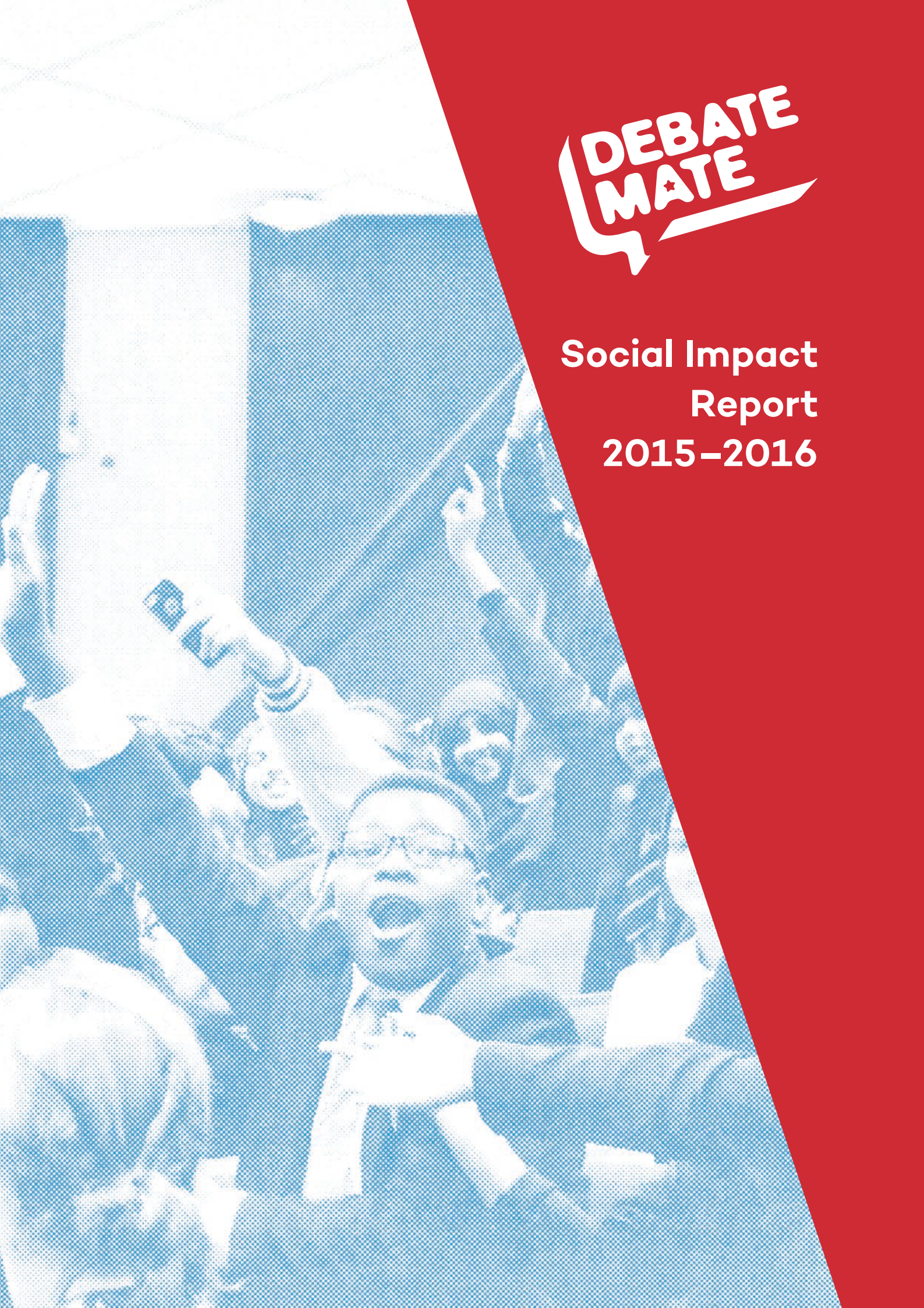




**Social Impact
Report
2015–2016**



Contents

1	Foreword
2	Social Context
4	About Debate Mate
8	The Core Programme
22	The Re-engagement Programme
26	The Graduate School
30	Conclusion
31	Supporters
32	References
33	Appendix





Foreword

The 2015-16 programme has been an exceptional one for Debate Mate. Our after school debating clubs ran in 272 schools, with almost 600 inspiring university mentors delivering weekly sessions. Across the country, our programmes improve speaking and listening skills, critical and creative thinking, teamwork and leadership, while developing core confidence, resilience, and empathy. Interactions with inspiring university mentors help to raise aspirations to both tertiary education and meaningful employment. In addition, Debate Mate creates engaged citizens who have an interest in, and understanding of, the world around them.

This report describes our social impact in 2015-16, reviewing the context in which we work, outlining what our programmes have achieved thus far, and summarising key statistics compiled throughout the year. We hope that by continually monitoring our progress we can sustain the momentum we have already achieved and make improvements to increase our impact in the future. Debate Mate strives to combat educational disadvantage by improving Speaking and Listening attainment, enhancing employability skills, and strengthening emotional capacity in our students. We look forward to working with all those who share our vision.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Margaret McCabe'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

Margaret McCabe, Debate Mate Founder and CEO



Social Context

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY

We all know the statistics; education in this country is unfair. The UK continues to have the lowest rate of social mobility amongst OECD countries (OECD, 2015). This 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. Over 60 percent of these children will fail to achieve five A* to C GCSEs, including English and Maths, which significantly increases their chances of becoming unemployed upon leaving school (JRF, 2015). The most recent data from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) shows that only 23% of students eligible for FSM reach higher education by age 19, while the corresponding figure for students from private schools is 85%.

Growing up in a low-income household affects not only a child's prospects but also their aspirations. One in four young people from these households believes that few or none of their career goals are achievable, compared to only seven percent of

those who are not living in poverty (Princes Trust, 2011). 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, and 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 13.6% (O'Neill, 2016), and the high proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) – 12.0% (Delebarre, 2016). Again, those who are eligible for FSM are vastly over represented 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 (Delebarre, 2016). Over a quarter of those experienced a period of NEET of more than 12 months (Delebarre, 2016).

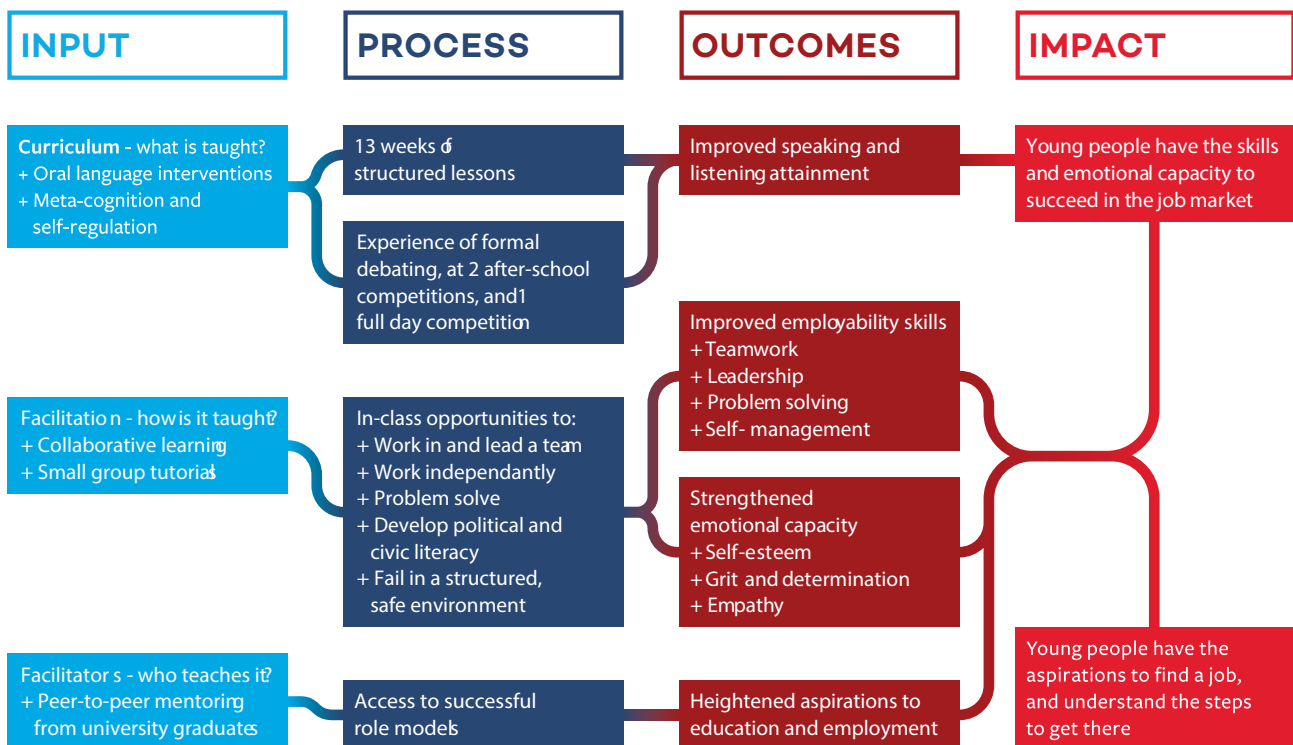
OUR SOLUTION

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). 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, as referenced in Bloom's Taxonomy, while also providing opportunities to succeed for students who need more support. The use of a peer-led programme raises students' aspirations and broadens the horizons of the brightest 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 competitive and aspiration-raising activity.

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 Birmingham in 2009, and then Bristol, Nottingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, and Glasgow in subsequent years. In 2009, the Primary Programme was launched in London, followed by Manchester in 2014 and Birmingham in 2015. Excitingly, 2016-17 will see a further expansion of the programme into Leeds.

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 curriculum, now called the Graduate School (see Section 6), attracts over 50 students each week in London, Birmingham, and Manchester.
- Since 2012, Debate Mate has run the Core Programme internationally, with permanent programmes now running locally in the USA and Jamaica and summer programmes running annually in Nepal and Rwanda. A summer programme in Kenya was piloted in August 2016.
- 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, one from each of our regions, as mentors challenged them to speak confidently and develop life-changing communication skills. The series culminated in a Grand Final at the House of Commons—the first time commercial cameras had been permitted to film inside the Palace of Westminster.
- In 2016, Debate Mate partnered with the Office of the Prime Minister to design and deliver a unique debating programme focused on the history and function of Number 10: ‘Downing Street Debates.’ Student from across 200 schools were asked to film and submit a short video about what they would do if they were prime minister for the day. The top 10 submissions were chosen by Number 10, and the students were invited to the Houses of Parliament for a debate. The top two teams then competed in a Grand Final, hosted and welcomed by David Cameron, in the State Rooms of Number 10.

Core Programme

Re-engagement 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

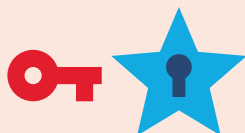
Aims



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-
dent 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



88% of students said they are better able to respond to and respectfully disagree with the ideas of others



83% of students said they feel more comfortable speaking up in class



82% of students said they take a more active role in the school community and the community in which they live



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 5 to 10 with 17 weeks of clubs and formal debating competitions, including the Debate Mate Cup, the Urban Debate League, and the Novice Cup. All elements of the programme have been designed with four central goals in mind:

- To accelerate attainment in Speaking and Listening
- To strengthen emotional capacity through building self-esteem and resilience
- To develop key employability skills such as leadership, teamwork, and self-management
- To heighten aspirations towards both tertiary education and meaningful employment

In 2015-16, the programme ran in 272 schools across London, Bristol, the West Midlands, Manchester, Nottingham, Liverpool, and – for the first time – Scotland. 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 students, who demonstrate the high calibre of debating towards which the students can progress. In 2015, over 4500 students attended Launch events in venues across the country. In London, our biggest ever launch event was held at the Emmanuel Centre, where 3695 students attended from 183 schools.

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 a 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. Seen motions are given to students in advance of the competitions, allowing them to develop research and preparation skills, while unseen 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 2016, students from all six regions travelled across the country to compete in the finals of the Debate Mate Cup, held at the Ham Yard Hotel in London, as well as the finals of the Urban Debate League, held at the House of Lords and the Oxford Union.

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

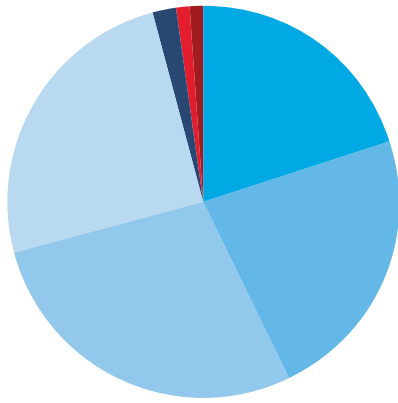
In 2015-16, Debate Mate worked in 104 secondary schools in London, 27 in the West Midlands, 21 in Manchester, 8 in Nottingham, 9 in Liverpool, 5 in Bristol, 5 in Edinburgh, and 4 in Glasgow. Our primary programme was made up of 63 schools in London, 19 in Manchester, and 7 in the West Midlands. The

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 on 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

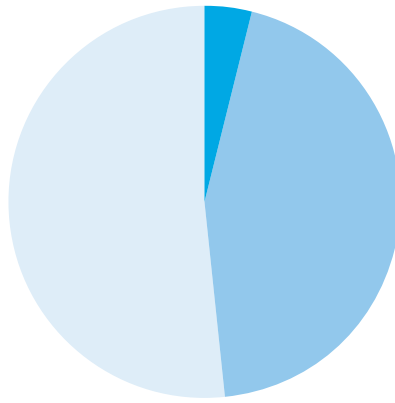
On average, over 4400 students took part in our 2015-16 Core Programme every week, with the average club reaching 17.5 students a session. Year on year, Debate Mate has increased the number of schools on the Core Programme by at least 10%.

Every year, we have a high rate of retention across the programme, with just as many students taking part in the competitions as those attending the after-school clubs. Of all the students that take part in our programme, 69% attend 10 or more of the 14 sessions.



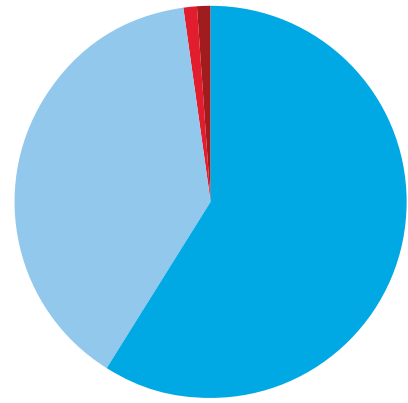
SECONDARY YEAR

20%	■	Year 7
23%	■	Year 8
28%	■	Year 9
25%	■	Year 10
2%	■	S1
1%	■	S2
1%	■	S3



PRIMARY YEAR

4%	■	Year 4
44%	■	Year 5
51%	■	Year 6



GENDER

59%	■	Female
39%	■	Male
1%	■	Other
1%	■	Prefer not to say

Inclusivity

Debate Mate works in areas of high child poverty, with one third of participating students in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM). True to our values of inclusion and equality, 10% of our students have Special Educational Needs (SEN) and 33% have English as an Additional Language (EAL)¹. These statistics are based on a survey of 58 primary and secondary schools, conducted in Week 6 of the

2015-16 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 to their learning.

¹ The national averages for these categories are 1.8% for students with a statement of SEN and 15% for students with English as an Additional Language.

CORE PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Following a consultation with the New Economic Foundation in 2010, Debate Mate designed a metric for each of the four goals stated previously. We worked closely with New Philanthropy Capital (Copps 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 (Goal 1: To accelerate attainment in Speaking and Listening)

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 Two 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.

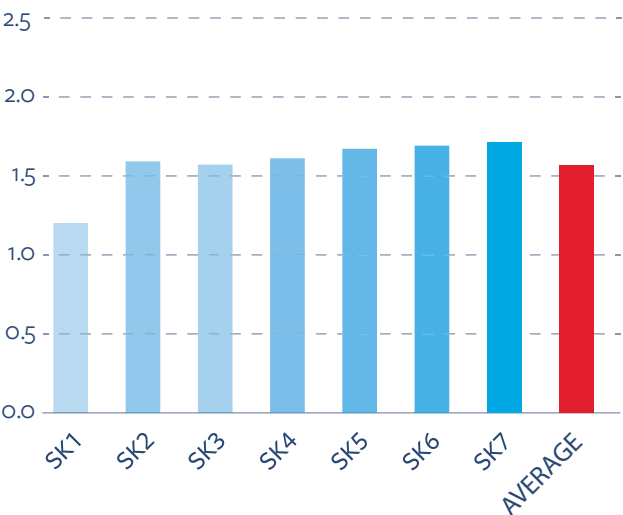
The results show that, overall, students make an average of 1.7 levels of progress over the course of the 17 week programme. To explain this figure further, a student averaging a level 3 will only occasionally engage in group discussion during preparation time, make points that are relevant but not structured, 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 90% of teachers have reported that Debate Mate has accelerated their pupils' progress in Speaking and Listening.

These assessments are moderated by teachers from the schools that the assessments take place in. The results this year are derived from a sample of 72 students from 19 schools in the 2015-16 programme year. All year groups from four to ten (and S1 to S3) are represented in the sample.

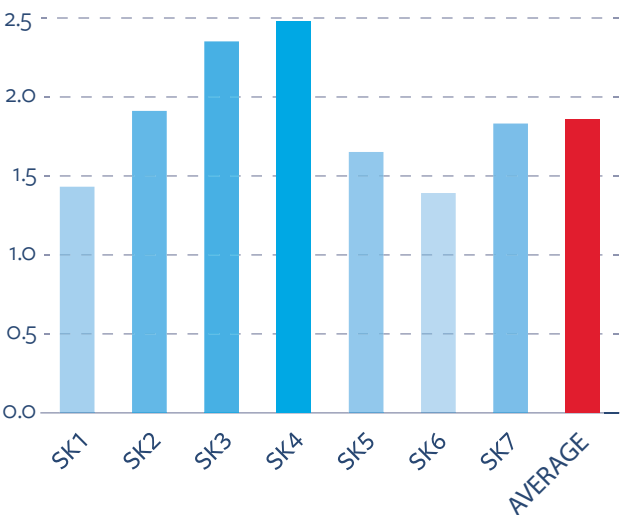
Debating has a massive impact on Speaking and Listening skills, as students learn not only

Secondary results — level of improvement



to articulate their ideas in a structured way but also to critically respond to other participants' 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.

Primary results — level of improvement



being almost 1.9 levels for students in Years 5 and 6. The greatest rates of progress are achieved in students' ability to structure their ideas and the quality of their spoken language – 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.

Levels of progress amongst primary school students are especially high, with the average rate of increase





Soft Skills Metric (Goals 2, 3, and 4)

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 the characteristics measured:

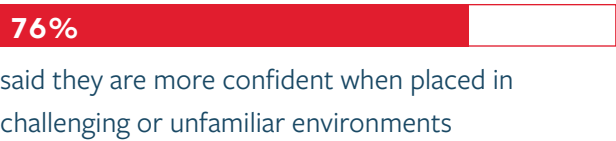
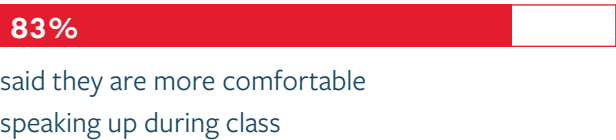
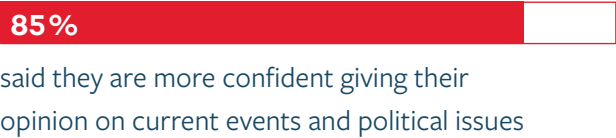
- Confidence and Self-Esteem, Goal 2 – Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965)
- Resilience, Goal 2 – Duckworth et al's Grit Scale (Duckworth and Quin, 2009)
- Leadership, Goal 3 – The Youth Experience Survey (Hansen et al, 2003)
- Teamwork and Self-Management, Goal 3 – Individual Protective Factors Index (Phillips and Springer, 1992)
- Critical thinking, Goal 3
- Aspirations, Goal 4

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'² – 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.

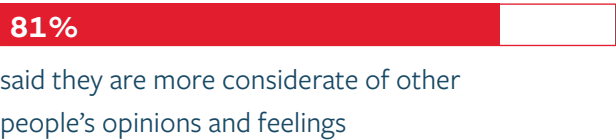
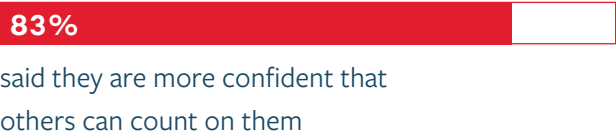
² Fair Education Alliance Report Card (2015) p. 7

In 2015-16, our annual student self-assessment was completed by 2412 students, over half of our total cohort. Of the students who completed the questionnaire, 98% said they enjoyed taking part in the Debate Mate sessions, with 72% of students enjoying it a great deal. Almost 30% of students had taken part in Debate Mate the previous year, indicating a high rate of return, and 96% said that they liked their mentors.

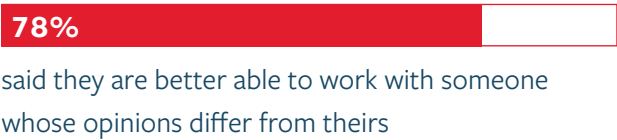
Confidence and Self-Esteem



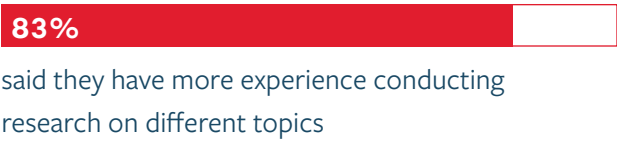
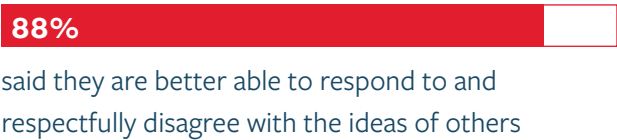
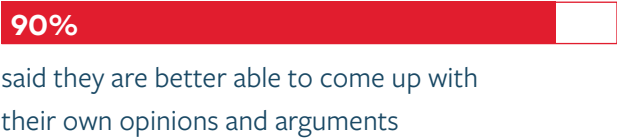
Leadership



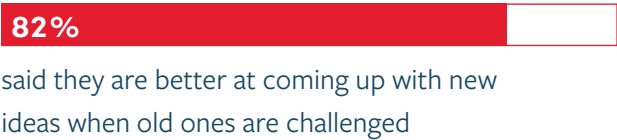
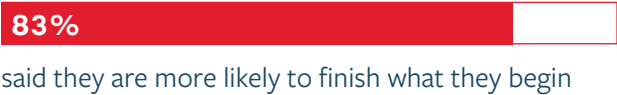
Teamwork and Self-Management



Critical Thinking



Resilience






To measure our impact on aspirations, we use a set of retrospective questions that reveal changes in students' attitudes about their future. Amongst secondary school students, many of whom will soon be making decisions about what they will do upon leaving school, 84% of respondents said the skills they gained from debating will help them to attend university. When asked to explain how debating and meeting a university mentor has affected their attitudes towards the future, students responded:

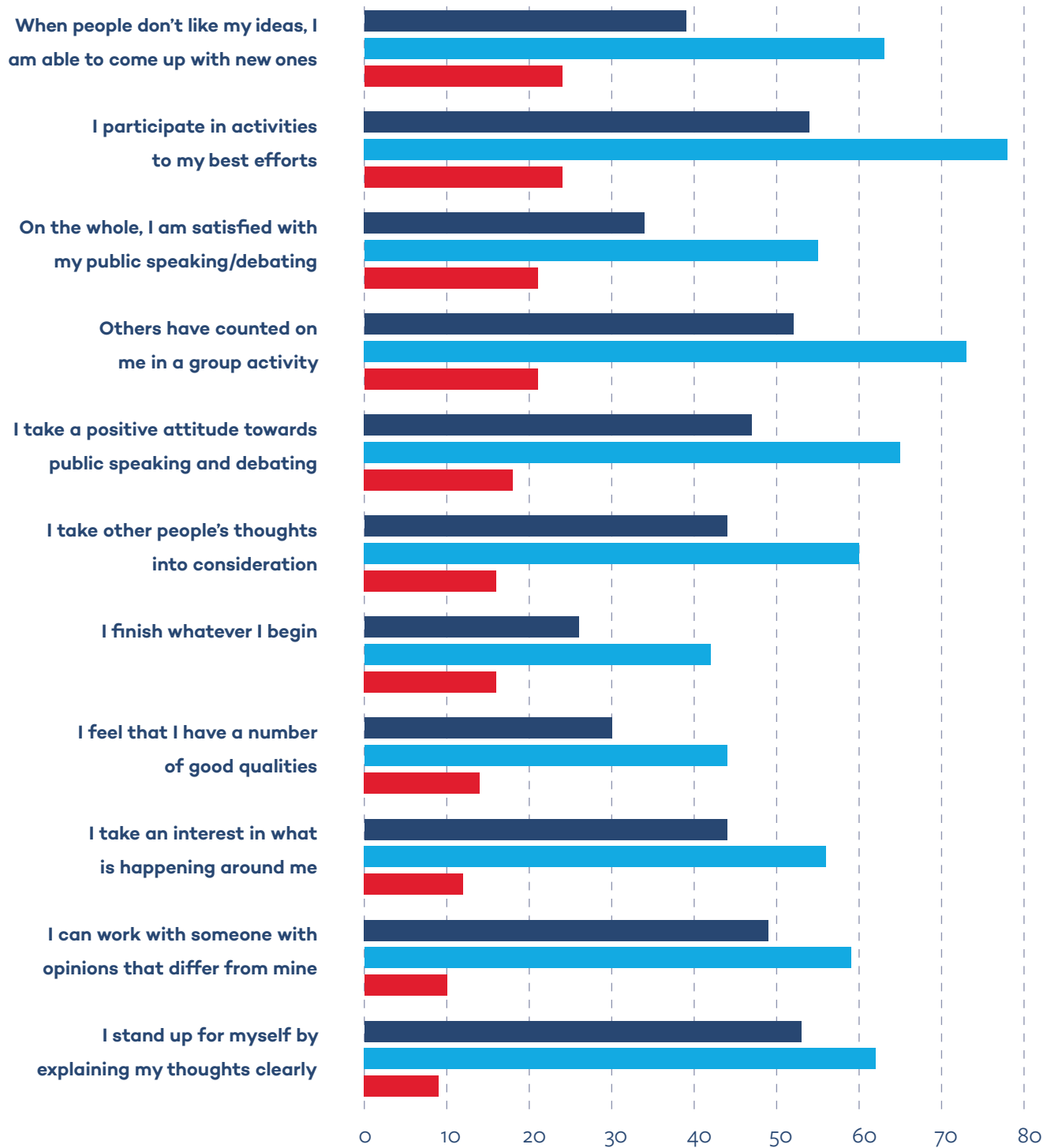
- My mentor has inspired to think about my future because she has shown me if you fail, keep on trying and you will get better. (Year 7, The Grange School)
- Meeting my mentor has taught me how to treat others respectfully and I have gained courage and confidence (Year 8, West Hill School)
- My mentor 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)
- Debating has made me more confident in the things that I say and has allowed me to vocalise my thoughts better and will therefore help me in interviews that I will have in the future. (Year 10, Eastlea Community School)

Pre- and Post-Programme Self-Evaluation

In order to meet Nesta's Level 2 Standard of Evidence (Puttick and Ludlow, 2013), Debate Mate has piloted pre- and post-programme student self-evaluations over the past two 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—5 primary and 7 secondary—over the course of the programme. We analysed the results and found the following:

Legend

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





The previous statistics show the significant positive impact the programme has on students' self perceptions, especially in their attitudes towards working with others, thinking critically, participating in school activities, and speaking publicly.

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 their students have gained confidence from the Debate Mate programme

91%

said that students demonstrate better leadership and teamwork skills

90%

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

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

85%

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

80%

of clubs elected student officers who continued leading the club

Between the conclusion of the programme (end of April) and the completion of the sustainability survey in the Summer term (mid-June), teachers reported an average of 93 unique hours of student-led debating that had taken place at their school. This means that, on average, over the course of the 6 weeks following the Debate Mate Cup, approximately 15 to 16 students at every school continued debating for 1 hour a week without a mentor present to facilitate.

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:



reported that their teaching ability has increased or increased greatly



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



reported that their confidence has increased or increased greatly



reported that their ability to challenge constructively and deal with confrontation has increased or increased greatly





The Core Programme in Action: Plymouth Grove Primary School

Plymouth Grove is located in one of Manchester's most deprived areas: 47.4% of its pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, nearly double the national average, and 10.4% have Special Educational Needs, also above the national average of 7.7%.

Despite the school's challenges, the Debate Mate programme has thrived and, according to teacher Sarah Kay Thompson, has been transformational for the students involved. Despite only joining the programme in September 2015, Plymouth Grove's Debate Mate club sustained an attendance of 25 students throughout the year and had fantastic competitive success. They were the champions of the nation-wide Primary Urban Debate League in May and were the first Manchester Primary school to ever make it to the Finals at the Houses of Parliament. After winning the Manchester Debate Mate Cup, the team was also invited to the University of Oxford for the National Finals Day in June.

Ms. Thompson describes the impact of these opportunities on the children:

"The students had never been on such a grand scale trip before. The only competitions we've had were regional sports events with neighbouring Manchester schools. None of the students had ever been to London before, let alone debated in the Houses of Parliament! It was a magical experience in an incredibly inspiring venue, and they won't ever forget it."

Year 5 and 6 teachers at the school observed that the students who benefited the most from the programme were those who struggled academically, especially students with English as an Additional Language or Special Educational Needs. Their development was visible across all school areas:

"The students were better at reading and writing, structuring their ideas, expressing their own opinions, and [Debate Mate has] had a massive impact on students' interest in current affairs. We saw a big change in collaborative learning and empathy; the students were working hard for their goals and supporting each other all year. Debate Mate has been a new bond and a new family for them."



“I believe in myself more and even though I still get nervous, I feel that I can do anything now.”

**Isabel, Plymouth
Grove Student**

One of the students, Isabel³, underwent a particularly positive transformation. Her teachers reported that in October, she was unable to stand up and give a presentation in front of a class due to her fear of public speaking. She was extremely quiet in her first few Debate Mate sessions and struggled with her self-confidence. By May, however, she was speaking for a full 3 minutes and went on to win the national championships of the Urban Debate League at the Houses of Parliament. She said, “I believe in myself more and even though I still get nervous, I feel that I can do anything now.”

Another student in the winning team was Ahmed, who consistently impressed the judges with his confidence, engagement with the other team, and

clear analysis of whatever topic he was confronted with. In previous years, however, his teachers had serious difficulties with his behaviour and self-discipline in school. Ms. Thompson and other teachers have noted that participating in Debate Mate helped him to channel his energy more productively, and his success in the programme has motivated him in other aspects of his schooling.

Many students in the club echoed these feelings, saying “I’m miles more confident in myself”, and “I no longer feel scared about getting my point across.” Reflecting her students’ enthusiasm, Ms. Thompson said that Debate Mate “has been the high point of my career as a teacher so far, and nothing could match the pride at seeing our students’ develop so much in this one year.”

³ All student names have been altered for protection reasons.

Re-engagement Programme

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Debate Mate' Re-engagement Programme targets students who have serious academic and behavioural difficulties. The 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 2015-16, the opportunity to run a Re-engagement club was extended to all schools on the Core Programme. After conversations with senior leadership teams and teachers, the programme ran in seven secondary schools and five primary schools, each of which selected a group 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 with their behaviour. 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

Re-engagement 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 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 in the programme, participants become remarkably engaged over time, with ten out of the twelve Re-engagement clubs sending at least one team to the Debate Mate Cup and Urban Debate League competitions in 2015-16.

The aim of the programme is to re-engage pupils into education. At the beginning of the programme, the pupils compete against other schools on the Re-engagement Programme, but by the end of the year they are expected to compete against schools and teams on the Core Programme. By putting a continual emphasis on professionalism and respect, mentors helps pupils to significantly improve their composure, focus, and discipline.

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

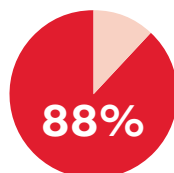
Across many of the soft skills development metrics, an even greater proportion of students on the Re-engagement programme reported self-improvement as compared to those on the Core Programme, indicating the significant benefits of Debate Mate for these students.



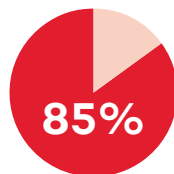
of students said they enjoyed taking part in Debate Mate sessions



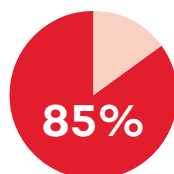
of students said they liked their mentor



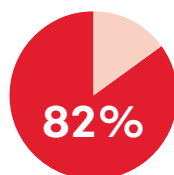
said they are more comfortable speaking up in class



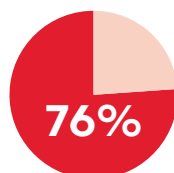
said they are more hard-working



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



said they are better able to work with someone whose opinions differ from theirs



The Re-engagement Programme in Action: Forest Hill School

At Forest Hill School, a group of ten Year 9s were taken out of their period 5 classes once a week to take part in the Debate Mate Re-engagement Programme. The boys on the programme were identified as having serious behavioural issues, being disengaged in the classroom, and at risk of exclusion.

The Re-engagement programme places particular focus on giving young people the skills to express themselves with composure when they disagree with someone. Alex⁴, a year 9 pupil who took part in the programme at Forest Hill, told us that he had previously been “renowned” for losing his temper, but that he had gained a vast amount of self-control from the Debate Mate programme. Alex said, “Before I would fight to get my point across, now I have to stand and listen to their point. If they’re right, I have to apologise; if they’re wrong I calmly and passively discuss with them why their point is invalid.”

Alex’s teacher, Helen Ta, noticed a similar change in her students’ behaviour, saying, “Before they’d get angry and have a go [at each other] but I’ve seen a lot of progress; it’s given them a lot more patience, it’s made them stop and think about how their language will affect others.” This testimonial is supported by the fact that 82% of pupils on the Re-engagement Programme felt they were better able to respond to and respectfully disagree with the ideas of others after participating in the club.

The programme also empowers pupils with the confidence to engage in their lessons outside of the Debate Mate sessions. Miss Ta said that “in lessons I’ve seen a big change in their behaviour—in the way they respond to adults, and the way they will take time to listen to other’s perspectives.” She continues, “they tend to stop and think a lot more, they put their hands up and wait. It’s really useful in Citizenship, English, History.” Another member

⁴ All student names have been altered for protection reasons.



“Before I would fight to get my point across, now I have to stand and listen to their point. If they’re right I have to apologise; if they’re wrong I calmly and passively discuss with them why their point is invalid.” Alex, Year 9

of the Forest Hill Re-Engagement Group was Daniel, who felt that the Debate Mate programme has helped him significantly in the classroom; “Every time I put my hand up in class, I feel more confident to say what I want to say”, he said.

Our statistics support these testimonials: 85% of pupils on the programme felt that they were now more hard working, 82% felt they could focus on something for a longer period of time, 88% felt more confident speaking up in class, and 85% feeling more confident coming up with their own opinions and arguments.

Finally, the boys at Forest Hill found a passionate and motivating role model in their mentor, Millie. Ms Ta told us that “they really do respect her, in the room I don’t have to behaviour manage, which

is rare. It proves that she’s changed a lot of them, Daniel especially. To have someone see him and have faith in him means a lot.” Alex described Millie as an “excellent mentor,” saying that “she’s just been really supportive, and really caring. Been more like a friend than she has a mentor, in a good way.”

Since the programme’s conclusion in May, Alex has been accepted into the Brit School, a prestigious performing arts school in Croydon, and states that “a part of me believes that Debate Mate is the reason I got into Brit School. In the interview they were asking about my school life, and my temper, and my mouth. It gave me the confidence to respond.” Daniel wants to become a lawyer and will be joining Debate Mate’s Core Programme club at Forest Hill in September. He is excited to once again compete in the Urban Debate League in 2017.

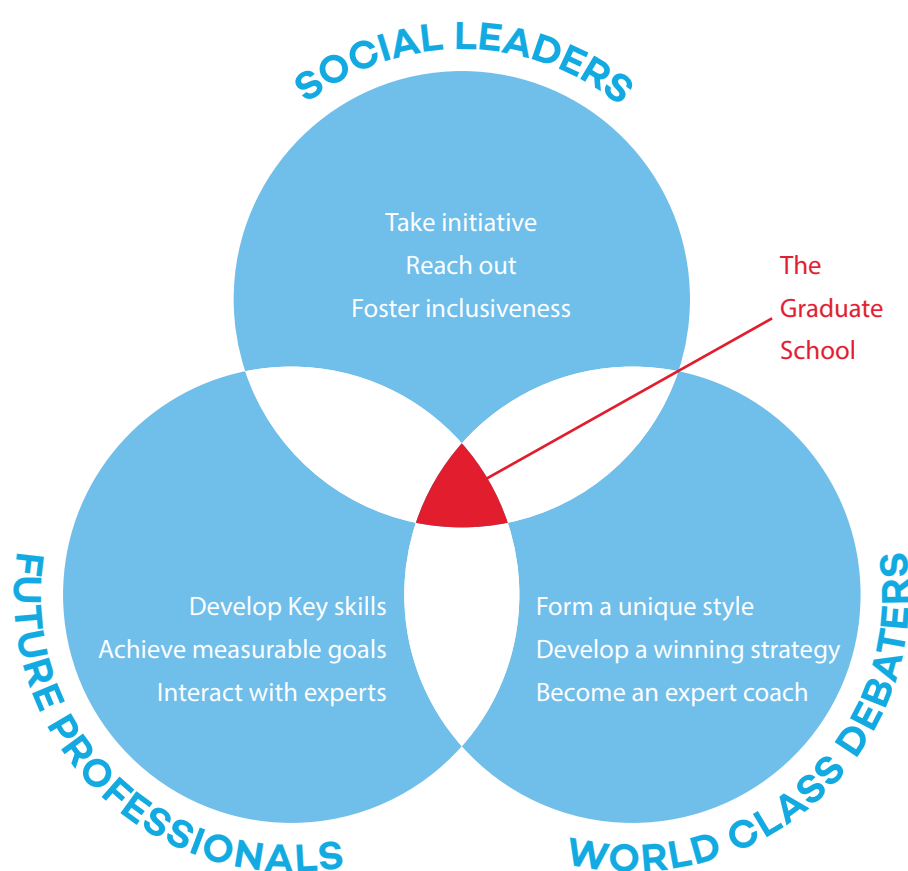
The Graduate School

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Debate Mate Graduate School takes students that 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, 40 to 50 Graduate School students participate in three-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 a high 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 elite debating competitions at both the school and university level.

51 Graduate School students competed at tournaments throughout the year, and alongside many individual achievements, teams made Grand Finals at six competitions, including Durham Schools, the world’s largest residential debating competition and one of the most competitive. One of the students, Ife Grillo, was also selected as a member of the England World Schools team, an incredibly impressive achievement that represents the first time a state-school student has been selected for the team since 2009. Ife, along with the other members of the team, went on to win the World Schools Debating Championships in Stuttgart in July 2016.

Social Leaders

On top of 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. In 2015-16, projects 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.

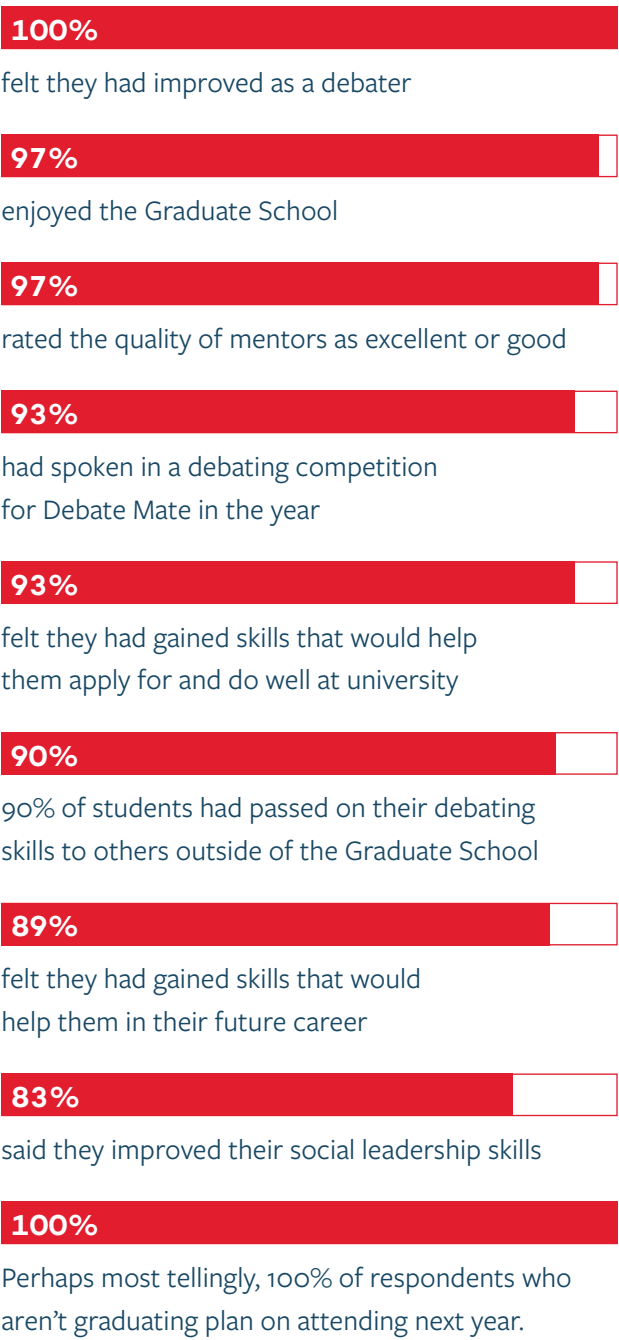
Future Professionals

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 international relations 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. The Graduate School mentors are selected for their ability to inspire, representing an array of university and career backgrounds.

FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

At the last Graduate School session, we collected feedback and self-evaluations from participating students. In all, we received 30 responses. Of those who responded:



The Graduate School in Action: Ife Grillo and George Benson

Debate Mate's Graduate School (formerly Debate Mate Plus) was established in London in 2011. Since then, the programme has grown massively, with over 50 students commuting to central London every Saturday morning to learn from the best university debaters in the country.

In the 2015-16 programme year, Graduate School students from London, Birmingham, and Manchester participated in nine debating competitions across the country and made it to the final for six of these. In November 2015, Ife Grillo, a student from Bridge Academy in Hackney, was selected as a member of the England National Schools Debating Team, joining four other students from Westminster School, Eton, Dulwich, and Alleyn's to compete in (and win) the competition in Stuttgart.

While these are remarkable achievements, the students are quick to say that their improved debating is only a small portion of what they've taken away from the programme this year:

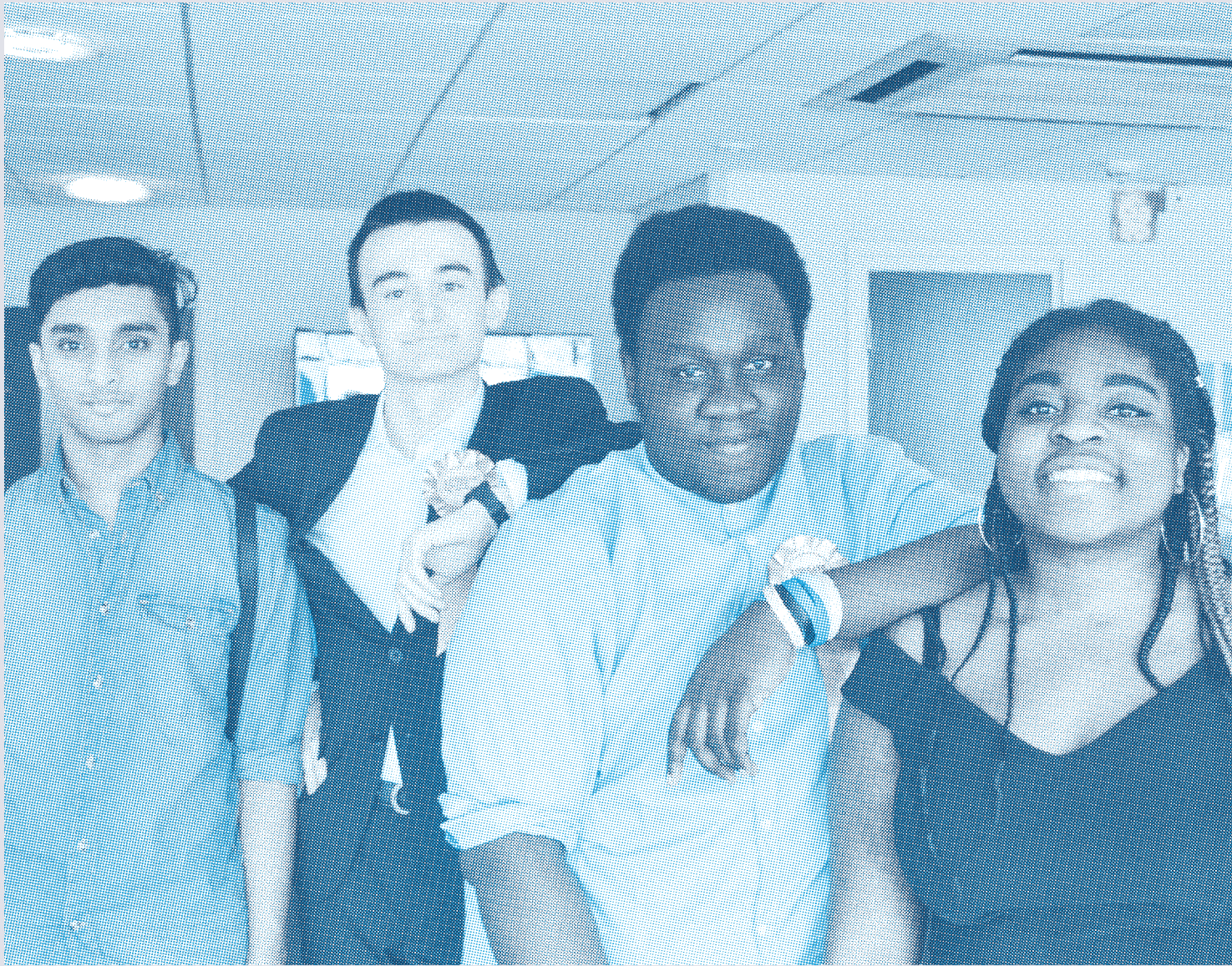
"I felt at first that I wasn't smart enough for debating or I wasn't good enough to do it. But if you just want to make new friends and hang out and improve, Grad School is the place to be. Grad School is a community. You'll develop as a speaker, that's unquestionable. But what you will develop more is long-lasting friendships. Even more than debating, that's what I loved about Grad School." – Ife Grillo, Year 13

"It's like having a family you didn't really know about. You come here, and at first you think 'These people are so good...' but you realize we all really get along with each other. It's like having a separate family you go to see on Saturdays— some people you look up to in a mentoring aspect, and other people you get on with more equally." – Louis Baxter, Year 11

For the students who are new to the Saturday sessions, having taken part in the Core Programme, the Graduate School represents a valuable chance to meet people from around the city and improve their debating skills. For older students, the programme has also provided them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills both during the weekly sessions and within their schools and communities. In 2015-16, Year 13 student George Benson, who participated in the Graduate School for three years and the Core Programme for two years before that, served as a Debate Mate mentor in his former secondary school and led sessions with younger Graduate School students. He also served as Chief Adjudicator in the secondary school invitational debating competition run by Graduate School students in November:

"For me, it's about coming and hanging out with the younger students and saying 'This is the information I've accumulated over years of coming to Grad School, what various mentors have taught me, now I'm going to pass it onto you.' It's all about sustainability and continuity. For the same reason, as soon as I got to Sixth Form I enrolled as a mentor, and I go back to Central Foundation, my old school, and I coach the kids there. Because I love Debate Mate, so I want to make sure people come and make sure they stay."

Having competed against each other at Debate Mate tournaments for many years (and been self-proclaimed debate rivals), Ife and George are now not only speaking on the same team but also good friends. They competed in and made it to the Grand Final of the Durham Schools competition together. As they both graduate from secondary school and look forward to university, they are passionate about the way the Debate Mate programme has transformed them.



George Benson (second from left) and Ife Grillo (second from right).

Ife says, “I go into situations now and think ‘there’s no reason why I won’t be able to succeed or I won’t be able to thrive because I’ve done it before, I can do it in any environment.’ For me it wasn’t even about debating. It was about believing that I can thrive in any environment, even if I’m not used to it.”

“I would stand up on a platform and people would listen to what I had to say. It was the first time I thought “I matter and what I say matters. I could really change people’s opinions.” And if you can change people’s opinions you can literally change the world.”

George agreed, saying “If Grad School’s given me one thing, it’s the ability to stand up for myself, no matter who I’m up against.”

We look forward to watching these students grow as they enter university and pursue their respective career paths. Both Ife and George will continue to mentor on the Core Programme next year and pass on their substantial debating knowledge to new generations of Debate Mate students.



Conclusion

As Debate Mate approaches its ninth year, we are constantly looking to build upon our successes. By carefully monitoring our progress and evaluating our impact, we hope to reach even more students and provide even better support to schools already on the programme. In the 2016-17 programme year, we will further develop our alumni network so that participating students can continue to benefit from the opportunities that Debate Mate provides beyond the Core Programme.

Internally, the alumni network will enable us to track students' progress as they enter college, university, and work, widening the scope of our monitoring and evaluation. We will also continue gathering data for a long-term pilot study on the effects of Debate Mate on student aspirations to better understand how our work contributes to the wider goals of the Fair Education Alliance such as reducing educational inequality and tackling social immobility.

We will continue to emphasise the importance of recruiting students from all backgrounds and

abilities to take part in the club. In order to have an even greater impact on students' aspirations, we will be creating more opportunities for students to think about their options beyond secondary school and encourage them to have conversations with mentors about their futures. We are also looking forward to the expansion of our Re-engagement Programme into more schools, including those in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester.

Through our Core, Re-engagement, 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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Social Impact Report
2015-2016

