

# DEBATE MATE

## ANNUAL REPORT

### 2018-2019



DEBATE  
MATE

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**LEARN TODAY. LEAD TOMORROW.**

# A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER AND CEO



I am so lucky to do the job I do, and our 2018-19 programme year proved this yet again. Each week, over 5,000 students from over 240 schools around the UK took part in their after-school Debate Mate clubs, delivered by nearly 500 of our inspirational university student mentors. In my eyes, every one of our students is a winner, a credit to themselves, their school and their community.

Every year, our programme expands to reach even more young people around the world, and this year was no exception. This was made possible by my fantastic team, who are incredibly hard-working, and dedicated to making the programme the success that it is! What makes our team particularly special is that this year we welcomed two students to the office who had taken part in the Debate Mate programme whilst at school, and are now off to study medicine at Imperial and history at Oxford, respectively. Excitingly, this year another student, Zarina, who captained the England Team at the World Schools Debating Championships in Thailand, is joining us full-time.

We also celebrated our 10-year Anniversary Party, in memory of Alan Rickman, who was a great supporter of ours. Our students across the country competed to reach the final of the Alan Rickman Cup, which was won by The Academy of St Francis of Assisi, from Liverpool. We were also invited to close the Bloomberg Equality Summit, with a debate surrounding diversity, equality and inclusion in business. One of our students - Rushma, aged 14 from Birmingham - competed in a debate chaired by actor Michelle Rodriguez. Our Primary Programme has also been spectacular, with students showcasing their skills monthly at our Platinum 100 Breakfast Debates hosted by Fortnum & Mason, The Beaumont, The Dorchester Collection and many others. It is always wonderful to see young talent in our Primary Programme, and having them as Debate Mate ambassadors is very special.

This year, we have reached students in Japan, Rwanda, Nepal, Dubai and Jamaica, and to date we have supported nearly 100,000 young people around the world!

I could go on about how wonderful our students are. But for now, all that is left to say is a big thank you for the dedication and support of everyone who helps Debate Mate thrive – from the supporters of our programme, to our Platinum 100 Club, our incredible board members, to my highly motivated and dynamic team, and our committed mentors and teachers. I look forward to the next 10 years!

**Margaret McCabe**

# WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

The UK has one of the lowest rates of social mobility amongst OECD countries (OECD, 2018). This manifests early, with the socio-economic backgrounds of children influencing their ability to develop and learn at school; a child growing up in poverty in the UK is more likely to achieve lower academic qualifications, have lower aspirations, and have a lower skill set than their better-off peers. These three factors influence their ability to access higher education, quality apprenticeships, or skilled work upon leaving school.

Social mobility has been stagnant in the UK for

**4 years**

Children from a working-class background are less likely to end up in high-paying jobs

**80 %**

Those from working-class backgrounds earn

**24 %**

less a year than those from more privileged backgrounds

(The Social Mobility Commission, State of the Nation 2018-19)



**1.5 million**

more children expected to fall into poverty between 2010 and 2021

(Professor Philip Alston United Nations, 2018)

# THE IMPACT OF DISADVANTAGE



1/3



47%



of students in receipt of Free School Meals leave primary school without having met expected **reading, writing and mathematics** levels

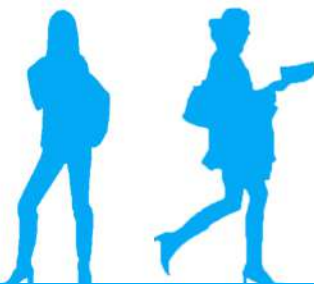
of children growing up in homes with low cultural capital **expect to go to university**, compared to 91% of students growing up in homes with high cultural capital



Extra-curricular activities are **less likely** to be offered in schools with a high proportion of students from low income families, with **academic activities** being the least likely of activities to be offered. Students have also reported a **lack of confidence** in their own ability as a barrier to taking part in activities

Students in receipt of Free School Meals will be

**HALF AS  
LIKELY TO  
achieve 5 A\*-C  
(or 4-9s) at GCSE**  
compared to the  
national average



24%

of students in receipt of Free School Meals reach higher education by the age of 19, compared to 85% of students who attend a private school

Graduates who were in receipt of Free School Meals

**EARN  
11.5%  
LESS**

than others 5 years after graduating



Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are

**TWICE AS  
LIKELY TO  
DROP OUT**

of their studies at university



Key 21st-Century **transferable skills** are crucial to **progression onto tertiary education** and to be successful in the professional world

# WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

Founded in 2007, Debate Mate tackles social mobility by delivering after-school debate clubs in schools in areas of high deprivation, using a highly effective peer-to-peer mentoring model. Our debating programmes, delivered by inspirational university student mentors from the UK's top universities, focus on **building key transferable skills** and **raising students' aspirations** to empower them to be successful both academically and in the professional world.

The advantages of debating are widespread and have been highlighted in a joint report by CfBT Education Trust, The English Speaking Union and EdComs by Akerman and Neale. As well as providing evidence of a link between debating, subject knowledge and academic attainment, through boosting students' motivation and engagement in a subject, the report demonstrates the significant impact that debating has on developing key transferable skills.

**INCREASED  
ASPIRATIONS**

## **Key transferable 21st Century Skills**

**Teamwork  
Leadership**

**Communication Skills  
Critical & Creative Thinking  
Core Confidence**

Since being founded, Debate Mate has designed and delivered accessible extra-curricular programmes to young people from non-selective state schools in areas of high deprivation, providing thousands of young people with the opportunity to participate in a competitive and aspiration-raising activity.





Debate Mate works in areas of high child poverty all across the UK, with some of the highest levels of educational disadvantage. We believe that every student should have the opportunity to debate, and should leave school with the **aspiration, core confidence and skill set necessary to succeed** in whatever they wish to do.

We have developed a variety of different programmes to engage students with ages ranging from 10 to 18. From helping to re-engage those students who are disillusioned with mainstream education, to supporting Debate Mate students be part of, and even captain, the England's World Schools debate team - we show that **debating is for everyone**.

## DEBATE MATE IN NUMBERS

**5,000**  
**students**

46% are in receipt of free school meals

43% have English as an additional language

**242**  
**primary & secondary schools**

**7** Manchester, Liverpool, London,  
Nottingham, Leeds, Bristol,  
The West Midlands  
**cities**



# THE CORE PROGRAMME

The Core Programme is a 17-week debating programme comprised of 14 teaching weeks and three weeks preparing for, and participating in, national debating competitions - the largest of their kind in the UK!

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

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

## THE LAUNCH EVENT

The Core Programme starts with students and teachers being invited to watch a show debate featuring champion debaters and former and current Debate Mate students.

Through seeing a range of role models on stage, this event breaks down any previous stereotypes students might have about debating.



## THE AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS

Debate Mate recruits and trains university students from top UK universities to deliver our 17-week programme. We place over 500 university student mentors in schools across the UK to deliver our unique debating curriculum to students in years five to ten.

Our curriculum focuses on giving students the skills to express themselves clearly, concisely and persuasively, and teaches them to research and argue for statements they might not necessarily agree with. This teaches the vital skill of empathy, which allows students to consider issues from multiple viewpoints.

Students are also taught how to deliver points stylistically, structure arguments in a convincing manner, and to debate strategically.



# NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Debate Mate runs two national competitions each year, for all Debate Mate students to take part in. The after-school **Urban Debate League**: an after-school competition where students compete against schools in their local area, and the full-day **Debate Mate Cup**: across the regions, students debate against each other at an inspiring university venue.



## NATIONAL FINALS

The schools that finish at the top of our national Urban Debate League leaderboard, or win their regional round of the Debate Mate Cup, are invited to our national finals, held at prestigious venues across the UK such as the Houses of Parliament and Christ Church College, Oxford.



## SUSTAINABILITY

We ensure that students continue to use the skills they have developed during our programme by encouraging them to undertake local leadership projects in their school and/or local community. Students elect a club president and three officers to continue running the clubs after our mentors have left, becoming leaders and instilling a culture of debating in their schools.



# OUR RESULTS

Debate Mate's programmes help students to develop skills that are key to success in higher education and work in the 21st century. To evaluate our impact, we carry out assessments which measure students' hard and soft skills, reflecting how students have progressed as a result of their participation on our programme. The evaluations also inform changes to the programme year on year.

## HARD SKILLS ASSESSMENT

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 National Curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Department for Education, 2014). These guidelines were mapped onto the skills that Debate Mate teaches to form a holistic metric that tracks students' progress continuously up to GCSE and beyond. Debate Mate's metric tracks progress through seven skill categories:

**SK1 Collaboration**  
**SK2 Listening and Responding Appropriately**  
**SK3 Articulating and Justifying an Argument**  
**SK4 Using Evidence**  
**SK5 Structuring Speeches**  
**SK6 Style**  
**SK7 Quality of Spoken Language**

**Students  
with English  
as an additional  
language make  
MORE PROGRESS  
than their peers**

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 5 to 10. Trained members of our team use this metric to assess students in the first and last debate of the year, moderated by teachers.

Our results show that on average, students (secondary and primary) make 1.4 levels of progress throughout the year, with students who speak English as an additional language making more progress than their peers over the course of the programme. This is a remarkable achievement, and is supported by the fact 87% of our teachers report that Debate Mate has accelerated student progress in Speaking and Listening.

Debating has a significant impact on Speaking and Listening skills, as students learn not only to articulate their ideas in a structured way, but also to 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 securing a job, maintaining employment, and progressing at work.

## SOFT SKILLS ASSESSMENT

To monitor our impact on soft skills, we have developed a student self-assessment survey to collect data on each of our measurement objectives: **confidence, 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 of each of the characteristics measured.

At the end of the 2018-19 programme year, 2292 students completed our post-programme survey. They were asked 'Since you have started debating at school, how have the following things changed?'. We have highlighted some of their responses below.

**86%** are more confident when speaking up in class\*

are better able to use feedback to reflect on their learning and improve their skills **90%**

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

**89%** are more confident giving their opinion on issues in the world around them\*

**89%** are more likely to put their ideas forward when working in a group

**91%** of students are better able to come up with their own opinions and arguments

**93%** say the skills they have learnt will help them succeed in further studies and training\*\*

**90%** are more likely to help others when working in a group\*

\* Results from our Primary School Programme

\*\* Results from our Secondary School Programme

# ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMES

## BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

### THE ACCELERATE PROGRAMME

Through teaching our unique debating methodology during school time, the Accelerate Programme empowers students who have been identified as having behavioural issues, being disengaged in the classroom and/or at risk of exclusion.

This intervention programme focuses on giving students the skills to express themselves clearly and to disagree with composure - improving their ability to engage in the classroom, and more widely at school and elsewhere. Students take part in 15-weeks of teaching sessions and an exclusive Accelerate competition, before being invited to take part in the Debate Mate Cup alongside their peers on the Core Programme.

Last year we ran this programme in 40 primary and secondary schools across Manchester, the West Midlands and London, reaching over 300 students.

**Developing the  
CONFIDENCE,  
DESIRE,  
& SKILLS  
to participate  
in the classroom  
and beyond!**



### DEBATEBOX



Over the last three years, Debate Mate's DebateBox programme, delivered in collaboration with The Harrow Club, has taken place in West London. The 11-week programme is run for up to 15 students from participating schools, selected by their teachers due to their level of disengagement with school.

The programme consists of weekly sessions where students participate in an hour of boxing coaching and an hour of Debate Mate training. The programme focuses on the shared skills needed to excel in both disciplines: self-control, creative and critical thinking, resilience, determination, commitment and self-confidence. The programme works towards a competitive DebateBox Cup in which students debate and box in succession, in an innovative and engaging format.

# ADVANCED DEBATING PROGRAMMES

## DEBATE MATE PLUS

Teaching students to use debating skills in the working world



Now a permanent feature of our offerings in London, our Debate Mate Plus programme is aimed at 15-18 year olds and designed to encourage and enable students to put their debating skills to use in the real world. Students are guided through a curriculum focused on the application of debating skills in a professional context, engaging with professionals from a range of industries throughout the course of the programme.



Having attended our programme launch event at Monzo HQ, students from eleven schools across London took part in weekly after-school debating sessions and attended competitions at Simply Business and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with whom we have a growing relationship.

## THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Every Saturday morning, students who have excelled on our Core Programme in London have the opportunity to receive advanced debate coaching and take part in social leadership projects in their own communities.

Our students compete in, and thrive at, national debating competitions historically dominated by students from the top private schools. Graduate School students attended eight different debating competitions, regularly reaching the final rounds and topping speaker rankings. Debating alongside some of the top private school and university student debaters from around the country helps to not only develop our students' debating skills, but to build confidence competing against and with students from a range of backgrounds and abilities.

Helping to create  
**WORLD-CLASS  
DEBATERS**

**The last two captains  
of the England World  
Schools team were  
former DM students!**

In 2018-19 we piloted this programme in Manchester, and are looking forward to making this a part of our permanent offering in the city for the upcoming year!



# A YEAR IN A DEBATE MATE SCHOOL

## SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Based in the South London community of Camberwell, Sacred Heart Catholic School has had a remarkable year on the Debate Mate programme, with over a hundred students taking part in one of the three Debate Mate programmes run in the school over the course of the academic year. The achievements of the students and teachers at Sacred Heart are all the more impressive when it is considered that half of the students attending Sacred Heart speak English as an additional language, and that the school has a higher percentage of students in receipt of FSM than the national average.

### PROGRAMME LAUNCHES

**October 2018**

For the fourth year in a row, Sacred Heart brought 30 eager students - new to debating - to the Emmanuel Centre to watch an exciting show debate, which featured four more experienced students from their own school.

Students watched and offered floor speeches during a debate on the motion 'This House would lower the voting age to 16', chaired by the BBC's Nick Robinson. Following the Debate, two Year 11 students from Sacred Heart interviewed Nick Robinson for our YouTube channel.

The Debate Mate Plus launch saw 20 students attend a show debate hosted at Monzo Bank!



### CLUBS START **November 2018**

**"Watching the pupils debate is a real pleasure, not only seeing the confidence and skill that they have, but seeing how quickly they learn and the passion and competitive drive that they have to improve and win is truly inspiring"**

**– Lead Teacher at Sacred Heart**

The week following the programme launches, our Core Programme, Accelerate and Debate Mate Plus clubs started. Over 100 students from across all year groups attended debating clubs throughout the week.

Running different programmes allows students of all ages and abilities to join in the clubs and develop their skills and confidence.



## SHOWCASE DEBATES

### Autumn Term

In striving to raise students' aspirations, and to showcase the skills that our programme teaches, we hold frequent showcase debates with supporters and corporate partners. Having been a well-established Debate Mate school for a number of years, students at Sacred Heart have been able to hone their debating skills throughout their time at the school. By the time they are in the upper years, students at Sacred Heart are eloquent and confident speakers, and have become excellent ambassadors for the impact of our programme.

Sacred Heart students were invited to speak at showcase debates at the Institute for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability, Mews of Mayfair and Monzo - all in the space of a couple of months!

## DEBATE MATE PLUS

### COMPETITION December 2018

After weeks of coaching from their mentor, students attended the first round of the Debate Mate Plus Urban Debate League at Simply Business and The Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Students took part in tours of the venues, Q&As with staff who work there, and participated in two debates: 'This House believes that the media should not report on the private lives of politicians', and 'This House would make people take a politics test before they were eligible to vote.'

After a strong initial performance, Sacred Heart placed fourth in the league!

**"Doing four years of debating has helped me become more confident and speak more eloquently; I now feel prepared for the outside world. Being part of the Debate Mate Plus programme has offered me loads of opportunities that I am really glad to have been part of."**

**- Year 12 Student**



# SHOWCASE DEBATES

## Spring Term

After consistently impressing crowds throughout their Autumn term, Sacred Heart students were invited to speak at corporate debates at the Better Futures Conference, Potato (digital products) and the Oriental Club, debating topics from climate change and investment, to the Internet of Things!

## FIRST CORE COMPETITION

### February 2019

In February, it was the turn of Sacred Heart year 7 & 8 debate teams to take part in their first ever debates. Students attended the first round of the Urban Debate League at La Retraite School and debated the motion **'This House would put modern artists and writers on the curriculum, over older and dated art and literature'**.



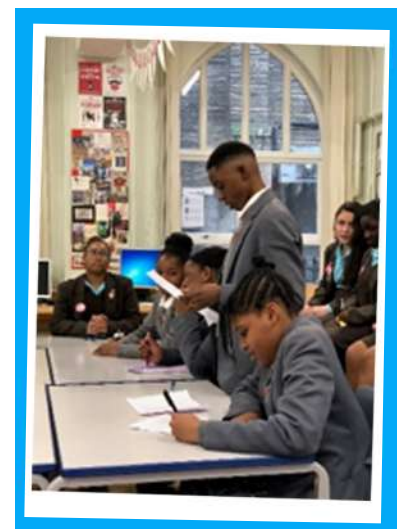
## ACCELERATE COMPETITION

### February 2019

In February, students on the Accelerate Programme took part in two rounds of competitive debating after-school. The students on the programme gained a great deal from the experience - primarily academic confidence and teamworking skills, improved relationships with their teachers and peers - and were willing to push themselves to understand and discuss topics that they would not normally have attempted before taking part.

**"The programme had particularly positive effects on certain individual students who had previously held reputations for negative behaviour or being too argumentative with teachers and their superiors. For these pupils, the opportunity to shine using their competitive and confrontational tendencies, showing them how to best utilise their skills, made a real difference to how they related to adults and their general behaviour in school."**

**- Sacred Heart Lead Teacher**



## HOSTING COMPETITIONS

### March 2019

Hosting the competition for seven schools from across South London, Sacred Heart entered three teams into the second round of the Urban Debate League for years 7 to 10 with older students also volunteering to support the running of the competition after-school. Incredibly, **all teams won every round of debates** that they took part in, making Sacred Heart the overall winners for all of the debates that took place that evening - clearly debating at home proved to be an advantage for the students!

## DEBATE MATE CUP

### April 2019

Our programme culminates with a full-day debating competition. Students enjoyed a show debate and took part in three debates themselves, including on the prepared motion **'This House believes a carbon tax on businesses is the most effective way to tackle climate change'**, debating excellently and showcasing their skills!



## STUDENT-LED TRAINING AND SHOW DEBATE

### May 2019



After a day when the entire year seven cohort took part in a debating workshop, students who had taken part in Debate Mate throughout the year, from across all year groups, ran and managed an event to showcase the skills, experience, and overall advantages that learning to debate professionally had given them, encouraging as many of their peers as possible to get involved in the clubs next year!

## DEBATE MATE & SAVE THE CHILDREN

### Last week of term 2019



The last full week of term ended on a high, with a selection of Debate Mate students in Year 9 going to voice their views in Parliament on the use of world aid funds. Students spoke with MPs, senior figures and the Secretary of State for International Development, voicing their opinions on what the UK's priorities should be when it comes to international aid.

**Thank you from Debate Mate to everyone at Sacred Heart for all your hard work throughout the year - we have loved sharing so much with you!**

# LOOKING TO THE YEAR AHEAD



Over the past ten years Debate Mate has reached tens of thousands of young people in the UK, and around the world, teaching key transferable skills that set up our students for success in whatever they do in the future.

Over the coming year we are excited at the prospect of enhancing our debating skill teaching via our new online platform. This will expand the geographical scope of the work we do. It is our hope that every student leaves school with the skill set and core confidence to succeed and the online platform is a huge step towards achieving this.

With our additional programmes expanding across the country even more students can partake in our debating programmes. We are pleased to announce the expansion of our Debate Mate Plus programme in London this year to 15 schools. In times of structural economic change, key transferable skills will be integral to preparing students for the future world of work.

We look forward to continuing to see former Debate Mate students mentoring with us, and inspiring young people across the UK. We hope to develop and expand to maximise our reach and empower students to achieve their goals.



**LEARN TODAY. LEAD TOMORROW.**



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