

Platanos College News

Thursday 7th December 2017

Platanos College Debating Society

Our ever expanding Debating Society has had a promising start to the year this term. We have welcomed back returning club members from last year and greeted new pupils who are eager to learn a new skill. Here at Platanos College, we believe that public speaking is an important part of pupils' development and we have a number of initiatives running to help pupils achieve their potential.

Happily, we are working with Debate Mate again this year who have extended their agenda and we are now running three of their programmes in the school: Debate Mate Core Programme, Debate Mate Accelerate and Debate Mate Plus. Debate Mate is an educational charity that runs after school debating clubs. Pupils who enrol in the programmes can develop their communication skills, higher order thinking, leadership and teamwork skills. It can help with confidence and self-esteem and furthermore, it gives students the chance to engage with the world beyond the classroom and address issues that affect them, their communities and the wider world. Finally, it can also increase academic achievement.





The Debate Mate Core program runs after school every Tuesday from 3pm-4pm. We currently have 24 pupils taking part in this afterschool club with a good mixture of returning and new pupils. This week saw the pupils who are new to the programme take part in their first full debate. The pupils were putting the skills they have been learning into practice and it was very exciting to see the potential they have.



Alongside this, the Accelerate program takes place during school hours and is targeted towards more disengaged students. It aims to foster confidence and desire to participate in classroom discussion. This is the second year that Platanos have taken part in the Accelerate programme. The pupils who participated last year were lucky enough to be invited to debate in the prestigious location of the House of Parliament; a wonderful opportunity for all involved. Furthermore, we were happy to welcome a couple of last year's Accelerate pupils into the Core programme this year.



Debate Mate launched a new advanced programme this year: Debate Mate Plus. This is aimed at Year 11 and above and hopes to address the widening skills gap between education and employment. Debate Mate Plus offers pupils debate training, academic support, CV and interview support, mentor training and general 'life admin' training. We currently have 8 pupils, most of whom completed the Core programme, taking part in this new initiative and their enthusiasm for debating is fantastic.

Lastly, this week a group of 17 pupils took part in a 3 hour debate training session as part of The Hyde Park Speak Up Challenge. The session kicked off with a show debate from the pupils who participated in the challenge last year and won the competition. The Hyde Park Speak Up Challenge gives pupils an opportunity to debate in the historic surroundings of Speakers' Corner and develop 21st century skills such as critical thinking and communication. These pupils have no previous debating experience and came out of the session with a new found enthusiasm for public speaking. We look forward to the competition which takes place in the summer term.



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