



Manchester Debating Competition

Congratulations to Elohor, Fergus, Ramneek and Vрати who gave up their Sunday to step up to the challenge of participating against other schools from all over the world in the Manchester Schools Debating competitions on February 6th.

Both teams were given the challenge of being opening government in the first round - meaning their thinking time was limited as they tried to negotiate new software, prep with each other across Googlemeet and come up with arguments for the challenging motion: *This House Proposes that scientists are generally perceived as ordinary people who chose science as a career, rather than as geniuses* - all in less than 15 minutes!

Our sides made strong cases for the proposition: considering stereotyping; the creation of fixed mindsets making people feel like they can't participate in the field if they aren't immediately geniuses at school; and the discreditation of other fields. The opposition came back with arguments around the importance of the public believing in scientific research and especially the recent importance of this in the pandemic.

Other debates followed on three more challenging motions:

This House Prefers a world where art that is physically separable from the artist is not publicly connected to the artist.

This House Believes That governments of developed nations should significantly increase spending and finance this increase through borrowing.

This House Regrets Ukraine agreeing to the Budapest Memorandum [in which Ukraine agreed to complete nuclear disarmament in 1991]

Although, they didn't break to the final - all teams improved performances throughout the day. Moreover, all four students were excellent examples of the behaviours in our ethos statement.

They were:

Engaged: debating all day long engaging with a range of issues and arguments.

Enthusiastic: giving up a whole Sunday (with an early start); grappling with new tech; not making excuses but tackling debates with positivity and gusto from the outset.

Enquiring: researching and considering arguments feverishly in the fifteen minutes allocated prep time.

Confident: all novices but completely undaunted in the face of more seasoned competitors from all over the world. They made their cases calmly and confidently on all topics.

Mannerly: dealing with other competitors politely but firmly; politely thanking and congratulating the oppositions; socialising with opponents with characteristic friendliness after the debate.

Mindful: listening (respectfully) to opposing arguments; accepting POI challenges; considered rebuttals

Motivated: were brave enough to enter the unknown and be prepared to compete. Then, despite not winning rounds initially had the grit to dig in and keep competing.

Creative: inventive with arguments and managed to dismantle opponents' arguments skilfully

Confident: all novices but completely undaunted in the face of more seasoned competitors from all over the world.

Cooperative: collaborating with partners throughout the day. As well as cooperating with competitors within the formal rules of debating impeccably all day.

All in all, the students did a fantastic job representing NHGS on an international stage - and Mr O'Neill and I had a thoroughly enjoyable day listening to the debates - and couldn't be prouder of them.