

Business Language Champions “The war of the words” Year 12 French debating challenge



On Friday 8 December four Year 12 students from Ratcliffe College: Hebe Jackson, Sarah Astill, Molly Edwards and Olivia Delargy, took part in a French debating competition at Stamford school.

As part of the day, there was a talk from a former Special Forces interpreter on the importance of learning languages, as well as training on presenting and speaking in public.

The girls' first debate was “cette chambre est d’avis que les réseaux sociaux sont un moyen de communication efficace pour les chefs d’état” (this house believes that social networks are an effective method of communication for heads of state).

The girls had to oppose this motion and beat The Perse school in Cambridge, to qualify for the second round, when they had just **fifteen** minutes to prepare their second debate: “Cette chambre est d’avis que Beethoven a autant d’influence que Coldplay” (this house believes that Beethoven has just as much influence as Coldplay). Once again, the girls delivered convincing arguments for the motion and were victorious against their opponents, the Kings School in Grantham, qualifying for the grand final.

The girls kept their cool in the tense atmosphere of the final debate, against Stamford school, for which they had just **five** minutes to prepare their arguments in support of the motion: “cette chambre est d’avis que tout le monde devrait être vegan” (this house believes that everybody should be vegan).

The judges marked each team on the originality of their arguments, logic, quality of French, body language, entertainment and teamwork. After a nail-biting wait, Ratcliffe were pronounced the winners, beating seven other teams from Stamford, Birkdale, Perse, Kings, Oundle and Leicester High. The girls each collected Amazon vouchers as their prize.

Mrs Sui Cushing, Head of Modern Foreign Languages at Ratcliffe College, said, “*Debating in one's mother tongue is a daunting prospect in itself; to do so in another language is doubly impressive and is testament to the girls' linguistic prowess and ability to remain calm under pressure. I am very proud of the girls for succeeding in what most people fear more than death and spiders!*”