

Ormiston Venture Students challenge parliamentary candidates at local election hustings

Yesterday, students from Ormiston Venture Academy in Great Yarmouth, asked the candidates running to be the town's next MP searching questions, at a local election hustings event.

A group of six student leaders, drawn from the Academy's innovative student leadership structure *Union of Venture Students*, attended the evening event to gain a better understanding of who might be representing them as their local MP and to develop their interest in politics.

The hustings saw two hours of 'Question Time' style debate take place at All Saints Belton Church, on Thursday evening (25 May). Local residents were given the chance to question five of the local parliamentary candidates and to understand the candidates' positions on key issues affecting the local community.

Students from Ormiston Venture were selected to ask the candidates four pre-submitted questions on topics including Brexit, jobs and qualifications, and the living wage.

One student described the event as "eye opening" and "a pleasure to attend". This was supported by another, who said that they felt that they, "now know a lot more about what the candidates are hoping to achieve in the Great Yarmouth area", and described "it as an amazing opportunity that they would love to have again".

The event was truly inspiring and informative for the students to watch. The 'no holds barred' style of questioning saw the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates answering a range of tough questions as they sought to secure votes. The students are also expecting a visit from the candidates soon to answer even more questions.

Union of Venture Students is a university style student union overseeing every aspect of student life, run by the students themselves. Last year, this initiative introduced by the Academy, with support from its sponsor Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT), earned the academy an 'Investors in Pupils' Quality Mark – a nationally recognised mark awarded to schools that demonstrate a student-centred approach.

Spencer Doggett, Director of Learning Cultures at Ormiston Venture Academy, who accompanied the students, said:

"It was a fantastic experience for all of the students involved, helping to bring politics to life and giving them the opportunity to share their views and speak in a public setting.

"The students' questions were well received by the audience and really probed what the candidates would do for the local area and our young people, if elected.

"We are very proud of the students who took part. They were fantastic ambassadors for the Academy and their participation really encapsulates the Academy's commitment to providing students with a broad range of educational opportunities and helping them to become valuable, active members of the communities in which they live".