

## Press release

### ***Bill Gates speaks with students at a Deptford school about their world-changing ideas as part of the Speakers for Schools programme***

#### **Wednesday January 25<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, will meet this morning with students at Deptford Green School to talk about his [2012 Annual Letter](#) which was launched today. He will respond to a selection of letters by the students themselves and engage in an interactive discussion about their world-changing ideas.

Each year, Gates publishes an Annual Letter describing his priorities and work in the fields of global health, education and development. For the first time, he has invited students from around the world to send him a letter about what *they* think are the most urgent choices the world faces - and to share how they could, via their future careers, volunteering or pioneering their own ideas, contribute towards making the world a more equitable place.

Gates will be making a special trip to the school on his way from Seattle to the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting in Davos as part of the [Speakers for Schools](#) programme which is run by the charity [Education and Employers](#) Taskforce. It aims to get inspirational speakers, leaders in their field to speak for free in state schools to broaden the horizons and raise the aspirations of disadvantaged young people.

After the talk, Gates will join students from the school and take part in *BBC World Have Your Say* debate. The group will be joined live via weblink by students in West Africa, Asia, US and Middle East.

**Keely Wilson, an English teacher at the school** applied to *Speakers for Schools* in November asking if the charity could help find an inspirational speaker with an interest in global issues to talk to her students. She explained that her school had strong international links and a long standing partnership with a school in Africa. Students from the partner school will be participating in the talk and question and answer sessions via a video link.

**Keely says:** "I was stunned on hearing that Bill Gates was coming to talk with our students. It means so much to them that someone like him will take the time to meet them, listen to them and answer their questions."

**Bill Gates says:** "I'm impressed by the ideas and the global sensitivity that students have shown in their letters. It's vitally important to listen to young people about the urgent issues facing us all, and I'm looking forward to hearing directly from them about how they would make the world a better place."

**Robert Peston, founder of *Speakers for Schools* says:** "I am thrilled that Bill Gates has agreed to take part in Speakers for Schools. Young people in disadvantaged state schools and colleges should have the same opportunities to hear from inspirational speakers as those who attend top independent schools. I want it to become *the norm* for leaders in their fields to give talks in state schools and colleges."

**Pete Campling, Headteacher of Deptford Green School, says:** "What a great opportunity for our students to be able to debate with Bill Gates and students from around the world about the global challenges we face. We are delighted to have been chosen to host this visit and that our international work is being recognised. Many thanks to *Speakers for Schools* for making this possible."

### **Media contact**

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### **Notes to Editors**

#### **What is Speakers for Schools?**

*Speakers for Schools* was launched the week of 10 – 14 October 2011 with a series of talks in state secondary schools around England. It is the idea of BBC Business Editor, Robert Peston, who wants young people in disadvantaged state schools and colleges to have the same opportunities to hear from inspirational speakers as those who attend top independent schools. The idea is to level the playing field and for it to become *the norm* for leaders in their fields to give talks in state schools and colleges. *Speakers for Schools* is administered by Education and Employers Taskforce charity. <http://www.speakers4schools.org/>

Speakers who took part during the launch week included: George Alagiah (BBC News), William Boyd (author), Damon Buffini (business leader), Sir Suma Chakrabarti (Ministry of Justice), Marcus Davey (Roundhouse theatre), Martha Lane Fox (founder Lastminute.com), Andy Haldane (Bank of England), Julia Hobsbawm (media entrepreneur), Laurence Hollingworth (J.P. Morgan), Ruby McGregor-Smith (MITIE), Sir John Parker (Royal Academy of Engineering), Robert Peston (BBC), Trevor Phillips, (Equality & Human Rights Commission), Dame Marjorie Scardino (Pearson), Philipp Schindler (Google), Lord Rees (Astronomer Royal) and Baroness Vadera (former cabinet minister) together with David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Ed Miliband.

In December 2011 Seb Coe launched a special London 2012 Olympics '*Speakers for Schools*' week. Speakers who took part included Seb Coe, Jonathan Edwards, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Sir Keith Mills

*Speakers for Schools* aims to have 1000 speakers who can address the big topical issues of the day: technological, scientific, political, economic, historical, cultural, artistic, ecological and ethical. Over 750 people have already agreed to participate including many leading CEOs, politicians, media and arts people, scientists, entrepreneurs and academics. Full list of speakers at: <http://www.speakers4schools.org/speakers>

The aim is to broaden the horizons and raise the aspirations of young people.

#### **What is Inspiring the Future?**

It is a new free service also run by the Education and Employers Taskforce which aims to get 100,000 people from all sectors and professions volunteering to go into state schools and colleges to talk about their jobs, careers, and the education routes they took. Everyone from CEOs to apprentices can volunteer for *Inspiring the Future*.

Recent graduates, school leavers and people in the early stages of their career can be inspirational to teenagers - being close in age they are easy to relate to; while senior staff have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. Talking with young people in a school or college can make a real difference to their perceptions of what jobs are available, and it may inspire them to consider options that they had previously never thought about. Talking to working professionals can also help them get a realistic view on the different routes into jobs and careers. Through *Inspiring the Future*, employers and their staff can volunteer in schools and colleges at no cost. Volunteers and schools are connected and communicate with each other through this simple, secure website developed pro-bono by Deloitte. Visit: <http://www.inspiringthefuture.org/>

#### **About the Education and Employers Taskforce**

The Education and Employers Taskforce was launched as a small independent charity on the 15th October 2009, and has seven staff. Its aim is to ensure that every school and college has an effective partnership with employers which provides young people with the inspiration, motivation, knowledge, skills and opportunities they need to help them achieve their potential and so secure our national prosperity. The Taskforce's Partnership Board comprises the leaders of the main representative organisations from education and employment and the Trustees are principally senior business leaders with an interest in education. For more details please see [www.educationandemployers.org](http://www.educationandemployers.org)

**Ends**