

EDUCATION

MP shares tips on public speaking

SHADOW Cabinet Minister Darren Jones delivered a workshop on public speaking at Fairfield High School.

The invitation to Mr Jones, Labour MP for Bristol North West, came from the school's Fem Soc and took place on International Women's Day.

Mr Jones has run his Speak Like You Own the Room masterclasses at a number of secondary schools in Bristol during this academic year.

At Fairfield, he explained how his tips could be used in many circumstances, such as a doctor or nurse as they spoke to patients, a bus driver as they spoke to customers, or as an IT technician while deciphering technical problems.

Mr Jones showed some clips of public speaking that demonstrated less than favourable body language, such as lack of eye contact, fidgeting in the seat and speaking over each other.

For those students with their eyes on a career within the political world, he gave tips to both the chair person (giving everyone equal time to speak and knowing when to move an argument along for example) and questioner (maintaining a calm disposition



and not accepting evasive answers).

In questions and answers at the end of the workshop students quickly got down to the nitty gritty: in 10 minutes they had established the MP's age, how much he earned, and the steps needed to become an MP, Mayor or Councillor.

Mr Jones said: "I was shy growing up but learning the saxophone and being on stage was a turning point as my confidence grew. I now represent around 100,000, if you include young people who can't yet vote, and am in and out of national TV studios and

the House of Commons every week. Aside from this, I really enjoy meeting the next generation of leaders. Fem Soc are a great bunch of students who listened intently, showed great body language of their own and who I am sure will have bright futures."

Jenny Putman, director of English and Classics at Fairfield High School, said: "We would like to thank Darren for this wonderful masterclass which will be relevant for all walks of life, and especially for combining his visit with International Women's Day, something as a school we value very highly."