NAME	Speakers Trust
SUBJECT	Speaking confidence
SCHOOL	1,000+ state schools in England
CLASS	213,355 students over 7 years

Who gets heard?

Speaking confidence in England's state secondary schools, 2026

Fewer than 1 in 4 young people in England's state secondary schools feel confident speaking in front of a group. In the classrooms left out, it is fewer than 1 in 7.

Where we are, why it matters and how to ensure every young person leaves school a confident speaker

THE REPORT IN FOUR PAGES →

SpeakersTrust
Speak and Be Heard

SUMMARY · NOVEMBER 2026

Fewer than 1 in 4 young people in England's state secondary schools feel confident speaking in front of a group.

More than a third, 37%, have little or no confidence at all.

Background and place make a big difference.

A privileged classroom



9 confident: affluent boys in London

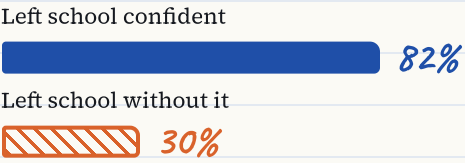
A classroom left out



4 confident: less affluent girls outside London

And it lasts.

Twelve years on, most confident school leavers still are. Few of the rest catch up.



> *"...pupils often leave school without the ability to speak confidently and so go into adulthood without being able to make their voices heard."*
>
> Teacher, Dorset · 33% free school meals

Speakers Trust start-of-workshop data, weighted to England's state secondary pupils.
YouGov for Speakers Trust, 2,010 adults aged 18–39, March 2026.

In one school day, the share of confident speakers doubles: from 25% to 50%.



4
today, in the classroom left out

→



10
after one workshop

A trained facilitator takes a class of 30 from talking in pairs to each giving a speech on something that matters to them.

Speaking confidence unlocks the rest.

Skills for work and life

92%

learnt skills for their next step

Empathy

95%

understand classmates' views, faiths and feelings

Belonging

31% → 57%

feel their opinions are heard and valued

> "Feeling comfortable, accepted and being myself around my peers."
>
> Girl, South West · 31% free school meals

> *"There were a number of students who are typically quite anxious and shy that [now] felt able to speak in front of the class.* ***That isn't a small thing at all.****"*
>
> Teacher, Bristol · 24% free school meals

Independently evaluated. In a University of Cambridge-led evaluation, students' oracy scores rose significantly against a control group.

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Matched start and end answers, 8,206 young people, Sept–Oct 2026. Evaluation: neaco, *Raise Your Words*, 2024/25.

Every young person should leave school with the confidence to speak in front of a group.

Today, fewer than 1 in 4 do.

BUILD IT

Back schools to build it, starting with those left out.

Poorer pupils, girls and young people outside London are the least likely to be confident. Our evidence shows that confidence and skills can and should be explicitly nurtured.

MEASURE IT

Measure it every year.

Build the evidence base continually on the state of speaking confidence in schools, how it is developed, and the individual and societal benefits.

WHAT WE BRING

21 years of a proven programme that has built speaking confidence in more than 600,000 young people. Seven years of detailed data on how confidence is built, who misses out, and how it shapes young people's wellbeing, relationships and prospects.

> *"Learning that my voice matters."*
>
> Boy, Barnsley · 32% free school meals · confidence 3 → 6 out of 10

Read the full report

Sixteen pages on where young people start from, who is left out, why it matters and what works, with the data behind every figure.

whogetsheard.org.uk

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