

Lord Foster, distinguished guests, Friends, parents and fellow pupils.

It's a great privilege to be standing here, where I've watched previous Head Boys, Dr Pyle, and acclaimed Old Lancastrians speak.

While my memories of the 2013 and 2014 speech days are somewhat hazy, I have today been reminded of how the continuous clapping can numb hands, so, to the year 8 and 9, don't worry, I won't speak for too long.

Having said this, I can guarantee, that while your hands may still be tingling, and you've most likely read your booklets three times over, you'll look back on this day fondly in years to come. You'll remember the message shared with you by Lord Foster, I hope; as well as the sense of achievement in the air today. This morning you have celebrated your classmates, and all of their hard work and in light of this, Headmaster, I would like to request a half-day holiday for the pupils of this school, as a reward for their successes over the past twelve months.

Now, I mention looking back, because it's something which has been playing on my mind a lot recently. As I walk around the school, I see memories in every corner; from our frenzied snowball fights in the first year, to the summer lunches spent lazing about on the Douthwaite, it's only as my time here draws to a close, that I have begun to fully appreciate LRGS.

You may not be so surprised to hear that many of my favourite memories have occurred outside the classroom. They stretch from the rainforests of Costa Rica, where we planted nearly as many saplings as we trampled over, to the vast glaciers of Iceland.

The school has taught me many important lessons, which extend far beyond the curriculum. During our Rugby Tour of Argentina in 2017, we were billeted with local families. I can still recall the long, cold walk to the bus stop, after meeting one of my hosts, and how I felt as I reached his family's three roomed bungalow, and took a cold shower from a hosepipe which had been taped to the wall. As I lay in bed that evening, he made the effort to speak to me from his makeshift bed on the floor, which consisted only of two thin blankets. We talked for a while, about school, rugby and music, using a mixture of his improvised English and my Spanish, which was limited to sí, no, and several crude phrases learnt from previous hosts, that would be best not repeated.

The experience gave me an invaluable sense of perspective. Lord Foster's message holds true not just for education, but for our heated homes, our full fridges and our comfortable clothes.

It has to be said though, that LRGS, and it's inspiring memories and lessons doesn't just happen by accident.

We have an incredible network that supports us, and it is important that we remain grateful for it. We must thank our parents, for their guidance, love and support, without which we would not be here today.

Thank you to the friends of LRGS, especially for your backing this year, as we introduce schemes to reduce plastic waste and become a greener school. Thank you to the teachers, and support staff who are our role models, and who take the credit for the well-mannered, pleasant young men which LRGS produces.

And lastly, I think it is important that we acknowledge the school itself, its traditions, it's quirks and it's ethos. Amongst other things I fill my spare time with rugby. It's a unique feeling, to run out onto the memorial fields, proudly wearing that blue and black shirt as thousands have done before me.

These traditions make this school special, and ultimately, it is up to you, boys, to embody them, and to make them your own.

As I recall Mr Kevin Roberts telling us earlier this year, the only certainty in this world is that there will be uncertainty. The present is forever changing, yet we have maintained LRGS' tradition of leading the way with exciting new ideas, not only remembering our history, but also looking to the future. From our form discussions on current affairs, to our obscene attempts at moustaches in support of mental health and the fight against male cancers, the diverse exposure that we receive prepares us for the big wide world that we will enter.

LRGS is more than just a school. It has become my home, a dynamic blend of the old and the new, a place which takes boys and produces young men. Whilst I can't offer a great deal of advice, I can say this, to the current pupils. Everything is in place for you to do well, and as long as you are determined, and learn from your mistakes, you will. But at the same time, it isn't all about the end product, it isn't all about that man who walks out of the school gates in however many years' time. Appreciate the journey, embrace every opportunity which comes your way, understand how fortunate you are, not only to have an academic education, but to have a holistic education, thrive under the challenges which will present themselves and treasure every moment at this school.

I'd like to finish by presenting Lord Foster with a small gift as a thank you for travelling to be with us today and sharing his stories and advice with us. Thank you.