

Mr Mayor, distinguished guests, parents, friends and fellow pupils of the school.

It is an incredible privilege to stand here before you today, in the same place that I have seen Dr Pyle, previous Head Boys and esteemed Old Lancastrians speak.

This morning, we have celebrated the vast array of successes of the school over the past year. In light of this, Headmaster, I would like to request a half-day holiday for the pupils of the school as a well-deserved reward for their successes over the past twelve months.

It has been an honour to be the Head Boy in what has been a historic year for the school. It was a bold move to admit girls into Sixth Form for the first time this year and whilst we are a school built upon our traditions, our ability to adapt and modernise has always set us apart. The move has proved to be a huge success and it will be fantastic for the school to celebrate the girls' successes at next year's Speech Day.

Whilst my time at LRGS began back in 2013, it was in 2010 that I first encountered the school. Invited to be amongst the first cohort of primary school pupils to attend the InspirUs programme at the school, I spent 10 weeks enthralled by the content. I have since learnt that I am the first Head Boy to have attended the programme and am delighted to see InspirUs continue to prosper to this day.

Without attending the programme, I may have never attended the school and thus would not be stood here before you today. It is safe to say I feel an immense sense of gratitude to those who have supported InspirUs. I am therefore delighted to hear of Mr Christopher Wright's support of the programme next year and also the similar work he has undertaken with the Sutton Trust.

As my time at LRGS is drawing to a close, I find myself recalling memories all around the school. From the highly competitive football matches held on the upper courts to summers spent playing all sorts of ball games on the Douthwaite, there are so many memories that will last a lifetime. Whilst I have always been appreciative, it is only on reflection now that I can truly appreciate how lucky I have been to attend LRGS.

I think it has to be said that although there is so much I will miss, the one thing I will not miss is, as I did in year 7, running from the bottom of the school hill to the top between lessons whilst wearing a rucksack almost as big as me.

I have already mentioned about unforgettable memories. For me, one was my very first rugby session in year 7. Having never played rugby before, the sight of boys far bigger than me and looking much more the part wearing head guards and shoulder pads was incredibly frightening. Feeling rather flustered, I went over to Mr Armstrong to explain how I was feeling. In response, Mr Armstrong asked if the initials that we both share, B.A., stood for "bad attitude, or brilliant ability".

To look into his quote a little further, it, in essence, embodies a lot of what the school is about. In attending the school, you have already demonstrated that you have natural ability, but with a bad attitude, your true potential will never be achieved. At LRGS, you have the

platform to achieve any imaginable goal, as long as you have the attitude and determination to do so.

To get back to my story, it's needless to say that I rejoined the training session and went on to play rugby at scrum- and fly-half for the next five years. Although in Sixth Form my focus has turned from rugby to football, it was a proud moment to step back onto the rugby pitch last weekend, wearing our distinctive black and blue shirt for a final time against Sedbergh.

Throughout my time at the school, I've been fortunate enough to experience the battlefields of Belgium and France, the ski slopes of the Austrian Alps and the beaches of Barbados, the latter in between playing some cricket of course. Most recently, the geography trip visiting the glaciated landscapes of Iceland was a phenomenal experience.

Although some of these experiences have been made memorable by the location, many have been truly made by the school itself. From the unparalleled feeling of pride felt when representing the school in sports to the incredible teachers who have made these experiences second to none. Their passion for their subjects and the school is clear to see, as we saw in Iceland when other tourists stopped to listen to the charismatic Mr Talks as he shared his infinite knowledge of the geographical landscape that surrounded us.

While the school will teach you so many valuable lessons, my message to students today would be to embrace the journey and every opportunity that comes your way. We are incredibly lucky to attend a school that teaches you so much more than simply how to pass your exams. For up to seven years, the school becomes your home, the place that shapes you. LRGS has for centuries had a fantastic knack of turning its students into well-rounded individuals. With the right attitude and determination, everything is in place for you to succeed. All that is left for you to decide, is where the journey will take you.

Finally, I'd like to finish by presenting Mr Christopher Wright with a small gift as a thank you for travelling to be here today and sharing his experiences and advice with us. Thank you.