

Madam Chairman, Governors, Mrs Clancy, distinguished guests, parents, and of course, girls.

When looking towards this day in the school year, I tend to reflect on my own education and experiences. This year my Latin lessons sprung to mind. Girls, Latin was not my strength but I remember two things from those lessons many, many years ago. The first is the verb amo - to love which we seemed to chant regularly and the second were the two phrases my Latin teacher would say when she strode into the classroom at speed. Tempus fugit - 'Time flies' and Carpe Diem - 'Seize the day'. These phrases have stayed with me and form the basis of my speech today.

In our very busy lives it is so important to make the most of everyday, to grab every opportunity that life has to offer - to 'risk take', 'have a go' at new things, and live for the day. We have looked at mindfulness at school this year and talked about not dwelling on the past or worrying about the future but really appreciating, valuing and making the most of the here and now - a valuable life lesson.

Mindfulness and self-awareness have worked successfully in tandem with our Melrose Mindset this year, underpinning our approach to learning. The girls value using our six mindsets as tools to support their progress.

A growth mindset is not a new philosophy, Albert Einstein recognised the need for perseverance, making mistakes, reflection, imagination, curiosity and learning from experience over 100 years ago. Girls it is so important for you to believe you can achieve anything, take a risk and make the most of every opportunity that comes your way, however big or small.

Girls, hands up if you have heard of the tennis player, Heather Watson? I taught Heather in my first year at Melrose, I have been

here a long time! Heather was very keen on all sports at school, some of you will have seen her name on swimming and sporting trophies, and she loved tennis.

Heather left Melrose and went to the Senior School and, then at the age of 12, took a risk and seized the opportunity to move to America, and train at a famous tennis academy in Florida. She has trained hard and shown great resilience at times and is now the number two women's tennis player in Britain and a former number 1. She has a Wimbledon mixed doubles trophy amongst others and is in the top 100 women tennis players in the world.

Heather made the most of the opportunities which came her way and you can do this every day at school which may, in turn, lead to bigger opportunities further down the line.

At Melrose we are very lucky to have a team of staff who greatly value the growth mindset approach and the need to seize opportunities and make the most of learning. They take seriously our responsibility to give the girls not only the knowledge but the skills that they will need to succeed further on at school and in life.

The staff have worked incredibly hard this year to provide a wide range of opportunities for the girls to increase their experiences, broaden their outlook, fuel their curiosity, encourage their risk taking, build their resilience and 'seize the day!'

We will be showing two short films this afternoon, filmed by the teachers themselves, which will provide you with a 'fly on the wall' glimpse at just a few of these experiences from the school year. It is impossible to reflect on all that has happened in a busy year, but I would like to mention some highlights.

We have continued to use the Outdoors as a valuable learning resource this year. Form III have really made the most of this working with

Mrs Morris and Ms Mitchinson, from the Senior School, on an introduction to the D of E skills and going on an overnight team building trip to Lihou amongst many other outdoor activities.

Girls throughout the school gained a wealth of skills and experiences from our Survival Days, learning to put up tents, forage for food, filter water, cook on an open fire, experience orienteering and semaphore amongst other activities.

Activity week again provided the perfect opportunity to rise to challenges, develop teamwork and enjoy hands on outdoor experiences. Junior Remove and Form I have experienced coasteering, kayaking, surfing, sailing and crate stacking amongst other activities with Outdoor Guernsey and the Preparatory Department have had a trips to The Walled Garden at Saumarez Park, the beach and Herm.

Visits and visitors truly enhance the curriculum and this year we have welcomed a range of visitors into school and assemblies including, the fire brigade, sea swimmer Adrian Sarchet, author - Anne Bryant, representatives from the Methodist Church and Salvation army, recycling and plastic free Guernsey and Mrs Sharma who led a wonderfully memorable assembly on 'Holi' festival.

The Junior girls also benefitted greatly from an assembly and workshop led by Maz, from The Self-Esteem team, who spoke about intrinsic motivation amongst other topics. We aim for Maz to return to talk to parents about self-esteem at our Curriculum Evening at the start of the new school year.

Our trips this year have ranged from local ones including, to the fire station, Candie Museum, recycling amongst many others and further afield. Form II experienced a new Tudor Trip this year, going to Hooke Court Residential Centre in Dorset. Here they experienced life as a Tudor through a range of activities along with team building

activities such as raft building. Form III experienced St Malo on their French trip, alongside a range of fun activities.

Sport at Melrose is another area for girls to seize opportunity and 'have a go'. The range of sports that the girls experience is impressive and we are blessed with some very talented sports women. However, sport at Melrose also offers the girls the chance to encourage each other, show perseverance and work as a team through matches and school events in Netball, Cross Country, Tag Rugby, Athletics and swimming amongst others. I am hugely impressed, and on occasions quite moved, during these events by the way Melrose girls really 'do for it' and at the same time, support each other so well.

Our Melrose Mile was a new initiative this year. A route has been marked out in the Junior playground and girls are encouraged to push themselves to increase their own fitness by trying to build up to walking or running a mile. A route will be marked out in the Prep playground from September.

Another focus this year has been to raise the girls' awareness of the environment around them and their social responsibilities on a local and global level. We have achieved this with our continued Forest Schools programme which encourages respect for and understanding of our environment but also through a whole school aim to look after the environment by becoming responsible citizens and recycling.

We are very proud of the fact that the girls themselves put the Melrose Mindset of initiative into practice by bringing to my attention that we could do more as a school with recycling. We have acted on their lead and enthusiasm by having an assembly visit from Mayside recycling and Plastic Free Guernsey and by us now having various recycling bins around the school which means that we can recycle almost everything.

We also acted on their passion of wanting to look after the sea and beaches with two beach cleans, involving the whole school, working across year groups. A considerable amount of rubbish was found and returned to school with the majority of it being reused or recycled.

Taking our social responsibilities seriously have not stopped there. Girls from several classes have worked with local conservation organisation, La Société Guernesiais on The Pollinator Project. A project aimed at providing environments for pollinating insects. They have worked on our roundabout planting a range of plants to encourage wildlife and will take part in a new annual survey of pollinators, which aims to gather data on pollinator numbers in Guernsey. This data will be used to shape conservation policy to stem the decline of these important animals.

Caring about those in our local community and further afield has also continued with maintaining our link with The Cheshire Homes and establishing a link with The Russell's day centre where the youngest in our school community in the Pre-Prep department have visited and carried out a range of activities with the members of the centre. Further afield Form III have worked with The Tumaini fund, making hygiene packs for women in Tanzania.

Our charity work has continued this year and we thank you in helping us to support both local and worldwide charities. The girls have shown an increased understanding of the needs of others and have raised £3,900 for charities including over £2,200 for the Swimathon and Guilles Alles library. Well done girls and thank you.

At Melrose we have a strong community of parents, staff and girls who work very well to support each other. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the parents who have given up their time to support the girls with trips and lessons. We could not do these things without your support. Girls please can you give your parents a clap.

At the heart of the Melrose community is our PTA who have yet again organised a range of fantastic events, including a new event in the Prep disco this year and raised an impressive amount of money for extras for the girls. This year Mrs Walsh is stepping down as Chairman, Mrs Redelinghuys as Secretary and Mrs Jones as Treasurer. We thank all three for their hard work. Mrs Jones deserves a long serving medal as she has been a committed member of the PTA for 8 Years. Your daughters have a small token of our appreciation for you.

As far as our staff community is concerned, Miss Martin, joined the team in September as Lower Prep Class Teacher, inspiring us with her active learning and love of the environment. Mr Waddingham became the Melrose caretaker in January. Mrs Bougourd has supported Upper Prep this term as a teaching assistant and Mrs de la Fosse has returned from maternity leave to take back the teaching of Junior Remove from Mrs Jackson and Mrs le Conte who have covered teaching this year group so well.

I would like to take this opportunity to publically thank all the staff at Melrose for their hard work and overriding commitment to do all they can to support each individual girl and provide such a fantastic learning environment in which they can thrive. Girls can you please give a round of applause for the Melrose staff team. (clap)

Visitors who tour Melrose regularly comment on how confident, outgoing and friendly the girls are. I believe that this is partly due to the amount of opportunities they are offered to perform. This year in the Preparatory Nativity ' A King is Born ' and in the Junior Production of The Wind In The Willows. In both shows the girls performed with such confidence and enjoyment, showing not only a great deal of talent but also self-assurance well beyond their years. The Summer concert also provided the opportunity for all the Junior girls to perform musically, there was a fantastic atmosphere in the hall and the girls performed with real gusto.

Leading by example the Melrose staff continued our new tradition and performed a mini staff panto 'Snow White and the seven Gnomes' on the last day of the Michaelmas Term.

Performance extended to the Eisteddfod. Girls from Upper Prep to Form III sang and performed poetry, both individually and in groups, in French, with great success. The Preparatory department also sang some energetic songs in English in the Unison singing class. The Junior and Canto choirs sang beautifully, gaining some very complimentary feedback from the adjudicator and, in addition, the small music groups and many individual girls gave excellent performances.

The Melrose Mindset of 'risk taking' extended to a group of Melrose mums this year who wanted to show their daughters that they were prepared to seize the opportunity to perform in the Eisteddfod. MV Taxi Services entered and won the Corporate Entertainment Class, performing as Mother Ducks! I congratulate all those who took part, both young and slightly older, for their courage and commitment.

The Melrose girls also enjoy the opportunity to express themselves through art and our Magical Mystical Art display at the Eisteddfod received many compliments. Thank you to Mrs Walkington for again leading this art project.

Competition also provides opportunity for the girls to seize the chance and have a go. All the Junior girls did themselves proud entering the Design An Ad Competition this year. The results were excellent with 9 girls receiving first, second or third places in their categories.

Lucy, Martha, Uma and Layla also put themselves forward to represent the school in the de Putron challenge, showing great determination and flew into the final and overall second place.

As I have mentioned, Melrose is a community and at the heart of the community, are the girls themselves. Our Form III, being the eldest in the school, have again taken on their roles this year as Prefects, Librarians, ICT, Sport and Prep monitors so responsibly. Form III will be sharing their reflections on their Melrose years with you through a poem later but I would like to thank them for all the happy memories they have created over the years and congratulate them on all how they have grown and blossomed into such accomplished young ladies.

When I spoke to Form III about their time at Melrose they said that one of the things they valued most was the way their confidence had been boosted over the years and that they were leaving Melrose with a confidence and self-belief that didn't have years ago.

We are proud of the educational achievements of all the girls, not just those winning prizes today and are also proud of the high academic levels that the girls leave us with when they move on.

However, more importantly if girls leave us full of self-confidence, a growth mindset, a desire to learn and take on life's challenges and a belief that they can achieve anything then as teachers we have done our job properly and set them up well on life's road to success.

So on reflection I did learn a couple of things from my Latin lessons and that is to make the most of every opportunity as time flies by.

Showing my age, I leave you with this quote from the film *Dead Poets' Society*, I have just changed the gender.

'Carpe Diem - seize the day girls, make your lives extraordinary'

You can do it and we will support you as much as we can along the way.
Thank you.