

# SENIOR SCHOOL FOUNDERS' DAY

## MRS LAYBOURN'S SPEECH

Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to you all.

Today is about coming together as a community to celebrate your daughter's achievements. It is a day to applaud what makes this school so special and a day to recognise and appreciate our founders.

"In 1906 there dawned a new era in the history of education in Burgess Hill. Three parents who were regular subscribers to the educational magazine – "Parents Review" decided that their children would benefit from the principles outlined in the magazine and the company of other children. Burgess Hill School for Girls, a PNEU school was founded by Miss Beatrice Goode and began with a total of 9 pupils. The school aimed to educate the whole child in body, mind and spirit to which we continue to emulate and take forwards today 112 years later.

A Hebrew proverb advises;

"do not confine your children to your own learning for they were born in a different time"

Indeed, if the girls finishing Yr 7 follow a 3 Yr degree programme they will potentially enter the world of work in 2027 and following a full working life, they may retire around 2074. It seems odd to consider that

Your daughter will

- Live in a world we do not know
- Have jobs that do not yet exist
- Use technologies not yet invented
- And – solve problems we cannot imagine

It has always been that each generation faces challenges that their upbringing and education did not teach them about.... How could it.... The future is not known to anyone. However, each generation has met and embraced those challenges and have gone on to develop and adapt in ways unmanageable to those before them.

The pace of change grows even faster. Whilst we don't know what the future will bring, we can be certain that things will not be the same.

At this school we believe passionately in the value of education in its broadest sense. We enjoy working with the girls to teach, to encourage and to inspire a love of learning that will stay with them as they pursue their lives and careers. We have high expectations of all our pupils and rarely do they fail to meet or even exceed them. We have a can do attitude and remember.

"Attitude is contagious and there is no doubt ours is worth catching!"

We recognise the importance of education to the full sense of the word and we encourage all the girls to take every opportunity they can to extend and stretch themselves, step outside their comfort zone and build resilience. To be confident that they can tackle the unknown, to discuss, reflect, question, challenge, be responsible and recognise their contribution is important.

It is no longer enough just to know – development relies on people being curious, and combining in ways not previously considered. The world is constantly evolving and our young people will be the ones who make discoveries, link previously unconnected ideas and take humanity forward. To be curious is the vital ingredient that transforms what is already known into something new and exciting. As Victor Hugo said

“Curiosity is one of the forms of feminine bravery”

Our new strapline of Tomorrow’s women focuses explicitly on our aims to provide an atmosphere which encourages young people to use their initiative, be inquisitive and creative and develop responsibility and independence. I would like to steal Walt Disney’s sentiments to describe our philosophy;

“We keep moving forwards, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths”

The staff, at Burgess Hill Girls, most certainly play an important role in your daughters’ development, not only as learners but also as poised, confident and articulate young women. It is not all about the physical environment, the chemistry of the environment, is also hugely significant and there is no doubting the excellent relationships formed between the girls and the staff. We really have had fun, in fact, we believe that the combination of enjoyment and hard work is why the girls so often exceed expectations and exude such enthusiasm for what they do.

Before I introduce our guest speaker this afternoon I wanted to share with you some recent tributes from our more recent Bold Girls published in the national press.

Nikita Khandwala

*Nikita pays tribute to Burgess Hill Girls, where she was Head Girl, for helping her get to where she is today. . The great thing was that, whatever you wanted to do – music, art, sport as well as academia – they supported you. They didn’t push you into a particular area of the curriculum. I very much had the opportunity to forge my own path.’*

Funke Abimbola

*“There have never been any guarantees along the way, but coming to this school gave me the boldness, the courage, the sense of identity about who I am, to keep putting one foot in front of the other. I can truly look back and say, I am probably half way up that mountain. I have a few more heights that I would like to scale!”*

Lotte Gilmore

*'Engineering is difficult for schools because it's not on the curriculum, but I think I probably wouldn't have been doing engineering without Burgess Hill Girls.' 'At a girls school, you're free to be yourself. I just decided what interested me. With small year groups, there's so much time for each person.'*

Kelly Willoughby

*Recalling her own school days, Kelly said: 'I started at Burgess Hill Girls at the beginning and I finished as Head Girl. I'm a huge believer in confidence. No matter who you are or what your strengths are, if you're not confident in yourself you're going to struggle.'*

*I believe Burgess Hill Girls gave both Holly and I self-belief in spades. Once you have self-belief and a good work ethic the rest will follow. I thank Burgess Hill School for giving me both.'*

Holly Tasker

*You will be treated as an individual, you will not be 'lost in the crowd'. You will be supported, listened to, and valued."*

Kate Mactear

*I've been amazed by what I can achieve when I put the effort and dedication into something I'm passionate about, something Burgess Hill taught me from a very young age."*

In conclusion – I leave you with this quote:

Lady Margert Thatcher said

*Look at a day when you are supremely satisfied at the end. It's not a day when you lounge around doing nothing; it's when you've had everything to do, and you've done it!"*

She was clearly describing a day in a life of a Burgess Hill girl

Team Burgess Hill – you do it all brilliantly and with honour. Congratulations to you all.