

I am delighted to have been invited to join you today to celebrate all your amazing achievements and to listen to your poems and singing. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on many fond memories of Avenue House School and to thank my wonderful teachers.

I joined in the Nursery a happy, but very shy little girl who mysteriously decided not to utter a word – I think I am probably the quietest child the school has ever known! I hope Mrs. McKiernan you didn't take it personally that I never spoke to you in Nursery, but as you may recall I chose not to speak to anyone for some considerable time! Thank you Mrs. McKiernan for your patience and understanding and allowing me to develop in my own way and in my own time.

In Reception I was still too shy to acknowledge my name at morning registration, and so it was to everyone's astonishment in the Summer Term when I won the Poetry Prize for my version of "Incy Wincy Spider"! I was expected to recite my poem at Prize Giving, and the real test was whether I would have the courage to do so in front of everyone on the day. I remember feeling a sense of achievement standing here and whispering my poem. I think on that occasion you could say that my actions spoke louder than words!

From an early age I was able to express myself freely through Art and I loved my lessons and Art Club. I am sure you will agree that the artwork displays are outstanding and I would like to thank Miss Jory for her creativity and ability to bring out the artistic talent in all her pupils. I continue to share her passion for Art and I love studying it for A Level.

Anyone who has been taught by Miss Casey in Willow soon realizes that there are rules to be observed. I rather naively thought I could continue to play my silent game and "pull the wool over Miss Casey's eyes", but I was very much mistaken and it was time to start growing up! I would like to thank Miss Casey for her dedication, guidance and encouragement and helping me to begin the gradual process of gaining confidence. I am pleased to tell you Miss Casey that your inspirational teaching helped to "sow the seed" during those early years as I am now enjoying studying both History and Geography for A Level.

I always found Maths a challenge, especially when it came to the problems of Time and Money. In my perfect little world I didn't think I had to tell the time or go out and spend any money! As we all know, our Mums are constant worriers and Mrs. Self felt the need to reassure my mother "Mrs. Hughes do you know of any adult who is unable to tell the time?" – another panic over! I would like to thank Mrs. Caine for her expertise, endless patience and helping those of us who found the subject a struggle! I am pleased to tell you Mrs. Caine that I did achieve a respectable grade in my IGCSE Maths last year.

Dr. Sharma joined in my final year and I would like to thank her for the fun and magic she brought to our Science lessons. I particularly remember all those fantastic experiments we carried out – better still when they didn't quite go according to plan!

I had many wonderful friends with whom I have remained in contact and their friendships, together with my unexpected appointment as Head Girl, helped me to grow in confidence. I would particularly like to mention one special friend – Mrs. Buckfield who always kept a motherly eye over me and to thank her for her warmth and kindness.

I have many fond memories of our trips to Black Mountain and to Paris in Year 6. Avenue House is like a family and it will always remain an important part of my life.

I would especially like to thank Mrs. Self for her tremendous support and encouragement and her ability to recognize the true potential in all her pupils. When faced with life's many challenges, I often think of Mrs. Self's firm, but reassuring words, "Come on Isabella, you know you can do it!"

I would like to wish all of Cedar every success and happiness in their new schools. I am entering my final year at Heathfield and I hope to go to University and study design, possibly Architecture. It is a big decision for me to make involving a further 7 years of studying, but I know I shall always have the full support of my parents in whatever I decide to do.

Perhaps there are one or two quieter pupils here today who might now be thinking "If Isabella can overcome her shyness, then so can I".

Thank you.