

Valedictory Dinner Welcome Speech, 24 September 2025

Given by 2025 Head Prefect, Sophie Alexander

For one of the last times, good morning Ms Danvers, official party, staff, special guests and girls,

To be honest, this speech has been on my mind for quite some time. How do you possibly condense thirteen years of education into just a few paragraphs? After all, it's everything I know. It's all any of us have ever known, and the thought of leaving it behind is honestly terrifying. The answer only came to me a few weeks ago, sparked by an offhand comment from one of our English teachers in class...

"I don't believe in overthinking. Most people don't think enough. But you never hear them getting accused of underthinking."

For the past six years, my routine has been predictable. Wake up, come to school, move through periods one to six, go back to the boarding house, and repeat, five days a week. Of course, there were exams, assignments, extra commitments, the occasional panic about deadlines. But outside of that, life has been mostly smooth sailing.

And yet, as I sat down to write this speech and reflect on what Kambala has really given us, I realised that within this routine, the most valuable lesson we've learnt wasn't in a classroom. It wasn't a formula in algebra or an essay on Shakespeare. It was how to overthink.

Now, I know that doesn't sound glamorous. Overthinking often gets a bad reputation, messy, inconvenient, keeping us awake at 3am staring at the ceiling, wondering if we've made the right choices or left the wrong words unsaid.

But the truth is, overthinking is courage.

It is the willingness to notice what others overlook, to question what others accept, to imagine consequences no one else has thought of. It is the ability to adapt in a world that will inevitably throw us challenges no classroom could predict.

As young women, our high school years are some of the most impressionable moments of our lives. It's during this time that we discover who we are, who we want to become, and what matters to us. That is why I am forever proud and grateful to stand before a group of girls who have not only walked alongside me through these years but have also shaped my character, challenged me to grow, and inspired me to think deeply every single day.

I'd like to extend this gratitude to our loved ones, whose support has allowed us to fully embrace this environment over these years. They, perhaps better than anyone, understand that life beyond these walls will rarely feel as orderly as our timetables. Our future problems won't come with answers in the back of the book. Overthinking however, reflecting, analysing, imagining, is what will allow us to find our way.

And yes, it is exhausting at times. But it is extraordinary. Because if underthinking is easy, if settling and ignoring is the default, then overthinking is the one thing powerful enough to change the world.

So, class of 2025, this is my message to you.

Continue to care too much. To notice what others skim past. To ask the uncomfortable questions and challenge the easy answers. Overanalyse, fail, get back up, and do it again. And know that you have a community of friends, teachers and families that are cheering you on every step after you leave these gates.

The world doesn't need more people who simply tick boxes and move on. It needs us, women who think deeply enough to leave behind something worth remembering.

Kambala has prepared us for uncertainty, for the chaos and possibility of the unknown. And that is exactly the kind of preparation that matters.

Congratulations, class of 2025. Leave this chapter thinking boldly, thinking endlessly, and making sure the world notices the depth of your thought.

