Good morning everyone,

I've been thinking about what I wanted to say to you today for quite a while.

The truth is, unlike many of your teachers, I wasn't here for the whole journey.

I didn't meet you when you first arrived at St Antony's as nervous Year 7 students.

I wasn't there for your first day. I didn't see you take your first steps into secondary school.

I joined your journey in Year 10 when I took on my first role as Head of Year.

And if I'm honest, I was probably just as nervous as some of you were. We were learning together.

You were my first year group as Head of Year, and because of that, you will always hold a special place in my heart.

Over the last two years, I've had the privilege of getting to know you, supporting you, challenging you, celebrating with you and sometimes having those difficult conversations that neither of us particularly wanted to have.

I've seen you at your very best.

I've seen you succeed.

I've seen you laugh until you cried.

I've seen you support one another.

I've seen you overcome setbacks and disappointments.

And I've seen many of you achieve things you never thought possible.

What makes me most proud isn't your exam results.

It isn't the grades you'll receive in August.

It's the people you have become.

Because when I look around this room, I don't just see students.

I see young adults.

I see resilient individuals.

I see kindness.

I see determination.

I see courage.

I see a year group that has grown enormously in the short time I've known them.

Some of you have faced challenges outside of school that nobody should have to face at your age.

Some of you have struggled with confidence.

Some with attendance.

Some with friendships.

Some with believing in yourselves.

Yet every day you came back and kept trying.

And that says far more about your character than any grade ever could.

People often think being a Head of Year is about behaviour, attendance, assemblies, reports and meetings.

And yes, there is plenty of that.

But what they don't see are the conversations.

The moments when students quietly ask for help.

The times when you trust us enough to tell us what's really going on.

The moments when we see someone finally believe in themselves again.

Those are the moments that stay with us.

And there have been many moments with this year group that I will never forget.

You have made me laugh more times than I can count.

You've tested my patience on occasion.

You've certainly kept me busy.

But you have also reminded me every day why I wanted to become a Head of Year in the first place.

As you leave today, I want you to know something.

Your time at St Antony's may be ending, but your story is only just beginning.

Some of you know exactly what comes next.

Others are still figuring it out.

And that's completely normal.

At sixteen years old, nobody expects you to have all the answers.

What matters is that you continue moving forward.

Continue being kind. Continue working hard. Continue believing that you are capable of more than you think.

Because you are. Every single one of you.

There will be times in life when things don't go to plan.

When you fail.

When things feel difficult.

When doors close.

But remember this:

You have already overcome challenges before.

You have already shown resilience.

You have already proven that you can keep going when things get tough.

Never forget that.

Before I finish, I want to say thank you.

Thank you for being my first year group.

Thank you for the memories.

Thank you for the laughs.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your journey, even if it was only for the final two years.

You may never fully realise the impact you've had on me, just as I hope I have had some impact on you.

I am incredibly proud of each and every one of you.

Not because of what you've achieved.

But because of who you are.

As you leave St Antony's, remember that there will always be people here cheering you on.

Always people who want you to succeed.

Always people who are proud of you.

Including me.

Good luck with whatever comes next.

Be brave. Be kind. Work hard. Look after each other. And never stop believing in yourself.

Thank you, Year 11.

It has been an absolute privilege.

God bless.