

Speech by Trudy Chappell, Head of Junior

Good morning distinguished guests, members of the Board, parents, staff and students. I would once again like to thank you for attending the Junior School Prize Giving Assembly for the 2018 academic year ... it's been quite a year!

We started off with all the usual enthusiasm and planning for the arrival of the students at the beginning of March, curriculums were checked, Units of Inquiries were discussed and reflected upon, planning was updated and in came our new classes, all grown up and looking relaxed and beautiful after a summer in the sun. We had our usual events to look forward to – Form 6 going off to Campamento Artigas at the beginning of year to spend a wonderful week surrounded by nature and getting to know their classmates in ways they may not have done before. This experience also gave them the tools to go off on their adventure to Buenos Aires, for many for the first time without their parents to stay with families and participate in sporting challenges with St Andrew's Scots School. Soon after the term started Mr Rompani and his team began the process of preparing Form 3, 4 and 5 students for their wonderful presentation of A Ghost Tale for Mr Dickens (a different sort of play this year but one that was executed skilfully and show-cased the many talents of our students), we had many and varied successes on the Sports fields culminating in a great Sports Day during the second half of the year, many educational trips and visits were arranged to allow students to broaden their knowledge and understanding by linking what they learn in the classroom to real life situations, everyone in the Community got involved in supporting our two solidarity campaigns (Pérez Scremini and Teletón) and we continued to raise awareness of environmental issues in the initiatives that took place across the whole year but there was one other thing that made 2018 a special year for us – yes, the celebration of 110 years of TBS. The 8th October was long awaited by everyone, the spiral in the Infant Playground and the countdown calendar were our daily reminders! On the day of the birthday, the whole of the Junior School gathered together to receive the gnomes who had taken away the key to the time capsule which contained a piece of writing by every student and many teachers who were at the School in October 2008 when the School celebrated its centennial year – a lovely time was had by all and I am sure this event will stay in the minds of all the generations that took part in it for many years to come. Obviously the students whose work was in the time capsule have long gone from the Junior School but it was wonderful to witness the enthusiasm of Senior School students who came to find their pieces and spend a few minutes chatting with friends and reminiscing. We also had lots of visits from former students who had seen what was happening on social media and wanted to collect their writing – all in all we had a wonderful few days. But what does this celebration really mean to the School and to us, as a Community? It made us think about the traditions that are linked to 110 years of existence – who we are, where we want to be, the differences, similarities – importance of being part of the community, generations of students come and go – the institution exceeds us – buildings have grown as we have grown – the guiding principles haven't changed – all in all, a moment of reflection. Towards the end of last week there was a buzz of excitement going around the corridors of the Junior School as groups of students from Form 1 accompanied by their teachers to Form 6 in Houses groups were going around showing how much they knew about the history (and geography) of our School – I was stopped in the corridor by one student who asked me, “what does Mr Jones' hair look like?” I was really confused until I realised the Mr Jones she was talking about – Headmaster of the British Schools from 1908.

Now I would like to address the Form 6 students: I won't forget this generation, our Generation of Firsts!!! The first students, in 2011 to have the privilege of working in the newly inaugurated Early Years Centre, a building that had been designed to complement the type of education we wanted to offer at The British Schools. It's not a coincidence that last year they were also the first cohort to present the PYP Exhibition, a great success for all concerned.

To continue, I am going to ask not just Form 6 but all the students from Form 3 upward, to think about 3 words, “Seize the Moment”, now I will tell you why! – a number of years ago I had the privilege of getting to know a lady whose story illustrates that importance of the way we look at the opportunities life sometimes presents us with and to think about how we should seize those opportunities, take the chances that present themselves and be risk takers (as the IB wants us to be). I used to work at a School in The Netherlands called the Helen Sharman British School – Helen Sharman is an “ordinary” lady who at that time worked as a Chemist

for a large company in the UK. She was going home from work and was stuck in a traffic jam – she switched on the radio and at that moment she heard an advert which said, “Astronaut wanted, no experience necessary!” When she got home, she called the number they gave, together with 13000 other people and was eventually chosen to be one of the 2 candidates to travel to Russia. There she began a process that ended one & half years later, when she was sitting on top of a rocket in a country that is now called Kazakhstan ready to launch into space (18th May 1991, Mir space station) – that day she made history by becoming Britain’s first astronaut and at 27 years old, only the 5th youngest person to spend time in space. If she hadn’t taken the opportunity, that chance that was presented to her that day, her life may not have developed in the way that it did – so my message to you today is - take the opportunities that are presented to you, “seize the moment” here in School and also in other areas of your lives – now is the time to try new things, to find out what you like, what you are good at – you will never know until you try!

Academic learning is very important, and it is part of the reason we are here at School but it is not the only thing – some of you have already been at TBS for 8 years, you have tried many new things (the plays, the sporting activities, the visits to CAIF this year, going off to another country possibly for the first time without your parents, I could go on and on), but it doesn’t stop here, as you continue your passage through the School there will be lots more opportunities that will present themselves, chances for you to grow as individuals – take them! Success is not the only objective, having a go is important, it is what will make you a more balanced person. There remains just one thing for me to say, and that is to wish all our families a wonderful Christmas and very happy and healthy 2019.