

Founder's Day Speech – Head Prefect Sixth Form – Tristen

Camden School for Girls has long been a pioneering force for women's access to education. At a time when high-quality education was often reserved for those with wealth and privilege, Frances Mary Buss challenged these reservations, highlighting that girls deserved the same academic opportunities as anyone else.

When Frances Mary Buss founded this school in 1871, she wasn't simply opening a place of learning. She was challenging the expectations of society and creating opportunities for generations of young people who might otherwise have been excluded. Today her mission still resonates. We live in a world where access, equality, and opportunity remain deeply important. In a time when differences in background, belief, or circumstance can still divide communities, the values this school was built are as relevant today as they were in 1871.

I myself live in another London borough, which is outside of the catchment area for CSG. It was a risk to choose and attend this school. I could have been overlooked; coming from outside the catchment area and from a different background than many of my peers. But those differences didn't define how people saw me. Instead, I found a community that welcomed new perspectives and valued people for who they are. Over time, our year group jelled, and started to feel like something much stronger - a community. My role as Head Boy has demonstrated that meaningful leadership stems not from prior connections, but from the ability to bring fresh perspectives that create positive change.

This sense of community is what makes CSG so special. Our students come from different boroughs, cultures, faiths, and experiences, yet we are united by a shared commitment to learning, curiosity and ambition. This is exactly the kind of environment that Frances Mary Buss envisioned: a school where education opens doors, where differences are embraced, and where students are encouraged to think critically about the world around them.

In our current world, we often see the disintegration of community through conflict such as the wars in the middle east. Social division grows at an alarming rate in our generation because we are living in an increasingly digital society that provides echo chambers of misinformation, which automatically places us on one side of the argument, dividing us subconsciously. This is why places of community, like CSG, matter. They bring people together to learn and live together regardless of differences, since we are stronger as a community because of our diversity, not in spite of it.

Founder's Day is not only a moment to reflect on the past, but also to think about the future. The people who are going to continue the legacy. You. As one generation places their stamp on the page, the next writes the following chapter in this school's story.

And so the question is simple: how will you carry that legacy forward?