

Head Boy Christmas Dinner Speech – Bryan Smyth

I would firstly, like to welcome and thank you all for coming to our annual Christmas Dinner. This is a time when we can all come together and enjoy the festive period. Before I carry on, I would like to thank all those involved in the preparation of tonight's wonderful meal, especially Mike, Matt and their team. I think they all deserve a round of applause.

I hope you've all enjoyed your night so far because it's all going downhill from here.

While writing this speech I've had a lot of time to reflect on my six years in Villiers and all the good memories that I've made here. I have realised how much these years have really changed me. It only feels like yesterday when I was walking through those white gates with all the sixth years towering over me. I found it very hard to imagine what it would be like to be one of those sixth years, and now here I am with only half a year left!

The first year in secondary school is always a difficult one. This wasn't made any easier when my mom started working in the office, although it was handy if I needed money for the café. We had to learn how to navigate the halls, make new friends, find classrooms, and remember to say please and thank you to Val in the café or else you would regret it! Saying that it has made sure I will never forget my manners in the future. At least we could find time to relax by putting on a bucket load of hair gel and going to the hockey disco.

Without a doubt, TY has been a real highlight of my years in Villiers. I got so many opportunities to grow as a person and develop so many new friendships. The number of activities we got to do before COVID struck made it such an enjoyable year. I remember so well that we had those seemingly endless hikes along the Lough Derg Way, especially when Godwin unsuccessfully tried to pick a fight with a goat along the way!

A lot of our trips were cancelled due to COVID so this will be the first year that you won't hear that the 'renowned' Achill trip was the best experience ever. In order to complete our Gaisce awards we got to hike within our 5k and camp out in the luxury of our back gardens instead. However, a lot of trips still got to go ahead like a rugby trip to Wales, a trip to Cork for MUN and a hockey trip to the Netherlands. The trip to Netherlands is one of my favourite moments from my six years here. I can still remember the taste of the dry ham roll we would all have for breakfast because we were too scared to try the local cuisine.

We learned so many new skills over the year. We learned how to be models from the fashion show, and actors from the drama, but I can sadly say very few of us would make it as good dancers. We learned how to step out of our comfort zones. Ross and Thomas set up a successful business through the enterprise module and they are still living off it to this day. I believe they just received their fifth prize for their venture the other week.

Luckily, our ski trip to the dreaded North of Italy got to go ahead just before the start of the pandemic. We left right as the cases started rolling in over there. We were lucky that with Mr. Sadleir trying to reign us in, that the worst thing that happened was Emma Smith knocking over a small child on the slopes and Leon puking in my suitcase the night before we left thanks to some dodgy pizza.

Sadly our year was cut short with a supposed “two weeks off” in March before our Easter break and we all know how that ended – online school! Days sitting in front of our computers pretending to pay attention when our parents walked into the room. We can all remember the dreaded moments of silence after a teacher directed a question to the class until some hero would step up with a mighty, “yes”.

Form 5 started the way TY finished – more online school. We all missed the strong support of our friends and especially Gordon’s sausage and chicken rolls. On our return it was never the same with the new fobs which are forever getting lost or are regularly out of credit – sales must have fallen sharply!

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the teaching staff for guiding us over the years. They have been role models to us since our first day at school. They encourage us and get the best out of all of us. We are really fortunate to have such amazing teachers over our time at Villiers. Their help and guidance has not gone unnoticed.

I would also like to thank all the non-teaching staff for all the work they do in the background. From my mom and Michelle in the office to all the cleaning staff, your work is very important to keeping the school running and the whole place would fall apart without you.

There has been a lot of good memories from my time in school. From Ms Quinn’s necessity to use the words “guys” and “Saturday study” in every sentence, that time Ms Crowley had to jump into a river to rescue my phone at Derg Isle. Thank you. Mr Storey being barricaded into his office by all the girls trying to doss class. Standing out in the freezing rain for our seemingly weekly fire drill. Mr Griffin hunting down students who are wearing the wrong-coloured coats. The bromance between Louis and Damien and Ms. Woods’, sometimes, overly enthusiastic dog, Alfie.

On a final note, I would like to say it’s been an honour representing the school as Head Boy. As I move on to the next chapter of my life, I will reflect on the unforgettable six years I’ve had here. I feel so fortunate to have spent this time here with all of you. And on that note, I’d like to wish everyone a merry Christmas. And as Ronaldo would say, “SIUUUUUUUU”.

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