



Press Release – Embargoed (24.09.2015 – 18:00)

## OUTSTANDING PRIMARY SCHOOL HONOURED AT SHINE A LIGHT AWARDS FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Aerodrome Primary Academy School in Croydon has been awarded the *Primary School of the Year* award at a glittering awards ceremony in London, hosted by comedian David Baddiel, for its dedicated approach to ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to improve their life skills through communication.

The **2015 Shine a Light Awards** is a national awards scheme organised by Pearson, in partnership with The Communication Trust, to celebrate innovative work, inspirational individuals and excellent practice in supporting children and young people's communication development.

Aerodrome Primary Academy School has introduced numerous initiatives to support their pupils from the Children's Centre and nursery through to year six, focusing on improving the communication skills of all pupils, including those with speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

The Children's Centre runs groups to encourage development through stories and songs while nursery classes have 'Bucket Time' groups, where toys are used to support attention building and encourage early language and communication development for children with severe SLCN.

Reception children are screened for speech and language delay in school entry with a special *Just Arrived at School* oral language programme for those pupils who need extra support. In year two, a *Talk for Writing* programme encourages expressive story telling and older pupils with SLCN across the whole school take part in *Partners in Talking* groups to encourage confidence for talking within groups.

Aerodrome Primary Academy is dedicated to providing a whole-school approach using visual aids in assemblies such as Communication Print, which uses imagery alongside words, and Makaton - a language programme that uses signs and symbols to help people to communicate.

Regular *No Pens Day Wednesday* days, when children are encouraged to talk rather than write, are held to encourage speaking and listening. Pupils with SLCN are encouraged to take part in school activities such as Aerodrome's Got Talent and I CAN's Chatterbox Challenge.

The school has also shown commitment to working with parents, organising Communication Challenges where parents are encouraged to talk to their child about their learning.

In addition, support is given to parents of pupils who are in the school's Enhanced Learning Provision, which provides specialist provision for pupils with significant special educational needs (SEN), where teachers hold regular parent meetings to inform parents of specific speech and language strategies that can be reinforced at home.

Aerodrome Primary Academy School's 'A chance for all' approach has resulted in amazing pupil progress with significant progress being made by pupils across the school, especially for those with SLCN. Eighty-five percent of pupils in the school's Enhanced Learning Provision showed progress with targets in line with expected levels across the school.

Maxine Whitmore, Speech and Language Therapist and Vicky Prigg, SENCO from Aerodrome Primary Academy School, said: "We are delighted to have won the Primary School of the Year Award.

"Across the whole school community, we provide a no barriers curriculum to ensure that all children, particularly those with SLCN, enjoy learning and achieve to their full potential. This award is recognition of the hard work and dedication of school staff, parents and the wider Croydon multidisciplinary services, in supporting children with speech, language and communication needs. Not only are our test results improved by this holistic approach, but also the growing confidence of the children is there for all to see. This really is a school community that provides a 'Chance of All'".

David Baddiel, Host of the 2015 Shine a Light Awards, said: "Because of the important work that the Shine a Light 2015 winners and highly commended finalists have achieved, children and young people's language and communication development, especially for those with SLCN, has been supported.

"Speech and language problems too often go under the radar, so everyone should not only be congratulated for their work but for bringing this important issue to the attention of others. I would like to say well done to all those shortlisted who have shown true grit and determination to better themselves and others. They are all a true inspiration - keep up the good work."

Chris Hall, Director of Clinical Assessment at Pearson, says: "Congratulations to Aerodrome Primary Academy School for winning *Primary School of the Year* award at the 2015 Shine a Light Awards. The different initiatives the school has put in place as well as its whole-school approach to developing communication has clearly had a significant impact on children's development. Each year the applications get stronger and more inspiring. We have seen examples of children and young people with SLCN being supported by some truly inspiring individuals, groups and schools like Aerodrome Primary Academy School.

"The Shine a Light Awards, now in their fourth year, continue to grow and we have been delighted to welcome an incredible judging panel who represent the very best of the education and special educational needs (SEN) sector. To once again partner with the Communication Trust and celebrate these inspiring people and organisations is a real privilege."

Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust, says: "Congratulations to the winners and highly commended finalists whose work will help inspire and motivate people right across the country. Aerodrome Primary Academy School is a wonderful example of what can be achieved when children and young people with communication difficulties are offered the support they deserve. We're delighted to have this partnership with Pearson, which allows Shine a Light to be a true celebration of the amazing work up and down the country and for helping the Trust to reach more children and young people and the professionals who work with them.

“The Shine a Light Awards are a key fixture for the speech and language sector as they reflect a range of best practice and innovative work taking place across the country. At a time when early years, health, education and SEN services are going through significant reforms, Shine a Light focuses attention on what can be achieved through expertise, sheer determination and never giving up on children and young people’s potential.”

Jack Williams, Project Officer at The Communication Trust and category judge, said: “Aerodrome Primary Academy School is a very worthy winner of the *Primary School of the Year Award*. The judging panel was really impressed by Aerodrome’s whole-school approach to supporting communication, involving not only teaching staff and the senior leadership team, but also non-educational workers such as kitchen, office and caretaking workers to ensure that students with SLCN are identified and supported.

“It was a real privilege to be a judge for the Shine a Light Awards – the level of expertise on the panel was staggering, and it was wonderful to see so many examples of the fantastic work that schools and settings across the country are doing to help those with speech, language and communication needs.”

The full list of winners and highly commended finalists include:

	<b>Winner/s</b>	<b>Highly Commended</b>	<b>Highly Commended</b>
<b>Pearson Outstanding Achievement Award</b>	Lord David Ramsbotham GCB CBE	N/A	N/A
<b>Early Years Setting of the Year Award</b>	Robert Mellors Primary and Nursery School Foundation Unit, Nottingham	Bambini Childcare Ltd, Bedworth, Warwickshire	N/A
<b>Primary School of the Year</b>	Aerodrome Primary Academy School, Croydon	John Ruskin Language Unit, John Ruskin Primary School, Southwark, London	Lark Hall Primary School, Clapham, London
<b>Secondary School/ College of the Year Award</b>	Hampstead School, London	St Marylebone CE Bridge School, Westminster, London	Peacehaven Community School, Peacehaven, East Sussex

<b>Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Award</b>	Woodlands School, Leatherhead, Surrey	N/A	N/A
<b>Community Friendly Award</b>	Talk About Team, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norwich, Norfolk	N/A	N/A
<b>SLCN Innovation Award</b>	I CAN’s Talk about Talk programme, London	County Durham Youth Offending Service, Durham	Talk About Team, Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust, Norwich, Norfolk
<b>Communication Champion</b>	Bev Crisp, Whitby & Moors	Cordula Hastings,	

<b>Award</b>	Children Centre, North Yorkshire	Charles Warren Academy, Milton Keynes	
<b>Young Person of the Year</b>	Jonathan Middleditch, Moor House School and College (Suffolk)	James Curtis, London – AVUK	
<b>Communication Commitment School of the Year Award</b>	Holy Trinity Primary School, Halifax, Yorkshire	Longmoor Community Primary School, Liverpool	Fonthill Primary, Bristol

For further information about the Shine a Light winners and highly commended finalists, visit [www.shinealightawards.co.uk](http://www.shinealightawards.co.uk) and follow us on Twitter #SAL2015

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### For Further Information

For more information, or to arrange interviews, please contact Laura Smith and Lisa Church at Consilium Communications by contacting [lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lchurch@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) / 07467 945661 or [lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk](mailto:lsmith@consiliumcommunications.co.uk) / 07467 945848.

### Notes to editors

#### About the Shine a Light Awards

- The Shine a Light Awards are sponsored and organised by Pearson in partnership with The Communication Trust, a coalition of over 50 organisations dedicated to supporting children and young people's speech, language and communication.
- The Awards are designed to promote and celebrate good practice in speech, language and communication for individuals, groups and settings that work with children and young people, particularly those with SLCN.
- The awards form part of the legacy of the National Year of Communication (*Hello* campaign) and have become a key event in the speech, language and communication community's calendar.
- Nearly 80 applications were received with 10 winners and 11 highly commended finalists picking up coveted awards at a glittering ceremony hosted by comedian, David Baddiel.
- The award categories were Early Years Setting of the Year Award, Primary School of the Year Award, Secondary School/College of the Year Award, Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Award, Community Friendly Award, SLCN Innovation Award, Community Champion Award, Young Person of the Year Award and Communication Commitment School of the Year Award.
- 25 judges were involved in the Shine a Light Awards including Anne Fox, Director of The Communication Trust; Kamini Gadhok, CEO and Derek Munn, Director of Policy and Public Affairs of Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT); Virginia Beardshaw, CEO of I CAN; Norbert Lieckfeldt, Chief Executive of British Stammering Association; Peter Sutcliffe, Editor of SEN Magazine; Jonathan Douglas, Director of National Literacy Trust; Chris Hall, Managing Director at Pearson; Lesley Munro, Education & Speech and Language Therapy Manager at Pearson; Jill Duffy, Managing Director for Schools, Pearson; Hilary Berry, Chair of Cheshire West and Chester Primary Heads' Association; Clare O'Rourke, Specialist Speech, Language and Communication Teacher at Peacehaven Community School and past winner; Michael Beakhouse, Adults & Children's Commissioner at Reading Borough Council and past winner; Shane Dangar, Communication Champion 2013/14; Anna Reeves, Manager of ACE Centre; Malcolm Reeve, Executive Director for SEND & Inclusion at Academies Enterprise Trust; Janet Cooper, Programme Manager of Stoke Speaks Out and Past Shine a Light Award winner; Liz Bayram, Chief Executive of PACEY; Zoë Peden, Co-founder of Insane Logic; Laura Steuart-Fotheringham,

Programme Manager for The Communication Trust; Shona Crichton, Professional Advisor for The Communication Trust; Jack Williams, Project Officer for The Communication Trust; Joy Rutter, SEN Governor at Linton Colliery First School; Julie Steele, Specialist Speech and Language HLTA; Helen Fiddler, ESCAL Interim Strategic Lead and Programme Manager at Sheffield City Council; Aidan Baker, Young Person of the Year 2013/14.

- For further information, visit [www.shinealightawards.co.uk](http://www.shinealightawards.co.uk).

#### **About Pearson**

- Pearson is the world's leading learning company, with 40,000 employees in more than 70 countries working to help people of all ages to make measurable progress in their lives through learning.
- Pearson is the world's largest commercial developer and distributor of educational assessments and psychological testing materials with over 90 years history of commitment to researching and developing products to a reliable high standard.
- Pearson is dedicated to the pursuit of professional excellence, leadership, and growth through acquisition, development, publication, and the maintenance of quality assessment tools in order to anticipate and meet the needs of its customers.
- Pearson have sponsored the Shine a Light Awards since their launch in 2011, as part of the *Hello* campaign (National Year of Communication).
- For more information, visit [www.pearsonclinical.co.uk](http://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk) or follow @PsychCorpUK #SAL2015

#### **About The Communication Trust**

- The Communication Trust is a coalition of over 50 leading voluntary sector organisations, which raises awareness, influences policy, promotes best practice among the children's workforce and commissions work from its members.
- The Trust's mission is to ensure that every child and young person is supported to communicate to the very best of their ability.
- The Trust works towards its mission by working in partnership to build, skills, knowledge and confidence in the children's workforce, based on a foundation of good practice, robust evidence and effective policy and legislation.
- For more information about the Trust visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk) or follow @Comm\_nTrust #SAL2015.