



Press Release – For Immediate Release

OUTSTANDING PONTVILLE SCHOOL HONOURED AT SHINE A LIGHT AWARDS FOR ITS COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S COMMUNICATION

Pontville School in Ormskirk, Lancashire, has won **SEN School/Group of the Year Award** at an awards ceremony in London for its continued commitment to developing its pupils’ communication skills. The **2018 Shine a Light Awards**, run by learning company Pearson in partnership with The Communication Trust, took place on 22nd March 2018 and were hosted by stand-up comedian, actor and TV writer, Adam Hess.

The 2018 **Shine a Light Awards** is a national awards scheme that celebrates innovative work and excellent practice in supporting children and young people’s communication development. There were 10 awards in total, with winners and highly-commended finalists chosen by a panel of experts from the sector.

Communication underpins everything at Pontville, from the first 12 weeks of a pupil’s journey, when detailed assessments are made, to the pupil’s very last day at the school. Bespoke approaches to speech, language and communication needs (SLCN) include a siblings group, home communication programmes, and parent/pupil target reviews.

Pontville School is part of the Witherslack Group and benefits from sharing clinical services and Speech and Language Therapists (SaLT) from across 15 provisions throughout England. New staff members undertake a six-week training course delivered by clinical services teams, and all staff receive regular top-up training from SaLT. The SaLTs themselves are also supported to undertake higher-level professional qualifications.

Tackling each half term individually, Pontville’s own SaLT team and PSHE coordinator collaborate to create a school-wide plan for communications. The plan is then incorporated across all subject areas. Alongside this, pupils attend weekly SaLT sessions with the therapist, and practice a range of communication skills in a special timetabled lesson with their teachers. The results are fantastic, with pupils achieving a range of qualifications to prepare them for further education, charity work, and/or employment.

Justine Sims, Headteacher at Pontville School, said: "I am delighted that Pontville School has won the SEND School/Group of the Year Award. This award recognises the fantastic teamwork and expertise of our education, clinical and care staff who demonstrate great dedication and their expertise ensures that students thrive and flourish.

"Speech and language is embedded throughout every element of the school and we ensure that the needs of our children and young people are at the heart of our work. Our pupils, staff and families have been rooting for us to win so we are thrilled!"

Stand-up comedian and actor, Adam Hess, host of the 2018 Shine a Light Awards, said: "The dedication of Pontville School is outstanding. As a child, I struggled greatly with dyslexia and an immense fear of public speaking, if it wasn't for the support I received when I was younger I wouldn't be in the position I am today.

"It is fantastic to know that other children and young people are being given the support they need to learn, thrive and achieve their goals. Pontville School should be very proud of its award."

Sharon Hague, Senior Vice President, Schools, Pearson, said: "Our warmest congratulations to to Pontville School. Through our innovative clinical assessments, Pearson is committed to supporting those working to help people overcome challenges in speech and language. For six years we have run these awards as we believe it is so important to recognise and celebrate the incredible, but often unsung, work being done across the country to change the lives of children and young people by helping them to develop their communications skills."

Octavia Holland, Director of The Communication Trust, said: "Congratulations to Pontville School and everyone who triumphed at the 2018 Shine a Light Awards. They have shown what can be achieved when expertise, enthusiasm and dedication is given to children and young people who struggle to communicate. These awards highlight the very best practice that is taking place in settings across the country."

The **Shine a Light Awards** have grown in popularity since their launch during the National Year of Communication in 2011 (known as the *Hello* campaign). To date, the awards have celebrated the work of over 120 teams and a wide range of individuals, including young people with severe and complex speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

For further information about the Shine a Light winners and highly-commended finalists, visit www.shinealightawards.co.uk and follow us on Twitter #awards_SAL

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For further Information

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

Notes to editors

The full list of winners and highly commended finalists is as follows:

Award	Winner	Highly Commended	Commended
The Katie Rough Memorial Award	Libby Hill, Uttoxeter	Rachel Peck, Cambridgeshire	
Child/Young Person of the Year Award	Jonathan Bryan, Wiltshire	Siena Castellon, London	
Communication Champion of the Year Award	Pip St John, Lancashire		
Youth Justice of the Year Award	Manchester Youth Justice, Manchester		
Early Years Setting of the Year Award	Children's House Nursery School, London	Juice Nursery Ltd, Altrincham	
Primary School of the Year Award	Pendle Primary Academy, Lancashire	Longmoor Community Primary, Merseyside	Bridgewater Primary School, Newcastle upon Tyne
Secondary School/College of the Year Award	Isaac Newton Academy, London	London South East Colleges, London	
SEN School/Group of the Year Award	Pontville School, Lancashire	The William Henry Smith School, West Yorkshire	
SLCN Innovation of the Year Award	Stoke Speaks Out		
Pearson Outstanding Achievement Award	Stoke Speaks Out		

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 and healthcare calendar.
- The judges involved in the 2018 Shine a Light Awards were:
 - Bob Reitemeier, CEO of I CAN
 - Diz Minnitt, Speech and Language Lead, Association of YOT Managers (AYM)
 - Hilary Berry, Chair of Cheshire West and Chester Primary Heads' Association
 - Janet Cooper, Early Language and Communication Strategy Lead at Stoke-on-Trent City Council and past Shine a Light Award winner
 - John Parrott, Chair of Communication Consortium at NAPLIC
 - Jonathan Douglas, Director of National Literacy Trust
 - Julie Steele, Speech and Language HLTA and Local Champion
 - Jonathan Middleditch, Young Person of the Year 2015
 - Kamina Gadhok, MBE, CEO of Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)
 - Lesley Munroe, Education & Speech and Language Therapy Manager at Pearson
 - Liz Tyler, Director of Learning Services, UK Schools at Pearson
 - Malcolm Reeve, Managing Director of Firmament Education Ltd
 - Octavia Holland, Director at The Communication Trust
 - Peter Sutcliffe, Editor of SEN Magazine
 - Shane Dangar, Communication Champion 2013/14
 - Theresa Redmond, Lead Professional Advisor, The Communication Trust
 - Vicky Roe, Deputy Chair of SMIRA
 - Wendy Lee, Director of Lingo Speech and Language Therapy and Consultancy

- Zoe Peden, Co-founder of Insane Logic

About Pearson

- Pearson is the world's learning company, with expertise in educational courseware and assessment, and a range of teaching and learning services powered by technology.
- Our mission is to help people make progress through access to better learning. We believe that learning opens up opportunities, creating fulfilling careers and better lives.
- 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 or follow @PsychCorpUK #awards_SAL

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 or follow @Comm_nTrust