

Home Secretary pays tribute to Britain's Happiest School

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The happiest school in the UK has been praised by Home Secretary Amber Rudd. Silverdale Primary Academy, in St Leonards-on-sea, East Sussex won the accolade at laughology (<http://www.laughology.co.uk>) Happiness Awards 2016 in London on Friday (November 18). The awards honoured the happiest schools, teachers, businesses and organisations in the UK.

In a separate category, the happiest headteacher in the country was named as Jane Thomas, from St Matthew's Primary School in Luton.

Silverdale Primary Academy is in Ms Rudd's Hastings and Rye constituency. In a letter to Silverdale headteacher, Liz Miles, Ms Rudd wrote: "I was thrilled to hear that Silverdale has been shortlisted in the Laughology Happiness Awards 2016." She went on to congratulate the school on its victory.

The awards are the first of their kind to be held in Britain and were staged by consultancy Laughology and backed by Nat West.

Both winners in the education categories impressed the panel of judges by placing happiness at the heart of school life. Silverdale monitors the happiness of its pupils year-round and has even developed a website to track their levels of happiness.

In St Matthew's school, Jane Thomas has created the first accredited Happy-Centred School in the UK and has introduced a school curriculum which runs alongside the National Curriculum and encourages important childhood experiences, such as going to the theatre.

Over 120 schools, businesses and organisations entered. The award ceremony was held in the City of London and attended by guests from industry and education.

Stuart McLean Vice Principal of Silverdale Primary Academy said: "It is a tremendous accolade and validates the work we do in the school based on positivity and happiness, which is embedded in all we do with our children and staff. We couldn't ask for a better team of staff and children at the Academy and that's what it's all about for us."

Jane Thomas said: "It's humbling to win because it is really a team effort. Happiness is the keystone of any school. Children don't want to come to school if they don't feel safe, listened to, and happy. If they don't feel like they can succeed and thrive they don't want to learn. The awards have been amazing. To have so many like-minded people in the same room has been overwhelming."

The Laughology Happiness Awards 2016 were launched by learning and development consultancy Laughology, which uses the psychology of happiness and humour to help people and organisations develop and improve. They recognise the increasing importance that happiness plays in business and education. They honour organisations and individuals who put happiness at the heart of what they do.

The awards were sponsored by Herman Miller and Crown House Publishing and were also supported by

government happiness adviser Sir Anthony Seldon, who said: “The awards are important because they recognise that happiness is not just a nebulous concept. It is a vital component in the human condition that needs to be encouraged and nurtured in all areas of life.”

Laughology founder and CEO, Stephanie Davies, said: “Our winners and all our finalists have been amazing. The awards are our way of recognising and honouring those in the UK who, like us, are making the world a better place through happiness. I’ve been blown away by the reaction to the first ever Happiness Awards. They have captured the imagination of people and organisations across the UK and they prove that both business and education take happiness seriously.”

To arrange interviews and for more information contact

Nick Harding, 07717760714. nick.harding8@gmail.com

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