



It's time to announce the victorious schools in this year's awards. From a host of worthy entries, whittled down to three for each shortlist, these incredible schools stood out as exceptional in their categories. So it is an absolute pleasure to open the traditional gold envelope and reveal which ones are our winners at last, says *VICTORIA LAMBERT*

THE JUDGING PANEL



VICTORIA LAMBERT

Editor,
School House

Victoria Lambert is Editor of *School House*. She is firmly in favour of a rounded education which brings out the best in every child.



JULIA MARTIN

Chief Executive,
ISEB

Julia Martin has extensive experience in the education and assessment sectors and is a strong believer in championing student wellbeing and creativity.



DR EMEKA OKOROCHA

NHS Doctor
and author

Dr Emeke is a NHS doctor who is passionate about sharing information and has presented shows for kids on BBC Teach.



LUCY CLELAND

Editor in Chief,
Country & Town House

Lucy Cleland has worked in the magazine industry for more than 20 years and is driving *Country & Town House's* sustainability agenda.



ANNA TURNS

Specialist
environmental author

Oxford biology graduate, Anna Turns writes on sustainability and our connection with nature. She is a host on BBC's *Costing the Earth*.

THE WINNERS

Naturally, choosing the winner in each category was difficult, time consuming and caused much debate. So how did the judges reach their decisions?



Local Partnership & Community Champion
ACS & CANFORD (JOINT WINNERS)

A huge postbag of entries was sifted to reveal ACS, Cobham, Surrey, Wellington School, Somerset and Canford School, Dorset. And the ultimate winners were impossible to separate – which is not to say the judges didn't think highly of Wellington School either for its brilliant drama and dance outreach programme. Julia Martin says she was impressed with the list of joint ventures at Canford: 'I really could see how that would have a positive impact. This shows an example of a relationship between an independent school and an Academy that is thriving.' ACS displayed an enormous range of ways the school was involved in the wider community and a seriousness of intent in how it harnessed data to increase accountability. Victoria Lambert liked the school's bespoke impact monitoring tool (acspartnershipsimpact.com) which logged 60K hours of ACS involvement with the community, 21K staff hours dedicated to public benefit, and 610,358 hours of external student interaction. Phew.

PHOTOS: PEXELS



Mind/Mental Health Champion
BRYANSTON

Putney High School GDST, London, Pembridge Hall School, London and Bryanston School, Dorset were our finalists and demonstrated huge ambition in how they approached an area of health which is critical. Dr Emeke, *School House's* own doctor, and one of the judges, said he was impressed by how seriously all three schools took the issue of mental health. In the end, though, he was won over by Bryanston's innovative approach. Dr Emeke was a fan, too, of the way the school understood that nutrition was an important part of keeping students mentally fit, and he liked the tutor/buddy system the school operates as well as the way it worked alongside health professionals. Nor does the school sit on its laurels: Bryanston's approach to emotional health and wellbeing is constantly evolving, it says, to reflect new priorities and the impact of emerging technologies and external influences as well direct feedback from staff, parents and the pupils themselves.



Sustainability Champion
JAGS, LONDON

The three finalists in this category were Truro School, Cornwall; James Allen Girls School (JAGS), London and Royal Hospital School (RHS), Suffolk. Judge Anna Turns says she admired JAGS' creative and comprehensive approach. 'Leaders have chosen to take this seriously by employing a dedicated sustainability lead to focus on five pillars but their efforts go way beyond this. So much goes on behind the scenes of course. The magic lies in how this is seeping into the students' education on a daily basis. Just the very act of only reusing costumes and materials for the drama production or baking for regular climate café meetings is a breath of fresh air. Staff are leading by example but also giving plenty of space for young people to make a difference through the repair club for example, and develop their own voices and sense of agency. JAGS has a strong strategy with tangible goals.'



Animal Support Champion
SAINT RONAN'S, KENT

Looking to divide the rosettes in this category were Saint Ronan's, Kent, The Elms, Herefordshire and Repton, Derbyshire. All demonstrated a real understanding of the way animals can be used in an educational setting – from offering emotional support to teaching biology. But Saint Ronan's edged ahead with its extraordinary range and number of animals. Judge Anoop Bhuller explains: 'Its submission demonstrated a commitment to providing a fun and hand-on-approach to learning for their students. They have a range of animals, big and small, even rescue hedgehogs. Children are given responsibility for the animals, taught about reproduction and conservation, as well as taking part in shows. There is an awareness of protecting the environment too'. Dr Emeka adds he was entranced by the idea of the school donkeys watching matches from the sidelines.



Charity Champion
STONYHURST

This was a hard-fought category with Millfield School, Somerset, vying with Claremont Fan Court School, Surrey and Stonyhurst College, Lancashire for top honours. In the end, Stonyhurst pipped the others to the top spot. Julia Martin was bowled over by Stonyhurst's 'impressive' list of works and Victoria Lambert admired the example of how its integral, holistic approach to charity results in pupils like 17-year-old Head Boy Dilip. During his school career – which coincided with Covid, Dilip has volunteered at local charities, become a trustee at local charity Maundy Relief, even completing a 500-mile walk from Accrington to John O' Groats with his fellow trustees. All this while recovering from a life-threatening heart transplant. Dilip says: 'Stonyhurst has been integral in cultivating me into the young man I am today.'



Pastoral Care Champion
BASSETT HOUSE

The three finalists in this category - Reigate Grammar, Surrey; Bassett House, London and Sherborne Girls',

Dorset – all impressed with their innovative ways to enhance pastoral care from engaging technology to peer support. In the end, Bassett House impressed with the bespoke nature of its vision. Julia Martin explains: 'I felt Bassett House had put initiatives into place that were individual to that school and worked.' Children can record how they feel about a range of areas throughout the school, feelings and personal targets and discuss these with their form teacher and the Pastoral lead to ensure the correct support is given. A pupil pastoral audit is completed at end of each term. The school says: 'We understand a child's happiness is key; their wellbeing is of utmost importance.'



Kindness Champion
SAINT RONAN'S

The three to watch here were Saint Ronan's, Kent, Casterton, Sedbergh, Cumbria and Godolphin Senior,

Wiltshire. And the winner? A very happy Saint Ronan's, pulling in its second award – a huge achievement for a small school. Julia Martin says, 'The heart of the school really came across in this submission, it was charming.' How do they do it? 'Fun is in our bone structure,' says the school. 'Each class has a name not a number. Go to assemblies in the Great Space, French in the Bear Garden, or Maths in the Bogey Hole. Our outdoor play area is called Treetops and was opened by staff dressed as monkeys chasing other staff dressed as bananas.' The school landrover is called Boris, a converted horse box dishes out 'grub/tuck' and a Butcher's Bike delivers prizes to children.

WHAT NEXT?

The prize winners have all been informed and will be receiving commemorative plaques and a selection of books thanks to the sponsorship of ISEB. And for those who just missed out? It's time to start planning next year's entry – more details in our Spring Summer 2024 issue.