

The achievements of some of the borough's brightest students were celebrated at a glittering event last week where they were joined by a star of the Paralympics opening ceremony, as **Susan Mulligan** reports. Photos by **Rehan Jamil**.



THE second Mayor's Education Achievement Awards ceremony gave centre stage to the borough's 300 students who had been selected by their schools for educational excellence, academic progress or for exceptional contribution to their schools.

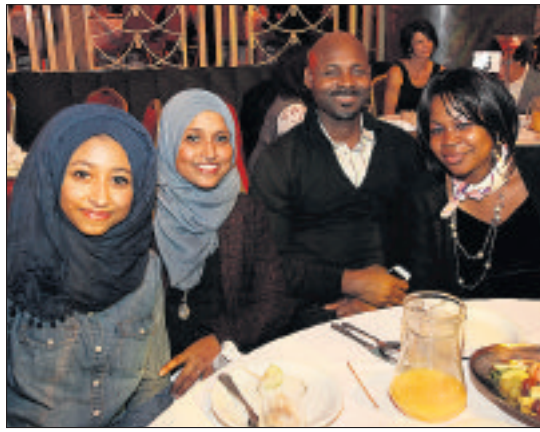
Mayor Rahman with Nicola Miles-Wildin

Held at the art deco Troxy in Limehouse, parents, teachers, senior education officers and councillors clapped and cheered as the youngsters, aged 16 to 18, met Mayor Lutfur Rahman and collected their awards and presentation certificates.

The winners' moment of stardom was led by the inspirational guest speaker, Nicola Miles-Wildin, who gave a poignant insight into the steps that she had taken to land the globally acclaimed role of Miranda in the London 2012 Paralympic Games opening ceremony.

Landry Adelard, a former Young Mayor of Tower Hamlets, also gave a rousing speech, highlighting the way that schools and his role as Young Mayor had given him purpose, motivation and a passion to help his community.

Mayor Rahman said: "These awards showcased the attainment that can be achieved by our young people with



Some of the guests at the awards ceremony

the support of schools, the council and parents working well together.

"I am proud of all our winners and I wish them every success in the future."

Akira Beidron, 16, winner for academic progress at GCSE level, from Bow School of maths and computing, said: "I couldn't speak any English when I arrived here from Japan six years ago. I'm now studying my A levels. It is an honour to be here tonight and to catch up with my old friends."

Paul Reader, 16, winner for academic progress, also from Bow School, said: "It is really nice to be appreciated. I'm so proud to be here. The venue is fantastic."

Harsha Lucka, 16, winner for academic excellence from Raine's Foundation School, said: "I think it's great that we can celebrate like this. I think it's about 'If you believe in yourself, and you want to get there, you will.'"

Chloe Bowden, 16, winner for academic excellence also from Raine's, said: "The speeches from the guest speakers were incredibly inspiring. They made me think that you need to work hard, but keep a balance because you are only young once."

Nawal Benachar, 16, winner of excellence from Morpeth School, said: "I was nominated because I was head girl and did quite well in my GCSEs. The evening has been really, really good. The speakers gave me a goosebumps feeling. It makes you think that, as long as you want to do something, you'll be successful. Just stay positive."

Kaitlene Koranteng, 16, winner for academic progress from Bishop Challoner School, said: "It has been a really nice evening with a great atmosphere."



Former Young Mayor Landry Adelard, watched by Cllr Rania Khan

"If you believe you want to



Mayor Lutfur Rahman, Tower Hamlets corporate director Isabelle Cattermole and Cllr

The ceremony was paid for by sponsorship from businesses Barratt Homes, JB Riney & Co Ltd and Bouygues UK.

Alastair Baird, regional managing director of Barratt London, said: "We are delighted to sponsor this prestigious celebration of young people's achievements in Tower Hamlets. My congratulations to all the teachers and students on their successes this year."

Bouygues UK has been working with the council for four years on the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Deputy managing director Arnaud Bekaert said: "We are proud to sponsor the Mayor's Education Achievement Awards in celebration of the outstanding academic successes of young people across the borough."

James Coe, general manager of Bow company JB Riney, said: "We are proud of our long-



Bishop Challoner student Savannah Smith



Chloe Bowden from Raine's Foundation School with her certificate





Aaron Bhambri and Isaac Onabajo from Bishop Challoner School



Isabelle Cattermole chats to guests



Dennis Gill from Bouygues UK with a student

ve in yourself, and get there, you will”



Abdul Asad with students honoured for academic excellence at GCSE level



Musicians from the council music service THAMES performed during the evening



Guests and students with Mayor Rahman



Nawal Benacher with her mum



Hussain Taoha from Bow School



Akira Beidron from Bow School



Harvey Dean from Bowden House School

standing association with the good work carried out by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets in promoting the achievements of



Guests and students after their meal

young people within the borough.”

The company’s managing director Brendan Riney was recently presented with an MBE by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace in recognition of his work with charities and the East End community.