

“Don’t be afraid of learning. Don’t be ashamed of asking—either from the teacher or at home—when you don’t understand something,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves said at the opening ceremony for the school year at the Ruila Basic School in Kernu Rural Municipality yesterday. “Someone who asks is not stupid, rather the one who does not ask and therefore doesn’t find out something important.”

The Head of State, who distributed primers to the 18 pupils starting first grade at the Ruila Basic School, said that he envies the folks at Ruila School, “A moderate-size school, where everyone knows each other; a soon-to-be built sports building and another study building; good teachers and wonderful pupils—where else but in such a school would it be fun to learn.”

President Ilves called on the pupils to care for their school, which was established almost 140 years ago by local farmers who understood that even in the country children need to receive a good education.

“Vigorous country schools are also very important for Estonia at the beginning of the 21st century,” the Head of State said. “If a village or rural municipality school has been able to survive until today and, even more, been able to develop, this demonstrates the vitality and endurance of the entire region.”

According to President Ilves, knowledge is acquired not only in class and he recommended that the pupils also study on the sports field, in choirs, hobby groups, and on one’s own while walking in nature or at home tinkering at something.

“All skills, all knowledge will help you to cope successfully in life. Estonia needs smart and active people,” the Head of State said.

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