

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Whitefield Primary School
Headteacher:	Jill Wright
RRSA coordinator:	Zoe Hathaway
Local authority:	Liverpool City Council
Assessor(s):	Martin Russell and Helen Trivers
Date:	19 th April 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This accreditation report is based on a virtual accreditation visit. The assessors would like to thank the children, the senior leadership team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form and provided a good collection of digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Highly effective leadership at all levels underpinned by children's rights and the RRSA Outcomes.
- A passionate commitment to children's rights from all duty bearers ensures that the Convention is evident in all aspects of school life.
- The empowerment of the children, evident in the role of pupil voice to shape key areas of school life and policy.

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been achieved.

2. MAINTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING STATUS

Our experience has shown that there are actions that have proven useful in other RRSA schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Gold level. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Maintain the current excellent practice, particularly the involvement of the children in school improvement and strategic development.
- Explore the possibility of using the CRC and your commitment to RRSA in the language used to communicate about who and what you are as a school.
- Be systematic in revisiting the origins of the CRC and its place in the wider framework of Human Rights and seek to be more ambitious in the breadth of rights explored across the school.
- Continue to be ambitious in promoting global citizenship. Consider a fuller exploration of the UN Global Goals through resources such as [The World's Largest Lesson](#).

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	There are 313 children on roll 43% of whom are entitled to support through the Pupil Premium. Around 40% speak English as an additional language and almost 2% have an Education health and care Plan.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, Deputy headteacher, RRSA coordinator,
Number of children and young people interviewed	7 children from Y2 to Y6 representing the School Committee who have led on RRSA in the school and 11 pupils from Y5 and Y6.
Number of adults interviewed	2 teaching staff, 2 parents, 2 governors, the PE lead and the Mental Health lead teacher.
Evidence provided	Gold evaluation form, comprehensive digital evidence, focus groups.
Registered for RRSA: 6th November 2017	Silver achieved: 27th November 2018

STRAND A: TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is made known to children, young people and adults, who use this shared understanding to work for improved child wellbeing, school improvement, global justice and sustainable development.

Strand A has been achieved

Children of all age groups spoken with, talked confidently about their rights, citing many examples from the CRC during discussions. They demonstrated a good understanding of rights and how rights apply in their life at school, at home and the wider world. One child explained that, *“Rights are one of the most important things in a child’s life...They give everyone opportunities.”* Another explained that *“Rights are there to help you access all the things you should have in your life.”* Children also shared knowledge of the nature of rights being unconditional, universal, inherent, indivisible and inalienable, saying: *“We have rights at birth”; “They can’t be taken away”; “We don’t have to do anything to have our rights”* and, *“Rights are for children in every single country.”* at different points during the discussions. This learning had been supported by the use of Unicef’s ABCDE of Rights resource. The concept of adults as ‘duty bearers’ for children’s rights was also widely understood.

Children explained that they learnt about rights in lessons and assemblies and displays of the articles around the school. There is a strong connection to the CRC in the Jigsaw PSHE programme. Examples were shared from various curriculum areas include a topic on volcanoes and earthquakes in geography which explores the impact on children of displacement, reduced access to food and safe water and on their education. One of the children mentioned how the Picture News resource raises awareness of other countries such as Afghanistan where, *“Not all children get their rights...some girls are forced into marriage.”* Another explained that they are always learning about the wider world and made reference to *“A girl who wants to change the world [Greta Thunberg] but the adults don’t always listen to her.”* Staff explained that links to rights are embedded throughout the curriculum and examples were shared including a planning grid for EYFS.

The senior leadership team and staff are highly committed to and passionate about embedding a rights-based approach across their whole school community and beyond, *“The rights underpin the whole school – they give us the reason for doing the things we do.”* Commenting on their progress since achieving Silver one of the school leaders said, *“You can educate the children in what the rights are but it’s them living and claiming their rights which is really making a difference at Gold.”* The leadership have ensured all staff are involved in CPD training and many school policies make appropriate reference to children’s rights. Governors are well informed about and involved in RRSA; *“Rights are at the heart of all governor discussions. For example, the right to play. The children really know that it is their right and they speak up for it.”* Parents and the wider school community are also made aware of rights through the school’s newsletters, social media platforms, leaflets, attractive informative displays and home learning tasks. A parent explained, *“The children are always talking about their rights at home. The school really respects their rights and it’s helping them to be more confident and positive.”* One of the adults pointed out that the children appear to be more *“...values based than before and they are really encouraging their families to be more respectful.”* The Headteacher also stated, *“The RRS agenda is not a separate entity. It is woven into the fabric of our curriculum. It is about ensuring that the children are citizens of our future”.* She explained that the experience of the pandemic *“Has really influenced the children in terms of valuing all their rights, especially to education and to play.”*



STRAND B: TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH RIGHTS – ETHOS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children, young people and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners and promotes wellbeing.

Strand B has been achieved

The children know that they are being nurtured in a rights respecting ethos and that it is the role of all adults in their school community to ensure that they can access their rights. When discussing the importance of their rights, one child explained, *“The teachers actually listen to us and that helps us to know that we are important.”* All those spoken with were clear that if anyone had worries or concerns either at school or at home they could speak with a trusted adult. The children are aware that all aspects of school provision link to their rights and they referred to the wide range of extra curricular clubs, including cross stitch, cookery and dodge ball, most of which are run in response to pupil requests. When asked about fairness within school, all children agreed that they were treated fairly with several saying, *“We are all equal.”* This led to a discussion about equity which was summarised by one child as, *“We all need different types of help.”* Another added, *“Everyone is different and that’s our strength.”*

Relationships within the school between children and staff, between staff and between the children which were observed, were positive and clearly based on mutual respect in a safe, nurturing environment. The creation and use of rights-based charters supports relationships and respect, with clear actions for both children and adults in school. Dignity is referred to and understood across the school; one of the children explained their understanding of this as being when *“Everyone is valued and treated as an individual.”* The school’s rights based approach to the promotion of positive relationships is also influenced by the Zones of Regulation philosophy which empowers children in self awareness and builds empathy for others. The school also promotes a talk-based approach, called ‘Social Thinking’, to solving and clarifying dilemmas and this refers to rights in order to develop the self-worth and to promote mutual respect.

The children unanimously agreed that they feel safe and protected in their school and understand this to be a fundamental right. Children explained that feeling physically safe was supported with many strategies such as crossing patrols and lockdown drills help them to feel safe. Some children talked about the role of the E-Cadets to support their peers in being safe online. Others remembered that, *“We learnt first aid and how to put people into the recovery position.”* One of the adults explained that Y5 and 6 learn about FGM and sexual exploitation and that this learning is linked to rights. It was also pointed out that, *“Consent is taught at all ages with even the youngest understanding that it’s OK to say things like ‘I don’t want you to play with my hair.’”*

The school has long prioritised health and wellbeing and this has intensified in the last twelve months; their work in this area has been recognised with a Gold School Mental Health Award. There is a trained mental health lead who supports children individually when needed but also provides drop in sessions so children know that there is always someone to talk to. One of the adults explained that *“If a child is not in a good place, we have to intervene in order to help them access their right to an education.”* The children identified many other aspects of mental health support including yoga and the use of Zones of Regulation, *“There are different colours to express your moods and emotions.”* When talking about physical activity one child commented, *“When we do PE and a variety of different sports, this also helps our mind too.”*



The school is a highly inclusive community and sees their work on diversity and inclusion as being strongly rooted in the CRC. The children cited several examples to show that they empathise with others and take action to help people feel a part of their community. One pupil spoke about the importance of understanding and celebrating difference as, *“Otherwise it’s like everyone’s in their own world and that’s not good.”* The children spoke about a video some of their peers had made to explain to their class the meaning and importance of Ramadan to Muslims. The school uses the ‘No Outsiders’ curriculum which teaches children about diversity, protected characteristics and non-discrimination. Every opportunity is taken to create opportunities to be positive about everyone’s uniqueness, for example in Neurodiversity Celebration Week the children drew umbrellas with positive messages on them and these were shared on social media. Videos of the children speaking or singing in their home language were created to mark International Mother Language Week.

Staff were very clear that the introduction of children’s rights has added significant value to teaching and learning. One of the senior leaders pointed out that there is greater independence, *“They don’t need to be guided as much by adults now.”* The children are very clear that their learning is core to their right to an education and they spoke of many ways in which they can actively support the right of others to learn, for example, *“We have learning partners – each week we move around and have a new one.”*; *“We swap books and mark each other’s work.”* They also spoke about learning in different grouping depending on their ability in each subject. P4C is used to enhance learning through dialogue and debate and is recognised by staff as enabling the children to *“disagree respectfully.”* One child was very keen to point out, *“Our teachers help us all to learn in a fun way.”*

STRAND C: TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR RIGHTS – PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION

Children are empowered to enjoy and exercise their rights and to promote the rights of others locally and globally. Duty bearers are accountable for ensuring that children experience their rights.

Strand C has been achieved

Children know that they have a voice in their school that is listened to, valued and taken seriously. There are a few different pupil groups enabling leadership and empowerment including School Council (RRSA Steering Group), E-Cadets, Librarians, News Crew and Play Leaders. The Headteacher asserted, *“The children’s views and voices completely shaped the reconnection work from September.”* This has resulted in a transformation of lunchtime arrangements with more time for the pupils to socialise and to engage with each other as they eat. One pupil explained that the consequence of this is that *“We feel more relaxed and calm by being with our friends more.”* Consultation involving the children is embedded at Whitefield, they know that their voices will be listened to and taken seriously. In the evidence, for example, was a photograph of the Children’s Committee engaged in a discussion around the question ‘What do our ‘keep safe’ boards need to say to children?’ the headteacher explained that groups of children were involved in a study to watch other children learn and their observations helped to reframe learning and teaching across the school. One of the pupils stated, *“You should use your voice to make a difference.”* This has been put into practice in other ways such as the ‘zoning’ of activities on the playground, provision of additional play equipment and the installation of a climbing wall, *“We make sure there is good equipment outside, for everyone.”* Explained a member of the School Council.

Children are aware of many global issues and understand how they can take action to make a positive difference as active global citizens. Examples of how they help others access their rights include support for Children in Need, Soccer Aid for Unicef, the local foodbank and Macmillan. A group of Y5 children have recently approached the headteacher expressing a desire to do much more for the environment. This was possibly prompted by the marking of Earth Day which was taken seriously by



the children, *“We wanted to spread awareness, so we made posters. We have only got one earth.”* Also, on an environmental theme, the children have engaged in OutRight, campaigning on action to combat climate change. Other campaigning has involved each class having the opportunity to engage in issues relating to social justice; one child explained, *“We had a workshop, we had to pick something important in our local area like racial discrimination or crime.”* Positives actions emerge from the learning and discussion and one group was very proud to describe the march they arranged and led to speak up against knife crime.

As a result of knowing about their rights, the children at Whitefield are both empowered and optimistic in their role as global citizens, *“We can make the world a better place for the next generation.”*