

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Rickmansworth Park JMI School
Headteacher:	Jane Linch
RRSA coordinator:	Natalie Catalano
Local authority:	Hertfordshire
Assessor(s):	Isobel Mitchell and Gill Roberts
Date:	18 July 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessors would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, staff and governors 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 assessment visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

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:

- A warm and welcoming school where children feel safe and enjoy school.
- Confident and articulate children with a good knowledge of rights.
- Inclusive environment where children feel valued and are listened to.

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:

- Develop systems for ensuring progression in developing knowledge of rights from early years to year 6. Develop whole staff knowledge of the content of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and consider including rights-based learning in lesson observations.
- Develop parents' understanding of the CRC through making links to Articles more explicit in the newsletter and at events.
- Continue to develop the use of rights-based language, particularly in the playground through perhaps a playground charter and/or further training for playground leaders (staff and children).
- Develop the children's interest in Fairtrade and environmental issues by creating further opportunities for them to campaign and advocate for a world which is more environmentally sustainable and socially just. Consider signing up for [OutRight 2019](#) to mark the 30th anniversary of the CRC and use the framework of the [UN Global Goals](#) for further work on sustainable development.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	A small school with just over 200 children from Reception to year 6. The figures from 2017/18 state that 7.2% of children receive SEND support and 18.2% have English as an additional language. 3.3% have received free school meals sometime in the last 6 years. The headteacher told us that the catchment area of the school has recently shrunk due to the building of new flats and that, as a result, the percentage of students with English as an additional language and the percentage receiving free school meals is increasing. The school was inspected by Ofsted in 2018 and received a 'good' rating.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, Deputy headteacher/RRS Lead, Assistant headteacher, External PE consultant/before and after school club's lead /governor
Number of children and young people interviewed	24 pupils from years 1 to 6 in focus group and 12 in steering group.
Number of adults interviewed	3 parents (also support staff 2 TAs 1 MSA), 1TA, 5 teachers.
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, whole school achievement assembly.
Registered for RRSA: 13 January 2017	Silver achieved: 14 May 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

Pupils from the Steering Group and focus group gave examples of a wide range of rights including some that are less well known, for example, the right not to be abducted or sold (Article 35) and the right to be protected from harmful work (Article 32). Pupils clearly understood that rights are universal, inherent, unconditional, inalienable and indivisible. The children, at least from year 2 upwards understood clearly the role of duty bearers and gave examples of the government, headteacher and teachers. They explained the Convention had been developed by the UN and the UN had been developed to “*discuss politics.*” The children were aware that not all children in the world were able to enjoy their rights, giving examples of famine, clean water, access to health care and price of clothing and food as some of the main issues facing children in the world today.

Children described learning about rights through assemblies, displays, and in lessons e.g. PSHE, and History. The PSHE curriculum overview has clear and explicit links to articles and subject leaders add links informally to their medium-term plans at the beginning of the year. SLT monitor links to rights across the curriculum through book scrutiny. The children could give examples of where they had learnt about rights in topic work, for example, year 6 had learnt about how rights were denied to people when studying the Ancient Civilization of Benin, year 2 talked about learning about Article 2 through studying Rosa Parks and year 4 had been reading a book about street children in the Victorian times and related this to rights. Y5 and 6 read First News and the whole school listen to news-round regularly in assembly. A year 5 display showed that links are made between current affairs in the news and rights.

Staff meetings regularly reference rights and the staff have received INSET training particularly on linking rights to the curriculum. Every term, children participate in their own class assembly which parents can attend and these also reference rights. Parents talked about how they had learnt about rights through their children talking about them at home and were very positive about their children learning about the Convention, “*Everybody knows their rights and they do respect the rights of others.*” A parent leaflet is being developed and the website is to be updated which will include a short video of the children talking about their rights and includes some pupils talking in their home language e.g. Polish, Russian. The governor said they had received updates at governing body meetings. School Council have taken governors on a rights-based learning walk, and feedback was that the children ‘demonstrated a really good understanding of rights.’

There is clearly a high-level commitment to learning about and applying rights in the school context. This is evidenced by the recent report from Herts County Council which states, ‘learning at Rickmansworth Park is underpinned by a whole-school ethos as a Rights Respecting School. This work has a high profile in the school and the children’s work, on display throughout, reflects their strong understanding.’ The headteacher commented that the rights work “*gives genuine meaning to our values.*”

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

Each class has their own rights charter which highlights the actions rights holders can take to respect rights and the actions adults can take as duty bearers. For example, in year 3, the display indicates that in order to protect the right to privacy the children would not copy each other’s work and the adults would ask before looking in a child’s tray. The School Council looked at all the class charters and identified the most frequently chosen rights which they then used to make a whole school charter focussing on Article 2 non-discrimination, Article 12, the right to a voice, Article 15, the right to join groups, Article 19 the right to be safe, Article 29 the right to a good quality education and Article 31 the right to rest and play. They represented this as a large poster which showed how pupils and staff would respect these rights for example staff and pupils would be ‘kind and thoughtful to one another’, ‘respect one another and celebrate differences’; and ‘work together to the best of their abilities and talents.’

Relationships in the school were very positive and warm, within an inclusive and caring atmosphere. SLT said *“the level of care the children show each other is very positive”*. They also felt that the children were starting to use rights-based language and that this was making low level conflict easier to resolve. Children said that if bullying occurred it would be sorted out immediately. They also described that if there was an argument everyone would have the chance to have their say. In more serious instances you might be sent to the headteacher where you would complete a reflection sheet which has the rights on the back and the focus is on understanding what happened and why it happened. The School Council had been consulted over the behaviour policy and did not want to change it as they felt it was positive. SLT reported that the children had said *“the focus of the policy was on help rather than punishments”*. Pupils in the focus group could explain the term ‘dignity’. They said it was about *“treating others how we want to be treated”*; *“everyone should be treated the same even if they were in a war zone.”* They could also give examples of how they are treated with dignity by staff *“If you have a problem, they listen to you and don’t just send you away.”* The children in the focus group explained they understood equality to be *“everyone treated equally”* and older pupils explained the term ‘equity’ in terms of how some children might need additional help with tasks if they had extra needs such as dyslexia.

Parents said their children feel *“confident, safe and happy”* at school and the children could give examples of how the school keeps them safe, their thoughts on this were displayed on a tree diagram with the thoughts written on leaves, for example *“I feel safe at school because there are lovely teachers all around and we have gates around the school.”*

The children were aware of how the school supports their health *“they give us healthy food and clean water.”* One of the parents spoke about her daughter who has medical needs and she felt that the rights respecting ethos has really *“enabled her to flourish and have a voice.”* They have had workshops from NSPCC, Child Line and other external providers on safety and wellbeing. The children in the focus group explained that they could see a counsellor if they needed to, but they also confirmed that they felt *“really confident to speak to a trusted adult”* if they had any concerns.

One of the parents was delighted that her son (the only Sikh boy in the school) had *“never felt any different to anybody and he was very confident to talk and speak up and was very happy and felt safe”*. All three parents we met emphasised how happy and included their children were at school and felt their talents were nurtured and they had plenty of opportunities for clubs. The parents we spoke to also felt that in the school the children *“feel listened to”*, and that the *“love and attention they get here is lovely.”* The headteacher felt the RRS award had helped them to embrace the increasing diversity within the school. The children spoke about how they had learnt about other religions and cultures through RE, assemblies, celebrating various festivals e.g. Diwali, visitors and visits. Pupils in the focus group said children could speak their home language in assembly and pupils have felt confident to teach other children about their heritage and / or religion. During our visit, we observed a ‘trophy assembly’ where children received certificates and trophies for a wide range of achievements, including the ‘Gold Cup’ which was awarded for encompassing rights respecting values.

Subject leaders conduct pupil voice focus groups to obtain feedback on their lessons which is then fed into lesson planning. For example, feedback on science requested a more practical approach which then influenced the teachers to reflect on level of ‘hands-on’ learning in all subjects. The children use a self-assessment traffic light system to check their understanding of their work.

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

The children have many opportunities to have their voice heard and take on leadership roles within the school. The School Council is democratically elected from year 1 to year 6 and also operates as the Rights Respecting Steering Group. They played a key role in developing the whole school charter of rights. This group have also led a consultation on school dinners and have fed back the results to the catering company as well as advocating for a table tennis table and table football in the playground which they now have. They have been consulted on the behavioural policy and felt it was very fair and did not need any changes. The Head Boy and Head Girl are the ambassadors for the school and are chosen by staff based on a presentation they give, the criteria for selection relate to being rights respecting. The Head Boy and Head Girl presented the school’s work on rights to new parents at the start of the year and they recently conducted a consultation with key stage 1 on how they felt the Playground Buddy system was working. There is a lot of peer support within the school, year 6 buddy up with reception and year 6 with year 2. There are also Digital Leaders from year 6 who help the younger pupils with IT and have led presentations on internet safety. Sports team captains are elected and run activities at lunchtimes. One of the parents spoke about how much her son enjoyed being a member of the School Council and one of the children we spoke to explained how he had grown in confidence and felt more willing to speak out since becoming a School Councillor/Rights Ambassador.

The headteacher explained how the rights respecting work had enabled the children to become more outward looking and they have begun to realise how they can have power and influence beyond the school. She felt that the children were more aware of how the money they raise for charity is used and have had more of a say on which charities to support. The School Council decided to support NSPCC and Children in Need nationally, and internationally they chose to support Unicef, Fairtrade and Comic Relief. The children talked about learning about Fairtrade and running a Fairtrade stall where they chose the products to be sold. They were able to link this to the rights of farmers to an

UNITED KINGDOM

adequate standard of living. As part of their project on the rainforest Y5 became concerned about the plight of indigenous people and have written to the Brazilian government through the embassy urging them to protect the rights of those living in the Amazon rainforest. In their local community, the school have been part of the Hertfordshire Schools Forum where they have been involved in a community project on the environment. They had the task of litter picking around the school and also the local Aquadrome. The issue of single use plastic was a focus at the event and the school are planning to look at this in more detail next term.