

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St. Oswald's Church of England Primary School
Executive Headteacher:	Emma Murtagh
RRSA coordinator:	Laraine Carr
Local authority:	Sefton Council
Assessor(s):	Martin Russell
Date:	12th July 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a second reaccreditation visit. The assessor 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 continue to be embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- The breadth and depth of children's knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and their understanding of the related concepts such as the unconditional and inherent nature of rights.
- The way in which the school has built upon and strengthened its longstanding Gold RRSA status, making good use of ongoing RRSA guidance and initiatives such as OutRight to maintain enthusiasm about rights across the school.

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:

- Build on the ambassadorial activity undertaken so far by reaching out to local secondary schools to help them to know about rights and to encourage their engagement with RRSA. Also consider making use of Diocesan networks.
- Continue to expand the reach and impact of pupil voice into all areas of school improvement on strategic planning. Consider systematising the best of current practice.
- Seek to make more planned and sustained use of [The World's Largest Lesson](#) in order to develop awareness of and campaigning about the UN Global Goals.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	The school has 237 children on roll. Approximately 30% of the children are identified as having some additional learning needs. About 8% speak English as an additional language and about 40% of the children receive additional support through the Pupil Premium.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher and RRSA coordinator.
Number of children and young people interviewed	20 children in focus group and over 30 spoken with in class visits during the tour.
Number of adults interviewed	2 teaching staff (one a governor) 2 support staff, 3 parents and the Chair of Governors.
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence and class visits.
Registered for RRSA: November 2010	Gold (Level 2) first achieved: 2012, then reaccredited in June 2016.

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 across the school were confident in speaking about and explaining an extensive range of different articles from the CRC. They were very clear in articulating the role of duty bearers in ensuring that children can access their rights. The school has made good use of Unicef's 'ABCDE of Rights', with children of all ages readily referring to the fact that rights are unconditional, *"No one can take rights away, that's inalienable."* and that they are from birth and can't be separated. When exploring the idea that rights are for every child, globally, all the children understood this and went on to discuss how the rights are for the whole world. The children were confident in pointing out that, despite the universal nature of rights, children in many parts of the world are prevented from enjoying all their rights, *"In some countries where there is war, children might have to leave their homes, they might lose their family, their education and the right to play or enjoy healthy food."* They also discussed natural disasters and poverty as further causes of rights not being accessed and this led to a discussion about threats to safety, education, family life and shelter. The children also recognised that there are situations in the UK context which might mean that some children can't enjoy their rights for example, as a result of homelessness, bullying which *"picks on people and might stop them from feeling safe."*

In addition to a very well-planned assembly programme and effective use of special events and days, the school's curriculum offers numerous opportunities for the children to encounter different rights in the context of planned learning. In Y1, for example, a lesson was observed as part of their Africa topic, in which the children had found out about Nelson Mandela; they were able to explain some of the rights not accessed by Black children during Apartheid. The children explained how their prayer space often links to different articles and one pupil said, *"We sometimes write prayers to help us think about people who are not getting their rights."* The children mentioned that they often watch Newsround and all classes participate in a weekly discussion using Picture News which helps them to learn about and reflect on national and global issues, always linked to rights. Parents welcome this global awareness, *"It takes them out of their little local bubble! This really matters, it was so good when they did the book collection [for a charity supporting education in an African country], my daughter really thought about it and realised that not all children's education is as good as hers."*

The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are whole heartedly committed to a rights-based approach across the school. They see the commitment to the Convention as an essential way of supporting their children, as the headteacher explained, *"It's so much part of who we are now. Having a new RRS lead has given us a new dimension. The children would never let this fall by the wayside."* Reflecting on the nature of the school's catchment, the leadership are certain that a focus on rights is essential for their community, furthermore, *"the rights tie in completely with our vision and our Christian ethos."* Parents are routinely informed about rights through newsletters and assemblies. The commitment of governors to RRS continues to be strong, ensuring that children's rights are at the centre of all decision making and at the foundation of all that the school provides. New staff induction and links with the local parish are always reinforced by reference to the Convention.

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

Discussion with the children about their understanding of themselves as rights holders provided an excellent framework for them to articulate all the different ways in which they can enjoy their rights in school. Many examples were shared and the conversation concluded with one pupil saying, *“It’s our right to know all our rights!”* All pupils were clear about the role of duty bearers and that, ultimately, it was the role of Government to ensure their rights were met. In school, however, there was certainty among the children that the systems for dealing with concerns raised by any pupil were both accessible and trusted; several children confirmed this to be so. The children defined a ‘trusted adult’ as somebody who could be relied upon, *“They are responsible for doing something about it.”* One of the staff commented that *“We keep empowering the children. They should be able to speak up for their rights. Nobody wants them to be passive.”* There was unanimity among the children that their school was very fair in the way people are treated, and they described examples of what this meant. An exploration of equity led to the children citing a range of comments including, *“It depends on the situation. Everyone has the same rights, but they might need more help to get them.”*

Throughout the visit, it was very clear that mutually respectful relationships are prevalent across the school. The children spoke about how well everyone gets on and how friendly their school is, and they knew that respect is a key part of the school’s values. When asked about how rights help when there are disagreements or problems, the first response was, *“You could remind them that they have rights.”* The discussion went on to include remarks such as, *“It’s always important to make sure everyone has their right to be safe.”* and, if adults need to be involved, *“They listen to one person’s story first and then another.”* All children are aware of systems such as the Buddy Bench, there to facilitate support when relationships are a struggle and they said that the *“Lunchtime charter is having a good effect, because people are sticking to it!”* Thinking about relationships in school, one of the SLT pointed out, *“The language of rights is helping them to be better people. It gives them a reason to understand why some choices are right and others are not.”* The pupils spoke positively about how incidents are dealt with and were clear in expressing their view that, whatever happened, people were treated with dignity, *“Everyone should be given lots of respect, no matter what.”*

Safety in school was referred to, unprompted, by all the groups of adults and children spoken with and a range of processes and actions were explained. The children were confident in speaking about e-safety and were able to link their understanding to a range of appropriate articles from the Convention. This focus was welcomed by parents and carers too, *“The school makes online safety a very big priority and this is good for the children at home too.”* The children in Y6 take on a role of Playground Leaders and this adds to the overall sense of calm and cooperation to which most children referred. Incidents of discriminatory behaviours and bullying are rare, and the school’s anti-bullying input is linked to all other aspects of being safe from harm and is woven through with relevant rights.

St. Oswald’s is proactive in highlighting and supporting all aspects of children’s health. They have participated in a local scheme whereby they were all given step counters and monitor their activity. This featured on local television and the school is proud that an increase in activity among the pupils has been sustained. Staff, pupils and parents all spoke positively about the impact of the school’s

focus on health with regard to diet, hydration and exercise. The pupils also demonstrated an emerging understanding of mental health and of the vocabulary associated with expressing their emotions. Y6 children described how they had been helped by learning to practise mindfulness; others spoke about the worry box in each class, *“The teachers read these every day and they would speak to you or see if you needed to talk to the nurse or somebody else.”* They were aware of the importance of talking about their feelings.

The school has a highly inclusive culture, and this is a constant focus for the leadership. Many actions were shared such as the employment of a Speech and Language specialist to screen all Early Years pupils and make recommendations to staff and parents for how children can be best supported; this has resulted in rapid progression in speaking and understanding for numerous children. The demographic of the school is very limited in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, but the staff are acutely aware of this and make every effort to counter it by the way the curriculum is planned and by taking every opportunity to celebrate the different cultures that are represented in the school. One of the parents commented that *“It’s so good that the children learn about and celebrate lots of different faiths and cultures.”*

The children were enthusiastic in speaking about their right to an education and the role they can play in making the most of this. With minimal prompting they spoke of peer assessment and different ways of helping each other, working as partners and editing each other’s work. They stressed the importance of being fair and giving positive feedback. The school has developed a system of ‘Pupil Passports’ for the Children’s University in order to encourage and provide evidence of out of school learning. The children described this as motivating and they appreciate the rewards the scheme brings. The SLT explained that children’s voice is recorded in lesson observations as to how the lesson has had an impact on them. This is part of school improvement and there is an appreciation that the children talk openly and confidently about lessons they have enjoyed or not enjoyed.

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 voice of the children has long established influence in the school and is recognised by all adults as being their right. The school offers multiple opportunities for the children to take on leadership roles and have their voice heard on different issues. The Rights Ranger Group worked on improving lunchtime behaviour and they have written a letter to the Chair of Governors to persuade her to provide resources on the KS1 playground to support play. The children who led on the activity tracking project mentioned earlier have now gone on to introduce the ‘Daily Mile’ for all children to further boost their levels of activity. Then SLT routinely consult with the School Council about the effectiveness of learning resources and a role is planned for the children to be actively involved in next year’s School Improvement Priority relating to mental health.

The children explained how the council is elected and the system of *“meeting every week with our own class and then bringing ideas to the whole council meeting.”* Policy developments and whole school improvement ideas have sometimes been shared with the Council for their opinion. One adult commented, *“We see the children really being empowered by their rights. They want to use their voice and bring about change.”*

The school has developed an effective ambassadorial role, taking the Convention beyond their own community and supporting other schools in Sefton. The commitment of the children to advocate for the rights of others has become embedded. For example, the school took part in Unicef UK's OutRight in 2018 and the children have written to their local MP inviting him to a whole school celebration assembly to show how the school have made their voices heard by supporting the reduction in air pollution. The children spoke about their desire to campaign on this issue *"Because you can get bad illnesses from air pollution."* At a local level this campaign has also resulted in an increased number of children walking to school. Parents welcome the fact that their children take an active interest in the news and that they bring their passion about rights and the environment into family life and discourse. One parent shared the experience of being amazed when her daughter, during a visit to MacDonald's, approached a member staff and explained, at length, reasons why single use plastic straws should no longer be acceptable. The children also recognise how fundraising can also make a difference to the lives of children and they described their commitment to the annual Shoebox appeal and to Christian Aid Week. One of the adults commented that *"The children have a sense of empathy for others less fortunate and can speak about how their charitable efforts can make a difference to the rights of others."*