

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Holywell Primary School
Headteacher:	Darran Callaghan
RRSA coordinator:	Nicola Lassman
Local authority:	Kent
Assessor(s):	Hilary Alcock and Jilly Hillier
Date:	16 th July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This 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 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:

- The development of pupil voice in all aspects of school life during the RRSA (Rights Respecting Schools Award) journey and the positive impact this is having on learning, inclusion and wellbeing.
- The way the CRC (Convention on the Rights of the Child) underpins school improvement and policy review e.g. Behaviour Policy, PSHE and RSE Policy.
- The commitment and energy of senior leaders and staff in embedding a child rights approach.
- Consistency of messaging and communication about rights across the school community.

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:

- Continue to deepen and widen knowledge and understanding of the CRC amongst the school and local community.
- Consider involving children in a child friendly version of the School Development Plan so they are active participants in the school’s development.
- Build on the work you have done to embed pupil voice by empowering children to campaign on local and global issues. Support children to move from a ‘charity’ to ‘justice’ perspective. Consider exploring the UN Global Goals using the World’s Largest Lesson resources to provide a framework, alongside rights, for campaigning. See Unicef’s Youth Advocacy Toolkit for tips on campaigning.
- Develop your role as ambassadors for the CRC amongst other schools in your trust and with secondary schools to support children with their transition to secondary school. As you said, ‘Spread the message!’
- Continue to find innovative ways to engage parents in the RRSA journey.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Holywell Primary School has 199 children on roll. 16% are eligible for Pupil Premium and 1% have an ECHP. 13% speak English as an Additional Language and 10 languages are spoken within the school.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	18 children in two focus groups.
Number of adults interviewed	7
Evidence provided	Portfolio of digital evidence, school website, evaluation form, pupil and adult discussion groups.
Registered for RRSA: 9th February 2016	Silver achieved: 15th June 2017

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 were interviewed in their class bubbles and demonstrated a very good understanding of children’s rights. They could name a range of articles including the right to education, to be heard, to information, to play, to privacy, not to be kidnapped, to protection against drugs, to know about your rights and the right to non- discrimination. They were also familiar with article numbers and knew that rights are universal, inherent, inalienable, indivisible and unconditional. They had a mature understanding about how rights sometimes need to be balanced, with one child saying, *“At certain times one right can be more important.”* and was able to give an example. They were clear in their understanding of the role of adults as duty bearers and themselves as rights holders. They described how at the age of eighteen they get their *“Adult rights.”*

Children talked about learning about rights in assemblies, in different subjects, displays and by making posters. Learning about rights begins as soon as children start school. The KS1 teacher explained how this is done in a child friendly way, focusing on rights such as the right to a name and identity and the right to be safe. The KS2 teacher described how now, *“It feeds into everything we do.”* Trainee teachers are expected to deliver lessons about rights too. Staff explained how modelling rights respecting language and attitudes, was also an important way to embed the ethos. Activities carried out during Covid19 show how learning about rights has continued and engaged parents. The RRSA Lead adapted the RRSA Article of the Week resource making it accessible for her children, inviting them to complete challenges on different articles. A range of videos and pieces of work were shared as evidence particularly on Article 24. Other children wrote a speech in English about the importance of rights as a way of showing their understanding of different sentence structures. Children also described their ‘rights removal day’ that helped them to empathise with children who do not have the same facilities as them to enjoy their right to education. Children described how they, *“Watch Newsround and Picture News every week and share what we heard on the news.”* to help them learn about current events and the wider world. They explained how there are times when children are not able to enjoy all of their rights, such as the right to clean water, healthcare, safety and food because of war, *“Like in Syria and the Middle East”* or natural disasters. One child explained that, *“Some governments don’t let people have their rights ... or might not have the resources”* to do so. The activities for ‘Going Global’ included finding out about Fairtrade, anti-racism and Black Lives Matter. Children shared their learning through a variety of ways such as news reports and drama. The RRSA Lead explained how surprised she was when one child created a Power Point about freedom fighters from Ghana. The headteacher explained how the anti-racism work was introduced to parents within the context of equality and fairness and how he had been thanked by a parent.

RRSA is well led by the RRSA Coordinator who has attended Gold training and disseminated information to staff. She explained how new staff are supported to embed a rights ethos into their teaching. Teachers interviewed were confident in their understanding of the CRC and are committed to embedding it in their teaching and learning and explained how the RRSA Lead supports them for example using the Rights Bingo activity. Parents and governors are kept informed about work on children’s rights. The headteacher explained how newsletters and letters refer to rights and in meetings with parents he highlights their role as duty bearers. He explained that using the context of rights had helped parents understand and respect decisions that are made in school. One child described how he talked about rights at home with family members including his great grandma and how he helped younger siblings to have a voice. Another child described how his neighbour had asked if she could play with him and he said yes explaining that, *“Everyone has the right to play.”* A parent

described how her child talked about rights at home and how he, “*Had the right to rest*” after a busy day at school.

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

Children gave examples of how school supported them with accessing their rights. On the school’s Rights Respecting webpage, it clearly shows how the CRC is integrated into all aspects of school life from the school’s vision and ethos to restorative practice and safeguarding. The CRC is clearly referenced in a range of policies including the Equalities, Anti-bullying and the comprehensive Behaviour Policy which is based on positive behaviour management and restorative justice. The difference between equality and equity is explained in this policy. ‘Our aim is to promote fairness and equality but with an understanding of the child’s needs, age, social, emotional or mental health issues. This means some children will require additional support in addressing specific behaviours.’ The KS1 teacher was clear in her enthusiasm for RRSA saying, “*This matters.*” They felt that they were treated fairly and could speak out if they felt something was unfair. One child gave the example that younger children used to have an hour for lunch but KS2 children only had forty-five minutes. They felt this was unfair and so went to the headteacher and “*We were listened to and we now get the same.*”

Mutually respectful, positive relationships are a strength of the school. The Behaviour Policy, which children were involved in reviewing, makes it clear that positive reinforcement and treating children with dignity and respect is key. For example, children’s names are only displayed for positive behaviour and a restorative justice approach is used. Children feel they have ownership of it and staff say behaviour incidents have, ‘drastically reduced’ since this policy was reviewed. Children described how staff treated them with dignity if their behaviour is inappropriate saying, “*They take us out of the room and talk to us quietly – so we aren’t embarrassed.*”

Children feel safe in school and explained ways in which teachers kept them safe. This included having locked gates around the school, locking doors so only staff can open them, having fire exits, being taught about safety online with one child explaining, “*We tell an adult if something pops up on the computer.*” Another child added that if she didn’t feel safe, “*I would tell an adult.*” They trust adults to sort out problems with them. Physical, mental and emotional health are given a high priority. One child described how they wash hands for twenty seconds to stay healthy and other children talked about the Calm Club where they can go, “*If you feel stressed or anxious and we talk about things and do things like mindful colouring.*” The deputy head explained how children who have experienced trauma and challenging life experiences are supported and how this is integral to their rights work.

It was clear that supporting children to feel included and valued is a key priority and staff are responsive to changes in society and adapt policies and practice to reflect this. The SLT has recently reviewed the PSHE and SRE curriculum to reflect the diversity of society and children’s needs so that everyone feels valued and respected. Children were very clear that school helps them to feel included. One child explained that three years ago when he came to the school, “*I had a voice, but one that no one understood.*” because he spoke a different language. He explained that soon he felt able to talk about his journey to England and his religion “*...and no one judges or laughs.*”

Children have opportunities to be active participants in their own learning. Assertive mentoring provides a one to one session in which children discuss with their teacher their learning targets and how they feel about their progress. One child explained that they felt being a rights respecting school, *“Helps you have a better education – if we didn’t have a voice – learning could be confusing.”* Another child commented that knowing about rights has had, *“a huge impact on my learning.”*

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 clearly feel they have a voice in school and that their views are listened to and acted upon. They talked about how they had been involved in developing the 4 Rs that make up the school values (Resilience, Respect, Responsibility and Ready). The head teacher explained how children contributed to the review of the Behaviour Policy because previously, *“They felt they didn’t have enough of a voice.”* Children explained that now, *“We get to choose our consequences”* which helps them to, *“Understand what we did and what we deserve ... we get more independence... our voice is listened to.”* There is a School Council and a Rights Respecting Group who help to make changes in school, but it was clear that all children feel able to suggest changes that will improve school and fundraise for different charities. There was evidence to show that children had approached the headteacher to ask for new resources that would improve ICT, to which he agreed. Children of all ages know the importance of being listened to, as shown by the video submitted by one child during remote learning based on the Not Now Bernard story book. The child’s advice to the mother was, *“You’ve got to listen to Bernard more!”* Staff shared their experiences of how RRSA had impacted on their teaching. The SENCO explained, *“It’s made a massive difference to the way I approach my role. The main difference is pupil voice. Before I didn’t understand the importance of pupil voice, but now I don’t do things for children, I do things with them... My role is to give them a voice.”* The RRSA Lead stated, *“Children have so much influence in what happens in school now – they know they are powerful, and this has made them feel more valued and able to discuss their rights and form a valid argument.”*

Children are developing their role as local and global citizens. Evidence showed that children have been involved in raising awareness of environmental issues such as looking at air quality. Some children visited the Houses of Parliament as part of the Outright campaign to speak about the importance of reducing air pollution. The headteacher considers that because of their RRSA journey pupils are, *“So much more aware of what’s happening in the wider world. They don’t just talk about it but talk about what can they do about issues, to make changes.”* Children in the focus group talked about the importance of recycling and reusing, driving electric cars and keeping the environment clean through litter picking. Children have been involved in organising and raising money for several charities, such as Children in Need and Jeans for Genes. Staff explained how they model responsible practices such as using Fair Trade products in the staff room and seeking the best local food suppliers to support their local community.