

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Chesterton Primary School
Executive Headteacher:	Mark Siswick
Head of School:	Danine Smith
RRSA coordinator:	Whitney Shore
Local authority:	Wandsworth
Assessors:	Frances Bestley and Martin Russell
Date:	6 th June 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the children and staff for the warm welcome received and for all the evidence provided of the school's success at embedding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into their daily life, learning and relationships. Prior to our visit a detailed School Evaluation Form was completed and the programme for the visit included opportunities for detailed conversations with pupils, staff, governors and parents as well as with the SLT.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- The children's confident knowledge and understanding of their rights and their awareness of the rights of everyone else in their school community.
- Strong relationships across the school with an emphasis on collaboration. It is evident that the children feel a strong sense of ownership of and pride in their school.
- In addition to securing a broad awareness of all the rights, time is given to explore issues in depth and understand causes, consequences and potential solutions. This has been exemplified recently through the focus on water.
- Adults, including parents and governors have a strong understanding of the wider purposes of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Outcomes for all three Strands of the RRSA framework have been achieved.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

None

3. 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:

- Sustain the excellent rights based practice seen during the visit.
- Continue to contribute to the leadership of RRSA support and growth across Wandsworth.
- Further embed the terminology related to rights: Duty Bearers/Rights Holders; inalienable, indivisible, inherent, unconditional and universal; equity and dignity.
- Contribute to the development of Unicef UK's campaign on air quality.

4. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

4.1. The school context

Chesterton Primary School is a larger than average primary school with a roll of around 470 children. The school serves an ethnically and economically diverse community around Battersea. 56% of the pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium support, more than double the average for England. A wide range of ethnic heritages are represented in the school, with over 40 different home languages spoken, over 77% (nearly three times the figure for England as a whole) of the children speak English as an additional language. Although the school provides additional learning support to a significant numbers of the pupils, only around 1.7% have a formal Education and Health Care Plan.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes

Attendees at SLT meeting	Executive Headteacher / Headteacher / 4 members of SLT / RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	40 children in two focus groups, plus two classes spoken with during the tour
Number of staff interviewed	3 teaching staff 2 support staff (one a governor) 2 parents 2 governors
Evidence provided	Learning walk including lessons seen Written and digital evidence Focus groups
First registered for RRSA: 2013	Silver achieved: 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 living.

Strand A has been achieved

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is deeply embedded in language, relationships and learning at Chesterton. The senior leadership team asserted that rights “*embody everything we have always done as a school but this has now taken it to a new level.*” All the children spoken with demonstrated a secure knowledge of a wide range of articles and were adamant that rights are unconditional and inalienable - “*no matter what you do you should have access to all your rights.*” Among many articles mentioned by the children were the rights to education, medical care, and protection from harm including abuse, to your own religion, expression of opinion and name and identity. The children knew that government, school staff and all adults were responsible for ensuring that they can enjoy their rights. When asked about the origins of the CRC, one child explained that “*people from all the different countries made them together.*” Conversations in the focus groups and in the class visits demonstrated that the children were fully aware that rights are universal and they were very confident in making connections between all aspects of school life and the relevant article(s).

Adults’ knowledge and understanding of the Convention is also very secure. Staff spoken with explained that rights now occur naturally in a wide range of situations but they pointed out that relevant articles also feature throughout their medium term planning. Among numerous examples seen included detailed PSCH topic books, with a variety of articles linked, and a wide range of displays with relevant articles explicitly referenced such as the Year Two Self Portraits linked to Article 7. In the Year 2 class visited on the tour their maths work was using data about access to clean water in rural and urban Ethiopia as the basis for their learning about fractions. It was evident that the children had a clear understanding that sustainable development is linked to rights; for example in describing the school’s wider work, campaigning and fundraising water, they knew that the money would be spent on wells, pumps

and pipes. They went on to explain that lack of access to clean water affected, education (especially for girls), health, safety and the right to relax and play.

The school's commitment to RRSA and the promotion of the CRC is exemplified by the fact that the opening paragraph of the Executive Headteacher's welcome on the website declares that the school 'holds the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child at its heart.' Parents and the wider community welcome the school's promotion of the CRC. One parent explained that *"It has really helped to develop my child's concept of the world, humanity and other people."* A randomly chosen school newsletter, mentioned Article 24 (In relation to the water project) and Article 14 (with regard to a class visit to the local Mosque) Governors' learning walks include a focus on the schools RRSA work and we were told by a governor that *"In our regular 'Book Looks' we are looking out for mentions of the rights."*

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

Pupils at Chesterton described very clearly the many ways in which their school ensures that they are able to access their rights. They described full access to numerous rights including, education, to relax and play, nutritious food and clean water, reliable information, shelter and healthcare. The children were keen to affirm that life in school was fair and non-discriminatory and that their participation is the norm. One child explained the concept of equity with the example that *"we all have a right to an education but some children need extra help with this at different times."* When asked for examples they mentioned additional needs such as ADHD, dyslexia and cerebral palsy. When asked about systems to express any concerns about their rights not being met, the children were confident in asserting that staff would always listen to them and they expressed high levels in trust in the 'worry box' system, with large numbers saying that they knew that concerns are responded to and always resolved. Staff awareness of the child's ability to speak up was summarised in the following comment from a member of the SLT: *"They almost hold us to account if they feel that a right is not being met. They verbalise it appropriately."*

It was evident throughout the visit that relationships across the school are mutually respectful and are founded on a strong understanding of rights. Interactions observed between children and adults were warm and supportive and conveyed a strong sense of trust and respect. This was also seen in the engagement between staff and families at the start of the school day. The SLT explained that their work with staff to deepen pupil engagement and confidence was founded on rights respecting relationships and is now bearing fruit, with much greater consistency across the school. When asked about how disagreements between pupils are addressed, the children were clear that *"people are always listened to, both sides.... because that's fair."* They explained that their involvement in shaping the school behaviour system included the introduction of a 'warning' from the teacher which they believed is a fairer way of responding to situations. The children said that everyone gets on very well, however, they could explain how their knowledge of rights does help to resolve conflicts by thinking about the other person's point of view. The school's own data demonstrates a reduction in incidents

of poor behaviour and the children were adamant that such incidents are very rare. One member of staff observed that, as a result of rights respecting, *"The children are more humble... they are much more grounded."* Although the word 'dignity' is not yet explicit in the school's lexicon, it was clear that the children and staff live the concept constantly in the way they value and show concern for one another.

A strong culture of safety is prevalent throughout the school and the children were readily able to cite a range of actions taken to promote their safety including, fire and lock-down drills, bike-ability, I.D. badges and visitor stickers as well as *"teaching us about internet safety"*. Children take a part in the school's risk assessment procedures and they know that their observations are valued and acted upon by senior staff and governors. The high status of their right to be safe was highlighted by one child who said *"If there is any danger, adults will keep us away from it."* The school's data shows that bullying and discriminatory incidents are extremely rare and both adults and children reported high levels of confidence that any issues raised are responded to promptly and appropriately by the school. The children are aware of each other's safety too; the SLT described a recent occasion when a child, concerned for the wellbeing of one of their classmates (not a close friend) outside of school, reported this appropriately and subsequent action has been taken by staff.

The promotion of health through exercise and diet is a major priority at Chesterton and, following a project in which selected pupils engaged in growing their own fruit and vegetables, the scheme was extended to all because of the numerous positive outcomes. There are now extensive gardens and raised beds with produce harvested all year round. The children spoke about fitness being promoted through PE but also in their after school clubs such as tennis and ball skills. The children described learning about their emotional wellbeing through their PSHE lessons. Staff explained that the programme of study has been developed around their detailed knowledge of the children's lives and is responsive to issues as they arise; for example *"when the children raise concerns about a news issue such as knife crime, we build in time to explore their anxieties."* The pupils all knew they could be supported emotionally with a range of provision from *"time in the book corner if you are feeling upset"* through to more planned and structured access to support. Two staff have been trained in 'Mental Health First Aid' and their skills can be accessed by all staff and pupils. The pupils feel their voices are heard and staff listen to and respect them. One parent commented that she was pleased to see *"a new generation understanding rights and believing in equality."*

Inclusivity is a long established strength of the school and is clearly a priority for all adults. The SLT described a subtle but significant shift in the narrative about additional support, from *they need this help because we all have different needs* to *we all have the same right to learn but we access it in different ways*. Allied to this change, in class grouping has been revisited by staff to enable more effective differentiation whilst minimising perceptions of discrimination. This conscious development has resulted in *"a significant improvement in self-esteem for large groups of children"* stated one senior leader. Beyond the classroom, records are kept, for example, in order to ensure that every child is able to access the annual 'Heyday' film making project once during their years at the school. The children stressed that pupils of all ages across the school have a strong feeling of involvement and belonging; one Y5 pupil expressed this as follows: *"Our school is now even better! The children run the school, with help from the grown-ups, and are allowed to have an opinion on anything. We listen to each other and treat everyone with respect."*

The school actively promotes a positive and collaborative learning culture with an emphasis on the engagement of the children. The leadership explained that their emphasis on 'reflective learning' based on opportunities for peer review is rooted in their rights based approach and encourage pupil ownership of their learning and progress. Pupils' positivity was reflected in

statements such as a “*We like to learn.*” “*Every topic is different*” and “*If somebody is struggling, you are there to help them.*” Staff described a culture in which different children, at different times can feel ‘*I’m an expert at this...*’ leading to greater motivation, increased confidence and a sense of empowerment. The children have a role in planning their topic work and they were enthusiastic about a ‘learning challenge’ scheme in English, Spanish and Maths. This is pupil led and involves weekly puzzles and challenges in which all pupils can participate; the children evaluate the entries and award the prizes. They also mentioned that their class charters, which are discussed and created at the start of each year, are a reminder to them about the importance of respecting their own right to learn as well as supporting the learning of their peers and better relationships in the classroom.

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

Participation of children is a well-established feature of the school with one of the adults commenting that “*the children really feel that they are empowered...they really want to be involved.*” Democratic elections are commonplace and there are many pupil leadership opportunities including the school council, peer mediators, house captains and the eco council. The children gave many examples of the ways in which their opinions have been taken seriously and acted upon; these included additional safety fencing, significant changes to school uniform, developments to the reward system and the design of the Y6 playground space. They have also initiated new after school clubs such as one for ‘Minecraft’. Regular pupil voice consultations, on topics initiated by the children themselves, frequently bring about positive change; most recently the ‘top table’ scheme for lunchtime was reshaped in line with the children’s ideas and they now have a major role in organising and running the system. The pupils are involved in the appointment process for new staff, feeding back their views on the lessons taught and they are regularly consulted by the SLT on a range of school improvement issues. Having their voice heard is clearly seen as a valued entitlement, as one Y6 child stated “*Rights respecting has made me a better person. I now understand the importance of my voice and that I can use it to make positive changes.*”

Global learning and a culture of campaigning and activism is a significant feature at Chesterton. Pupils of all ages are empowered to be informed, passionate and effective citizens: “*They have real optimism about their ability to change the world*” said one member of staff, summing up the value of investing time in this work. Their focus on activism is often linked to themes and issues promoted by the ‘WE’ movement and has included a focus on global education, clean water and hunger. Unicef’s Outright campaign was used last year to take action for the rights of refugees. The children are becoming familiar with the UN Global Goals which were described by a Y2 child as “*the things the world has to accomplish.*” Children have also engaged with local issues, writing to their local council about road safety and they have had a role in an emerging project to improve air quality in their neighbourhood. Collections for the foodbank and support for local homelessness projects have also been undertaken. The school’s rights respecting work has been shared through local networks and there is scope for the children to take a more proactive role in this. The effectiveness of Chesterton’s rights based education is summed up well in the word of two children: “*I think that all schools should be rights respecting because it provides you with a way to learn about the lives of other children....*” ... “*I know how I can make a difference in my world*”