

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Beaver Road Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b> <b>Head of First School:</b>	David How Liz Hardy
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Hilary Silva
<b>Local authority:</b>	Manchester City Council (The school is an elective Academy in the M20 Learning Trust)
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Martin Russell
<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2019

### 1. INTRODUCTION

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 visit and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school completed 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:

- Highly effective leadership of and commitment to children’s rights and the RRSA at all levels
- Mutually respectful relationships between all children and adults.
- Confident and articulate children who are able to enjoy and claim their rights.
- A very strong commitment to campaigning and to the championing of the UN Goals for Sustainable Development (Global Goals)

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.
- Continue to be ambitious in seeking to promote awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and engagement in RRSA within the locality and through wider networks.
- Continue to seek new opportunities for parents and carers to build confidence in understanding and articulating their role in relation to their children’s rights.
- Consider fuller use of Unicef UK’s OutRight materials to build on the existing strong campaigning strategies.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	A suburban primary school in South Manchester with 707 children on roll. Around 10% of pupils are recognised as needing additional support with learning, 2% have an EHCP. Around 16% are EAL learners but only around 10% of children are eligible for support through the Pupil Premium.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher, head of First School, two SLT members, a governor and the RRSA coordinator.
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	20 Rights Champions including tour guides, 20 children in focus group, 3 children on the learning walk and around 50 children spoken with in class visits.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	6 teaching staff, 3 support staff, 2 parents
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Learning walk on each school site, participation in the Y6 Global Goals Festival, focus groups, written evidence, class visits and video evidence.
<b>Registered for RRSA: December 2017</b>	<b>Silver achieved: November 2018</b>

**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 had an excellent knowledge of a very wide range of articles from the CRC including, among the older children, a well-developed understanding of some of the more complex and challenging protections and freedoms in the Convention. Explaining how they value their rights, one child said, *“Knowing them properly makes you feel respected and treasured, you know you are valued.”* One of the parents spoken with was impressed that, *“The children know their rights so well, they bombard us with knowledge. It is so good that they can bring the rights into their day to day lives. It has meaning in our community.”* The children of all ages were very confident in articulating their knowledge of the concepts of rights being inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional. Very effective use had been made of Unicef’s ‘ABCDE of Rights’. Children talked confidently about duty bearers and understood that teachers and the government are responsible for children enjoying their rights. The understanding of where children might not be able to access their rights was thoughtful, evidencing the school’s focus on Global Goals, and was also apparent throughout curriculum planning. Examples shared by the pupils included reference to a topic on child labour; *“Some children are deliberately malnourished and forced to ride camels in races. It was shocking.”* Some pupils spoke of countries where there is a lack of medicine, that sometimes *“children are sent off to war.”* and they spoke of the impact of global warming on access to clean water. They were clear that several issues like homelessness, racism, poverty and *“Children not always being treated properly”* also affected children in the UK.

Extensive displays about the Convention and the UN Global Goals were prominent throughout the school and the children explained that they learned about rights in their lessons and assemblies. Teacher’s planning documents and the assembly plan in the evidence folder corroborated this. A member of staff explained, *“It’s really embedded in the curriculum now, we make a deliberate effort to link teaching and learning to rights. A recent external moderator commented on the children’s use of the articles.”*

The Senior Leadership Team are very committed to their school being rights respecting. The headteacher explained *“We have always striven to be ‘more than a school’ and the Convention has helped us to concentrate and focus our philosophy.”* RRSA and the Convention feature frequently in staff training, often led by the pupils. This effective approach has been shared with other schools via an article on the RRSA website. One member of the senior team pointed out that *“Children and adults throughout the school are passionate about the rights. It gives a language and a framework; it’s a values system for how we want to be.”* Parents, carers and governors are well informed about the school’s commitment to the CRC; there is regular information about rights in the newsletters; the website also provides very good information. Strategic planning and policies are linked to articles which the headteacher explained leads to sustainability. All governors monitor the impact of RRSA and see it as adding value to the school’s work; one governor stated, *“This has made the school even more special. It has built on our strong sense of community.”* There is regular information about rights and activities in the monthly newsletters; the website also provides extensive information about the school’s rights respecting work.

**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 explained how the school enabled them to access a wide range of rights and they discussed, for example, how everyone enjoys the rights to relax and play, to clean water and to medical treatment if they need it. One child stated that *“Our teachers really help you; they always teach us about our rights.”* Other spoke about their rights being supported by the roles of a wide range of staff including catering, admin and site staff. The children were proud to show (on both sites) the Duty Bearer Hall of Fame which is driven by children’s nominations which lead to special recognition for a range of staff at weekly assemblies. Staff commented that this made people feel very proud and humbled, but a bit competitive too! The children had a clear understanding of fairness and equity and made many references to how adults at school treat them fairly. The children were able to explain that being fair doesn’t mean treating everyone the same and there was considerable agreement about this with comments such as, *“If you came to our school from another country, you would probably need an extra boost.”* It was evident that the children trust the school’s systems which enable them to express any concerns about their rights, or the rights of others, not being met. One boy explained that, *“A trusted adult is somebody who can be relied on – you believe in them.”* Others expanded, in detail, upon the concept of trust.

Positive and mutually respectful relationships are a key characteristic of the school and are regularly talked about, reinforced and celebrated. All interactions observed during the visit demonstrated a deep sense of mutual understanding and affirmation. Such qualities are reinforced through frequent assemblies and are modelled by all adults; the consistent use of the language of rights and respect frame all conversations about how people interrelate across the school. Parents spoken with were extremely supportive of the way in which their children bring this outlook into life at home, *“They have such a strong sense of justice, but they always think about the other person’s point of view as well.”* Where fall-outs do occur in school, staff said, *“Linking the rights to restorative approaches makes it more objective and takes the emotion out.”* Children and adults, independently, shared the same example: free access to the woodland area behind the school had resulted in some significant fall-outs over damage to dens and ‘territorial’ behaviour. When asked by the headteacher about a resolution, the children set about creating a rights-based charter which they all agreed upon and has resulted in a positive and sustainable solution. When the concept of ‘dignity’ was explored with the children, their understanding was evident in many comments including, *“When adults treat you with dignity it is as if they remember what it was like to be a child.”* The children were keen to point out that if there are arguments or fall-outs, the adults are fair and balanced in their response.

All children spoken with were emphatic about how safe they felt in school. They were able to discuss a range of actions taken by the school to ensure their safety. They demonstrated excellent knowledge of e-safety which they were able to link to an impressive range of articles. The children have a very wide range of curriculum input to enhance their safety and the school is highly proactive in engaging the children in anti-bullying work, which is always pupil led. The RRS lead explained, *“Children have reviewed our Relationships and Behaviour policy and have opted for even greater focus on understanding and prevention whilst rejecting words such as ‘sanction’ and ‘reward’.”* There is evidence that violent or discriminatory behaviour is very rare. A staff member referred to the *“sense*

*of peace around the school.” attributing this to the fact that “The children don’t just accept things; they question in an appropriate way and they know we take them seriously.”*

There is widespread commitment across the school to the view that if children’s holistic wellbeing is not supported, they will not flourish as learners. Consequently, there are strong and well-established systems to promote their physical, mental and emotional health. The children spoke fluently about the importance of healthy diet, sleep, hydration and regular exercise. They shared various ways in which these are promoted and encouraged in school and made the connection to rights, especially Article 24. The School Council has helped re-write the Healthy Lifestyle Policy which has resulted in the introduction of KS2 Dance Leaders and a morning exercise club. With regard to mental health, Y5 children are trained as Peer Mentors within the framework of the Anna Freud Foundation. The children had a mature understanding of emotional wellbeing explaining, for example, why they do meditation after their reading time and how, with some worries, *“only you can know and if you don’t tell somebody it could get worse.”*

The culture of the school is highly inclusive and there is a conscious promotion of diversity and difference being valued and celebrated. The SLT were clear that, *“Article 2 gives us a framework for all of our inclusion work.”* It was evident throughout the visit that the message of inclusivity and respect is modelled by staff and children and that they are proud and passionate in making sure everyone in their class community feels valued. Curriculum planning includes the promotion of diversity and inclusion and some Y2 children explained that their learning about Rosa Parks reminded everyone that it’s *“wrong to separate people by the colour of their skin.”* and their letters to the Alabama Bus Company were on display. The children were passionate about explaining the numerous links to equality, non-discrimination and inclusion through many of the Global Goals. The headteacher invited the Y6 children to ‘leave their legacy’ by rewriting the school vision statement: at the heart of their carefully worded statement is the phrase ‘welcoming difference and diversity’.

A member of staff pointed out that the introduction of children’s rights has added significant value to teaching and learning, *“..it adds to good practice. You can’t be a good practitioner without an approach that puts the children and their rights at the centre.”* This was borne out in observations and discussion through the visit. Children are very clear that their learning is core to their right to an education and they also spoke of many ways in which they can actively support the right of others to learn, for example, *“We pair up and edit our work together.”* They outlined other strategies too, such as target setting and helping to shape the topic at the beginning of a new subject and reviewing the learning with their teacher at the end. Both children and adults referred positively to Kagan approaches and P4C both of which were seen as being enhanced by everyone’s knowledge of rights.

**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 active participation of the children is a strong and well-established feature of the school with one of the adults explaining that they are always seeking ways to strengthen this further, *“Their voice must be heard, and we have a duty to listen!”* One of the parents was very impressed that children wanting to be elected to the School Council *“...had to make a manifesto before the vote.”* In addition to the Council and the Rights Champions, there are numerous other opportunities for pupil leadership; the

influence of the children on the life of their school is extensive. For example, children have led their own feedback to governors during curriculum review meetings, some children have been on research visits to local special schools in order to advise the SENCO on the best choices for play equipment and the School Council have been employed on a number of occasions to give teacher appraisal-type feedback about teaching and learning. The words ‘empowerment’ and ‘confidence’ were mentioned frequently during all conversations with adults about the impact that becoming rights respecting has made. It is significant that the children can speak up outside the formal structure mentioned above. For example, the entry form for a national writing competition only gave two gender options – male/ female and so the children wrote a letter of complaint to suggest that in the spirit of dignity, a ‘prefer not to say’ option was called for. The following year, this amendment to the form had been made.

The empowerment of children to speak up for rights is evident in a wide variety of ways. They took part in a city-wide campaigning as part of Greater Manchester Moving and Living Streets Charity – Children took a protest demonstration to Manchester City Centre and shared their protest poetry to the street audience. Beaver Road children addressed delegates at a GM Conference to champion the physical, mental and environmental benefits of walking. Mayor Andy Burnham was so impressed and inspired by the pupils that he has made a date to visit, spend time with the children and consult them on the next stage. The school’s action for the rights of others is now linked equally to the Global Goals as well as to the Convention. Linking in Zero Hunger and Article 27, for example, the children have arranged to fundraise and promote awareness of homelessness through a local charity, The Booth Centre. The children help raise funds for a partner school in Constantia, South Africa; this is a new school that has been founded on the principles of the 17 Global Goals. The accreditation visit coincided with an event that was the culmination of weeks of work involving every Y6 child. They had worked in teams, one for each global Goal, to prepare highly interactive and informative ‘stalls’ about their Goal. This was set out over a large area of the school site and was visited by all other classes in turn as well as by parents and members of the local community. Quizzes, bake sales, games, a water purification activity and well researched and beautifully made leaflets were among many innovative ways in which participants were engaged in the Goals.

The home page of Beaver Road’s website is headed with the following quotation; the entire school community works daily to realise this vision:

“There is no more powerful transformative force than education—to promote human rights and dignity, to eradicate poverty and deepen sustainability, to build a better future for all, founded on equal rights and social justice, respect for cultural diversity, and international solidarity and shared responsibility, all of which are fundamental aspects of our common humanity.”

—**Irina Bokova, former Director-General of UNESCO**