

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Cherry Orchard Primary School
Headteacher:	Alison Taylor
RRSA coordinator:	Leanne Clee
Local authority:	Birmingham City Council
Assessor(s):	Kathy Allan and Hilary Alcock
Date:	20 th May 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a Gold virtual accreditation report. 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:

- Children's breadth of knowledge about their rights, how they can claim them for themselves and their commitment to effect change to enable others to enjoy them locally, nationally and globally.
- Learning about children's rights is fully embedded across the school including the nursery.
- The way the school has used a child rights based approach to strengthen existing positive relationships resulting in children's voices being amplified and impacting upon change within, and beyond 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 support children to develop their understanding of sustainable development. Consider exploring the Global Goals through [The World's Largest Lesson](#), your plans for being part of the Connecting Classrooms through Global Learning project and how they impact upon children's rights and the wellbeing of the planet.
- Consider how to incorporate a commitment to global citizenship and sustainable development within the school's vision and values.
- Continue to develop a strategic approach to pupil voice within the school perhaps through children helping to devise their own version of the school's Improvement Plan.
- Consider using UNICEF's [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#) to further develop children's campaigning and activism to promote and claim children's rights locally, nationally and globally.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	There are currently 478 on roll including 21 pupils in a resource base for children with autism and 38 part-time nursery pupils. 19.5% of pupils are entitled to FSM/ Pupil Premium. 12.8% are identified as having a SEND. 25.9% of children speak English as an additional language with 98% of pupils coming from within the BAME community. The school's most recent Ofsted inspection in 2017 graded the school as Good.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher and RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	22 children from years 1 to 6 in focus groups
Number of adults interviewed	1 teacher, 2 pastoral team support staff, 1 parent and 1 governor (Chair).
Evidence provided	Gold evaluation form, digital portfolio, interviews
Registered for RRSA: May 2017	Silver achieved: July 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

All children spoken with during the visit were familiar with a wide range of Articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They knew that adults are duty bearers and that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional commenting that, *“The rights are for everyone under eighteen whatever your nationality, you’re born with them, you don’t have to earn them, they can’t be taken away and they are all equally important.”* Pupils learn about rights during assemblies, in lessons and during special Rights Respecting Weeks, *“When we campaign for things like the Food Bank.”* Children continued to learn about rights during Covid -19 home learning. One pupil emphasised that, *“If children grow up without knowing their rights then they can’t teach their own children and it’s important because children need the protection of the law and to be treated with dignity.”* Children are beginning to understand how local and global issues and sustainable development are linked to rights. They explained how they had, *“Written to famous footballers about child labour to try to persuade footballers to use Fairtrade products like cocoa because there are 260 million children employed in child labour across the world.”*

The headteacher explained that, *“Learning about rights is not an add on but something that’s completely part of the curriculum. Medium term planning for every subject includes the CRC in most lessons.”* Within the nursery and reception classes children learn about rights by staff using rights respecting language in relation to, for example, their right to clean water, nutritious food and to relax and play. Parents are informed about the school’s commitment to a child rights based approach (CRBA) as they begin at the nursery or full time school. A relatively new member of the teaching staff commented that, *“I could see straight away how at Cherry Orchard a rights respecting schools approach underpins everything we do. This is clear within the pastoral approach as well as within curriculum planning. We speak with the children in a way that gives them a voice and encourages them to engage with each other.”* The headteacher commented that, *“Our school’s core values have remained the same since we started our RRSA journey, but we now use the CRC to emphasise, for example, the importance of the right to education as a way to try and break the cycle of poverty that still exists around the world.”* The headteacher also considers that pupil voice is now much stronger within the school. She commented that, *“Children know that they have a voice, that they can question, reflect, challenge and try to understand issues from different perspectives.”* She gave an example of how a group of children respectfully challenged a decision about changing the format of the annual Christmas party. *“They were nervous about it, but they knew they were going to be listened to because they felt they had an argument that was reasonable and appropriate.”* The result was that the children got the type of party that they wanted reinstated but as part of this they negotiated a way that they would take responsibility for helping to ensure that it ran smoothly.

Homework is designed to engage parents with the CRC they are kept informed and involved with the school’s CRBA through weekly newsletters and whole school charity events and campaigns. A parent commented that, *“What my child is learning here is definitely having an impact of her thinking about the world around her.”* A governor considers that RRSA has, *“Facilitated creative and innovative ways to share and embed the importance of the voice of the child; parents are learning alongside their children and widening their perspective of the world around them.”*



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

All children spoken with during the visit demonstrated an understanding of how the school, and duty bearers, facilitate them to enjoy a wide range of their rights. One commented that, *“The teachers, the duty bearers, keep teaching us about our rights. Monday assembly (when it’s not lockdown) is all about rights. The adults protect us and keep us safe.”* Pupils articulated that teachers genuinely listen to them, e.g. *“They allow us to have our say, to have our voices heard and to have votes about things.”* They were confident that they would speak up if they felt that their rights were being denied and trust that the school would act upon any concerns about their rights not being met. Children are developing an awareness of equity with one commenting in relation to online learning that, *“I like how all children from school have the same opportunity, both children at school who need to be there and children at home.”* (Digital portfolio.) Another explained that, *“We’re all different in some ways but we all need to be treated the same and yet differently... like if a child is less confident and they don’t want to answer a question that’s ok and the teacher will be flexible and encouraging.”*

Relationships were identified by all of the children and adults spoken to during the visit as mutually respectful. Children spoke about how they are now more able to sort out any problems on the playground themselves. One pupil explained that, *“I fell out with my friend... we talked about it and agreed to play a different game on different days to share out what we each wanted and now we are friends again.”* The children explained how charters help them to be respectful to each other. They consider that an adult giving a warning about consequences for inappropriate behaviour is fair because, *“Otherwise they won’t learn how to improve.”* Children spoke about their right to be treated with dignity. Training for lunchtime supervisors about their role as duty bearers has, as explained by the RRSA coordinator, *“Created a more consistent approach to behaviour management with relationships between pupils and lunchtime staff building and building over time.”*

During the visit all children spoken with said that they feel safe at school. They explained how fire alarms and the lock down alarm plus locked doors are ways that the school keeps them safe as well as all the adults whom they trust will always be there to help if someone gets hurt. They also cited pupil school councillors and the pastoral team as people who could help. One pupil commented that *“Pastoral don’t take sides; they just help to sort out the problem.”* Children clearly value the pastoral support they have received during online learning. One said that, *“She is like a hero, she takes her time helping us at home during lockdown.”* Children described how a rights respecting approach contributes to them feeling safe e.g. one pupil explained that, *“If a person is getting bullied they would get pastoral help...like drawing and talking therapy. They would be able to talk with an adult about what the drawing means.”* Children spoke about how individuals who have been bullied can be vulnerable to being bullies themselves and so this therapy is one way to try and prevent that from happening. Children understood about being safe online and explained how the school’s online code of conduct developed during Covid lockdown helped with this, e.g. *“Don’t talk to people online that you don’t know and tell a grown up or report inappropriate videos.”* Pastoral staff commented that *“We use the language of rights all the time and encourage children to speak with the adult of their choice. During lockdowns we made sure that children’s voices were still heard... that they felt comfortable and safe even though they were online.”*



Most children during the visit could describe how the school provides information and support for a range of physical, mental, social and emotional needs. They gave examples of how, *“Playing outside and running can make you feel better and we do sports and gym to keep us fit and healthy.”* They described how, *“Homework has a healthy focus, and we learn how to develop strong minds and do exercises like ‘calm me time’ after PE.”* Pupils had produced evidence that resulted in getting families on board with providing healthier packed lunches. Children who took part in the Sports Crew initiative explained how they had, *“Designed a PE lesson for younger children plus other lunch time activities.”* Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a wide range of school clubs they can usually access such as multi sports, self-defence, netball and dance. They explained that they had voted to choose which clubs they should have. One pupil said he had, *“Made a board game to teach children about rights.”* Cherry Orchard gained the Healthy School Award in July 2018. The headteacher stated that, *“Children’s needs are being met as soon as they are identified and the school’s welcoming, ‘open door’ policy results in parents being confident to seek support when needed which all results in improved outcomes for children.”*

The school has a resource base for children who have autism and notes that, ‘Over time this has helped to improve children’s attitudes and behaviours with regard to acceptance and understanding of all children.’ (Gold Evaluation form.) Pupils have suggested amendments to the schools’ SEND policy. One pupil described how, *“I used to be in the resource base for autism but now I’m in Y6 I’m not anymore. At the start I was a bit scared and nervous and felt worried about being on the playground but now it’s amazing because everyone is normal to me. I’ve learnt so much. Everyone knew I had autism and knew I might be scared and worried, but they treated me fine like everyone else and act like I’m a normal person just like them.”* The school also welcomes refugee children and pupils have developed an induction policy, *“Because it allows the children to feel that they are in a safe environment and that they belong in our school.”* (Y6 pupil, digital portfolio evidence.) Children explained how during online learning a system of names on lollypop sticks was used to, *“Make sure that everyone gets a time to talk to make it fair and everyone gets their voice heard.”* Staff explained how they use the language of ‘a different ability rather than disability’ and how pupils are now, *“Open to SEND as well as other differing needs of children such as those who have different family arrangements; through the CRC they are able to explore the reasons why situations exist. It helps them to appreciate why some children need extra support and that the CRC exists to keep all children safe.”* The school’s RRSA Steering Group is represented by all different types of children across school, including the resource base. The school has started to, ‘represent the history of our British BAME community in our curriculum and an overview of this is shared on the school website. Our science leader has also mapped out where reference can be made to BAME role models in the world of science across our curriculum. (Gold evaluation form.)

All children during the visit clearly demonstrated how much they value their right to education and understood that they need to respect the right of others to access this too. They referred to the positive impact that charters have with regard to this as well as their inclusive attitudes and actions in relation to peers with individual needs of varying kinds. Children feel respected by adults and they in turn respect each other. One pupil described how, *“A new girl in our class was very shy and introverted so we asked her to play and then she began to open up and join in more in class which helped her with her education.”* Since their Silver RRSA Award pupils have taken an active role in reviewing and helping to produce guidelines for the rewards system, sporting opportunities, online home learning and online gaming.



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

At Cherry Orchard children are confident that their voices will be heard and respected and that they will be encouraged to put forward ideas for ways to make positive changes to the school. One pupil explained that, *“We tell our ideas to school councillors, to teachers or to the headteacher.”* Another said, *“We get asked a lot for our opinions.”* Examples of changes pupils have initiated in school are *“Asking to have safety black rubber strips on the doors so that people won’t get hurt fingers ...being able to suggest different places to work so I’m not distracted...requesting a salad bar for lunchtimes...choosing new equipment like football and skipping... getting the Christmas party back...and voting for which end of term movie we want to watch.”* A parent commented that, *“I think it’s brilliant that the children learn about the CRC. They know that they have the right to express themselves; it’s really important that children should be seen **and** heard.”* The Chair of the governing body considers that, *“The biggest impact of RRSA is reinforcing the message that children at the school have the right to be heard, to have choices and lots of opportunities to share their voices and be part of the wider world.”*

Children in the Steering Group explained how they, *“created our own posters to tell other children about their rights and we wrote to the Prime Minister about wars in other countries that are stopping children getting their rights. We stand up for other people’s rights, like children who have a disability.”* The Steering Group explained that, *“We pass on our knowledge about rights to other people to encourage them to donate to charity in order to help other children get their right to an education or other things that they need, and we visited another school to share learning about rights with them.”*

During the visit all children spoken with showed significant commitment to wanting to engage in action to campaign and advocate for the rights of other children locally and globally. They described events and campaigns they have helped to organise such as Stop Racism, Children in Need, Walk to School Week to raise awareness of air pollution, litter picking in the local park, blood donation, setting up a food bank and taking part in the Birmingham Asks project. Members of the Young People’s Parliament took part in a local professional football club’s mental health promotion which they then shared back in school. Children spoke about the importance of, *“Being a good citizen by wearing face masks... planting seeds and reducing the use of and recycling plastic.”* One parent said with regards to the blood donation twitter campaign that, *“I’d never given blood before, but the children’s campaign persuaded me to do so and I will do it again. This had such a positive effect on me and others in the wider community.”*