

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Chisenhale Primary School
Headteacher:	Sharon Taylor-Sezgin
RRSA coordinator:	William Clark
Local authority:	Tower Hamlets
Assessor(s):	Anita Haigh and Gillian Roberts
Date:	17 th January 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessors 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 are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Children’s secure knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- High visibility of the CRC around the school.
- Mutually respectful and supportive relationships.
- Outreach to parents.
- Pupil involvement in active campaigning.

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:

- Consider introducing a structured progression for learning about rights, appropriate to children’s age and ability, to develop a more nuanced understanding of rights and how they apply in a range of contexts.
- Consider how to communicate the links between the CRC and other key drivers such as the ‘Vision and Values’ statements to support children’s understanding.
- Be more precise with the terminology around rights, for example, the Rights Rockets motivational charts.
- Further develop the strategic decision-making and ambassadorial roles of the Rights Council; for example, developing a child-friendly version of the school’s strategic priorities, contributing to the school newsletters/blogs, and leading workshops about rights.
- Consider how to develop an advocacy role with the local secondary schools, for example, through transition projects.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Chisenhale Primary School has 348 pupils on roll, aged 3-11 years, located in east London. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 26%. 45% of pupils speak English as an additional language, and 3% of pupils have an EHC plan. An Ofsted inspection in March 2019 graded the school as ‘good’ for overall effectiveness.
Attendees at SLT meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headteacher • Senior leaders: SENCo, Upper KS2 lead, Lower KS2 lead, Early Years lead • RRSA coordinator
Number of children interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 Year R-6 children in a focus group • 3 steering group members on the learning walk • 3 class visits – Years 1,4 and 6
Number of adults interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 teaching staff • 7 parents (one of whom is also a governor) • 2 governors • A parent engagement officer
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus group, written evidence and class visits.
Registered for RRSA: 19th August 2015	Silver achieved: 3rd July 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 have a sound knowledge of the CRC. They named several articles and understood that every child enjoys these rights from birth, that *“you don’t have to earn them”*, that *“they can’t get taken away”*, and that *“all rights are equally important.”* Posters on the ‘ABCDE’ of rights were displayed around the school. Children were familiar with the term ‘duty bearer’ and the role of adults to ensure that children’s rights are upheld. They were aware that not all children enjoy their rights, citing the issues of child abuse, homelessness, child labour and the impact of the war in Syria and Afghanistan. They spoke passionately about the effects of climate change on the environment and people’s lives, and how flooding, air pollution and deforestation are impacting on basic rights to life, shelter and safety.

Vibrant displays around the building promote and celebrate different rights, for example, one showing the many languages spoken in school, linked to Articles 2 and 30. Children reported learning about rights through PSHE, assemblies and topic work. Curriculum plans make explicit reference to articles of the CRC. For example, in Early Years, children explore different rights through traditional nursery rhymes, including a focus on identity and belonging (Article 7). English teachers explained how texts are chosen with rights in mind to ensure they promoted a *“wider global perspective”* and offered *“thinking points about moral choices.”* During the learning walk, a Year 6 class were discussing the rights infringements experienced by a character in Philip Pullman’s novel, *Clockwise*. Lessons are explicitly linked with a named article and a child friendly, icon version of the CRC was visible on the children’s tables. Special days and events have also have a rights focus such as Arts Week, Martin Luther King Day and the 30th anniversary of the CRC.

Local and global issues are highlighted in assemblies and woven into the curriculum. At the time of the assessment visit, the whole school was exploring the topic of sustainability, linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Children spoke of *“looking at ways to look after the planet”* and gave examples such as *“landfill gases leading to global warming”*, *“not wasting food”* and *“recycling and using paper sensibly.”* A Year 5 and 6 display included pupils’ reflections on climate change and Greta Thunberg’s campaign. One pupil commented, *“governments should stop worrying about what’s politically possible and focus on what we can actually do.”* Pupils highlighted the provision of recycling bins and a compost bin.

Adults show a strong commitment to the CRC. The headteacher described how the children are *“at the forefront”* of all decisions. School development priorities include the drive to ensure that the ‘UNCRC underpins teaching and learning’ and to develop Rights Councillors (pupils) as ‘a vocal force’. Staff and governors have received training on the CRC and the language of rights, and could articulate how this related to their individual roles. Parents expressed enthusiastic support for the school’s rights-based approach and felt *“included on the journey with the school”*. They described how rich discussions with their children had helped them learn more about the CRC and its application. A helpful section on the school website explains the Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Award and the CRC, and suggests ways for parents to support the school’s rights-based approach by talking with their children about rights. Parents also learn about rights through attending assemblies and workshops. The Parent Engagement officer provides support and advice to families, and this includes workshops that address issues of child rights, wellbeing and safety.

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 had a clear understanding of the concepts of equity and fairness and could differentiate between being treated the same and being treated fairly. One pupil said, *“Some people may need more help than others to get the same things.”* A teacher explained how equity is discussed in lessons. For example, in PE children have considered what it means to play fair so that everyone can participate to get the most out of the session. The children suggested changing the teams half way through to achieve this. The school motto is ‘Respectful Citizens in a World of Possibilities’. The CRC is promoted alongside 6 core values of confidence, curiosity, ambition, resilience, creativity and kindness. The Headteacher commented, *“this is our way of being.”* The Parent Engagement officer commented that a rights-based approach *“defines the culture of the school and is the basis for our Behaviour Policy”*. Pupils talked about the ‘Rockets to Rights’ charts and receiving ‘dojos’ (rewards) in recognition of rights respecting behaviours. Each class has a Golden Book which celebrates positive choices; children are thanked for their promotion of a particular right and post cards are sent home.

Relationships among children and adults are respectful and supportive. Pupils could explain what it means to be treated with dignity: *“treat people how you want them to treat you”* and *“respect and self-respect”*. They also gave examples of how adults treat them with dignity: *“Teachers don’t shout, they ask you nicely”, “they remind you of rights, like ‘every child has a right to education’, if someone is talking”*. When discussing a scenario, they described how an individual would be spoken to privately about their behaviour to maintain privacy and dignity. ‘Praise in public, restore in private’ is central to the school’s approach to behaviour management and is outlined in the Behaviour policy. Staff have received training in emotional coaching, restorative justice and attachment theory to support this approach. A pupil described how adults support conflict resolution in a fair and respectful way: *“They hear both sides of the story, everyone gets a say.”*

Children confirmed that they felt safe in school, and cited ways the school ensures their concerns are listened to. For example the whole school community have regular access to a school counsellor and a ‘Space Box’ provides a means of voicing any concerns and receiving appropriate support. The establishment of a wellbeing team is also central to the school’s priorities. The school is in the process of mapping current provision available to support pupil and staff wellbeing. Senior leaders noted that an increased understanding of rights has meant that both staff and children are more confident to report any welfare concerns. In addition, pupils gave examples of how they learn to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including roads, the internet, bullying and first aid. The school participates in the annual Anti-Bullying Alliance days.

Health and wellbeing topics are addressed through assemblies, the PSHE curriculum and national initiatives, such as the ‘Grow Your Own Playground’ project. Children have access to an edible garden where they are growing vegetables. They described how the school encourages them to eat healthily. A recent review of school lunches led to a change in the range of desserts offered in order to reduce children’s sugar intake. Children are now offered fruit, yoghurt or cheese and biscuits and enjoy more sugary puddings on special occasions.

The school serves a diverse community and has a strong culture of inclusion. Parents are encouraged to participate in workshops to discuss a range of issues, learn about the curriculum and master new

skills, such as parenting courses and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The school is committed to empowering children to challenge discrimination. Assemblies and PSHE and RE programmes provide opportunities for children to explore and celebrate difference and diversity. The school is shortly to undertake training around sexuality and gender identity with the Stonewall charity. They also plan to work with the charity, Lifting Limits, on challenging gender stereotypes. The Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENCo) spoke of the work done through emotion coaching to support children with special needs and disabilities to articulate their needs and so ensure they are fully included in their reviews.

Children play an active role in their learning. They are asked what they know already about a topic and what they would like to know, and contribute to their targets. They can work in different groups and practice peer marking. Teachers reflected that promotion of Articles 12 and 13 had encouraged a more dialogic approach to learning in which a range of possibilities and opinions can be shared. A teacher commented that children are more willing to talk and share their thoughts and initiate how learning proceeds. The science coordinator said that “*children had shaped how the science was delivered*” and explained how, as a result of listening to pupil opinion, more investigations and practical work have been included in the science curriculum. The key curriculum drivers, ‘Rights Respecting’ and ‘Possibilities’ were agreed in collaboration with the Rights Councillors, and through consultation with governors, staff and pupils, and are reflected in the school motto.

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 school council is democratically elected and made up of Rights Councillors from across all year groups. They meet regularly with the RRS coordinator and have led assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to place their ideas for school improvements in the ‘suggestion box’ outside the headteacher’s office, and this informs the school council’s focus and priorities. A display above the suggestion box summarises the issues that have been raised and the response to them. Adults have recognised the need to support children to have a voice and express their opinions appropriately (Articles 12 and 13) and see this as part of their role as duty bearers.

Children gave examples of being listened to and changes made as a result, for example, separate rooms for girls and boys to change in for PE, and the request for an inside area at lunchtime. The latter has resulted in the library area being used for a variety of activities that are pupil-initiated, including reading, role play, board games, Lego and art. Following the change to the dessert menu at lunchtime, children challenged the decision and persuaded senior leaders and governors to allow more traditional puddings as occasional treats at special events, as opposed to a complete ban. One child raised concerns about paper waste and requested the provision of recycling bins. Another child requested a junk modelling club out of concern for sustainability and with empathy for those children who might not have many of their own toys. The headteacher commented that the school focus on sustainability meant that children were more informed and willing to challenge practices which they felt did not reflect the school’s values. She cited the example of children’s protests about the use of paper plates and plastic cutlery one lunchtime when the dishwasher had broken down. Children have also challenged the serving of individual plastic yoghurt pots and now yoghurt is ordered in large containers and served in bowls that can be washed.

Children are encouraged to develop as active global citizens. Years 5 and 6 pupils were involved in the 2019 Outright campaign for cleaner air. They made banners and took part in a march to Mile End and their banners are now on display in the local library. They have been encouraged to engage with wider global issues through links with international projects, such as Jeel Al Amal (Generation of Hope) which works with Palestinian orphans and refugees on the West Bank. Visits from outside speakers, such as a human rights lawyer and a Masai chief (for whom the school raised money to build a well), have helped children appreciate the challenges that children and their families face in other parts of the world. Parents commented on their children's greater empathy and sense of agency: *"He is aware of the wider world beyond Bow, aware of children around the world who don't enjoy their rights".* Another said, *"It has gone beyond knowing – it is affecting their decisions."*