

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St. Cuthbert’s RC Primary School
Headteacher:	Mrs Nicola Noble
RRSA coordinator:	Miss Lyndsey Huntley
Local authority:	Durham County Council
School context	St. Cuthbert’s Primary School has 205 pupils on roll, of which, 19% are supported through the Pupil Premium. 0.5% of the pupils have an IEP and 1.5% speak English as an additional language.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Head Teacher, Deputy Head Teacher, 2 x RRSA Lead Teachers
Number of children and young people interviewed	14 children from the Steering Group 14 children from across various Year groups Y1-6
Number of adults interviewed	Deputy Head, HLTA, Y3 Teacher/SENCO Y2 Teacher/parent EYs Teacher
RRSA accreditations	Registered for RRSA: 08 May 2014 Silver achieved: 26 February 2018
Assessor(s):	Helen Trivers and Stuart Whiffin
Date:	21 September 2021

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been achieved.

St. Cuthbert’s Primary has met the standard for UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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 virtual 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 digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- Happy, confident children who clearly know that they have rights and are committed to helping to realise these for other children locally and globally.
- A strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA from leaders at all levels tied into the vision and values of the school. Quality training and support for staff has been sustained.
- The school has a strong desire to support all students to develop an understanding of inequalities around the world and the actions they can take to address this.

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:

- Focus on the precision of language used when discussing rights with children ensuring the rights language is true to the content of the CRC. Create further opportunities for pupils and staff to learn about rights in greater depth.
- Continue to explore with children/young people and staff the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights-based approach, for example 'dignity' and 'equity'.
- Continue to further develop opportunities for children and young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, recognising the role of children in helping adults understand problems and develop achievable solutions.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights/Comments
<p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p>	<p>Children at St. Cuthbert’s were confident in their knowledge of the CRC and the importance of rights. They knew that rights were universal, unconditional, inherent, indivisible and inalienable. One pupil commented, <i>“Children’s rights are for everybody under the age of 18, every child in the world. No one can take away your rights from you, and you don’t have to do anything to get them.”</i> Children interviewed understood that some children cannot access their rights for a number of reasons. <i>“Some children’s rights aren’t respected all of the time. Refugees don’t always get their rights, such as shelter or medical help”.</i> Staff discussed how a rights-based approach has been fully embedded, <i>“Since achieving our Silver award, the children have taken the lead in developing our rights-based approach, it fits into everything that we do. Rights have become part of our everyday ethos which fits perfectly with our Catholic ethos as well as informing our policies and procedures.”</i> Staff are very well informed and are kept up to date by the RRSA leads, ensuring that new staff (including student teachers) are trained in the rights-based approach. Parents take part in a ‘meet the teacher’ event at the beginning of each year where information is shared about rights, they are shown the links to rights-based activities on the school website and are given information about the school’s rights-based practice.</p>
STRAND B	Highlights/Comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Staff discussed how fairness and equity has been a focus within staff meetings and discussed with children. <i>“...Children are now recognising equity and fairness within school, pupils understand that for others to have rights met we need to have things in place such as positive behaviours and knowing that it’s not just one rule for everybody, we need to make sure the correct support is in place so that all pupils can achieve their best.”</i> Children interviewed had a good understanding of duty bearers and their role within the school, <i>“Duty bearers have the responsibility for making sure our rights are respected. They can be teachers, teaching assistants, dinner ladies, police officers or anyone who works for the Government.”</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>Staff and pupils report that relationships are strong within the school. One pupil said, <i>“We all get on well in school. The school gives us time to calm down and we apologise after both sides of the argument has had a chance to speak. The teachers help us to sort out our problems or we use rights respecting language to sort out our problems ourselves.”</i> Children have begun to explore what dignity is, <i>“Dignity has a lot to do with respect. The teachers in our school treat us with respect and listen to what we need.”</i></p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>Children at St. Cuthbert’s had a good understanding of the ways in which duty bearers keep them safe and could list a multitude of ways the school achieves this from a locked door policy to examples within learning. One said, <i>“Teachers wear different ID tags and help us with worries. If we don’t feel safe, we know that the school is a safe place to tell our problems to. We have posters around the school, so you know who to go to if you have problems and worries.”</i> All children agreed that staff would do all that they could to help them if they had a concern around safety.</p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>A number of systems are in place to ensure wellbeing is of top priority. Staff discussed how children in Y5 have had training to become Mental Health Champions, developing techniques to help identify the signs of mental health issues of other children. The school has a designated page on the website, signposting children and families to mental health websites and resources. The PE lead teachers’ focus has been to look at the physical impact of lockdown and how that links to mental health; <i>“Pupils will be active for at least 30 mins a day using equipment on the yard and there is a priority this year to develop the way children play outside.”</i> The school has also recently started a mindfulness club.</p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p>Children all agreed that they feel valued and included in the life of the school. They discussed how they have been learning about difference and how this relates to rights. <i>“Racism can stop people getting their rights respected. If someone is being discriminated against because of the colour of their skin or their religion, they may not feel that their right to be protected from harm is being met.”</i> Children said how the school has helped their learning about non-discrimination with awareness weeks and topic work.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p>Teachers use different strategies to encourage talk during lessons such as talk partners, elbow partners, as well as using ‘magpie-ing’ in KS2, enabling children to listen to work shared by others to adopt those ideas for themselves. One pupil commented, <i>“...if you are learning something and you don’t understand, the teachers will help you. We get to choose the types of tasks we complete in class and also choose the way we want to learn. In our class, we have different activities which we can choose from depending on how we feel that day.”</i></p>
<p>STRAND C</p>	<p>Highlights/Comments</p>
<p>8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.</p>	<p>Children can join a wide range of pupil voice groups and described how they are elected to each of the groups. <i>“We think about which group we want to be in, and we have to say what we would bring to the group. The decision is made by a vote which I think is fair.”</i> One staff member said, <i>“Pupil voice is so important to us, we ensure that we listen to the views of children to help us drive change. Mixed house groups are working very well as younger pupils have the older pupils as good role models, ensuring ideas from all ages are taken on board.”</i> Pupils could discuss the changes that have been made as a result of their ideas, such as choosing which charities the school will support after researching what the money they raise will be used for.</p>
<p>9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.</p>	<p>Children have been engaged in a number of campaigns and events to promote not only their rights, but the rights of all children locally and globally with children given ownership over which charities and campaigns they would like to support. Staff and children discussed the many ways in which this has been achieved, including collecting money during lent, donating food and toys to local foodbanks, and planting trees to improve the local environment. The school has links with a school in Hungary to foster engagement about cultures and traditions which helped the children draw similarities and differences in lifestyle and culture. Pupils have recently campaigned to have a defibrillator installed in the school after a pupil with a heart condition joined. The children wrote to the local council and MP detailing the child’s right to safety and adequate medical care which was a success.</p>