

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Meadows First School
Headteacher:	Sue Hewitt
RRSA coordinator:	Sara Date
Local authority:	Worcestershire
Assessor(s):	Hilary Alcock
Date:	5 th February 2020

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 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:

- Happy, confident children who are knowledgeable about their rights and can articulate how these impact positively on their own daily, lived experience both in and out of school.
- How the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) underpins the school’s core principles and has strengthened pupil participation and the school’s commitment to global citizenship.
- Staff and governors who continually reflect, challenge and work together as a team so that, “*We do RRSA our way and make it work for our school.*”

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:

- Review the use of language within class charters to ensure they reflect Articles accurately and include actions for rights holders and duty bearers. Encourage the EYFS to consider how they can develop class-based charters relevant to the evolving capacities of their children.
- Enhance ambassadorial work capitalising on the children’s enthusiasm for sharing their RRSA journey with other schools e.g. the middle school they will transfer to, the local Bromsgrove network and the teacher training collaboration with Worcester university that has already started.
- Plan for ongoing staff and governor CPD for further developing knowledge, understanding and application, relevant to roles, of the CRC e.g. including administrative staff.
- Continue to involve, as appropriate, pupils within policy development.
- Consider how to make more prominent the school’s RRSA Gold status on the website including increased and regular pupil participation for achieving this.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	There are 349 pupils on roll; 3.5% have an EHCP. Only 2.7% speak English as a second language and around 16% are supported through the Pupil Premium. The most recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be Outstanding in March 2019.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, RRSA coordinator plus 3 other SLT
Number of children and young people interviewed	35 children in focus groups, 6 children on the learning walk and 60 children in class visits
Number of adults interviewed	4 teaching staff, 1 support staff, 2 parent governors
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits
Registered for RRSA: October 2016	Silver achieved: February 2019

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

Most children across KS 1 and KS2 know a wide range of rights from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and many children could identify relevant article numbers. Most children are familiar with the ABCDE of Rights. By using this resource, they understand that rights are universal, unconditional, inherent, inalienable and indivisible. Some of the oldest pupils (aged 8 and 9) were able to use the formal terminology. All children spoken with during the focus groups and within class bases were clear that, *“We were born with rights”, “The rights are for all children everywhere in the World”* and *“No one can take them away from you.”* Children also understood that adults are duty bearers with responsibility for teaching children about their rights and making sure that they can access them because they are the rights holders. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff are fully engaged with developing their own knowledge about the CRC and are applying this to curriculum areas. Displays about Identity and sustainability and how these link to the CRC were very visible within the indoor environment in the Nursery, and within Reception the CRC is also clearly displayed. Parents of nursery children are kept well informed about how the CRC is part of the curriculum through the online Tapestry facility.

Children explained that they learn about rights, *“Through assembly times”* and *“In all our lessons.”* The Steering Group had thought carefully about which areas of the school to highlight during the school tour to show the wide range of rights that they are learning about including the school’s outdoor learning area and garden. *“We love our garden and the allotments”,* commented one pupil. Overall the whole school environment provides evidence of a school community that is fully committed to and embedding the CRC within its ethos and culture. The children demonstrated a clear understanding that not all children can access their rights all the time. They spoke, for example, about children who might be denied access, due to natural disasters, to clean water, health care needs and education. One member of the SLT considers that *“Global citizenship is now at the heart of the curriculum with pupils better able to empathise with others both locally and globally.”* The School Council lead member of staff commented that, *“You know the CRC is embedded when children start firing back at you about injustices around the world.”* The headteacher explained that they consider this to be especially important because most of the children experience is predominantly within a community of people of white British heritage. Staff also consider that, through RRSA children are learning to think more critically about products they use and the environmental impact of these and that, *“We are giving them a voice to do something about it.”*

The headteacher commented that, *“Now that we use the CRC as a framework, children’s rights underpin everything that we do... we live it every day... it’s so evident in lessons now.”* She went on to say that the enthusiasm and commitment of the RRSA coordinator had, *“Opened up staff’s eyes to the CRC and really taken them on the RRSA journey with her.”* Other staff and governors echoed the significant role that the RRSA coordinator plays, but also agree with her that the redesigning of the curriculum is the result of, *“A huge team effort by everybody.”* The senior leadership team, staff and governors all clearly articulated that they consider the school’s RRSA journey has strengthened considerably since the school gained the Silver Award just under a year ago. The headteacher commented that, *“Since then we have been galvanised to put more structure for the CRC in place.”* The RRSA coordinator explained how with the past year the school has, *“Reshaped the curriculum*

UNITED KINGDOM

so that learning about rights is fully embedded within it, staff meetings regularly provide opportunities for building up knowledge about the CRC” and that overall, “The school has stepped up a notch.”

Governors explained that they monitor how the CRC is being taught and practiced within the school through learning walks, and that as parents they also experience first-hand how their children now incorporate talking about rights more at home.

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

Most children understand that their teachers are duty bearers for their rights as well as knowing that adults at home also need to look after them and keep them safe. They explained how, *“Our teachers let us learn about rights...which helps to keep us safe.”* They gave personal examples such as, *“When I need a drink, they let me have one”* and *“They give you help with your work when you need it.”* One KS2 pupil said that, *“There’s lots of helping out with the younger children at this school.”* Children consistently articulated that adults at school listen to them. They explained how their individual class charters have been formulated with the involvement of everyone in the class and how they are used, *“To help us to be a better person, so that we think about how we would like to be treated by others and that we should do the same for them... when we look at the charter it reminds us to do that.”* One member of staff considers that the role of charters has become, *“More dynamic...the children talk about them and change things if they are not working.”* Children consider that the way the school treats individuals is fair and understand why there are consequences for those who might be disrespecting the rights of others. They are confident that adults would respond to their concerns if they considered that their rights were not being met.

Children and adults consider that relationships at the school are mutually respectful. Children spoke confidently that staff always treat them with dignity. If an individual pupil needs to be spoken with then the teacher, *“Will always take you to a different room or away from the other children...they don’t do it in front of everyone...they respect your right to privacy.”* One member of the SLT said, *“We really care about the children and their right to speak and be listened to.”*

Children feel safe at Meadows school and identified, in addition to the adults themselves, a wide range of safety measures that are in place, e.g. *“Taking the register so the teachers know who is here... having fire drills, learning to be safe during forest school sessions, visitors signing in and wearing stickers.”* Children also spoke about the pupil digital leads who learn how to set up computer equipment safely and that all pupils are taught how to report anything that they consider is unsafe online. One child also confidently expressed that adults keep us safe, *“Because they never share our personal information.”* During the school tour children pointed out posters produced by the NSPCC and ChildLine and explained that these were there to help children know that, *“If you don’t feel safe there is always someone at school or somewhere else that can help you.”*

The school’s ethos and culture are clearly centred on children’s wellbeing, underpinned by the CRC. Children highlighted displays and spoke about the Wellbeing Wheel which represents a holistic approach to developing a positive identity for children, e.g. Happy Me, Safe Me, Clever Me, Calm Me,

Active Me and Friendly Me. They explained how the Wellbeing Wheel, *“Helps you to be you...because we are all different.”* Children spoke enthusiastically about the wide range of extra clubs and activities, e.g. tennis, trampolining, yoga, pottery, stating that, *“There is something on every day.”* They also explained that there is a ‘Kids Club’ because, *“Sometimes your mum can’t be here to collect you, and so kids can go there and be looked after and kept safe.”* Children help to plant, care for and harvest foods in the school garden and explained that the food is used for *“Heathy snacks at lunch times and sometimes we take it home.”* Specific individual needs are catered for with the Hive nurture facility.

Many children spoken with identified a range of learning experiences that were helping them to learn to respect and value diversity. They demonstrated an appropriate understanding of issues relating to discrimination and spoke about individuals such as Anne Frank, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. They were emphatic about the unfairness of how some people are discriminated against commenting that, *“We should treat everyone fairly.”* Another pupil added that, *“I want to help to campaign to change the world.”* Another pupil explained that it is important to learn about different religions, *“Because if you meet somebody with a different religion you would respect them and know what they celebrate.”* Staff consider that pupils are now more aware of discrimination and more able to identify and challenge stereotypical views. One teacher commented on how children were now raising issues for discussion at school that they had noticed when at home, e.g. children referring to the diversity issue that had been identified during the recent televised BAFTA awards ceremony.

Through the Meadows Mouse Learning Mascot children learn and can identify positive learning behaviours. Many children spoken with explained that they know they have a right to learn and need to respect this right for other children too. Through the Wellbeing Wheel approach, they are developing into confident learners who know what they are trying to achieve and show a real sense of enjoyment and pride in their lived school experience. They are very positive about how their teachers listen to them and help them. They also value peer support such as the reading buddy scheme. (97% of children within the RRSA questionnaire said they know how to make progress with their learning)

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

Most children said that they can influence decisions within school. There are a range of established pupil voice groups including a School Council, Eco Group, Digital Leaders and Sports Crew as well as pupils who are lead Rights Respecting Representatives. Children are confident that their views are listened to and that they are given opportunities to voice their opinions. School councillors meet weekly and feedback to their classes so that all pupils are involved in the development of ideas and can put forward their preferred course of action. One pupil said that, *“We vote a lot in this school...that links with Article 12, the right to be heard.”* Most children within the focus groups echoed a comment made by one child that, *“We all get on together and have a vote.”* Pupils are very positive about their involvement in the school’s Wellbeing Garden and how they develop and maintain the school’s allotment. They also lead the school’s Switch it Off campaign to reduce energy use and waste. Within the nursery, Philosophy for Children is used to encourage and facilitate children’s critical thinking and decision making. Pupils spoken with in the focus groups had various ideas of how to make their school even more rights respecting including involving families more by having a weekly rights quiz and more

homework activities linked to rights. They are also keen to share ideas with other schools on their RRSA journey and, *“Tell those that don’t do it yet all about it.”*

Pupils are beginning to be more involved with school strategic policy development. Most recently they were very influential with a review of the school’s marking policy. Having sought the views of the children one member of staff commented that, *“We went to the children first and asked what they thought and then virtually changed everything because of what they said; as staff we changed our opinions because of the children’s ideas.”* Staff consider that through their RRSA journey children’s voices and their ability to influence change within school has increased significantly. One commented that, *“We always thought we respected and listened to children, but now pupil voice is everywhere, it’s amazing!”*

Global Citizenship and preparing pupils for life are core principles that underpin the ethos at Meadows school. Ofsted, in March 2019, commented that, *‘Leaders’ thoughtful promotion of British Values, within their Rights Respecting School context, enables pupils to develop a meaningful understanding of life in Britain and of the difference they can make to society’*. Children spoke enthusiastically about a range of ways they help other children locally to access their rights. Examples included collecting for the local foodbank, supporting Macmillan coffee mornings, taking part in community Clean Ups, meeting with local housing trust representatives and raising issues about improving their community through discussions with their local MP. Children demonstrated an awareness of how their actions can impact on the environment and children’s rights globally. They explained passionately that we should all reduce our own plastic use stating that, *“We don’t have to throw plastic things away, we can reuse them or recycle them... I told my parents that at home... because we have to make sure that the sea creatures don’t die.”* The school has used creative ways, that have been very well supported, to involve families undertaking activities with their children focusing on sustainability issues. Children learn though a focus on Fairtrade how consumer behaviours can potentially impact negatively as well as help others globally. They also explained how a topic about minibeasts had involved learning about how malaria is contracted, the impact this can have on children’s rights and have raised money to buy malaria nets to improve things for children. Through a Clarks ShoeShare collection, children are aware that this activity was undertaken to support the right of children everywhere to go to school.