

# RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Bourne Abbey Church of England Primary Academy
<b>Executive Headteacher: Head of School:</b>	Sarah Moore Sarah Buttress
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Angela Goold
<b>Local authority:</b>	Lincolnshire County Council
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Martin Russell
<b>Date:</b>	25 <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 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.

This was a reaccreditation visit.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- The breadth and depth of children's knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and their understanding of the related concepts such as the unconditional and inherent nature of rights.
- The way in which the school has built upon and strengthened its longstanding Gold RRSA status making good use of ongoing RRSA guidance and initiatives such as OutRight to maintain enthusiasm about rights across the school.
- The passionate commitment of staff, pupils and the wider school community to the promotion of children’s rights.
- Exceptional practice in the Early Years/Nursery phase supporting children in their first encounter with their rights.

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:

- Build on the excellent ambassadorial activity undertaken so far by reaching out to local secondary schools to help them to know about rights and to encourage their engagement with RRSA. Also consider making use of Diocesan networks.
- Continue to expand the reach and impact of pupil voice into all areas of school improvement on strategic planning. Consider systematising the best of current practice.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	A very large primary school with around 700 children on roll. Approximately 5% of the children are identified as having some additional learning needs. About 10% speak English as an additional language. Around a fifth of the children receive additional funding through the Pupil Premium.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Head of School, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and RRSA coordinator.
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	20 children in focus group and over 60 spoken with in class visits during the tour.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	3 teaching staff (one a parent), 3 support staff (two of whom are parents and one a governor)
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence and class visits.
<b>Registered for RRSA: July 2011</b>	<b>Gold (Level 2) first achieved:</b> 2013, then reaccredited in June 2016.

### 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 across the school were confident in speaking about and explaining an extensive range of different articles from the CRC. They were very clear in articulating the role of duty bearers in ensuring that children can access their rights. The school has made very effective use of Unicef's 'ABCDE of Rights', with children of all ages readily referring to the fact that no one can take rights away, that they are from birth and that they can't be separated. When exploring the idea that rights are for every child, globally, one child suggested, *"Rights have to be universal."* and went on to discuss how the Convention was agreed for the whole world by the United Nations. Several conversations included reference to the rights being both inalienable and unconditional. The children were confident in pointing out that, despite the universal nature of rights, children in many parts of the world are prevented from enjoying all their rights as a consequence of poverty, *"The conditions in their country might mean there is not much food."* or natural disasters. One pupil mentioned that, *"Their country might be at war like Syria."* and this led to a discussion about threats to safety, education, family life and shelter. The children also recognised that there are situations in the UK context which might mean that some children can't enjoy their rights for example, as a result of homelessness, bullying and *"Some children might not have a family who can look after them properly."*

In addition to a very well-planned assembly programme and effective use of special events and days, the school's curriculum offers numerous opportunities for the children to encounter different rights in the context of planned learning. In Y1, for example, their work about democracy is linked to Article 12. The work of the nursery phase in embedding an appropriate understanding of rights to the youngest children is particularly impressive; displays and conversations heard during the visit gave evidence of this and detailed planning was evident referencing a wide range of articles to the children's learning. In the wider staff discussion, other curriculum examples were shared and one teacher summarised, *"All our topics are intrinsically linked to the articles."*

The headteacher, governors and senior leaders are whole heartedly committed to a rights-based approach across the school. They see the commitment to the Convention as an essential way of supporting their children, as the headteacher explained, *"It's so important for our children and the rights tie in completely with our vision and our Christian ethos."* The leadership is completely committed to ensuring that children's rights are at the centre of every decision and at the foundation of all that the school provides. Parents are routinely informed about rights through newsletters and assemblies and information about rights linked to learning often features in the Tapestry school-home messaging platform. The SLT explained that the wider community reads about the school's commitment to the CRC because press releases always bring in rights where relevant. The commitment of Governors to RRSA continues to be strong and the head explained that her termly report to the Governing Body always refers to rights.

**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**

Discussion with the children about their understanding of themselves as rights holders provided an excellent framework for them to articulate all the different ways in which they can enjoy their rights in school. Among many other elements, they referred to being healthy, having a good education, being kept safe and having their privacy respected and their opinions listened to and taken seriously. A Y2 pupil summed it up by saying: *“All our rights help us to be the best we can be!”* This all leads to very positive attitudes towards school and the leadership cites their sustained attendance levels, above national average, as an indicator of this. All pupils were clear about the role of duty bearers and that, ultimately, it was the role of Government to ensure their rights were met. There was certainty among the children that the school’s systems for dealing with concerns raised by any pupil were both accessible and trusted; several children confirmed this to be so. The children defined a ‘trusted adult’ as somebody who could be relied upon, *“They are responsible and would know what to do.”* One of the senior leaders commented that *“All the children now really ‘own’ their rights and they will invariably let us know if they think their rights are not being met in full!”* There was unanimity that their school was very fair, and they described examples of what this meant. An exploration of equity led to the children citing a range of comments including, *“Not everybody needs the same help all the time.”*

Throughout the visit, it was very clear that mutually respectful relationships are prevalent across the school. The children spoke about how well everyone gets on and how friendly their school is, and they knew that respect is the recurring word in the school’s three core values. When asked about how rights help when there are disagreements or problems, pupils commented: *“It’s always important to hear both sides of the story and help people figure it out for themselves.”* whether self-managed by the children or when adult intervention is needed. The role of the peer mediators (trained volunteers from Y6) was explained and these were seen as being very helpful and effective by a range of pupils. One adult commented that, *“You now see consistency [in relationships] between the classroom and the playground.”* Another commented, *“The children are now empowered to intervene for their peers.”* They spoke positively about how incidents are dealt with and were clear in expressing their view that, whatever happened, people were treated with dignity, *“It’s about respecting people, we are all equal and precious.”*

Safety in school was referred to, unprompted, by all the groups of adults and children spoken with and a range of processes and actions were explained. All pupils in the school discuss and make a ‘safe hand’ which has five ‘safe’ people they can go to/ talk/ask for help if they are worried. All Y5 pupils take part in introductory first aid sessions run by St John’s Ambulance, enabling them to know what to do in an emergency and put someone in the recovery position. The school is involved in the local ‘Mini-Police’ initiative where pupils apply and are voted as Mini-Police. Working with the local PCSOs, they promote safety and good social behaviour. Incidents of discriminatory behaviours and bullying are rare, and the school’s anti-bullying input is linked to all other aspects of being safe from harm and is woven through with appropriate articles from the Convention.

The school is proactive in highlighting and supporting all aspects of the children’s health. Staff, pupils and parents all spoke positively about the impact of this work regarding diet, hydration and exercise.

There is an extensive range of extra-curricular clubs, many sports based to engage children in being active and the 'Abbey Mile' has been introduced as a regular feature for all in KS2. The pupils also demonstrated a developed understanding of mental health and of the vocabulary associated with expressing their emotions. Some Y2 PSHE work spoken about in which the children had to imagine the range of feelings that might be experienced by a new member of the class. The children spoke about the different ways they could speak about or convey their feelings including using worry boxes in class or speaking with specially trained staff. They were aware of the importance of talking about their feelings, *"If you don't it can affect you on a day to day basis and you might say things you don't want to say."*

The school has a highly inclusive culture. In a recent pupil survey (PASS), 97% of KS2 and 96% of KS1 pupils agreed with the statement: The school helps me to respect people from different backgrounds. The demographic of the school is very limited in terms of ethnic and cultural diversity, but the staff are acutely aware of this and make every effort to counter it by the way the curriculum is planned and by taking every opportunity to celebrate the different cultures that are represented in the school. Bourne Abbey collaborates with Just Lincs to help the children to learn about the value of diversity and to develop a culture that is against all forms of discrimination and hatred. The children requested a reorganisation of how the outdoor spaces were used at lunchtime, in order to be fairer and more inclusive. This has been implemented. In addition, to support more vulnerable pupils at lunchtime, who sometimes feel overwhelmed in the playground, a quiet room offer has been developed. It has been extremely successful in helping those pupils feel more secure at lunchtime, one Y6 child said, *"I really don't like loud noises, so I like the quiet room. The playground is very loud."*

The children were passionate about their right to an education and the role they can play in making the most of this. With minimal prompting, they launched into detailed explanations of peer assessment, and different ways of helping each other with the emphasis on positive feedback. Those spoken with all knew their next steps for learning in their work and explained that teachers mark written work in two colours – one indicating their next step; the pupils are given time in the lesson to respond to this.

The children also commented that their class charters help to support their learning in class, *"At the start of the year, we all agree on certain rights to include."* Staff spoke of the power of family learning sessions, especially in Reception, with *"Themes such as name and nationality which are often linked to 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 voice of the children has long established influence in the school and is recognised by all adults as being their right. The school offers multiple opportunities for the children to take on leadership roles and have their voice heard on different issues. Examples shared included the regular involvement of children in the appointment of new staff and 'Pupil Review' is an established part of the school's quality assurance and improvement cycle. Initiative and improvements are frequently suggested through the democratically elected School Council; pupils have recently requested and helped established a charity 'wishing well' in the KS 2 playground and new trim trails for Y3 & 4. The children explained how the council is elected and the system of *"meeting every week with our own class and*

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*then bring ideas to the whole council meeting.” Policy developments and whole school improvement ideas have sometimes been shared with the Council for their opinion. One adult commented, “We see the children really being empowered by their rights. They want to use their voice and bring about change.”*

The school has developed an effective ambassadorial role, taking the Convention beyond their own community: in September 2018, Bourne Abbey shared their knowledge of RRSA with other local schools supporting them in gaining Bronze and Gold accreditations. The commitment of the children at Bourne Abbey to advocate for the rights of others has become embedded. The school has skilfully built upon their existing rights knowledge and has interwoven the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Global Goals) into many facets of the curriculum. One member of staff explained that, *“In today’s world where things are so transitional it’s good that the children know and care about the world and that they really want to make a difference.”* Parents are impressed and welcome the fact that their children take an active interest in the news and that they bring their passion about the Global Goals into family life and discourse. The children spoke confidently about campaigning and speaking out for the rights of others. The school has used Unicef’s OutRight materials so that research, poster design, banners, petitions, letter writing and presentations to local and national politicians have become the norm. Another type of activism was described by the children explaining that, *“The Community Kindness group go to the Cedars care home and draw with the people there and read books to them.”*

The children also recognise how fundraising can also make a difference to the lives of children, the Collective Worship Council lead the fundraising efforts and promoting everyone’s understanding of what the fundraising is for. The Harvest collection, for example, supports people locally through the food bank. They have supported Unicef’s Playground Challenge for Soccer Aid and during their annual Africa day, as well as learning, they raise funds to support access to education in their partner school in Kenya.