



RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School	Rathfern Primary School
Local Authority	London Borough of Lewisham
Number of pupils on roll	515
Headteacher	Mrs Naheeda Maharasingam
RRSA Coordinator	Michelle Henderson-Vieira
RRSA Assessor	Isobel Mitchell
Date of visit	07/11/2018
Attendees at SLT meeting	2
Number of pupils interviewed	21
Number of adults interviewed	13
Evidence provided	Evidence files, evaluation form, learning walk
Date registered for RRSA	14/08/2014
Bronze achieved	25/09/2015

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Rathfern Primary School has met the standard for Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

EVIDENCE FROM THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

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 living.

- The children's knowledge about rights was excellent, they could name a broad range of rights from the Convention, for example, Article 13, freedom of expression, Article 12, right to a voice, Article 16 the right to privacy. They knew that the rights came from the United Nations and that they are universal, unconditional, inalienable, inherent and indivisible even if they did not use these exact words.
- The children have learnt about their rights through displays, assemblies, rights charters and a very powerful curriculum where topics begin with a moral question relating to rights. For example, in Year 6 the study of the Ancient Greeks began with a question related to Article 3: Did King Midas think about how his decisions would affect all children? And to Article 29: Did Icarus use his education to develop his talents and abilities? Did he respect the advice given to him? The curriculum is also explicitly linked to global learning themes and the UN Sustainable Development Goals which is very effective in enabling children to see the connection between children's rights, global justice and environmental protection. This approach to the curriculum is used throughout the year groups and is reviewed every year.
- Parents and governors are informed about the schools' work on rights through newsletters, bulletins, home learning projects, community events and campaigns. The head uses the language of rights when discussing issues with parents related to, for example, safeguarding or the rights of children to take part in all activities and develop their talents to the full.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue the excellent work ensuring the curriculum is relevant to today's world, linked to rights, sustainability and global justice
- Find creative ways of making articles even more visible and high profile around the school and on the website, particularly through the use of more pictures and symbols and less small text.

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.

- The school has 5 core values which are explicitly linked to rights. The head teacher feels that the traditional education system does not necessarily protect children's rights and explained that she "wanted to put the CRC at the heart of learning in order to challenge this". The school has developed key learning attributes based on 'metacognition' - teaching children how to 'learn to learn'. The head explained how this also relates to rights in that she sees this as an 'emancipatory pedagogy' referencing the work of Paolo Friere – (Pedagogy of the oppressed).
- Every class has worked with their teachers to create rights based charters which include statements on how adults will protect rights and how pupils will respect the rights. The children explained how they use the charter to help respect the right to learn. "In our class, we have a right to learn – we say that if you are disrupting the class, you are denying that right". In the playground, the rights charter featuring Articles 19, 12, 31, 2 and 24 is continually referred to by children and staff. The staff explained how the charters and the use of rights based language has helped improve behaviour: "It supports the children with their reflection and helps them to understand why it is important to behave respectfully, for example if they are pushing in the playground, we refer them to the right to be safe." The newly revised behaviour policy is underpinned by Article 3 – the best interests of the child and the underlying principles of respect and dignity "We treat children with dignity and respect at all times".
- The children talked about how the school protects their right to safety through for example referring to the charter in the playground and through wearing high visibility vests on trips. The children have taken part in workshops from the NSPCC on keeping safe and they know who to speak to if they have any concerns. The school protects the health and well-being of the students through opportunities to take part in sport and encouraging healthy eating. For example, the children are currently working on a project to make smoothies for children to have at lunch time. The children talked about how knowing your rights helps with well-being; "Knowing you have a right to join groups and makes friends helps you to be happy."
- The school is a very diverse community where everyone is valued and treated fairly. This is emphasised through the school values and regular assemblies. The children felt that Rathfern is a school where "everyone is different but everyone can be included". The children worked with staff to organise a 'global café' festival to celebrate the diverse cultures in the school.
- Pupils play an active role in their learning. Every topic starts with the questions "What do we already know?" and "What would you like to know?" The head explained how pupil voice is very strong in the school and that the CRC "helps children to protect themselves and challenge staff" to prevent unconscious bias and challenge them to be creative and move away from "default practice".

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to embed the use of the language of rights and respect to strengthen school systems for resolving conflict and the promotion of positive attitudes and actions for 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.

- There are many opportunities for the children to take on leadership roles within the school. The 'Leading Citizens' are 10 children from KS2 who are chosen by their peers and they lead on the RRSA, and change in school. A wider group of children known as 'community ambassadors' will shortly include KS1 as well. These children are involved in wider projects, and often work with the Leading Citizens to effect change in the school. For example, following a community cohesion conference they argued that the symbols for the toilets should be changed so as not to stereotype women as wearing skirts and men as wearing trousers. The signs have now been changed to the scientific symbols for male and female. The children in these groups speak to every class including nursery and reception before and after their meetings to make sure the voice of all the children is heard.
- The children were very involved in the review of the behaviour policy and because of their feedback the wording was changed so it now uses the word 'reminder' rather than 'warning' which they felt was too intimidating. They also influenced the policy to increase the emphasis on reflection rather than loss of playtime. The SLT recently reversed a decision on the time of playtime because the children felt that the change meant too many children in the playground at one time, which they felt was unsafe.
- There is an emphasis in the school on the use of moral questioning, debate and critical thinking, so the children are used to expressing their opinion on an issue and listening to the opinions of others. One pupil explained how she attends a 'debate mate' group every Wednesday. "I go and I really enjoy it".
- Rathfern primary was a Global Learning Programme Expert Centre and have therefore put an emphasis on learning about and taking action for global justice. The children are very aware of global issues and they have undertaken a number of whole school projects. For example, they have recently focused on the Sustainable Development Goals where they ran awareness raising campaigns in the school and in the neighbourhood on climate change and protecting water resources. The children could talk knowledgeably about the resulting displays from these projects and offered some good ideas on tackling climate change, for example "the government should support the production of more electric cars as this would bring the price of them down a bit". All the children have made pledges to contribute to the SDGs and many have written to the Mayor of London and their local MP on the issues that they are concerned about. The projects and learning on the SDGs has been linked to Article 24, in relation to the right to a clean



environment but also to Article 26 (the right to government support) and 27 (the right to an adequate standard of living) which relate to the ongoing work of the school to learn about and take action for social justice. Charitable work is related to rights and the relevant Sustainable Development Goal, for example, the children ran a cake sale for Macmillan cancer support and alongside this, they created posters to show the importance of protecting Article 24 the right to health and SDG3 on health and well-being. The children have also supported the 'Send my Friend to School' campaign and the children are currently working on a project to support the homeless, locally.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Further build opportunities for children and young people to be involved in pupil led groups, particularly in KS1 and ensure that children can articulate the impact that these groups have on the school and / or its community.
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by enabling children and staff to promote and encourage Rights Respecting values and actions and knowledge of the CRC with other schools and in the wider community.
- Create further opportunities to ensure that the impact of local and global campaigns is fed back to children so they can see how their actions have made a difference.