



RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School	Rack House Primary School
Local Authority	Manchester City Council
Number of pupils on roll	407
Headteacher	Darren Amesbury
RRSA Coordinator	Richard Corbett and Angela Nilan
RRSA Assessor	Martin Russell
Date of visit	12th November 2018
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, two assistant headteachers. SENDCO and DSL, RRSA coordinators.
Number of pupils interviewed	20 children in focus group plus discussion with two classes during the tour of the school
Number of adults interviewed	4 teachers, 4 support staff (one a Governor and two parents of children at the school) A parent, unable to attend on the day, wrote a detailed letter to support the visit.
Evidence provided	Displays and portfolio of documentation
Date registered for RRSA	November 2017
Bronze achieved	March 2018

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Rack House 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.

- Children, from a range of age groups, had a very good knowledge of individual rights from the Convention. They demonstrated that they understood the unconditional nature of rights with comments including *“Nobody should ever take your rights away.”* They had a good understanding that rights are universal, *“Rights should be everywhere around the world, everyone should have them.”* They also recognised, however, that not all children were able to access their rights; examples shared included access to clean water, shelter and education being affected by *wars or natural disasters*. They also spoke of that fact that access to rights can be limited in wealthier countries, like the UK, too because of bullying or bad treatment by adults.
- Conversation with the children made clear that they understand that adults and the government are responsible for ensuring that they can access and enjoy their rights; *“Rights make our life better. They remind you to respect everyone and you can tell somebody if you are not getting your rights.”* It was clear that their learning about rights is becoming established in various ways; as well as effective displays and input through assemblies, there is growing curriculum coverage of the articles such as this example from a member of staff who said that rights knowledge, linked to learning about World War II, *“Made it much more meaningful for the children.”*
- The senior leadership, governors and staff are wholeheartedly committed to a rights based approach being fully established at Rack House. The headteacher explained *“We want them [the children] to know about their rights. It’s not just about school, it informs them about all aspects of their lives.”* There is clear commitment across the school to the empowerment of the children, this has required a conscious effort on the part of adults. The positive impact of promoting rights is evident in various ways such as *“really positive improvements in attendance because we speak about the right to an education in meetings with parents.”*

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

- Work towards an increased knowledge of the origins of the CRC, its global impact and, for older pupils, its place within the wider framework of Human Rights and find creative ways of making rights even more visible and high profile around the school and on the website.
- Be more explicit in looking for correlation between improved outcomes for children and the implementation of a rights-based approach across the school.



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.

- There is a clear understanding among the children that their school is a place where all their rights can be accessed. They explained that *"trusted adults"* were always available if they thought they weren't getting their rights and they have a high level of confidence that school systems for addressing difficult situations are fair and effective. Parental comments reinforced this with clear appreciation expressed for the fact that their children *"felt empowered to have their voice and use it with confidence."* Children and adults described very positive and mutually respectful relationships across the school and it was pointed out the children *"are starting to use their rights to resolve situations among themselves when disagreements happen."* Sometimes support is needed and the children spoke very positively about the L.E.A.F. (Listen – effect – amend – follow up) system which is a reflective and restorative approach followed when things go wrong.
- The wellbeing of the children is a constant focus and is linked, as appropriate to their rights, especially Article 24. Numerous structures are in place to promote mental health as well as physical wellbeing. The children spoke very positively about healthy eating and the array of clubs to support being active. The school's emotional support provision including the 'Room to Think' therapy space and there are also informal ways in which pupils can speak about their emotions with adults and feel supported and one commented that *"Mental health is really important, it's all about your feelings."*
- Inclusion and the celebration of diversity are key features of the school. The children leading the tour spoke with enthusiasm about this and showed displays such as the board created for Black History Month which celebrates the contribution of different cultures and traditions. Conversations with adults, including parents referred to a noticeable increase in mutual respect and appreciation of difference with a corresponding reduction in bullying and incidents of a discriminatory nature.

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

- Consider using the Unicef RRSA Charter Guidance to reinforce on the language of 'respect for rights' In the next 'round' of class charters endeavour to include actions for Duty Bearers as well as for children
- Develop everyone's confidence in some of the technical language underpinning rights including: Inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional and the concepts of human dignity and equity and equality.
- Consider developing the school's strategic documentation to link to and reflect relevant articles of the CRC and ensure that leaders at all levels can articulate school improvement in terms of the CRC. This could extend to the website too.



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 effective pupil participation and engagement at Rack House. In addition to the elected Rights Respecting Council, there is a range of other groups including Eco Warriors and Buddies plus various clubs and groups based on interests.
- The voice and participation of the pupils is taken seriously by adults across the school. The headteacher *explained* that “*The children are far more aware that their voice matters and it will be taken seriously.*” Structures are in place to facilitate this in a meaningful way both internally with ideas from Council meetings shared with the headteacher and externally through collaboration in local pupil voice panels and meetings with their MP.
- The children are beginning to feel empowered to take action for the rights of others both locally and globally. Parents and staff reported that the children are much more aware of issues affecting other people and will raise issues about homelessness and environmental concerns about plastics, water conservation and wasted electricity; “*It’s good that they come home and talk about their rights, unprompted – they can link them to real life.*” Within school, the buddy bench, playground equipment and markings, more space for garden and, the yet to be realised, solar panels have all been introduced as a result of pupils’ suggestions.
- There is growing global awareness which is supported with special events such as world culture day. Opportunities are provided for the children to act for the rights of others such as their focus on the right to education through a very successful Unicef/Clarks Shoe Share event. Other charity work has included a focus on WaterAid. One of the pupils, asked about the importance of knowing their rights explained, “*We need our rights but they help you think about other people.*”

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

- Continue to strive for more creative and significant opportunities for the participation and decision making of children and young people to influence and shape the life and work of the school, perhaps through explicit involvement in school improvement planning and/or the evaluation of learning and teaching.
- Continue supporting children to look at global issues from a perspective of rights so that they develop a heightened sense of justice and equity. Consider further CPD in this area and engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals through The World’s Largest Lesson.
- In addition to your charity fund raising, facilitate more opportunities for the children to initiate powerful advocacy and campaigning work, particularly with regard to children’s rights. Consider joining in with Unicef UK’s Outright Campaign.
- Aim to participate in RRSA training to support your journey Gold.