

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD

ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

School:	Martenscroft Nursery School and Children's Centre
Headteacher:	Liz Hardy
RRSA coordinator:	Jan Nettleton
Local authority:	Manchester City Council
Assessor:	Martin Russell
Date:	20 th June 2016

The school context:

Martenscroft is a Manchester Local Authority maintained provision led by a Governing Body and Headteacher. As a fully integrated School and Centre they have a large multi-disciplinary team and work with a wide range of partner agencies and professionals to ensure quality provision, which meets the individual entitlements of children and families. The offer includes: Nursery class provision with before and after school clubs and holiday care for 3 to 4 year olds; Children's Centre services; Full childcare from 4 months to 5 years; Free 15 hours childcare for 2 year children; Resource and toy library (RATL). 60 children are currently attending the Nursery School and 55 are in childcare provision. Martenscroft is also a designated National Teaching School. It serves a very diverse, multicultural community. The number of lone parents is higher than the national average and around 50% of families are or very low incomes or are unemployed.

First registered for RRSA: April 2015 Recognition of Commitment: June 2015

Assessment information:

Progress and evaluation form received	Yes	Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, Deputy Head, RRSA Coordinator, Children's Centre Leader		
Number of children and young people interviewed	Numerous children spoken with. Observation time spent in all areas.		
Number of staff interviewed	3 teaching staff 1 governor	3 support staff	3 parents
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Circle time with 6 children Assembly/Reward Gathering		

The Assessment Judgement:

**Martenscroft Nursery School and Children's Centre
has met the Standards for Unicef UK's
Rights Respecting Schools Award at LEVEL 1**

Recommendations

Although Nursery and Early Years settings are not able to be assessed against the RRSA Level 2 Standards, it is recommended that Level 1 be maintained and further enhanced by both consolidating and adding to the practice seen during this visit. The following recommendations, based on Unicef's experience with nursery schools and early years settings across the UK, may assist with this:

- In the next round of room charters, try to further enhance the use of the word 'respect'.
- Continue to keep the Articles of the CRC at the forefront of the strategic development of the School and Children's Centre.
- Because of the ever changing nature of school population, maintain a constant and innovative flow of information about children's rights and the Convention for new families/carers.
- Contribute to the growing bank of 'best practice' examples for RRSA and consider contributing to or hosting early years training.
- Develop the role of ambassadors for RRSA, Unicef's work and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to existing and emerging networks and contacts.
- Sustain the imaginative and enthusiastic approach to global awareness and learning.

The following good practice evident at the assessment contributes to the school's success at Level 1:

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

- The Leadership Team demonstrate an excellent understanding of the UN Convention on the rights of the child and are wholehearted in their commitment to establishing a rights based approach throughout Martenscroft. Their passion and determination passes on to all professionals, to the governors, the families and the wider community.
- The Headteacher and her team can demonstrate how the reframing of their practice by formally introducing and promoting the CRC has contributed to improvement and has helped to sustain excellent outcomes for children across a range of measures including greater engagement and raised self-esteem. This has been supported by the strategic decision to include Rights Respecting practice in performance management for staff and in the lesson observation procedure.
- The introduction of the RRS approach has been seen by SLT as *'bringing together voice, diversity an cohesion... It enhances learning and teaching, bringing together so many links especially understanding the world around us.'* This approach has been valued by all staff

and by governors one of whom is fully involved in the Steering Group. A member of staff commented that *'this has given us a whole raft of new tools.'*

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

- The vast majority of adults at Martenscroft have a good awareness and understanding of the rights children have as set out in the CRC; many explained that they had not previously known about rights in any real detail. This has been brought about by the consistent and enthusiastic leadership of RRS by key colleagues and is creating an organisation-wide passion for and commitment to children's rights.
- In the circle time observed, three and four year-olds were fully engaged in a discussion about the importance of having a name, shelter, a family and access to clean water. Two boys spoke with pride about it being their turn to be the 'Super-Hero Safety Checkers' – With appropriate adult guidance they were noting issues such as a failed light fitting and some spilt water and were going to report these to the caretaker. Asked why they did this important job one said *'We need to be safe.'*
- Numerous strategies have been used to ensure that families are properly introduced to rights; these have included the children taking home a bear which was explained to parents as follows: *Coming home with the bear will be a printed card with one of the Articles printed out for your family to keep. This Article will be the one the room teams have chosen to tell the children about during that half term.* The guidance went on to encourage the family to talk about the Article with their child. Parental feedback has been consistently positive, one member of staff said that *'Families really like the word respect.'* All parents spoken with were very positive about the work to introduce rights and one said that *'This acts as a really good foundation.'*

Standard C:

The school has a rights-respecting ethos

- Each room has a rights based charter and, very impressively, parents /carers were involved in a consultation process about which rights to include. By involving them in expressing their views at drop-off and collection times the school ensured that the charters had the widest possible sense of ownership and reinforced the essential partnership between school/centre and home in supporting the children.
- The language of rights could be heard in all areas of Martenscroft throughout the visit. It was evident that adults felt confident about and comfortable with the language of the Convention and it has clearly become a natural part of the discourse across the community.
- A strong culture of celebration including 'Wonderful Willows' certificates helps to reinforce a strong sense of respect for rights and this is further reinforced through circle time and focussed family events and opportunities for engagement. Communication with families consistently emphasises the importance of respecting rights of others.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

- Numerous examples were shared of the increased empowerment and engagement of the children. One adult described how some children in one room initiated a request to display particular examples of their work on the wall. Lunchtime arrangements are based around 'family style' grouping with the children taking a role in choosing and serving their food. There is a determined effort to involve children, in all ways possible, when their learning,

support and care is being reviewed. One member of staff said that the CRC significantly contributes to dialogue with external agencies and other professionals.

- Both in curriculum learning and after school provision the children are actively involved in shaping and determining what they learn and choose to do. Whilst this is 'best practice' in all early years settings, at Martenscroft this practice is founded on Article 12 and all adults are very clear that the consideration of the views of the child is a right not a permission.
- Carefully thought out events enable the children and their families to develop awareness of others both locally and globally and support efforts to uphold their rights. An international day in March created time and space to celebrate the different cultures, nationalities and religions represented across the school. Involvement in the Barnardo's 'Big Toddle' enabled families to take action on behalf of other children.

The powerful impact of Martenscroft's Rights Based Approach to childcare and learning is both impressive and significant. In a relatively short space of time, this community has not only embraced and celebrated the Convention on the Rights of the Child but has begun to inform and inspire a generation of parents and carers so that their children may truly know about and enjoy their rights and speak out for the rights others.