

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St Augustine’s Church of England Primary School
Headteacher:	Razia Shah
RRSA coordinator:	Anam Mohammed and Lawrence Gibaut
Local authority:	Manchester
Assessor:	Martin Russell
Date:	21 st June 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the children, the leadership team, staff, parents 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 provided a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

It was clear throughout the visit that everyone really valued and contributed to the increasing impact of a rights based approach in all aspects of school life.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- Very strong leadership of RRSA and a clear commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) across the whole staff team.
- The secure knowledge of rights across the school linked to very effective class charters and excellent visibility of the Convention around the school.
- An impressive impact beyond the school with evidence of the awareness of children’s rights adding to community collaboration and identity.

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been met.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

None identified

3. 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:

Further develop the role of the children and of the whole community in being ambassadors for children’s rights and for Rights Respecting Schools.

Consider evaluating all current work around global citizenship to make it more integrated and explore the possibility of promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the [World's Largest Lesson](#)¹.

Build on the excellent culture of pupil engagement to further integrate the voice of the children into all areas of strategic school improvement.

4. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	An average sized primary school with 230 children on roll; it serves a highly diverse community in terms of ethnicity with the proportion of children speaking English as an additional language double the national figure and the proportion of children eligible for support through Pupil Premium is also very high, at around 62%.
School evaluation: Gold form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, deputy head and RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	25 children in focus group plus two classes spoken with during the tour.
Number of staff interviewed	2 teaching staff 3 support staff (one a governor and one a parent)

	5 parents 2 governors 1 Local resident, a former governor.
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Lessons
First registered for RRSA: 2010	Silver achieved: 2015

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.

Strand A has been achieved

Knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is embedded at St Augustine's. The children could speak about a range of rights such as: to relax and play, to be kept safe, to privacy, to reliable information, to shelter and to not be separated from their parents. They understood that rights are unconditional, universal, inherent and inalienable; as one pupil explained *"Whatever happens nobody should ever take them away."* with another adding that *"...the rights are for every child in the entire world because Article 1 says they are for everyone under eighteen."* The children fully understood the indivisible nature of the Convention; when asked their thoughts about reserving some articles perhaps for older children they were quick to assert *"That wouldn't be fair, we would have to complain."* All the children spoken with knew that all adults and the Government have the prime responsibility to uphold and promote their rights. Curriculum based learning is regularly linked explicitly to rights across all phases and this has become the norm; staff and children gave numerous examples such as Foundation Stage work about Diwali linked to Article 31 and Y2 exploring identity and nationality in 'Where Families Come From.' The RRS team of children and adults actively promote awareness of rights with strategies like their 'Article of the Month' with displays, activities and explanations about rights.

The children were able to link many national and global issues to children's rights. Examples included the consequences of poverty, wars and natural disasters impacting on children's rights to medical treatment, survival, safety, education, access to healthcare and to be with their family. They spoke about complexities of being a child refugee and linked this to the learning they had done around the Outright project. There was a discussion about homelessness, violence and bullying, all causes of children in the UK potentially not having access to their rights. The SLT are very clear about the value added by the children knowing about their rights in the context of the lives many of them live *"What's happening in school has a real impact on the community. We need the school to be at the heart. The rights are meaningful to the children as they impact directly on their lives."*

Adults in the school and in the wider community of governors and parents are well informed about and committed to the CRC and a child rights based approach. The SLT were clear that RRS supported their ethos and mission which includes the line 'Everyone is valued, respected and is encouraged to find their own voice in a safe, secure yet challenging environment.' One adult spoken with commented, *"The children have influenced and educated their parents and*

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this has changed the neighbourhood.” A parent added “Understanding the rights is so important. It has changed the way I parent. It has helped me understand my children better and I respect their ideas.”

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

The children explained how the school enabled them to access a wide range of rights and they discussed, for example, how everyone enjoys the rights to relax and play, to clean water and to medical treatment if they need it. By way of examples as to how their rights are supported through the curriculum they explained that Y4 learn to swim in their pyjamas and Y5 visit the Crown Court to learn about the law. The children have a clear understanding of fairness and equity; among other good explanations, one child said *“There are chances for boys and girls to play all sports and there is a rota for football.”* Another child pointed out *“It’s not just about being fair in school. We learn about Fairtrade too because that’s all about fairer lives for everyone.”* They were clear that being fair doesn’t mean treating everyone the same, *“We are all different so not everybody needs to have the same way of learning.”* There are high levels of trust that action will be taken if issues are raised about rights not being met. One child said *“because you know your rights you can always tell somebody if they are not being respected.”* Senior staff explained that children cite their right to an education when parents *“want to keep them off school.”*

Positive and mutually respectful relationships are a key characteristic of the school and regularly talked about, reinforced and celebrated, for example with the weekly Rights Respector Award at assembly. A child said *“You might not always get along but there is always a way to find an answer or a solution.”* Pupil surveys enable SLT to have an up-to-date picture of children’s feelings and perceptions about relationships – the vast majority agree that they are treated with respect and that this has been sustained over time. The concept of ‘dignity’ has been introduced to the pupils and their understanding of this is developing well. It was explored in the focus group discussion, with the children referring to confidence, pride and equality; one explained *“It’s about being yourself and not somebody you’re not.”* One pupil said *“Dignity is about having pride in yourself and you can’t have that if you haven’t got rights.”* The children were keen to point out that if there are arguments or fall-outs the adults are fair and balanced in their response. One boy explained that *“It’s OK to disagree because nobody can actually take away your opinion.”*

All children spoken with asserted that they felt safe at school and were confident to approach a trusted adult if they had any concerns. Examples of things that they said help them to enjoy their right to be safe included the NSPCC visits with their ‘PANTS’ assemblies, fire drills, gates around school and separate play areas for different ages. The survey returns show the vast majority feel safe at school and, in discussion, it was apparent that issues around online safety, safeguarding, first aid and SRE were understood in terms of children’s rights. The very rare incidents of bullying or aggressive behaviour are dealt with very promptly and in a rights respecting way; the children feel empowered to resolve situations themselves or with their

peers; they spoke about friendship week as a way of promoting anti-bullying attitudes and they explained that *“working together in all different age groups”* on special days helps everyone to get on together. Staff commented that *“pupil teams like the ‘Buddies’ and the ‘Urban Crew’ support positivity at play and lunchtime.”* Parents commented that the language of rights *“helps you to follow through with issues at home, it’s helping them have more confidence and you want to know that they understand about being properly safe.”* SLT and governors commented on an enhanced culture of safety in the school and, as a result of RRSAs there has been an increase in child protection disclosures and referrals.

The leadership at St Augustine’s explained their commitment to ensuring the children grow in *“a real understanding of their wellbeing, equipping them with strategies for their lives outside school too.”* They pointed out that this applies equally to all the staff. Numerous planned systems are in place including having a full time Pastoral Worker on the staff, a mental health curriculum ‘My Happy Mind’ and a scheme whereby the older pupils speak to the younger ones about mental health and the importance of expressing your emotions. The children were very well informed about mental health and shared numerous points including *“We are entitled to know about mental health. When you talk it can release all the problems and you start to feel happier and safer.”* They also described extensive learning and action about other aspects of staying healthy including awareness of sugar, the importance of hydration and a balanced diet. Being active was highlighted (*“The school totally supports that!”*) with reference to a range of regular afterschool clubs including netball and multi-skills.

The school promotes children’s social and emotional wellbeing in a number of ways; the Emotional Literacy Support Programme, the Nurture group, children learning about the PANTS rule, Internet safety, life education sessions and the DARE programme supporting them in making healthy informed choices. The children, when encouraged, were able to speak about emotions and feelings with comments such as, *“You can get stressed and angry if there is stuff going on at home.”* Counselling sessions are set up for children who have emotional or social issues. When asked about the school promoting their physical health they spoke of healthy food being encouraged, the importance of PE and sport and went on to describe having the chance to join numerous after-school clubs related to physical activity including dance and Yoga.

Inclusion is a strong focus of the school and the children spoke with enthusiasm about numerous ways in which everyone has the opportunity to be involved in all aspects of school life. Reference was made to Black History Month, trips to the Jewish Museum and the Mosques, Manchester Together day and the celebration of most major religious festivals as a school. Several times during the visit, the children spoke about equality and the importance of non-discrimination alongside valuing individuality and difference. The most recent SIAMS report confirmed and praised the highly inclusive nature of the school. Parental, governor and community based views included an appreciation that *“This school is so open about everything, everyone is valued.”* This led to a powerful sense of *“Feeling so at home here, the school is so unified, it’s one voice.”* Staff explained that the creative curriculum, including PSHE and P4C, helps children to value each other as individuals and all the rights that this entails. The school’s key role as a catalyst for integration in the local community was a recurring theme throughout the visit.

The children were very enthusiastic about their learning and valued their right to an education. They conveyed a sense of empowerment and described a number of ways in which they are involved in setting targets, using learning partners and being supported with checklists and success criteria. Parents explained that *“The children make comments on their own reports and at parents’ evening the teachers talk directly to the children about their progress.”* They described sometimes being encouraged to *“Do it in a way that suits you best.”* The school has

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a focus on ‘Deeper Learning’ emphasising mastery and motivation. SLT observations have seen sustained improvement related, in part, to the children’s awareness of their right to education, *“knowing that quality learning is your entitlement gives everything a purpose, makes it meaningful for the children.”*

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

Children’s participation is a significant feature of the school and it is widely understood as their right. The democratically elected school council meets regularly and representatives take the views of their peers to the meetings. The children explained a number of initiatives arising from pupils’ ideas including a new school lunch menu together with plates instead of trays and advance notice of the menus (these involved pupil consultation with the catering company), improved play equipment and the purchase of Fairtrade footballs. The Behaviour for Learning Policy has been reviewed in partnership with the children and a child friendly version has been created; lesson observations include a pupil voice element and the children have begun to be involved in reviewing the school improvement plan. In addition to the Council, the other pupil groups (those already mentioned plus the Eco Group) have their work displayed prominently in the school hall and it was evident, in conversation with a cross section of adults and children that their work is valued and has impact. An indication of the empowerment of children brought about by RRS came from a parent who said *“I am now much less nervous about my child going on to high school...they are much more confident because they know their rights.”*

Children at St Augustine’s are constantly engaged in actions to support the rights of others both locally and globally. The children explained that each class has a named charity to support, *“We choose the charity in our class and then we find out about it and help to raise money.”* Y5 support the Make a Wish Foundation; Y2 support Water Aid and Y3 focus their efforts on Unicef. A parent commented on the value of this work and how it links to rights, *“It’s so important for them to see beyond themselves. It’s amazing how committed they are to wanting help others to get their rights.”* As campaigners for rights, many of the pupils have been involved in a road safety campaign in their locality, *“We wanted the parents to think and learn about our right to be safe.”* The Eco Group are currently lobbying the company that provides milk in school to stop using plastic straws. They were able to explain how the environmental impact of plastic has consequences for the rights of people around the world. The school has also participated in Unicef’s Outright campaign and in Soccer Aid. The school has also acted as an ambassador for children’s rights by offering support to other schools on their RRS journey, as one of the leadership team explained *“When you see the difference something is making you want to do more and you feel obliged to share it.”*