

RRSA RE-ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Kirkhill Primary School
Headteacher:	Yvonne Donaldson
RRSA coordinator:	Wendy Lord
Local authority:	East Renfrewshire
Assessors:	Steven Kidd
Date:	02 October 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a re-accreditation visit.

The assessor would like to thank the pupils, Senior Leadership Team, staff and parents 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.

The assessor was especially impressed at the way in which the school had taken on board the recommendations of the previous report and sought to address the areas identified.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- Excellent knowledge of the Articles of the Convention and a clear understanding of key rights concepts, such as the universality and unconditionality of rights.
- A strong commitment to 'learning for sustainability', encouraging children to understand their place in the world and to strive for social justice.
- A whole school community which is passionate about achieving the very best for its learners.

Strands A, B and C have all been met.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

None.

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:

- Consider evaluating school systems using the lens of dignity and question whether some minor adjustments could be made.
- Consider whether they are opportunities to deepen the impact of pupil voice groups, perhaps by extending their involvement in strategic school improvement.
- Explore how children can be supported to take further action on issues of importance to them, perhaps related to learning about the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

4. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	A large primary school with 624 children on roll; less than 3% of the (P4-P7) pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, considerably lower than the national average.
School evaluation: Gold form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / DHT / RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	134 children (learning walk, focus groups and classroom visits)
Number of staff interviewed	8 teaching staff, 2 support staff, 3 parents
Evidence provided	Learning walk; classroom visits; focus groups; portfolio of evidence
First registered for RRSA: 17/12/2009	Gold achieved: 11/06/2015

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

Children’s understanding of individual articles was excellent and they were happy to share a wide range of examples, including some less commonly explored. They were strong, too, on the nature of rights, with one P6 pupil giving an especially impressive explanation of universality. They made clear links to their learning and were confident in discussing some of the barriers some children may face in accessing their rights such as natural disasters and war; indeed, it was apparent to the assessor that a global dimension was an integral part of rights learning, given the natural way in which children introduced this into conversation e.g. *‘In war-torn countries, like Syria...’* Focus group participants readily shared examples of where they’d learned about rights, ranging from assemblies to specific lessons in class and evidence supported an SLT assertion that *‘rights permeates everything’*.

Rights are a visible part of the fabric of the school, featuring on numerous displays, some discrete, others where an article or more has been explicitly linked to the learning featured; ambassadors explained that these are put up by classes when creating the display, rather than something added later by the Steering Group. One of the most eye-catching displays was the Whole School Charter, which children eagerly explained had been designed following a pupil competition: *‘each class is a flying saucer with pictures of all the pupils, the teachers’ faces are on the big spaceship and Mr Connor [the janitor] is an astronaut on the planet.’* Teachers noted how the competition to design the charter was one way the school *‘keeps it fresh’*, whilst also remarking how the classroom charters were also a source of much excitement. The school’s Right of the Fortnight initiative was also commented on positively by children.

The RRSA lead explained how the school had taken on board the recommendations from the previous Level 2 report and had worked to ensure a systematic approach to rights learning, explaining that they had *‘mapped rights across the curriculum and put together an Improvement Team... [and] now ensure all rights are covered’*. A teacher explained the effect of including rights in planning processes: *‘It’s embedded... We spent a lot of time looking at how we bring rights into teaching... all 42 will be covered across a child’s time in the school.’* Another colleague picked up on this, *‘There’s an instinctiveness to it now, you know you’re going to pull it in’*, whilst the Headteacher talked about the impact: *‘You see children linking rights to their lives... the examples are more diverse than they were in the past.’* Evidence showed how the school had reached out to parents, keeping them informed of the school’s journey through regular communications and ensuring that articles featured prominently; of course, parents in the focus group also credited their children with improving their knowledge: *‘My daughter talks about it... it’s a great conversation starter, it opens up a discussion about why some children don’t have the same things.’*

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

Children were familiar with the terms rights holder and duty bearer, and understood teachers to be critical duty bearers in their school life, responsible for ensuring their access to rights. They were firmly of the opinion that teachers acted to facilitate that access, mentioning things such as extra-curricular clubs (article 15), *'Friday Fun'* (article 31) and *'healthy choices'* on offer in the cafeteria (article 24). Focus group participants understood the distinction between equality and equity, with children comfortable that some pupils received different support to help them participate fully, with detail confirmed by the evidence provided. Teachers agreed: *'People aren't jealous, they accept it... they celebrate it, actually.'* A parent summed up the school's approach: *'From the moment you walk in the door, it's very apparent that it's something entrenched in the school.'* Evidence showed how rights was woven throughout the school's policies and practice, including the School Improvement Plan.

Throughout the visit pupils were polite, yet confident. Relationships between pupils and with staff, seemed to be warm and respectful, with children keen to share their experience of school life with the assessor. The Senior Leadership Team explained that charters were the key tool in shaping the school's approach to managing relationships, that *'the Golden Rules are long gone.'* Teachers spoke of how they *'refer back to them [charters] constantly'*, whilst children explained that creating a charter was one of the first tasks at the beginning of each year, to *'decide what we want our class to be like'*. The school takes a restorative approach to dealing with any incidents which do occur, with the use of 'thinking time' sheets which are explicitly linked to rights to encourage reflection and tailored behaviour interventions where required. Children understood the system and shared their belief that it *'helps everyone to enjoy their rights'*, whilst SLT noted that *'repeat occurrences'* had been significantly reduced. Teachers also highlighted the role of the Wellbies (peer mediators) in helping to resolve low-level conflicts and spoke of how children can frequently be heard using the language of rights to diffuse situations.

The right to safety was mentioned often by children during the visit and they were clear that it was something they enjoyed at Kirkhill Primary School. Pupils pointed out everything from secure entry systems – *'no pupil is allowed to buzz anyone in'* – to the work of Junior Road Safety Officers (JRSOs). Woven through their answers was a recognition that the duty bearers in the school placed a high priority on their safety and evidence showed how the school is using data to monitor this, noting a positive reduction in unacceptable behaviour and the rarity of bullying, violent or discriminatory incidents. During the learning walk, ambassadors pointed out the Worry Box in each class, available for any pupil to anonymously share a concern, and explained how the school's card system contributed to safety (e.g. a red emergency card used to call immediate attention to a situation and location cards so that a class could easily be found). In the playground, painted 'buddy' stops and 'peer mediation' stops enabled children to call attention to their needs.

Every week the whole school takes part in learning related to physical, mental, social and emotional needs; Health and Wellbeing Wednesdays ensure that time is set aside each week for everyone to reflect on pupil needs. Evidence gathered throughout the visit highlights the

importance the school places on meeting all of the needs of their pupils, with nurture a critical dimension. The Headteacher clarified their approach: *'We see all behaviour as communication and we don't have a punitive system... we look into the reasons behind everything.'* Ambassadors highlighted the school's Sunshine Room and Sensory Room, explaining that they represent just some of the additional support available to pupils. Children also noted that they receive two hours of Physical Education per week and are able to access a variety of extra-curricular clubs and activities, and the school has recently been accredited by SportScotland as Gold for the provision of physical education, activity and sport.

'Everything we do is very much about the needs of individual children', explained the Headteacher, expressing a desire to see every child *'being positive about their environment, their learning, knowledge and understanding.'* For the children interviewed that appeared to be the reality, as they spoke at length about how school was a place where everyone's contribution and talents were appreciated. A Wall of Achievement was pointed out during the learning walk, which ambassadors described as a showcase of pupil successes; *'it can be all sorts of things, as long as you think it's an achievement.'* One parent noted that *'diversity is very evident... they [children] know everyone is equal'*, whilst another spoke of non-discrimination: *'there's a level of support... sometimes no-one else is even aware. They're sensitive to the child's dignity.'*

In line with principles of Curriculum for Excellence, all pupils are encouraged to have a say in their learning, through target setting and progress discussions between learners and teachers. The right to an education was the one most commonly identified by pupils during the visit and much evidence was provided of how the school engages students in shaping their learning. Children spoke about staff/adults encouraging them to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas about topics of importance to them: *'we talk about what we know and then what we want to know... and then come back to it at the end.'*

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

Pupils interviewed were overwhelmingly positive about their involvement in decision-making within the school, and about the value of their voice. A wide range of pupil groups operate in the school, with children able to put themselves forward to participate; groups include a pupil council and parliament, as well as others such as Eco and the Kirkhill Media Group (KMG). These groups all touch on life at the school and enable children to input their views; they meet every second week and large displays keep other pupils up-to-date with the groups' agendas and progress, though one focus group participant was keen to stress that *'it's not just the members that get to get heard, they go round the classes and ask.'* Each of the pupil groups has role descriptions for members and has a plan which is linked to the School Improvement Plan.

Kirkhill Primary School serves a generally affluent catchment area but the school has made considerable effort to ensure that pupils were conscious of the lives of other children whose experiences may be very different, home and abroad. According to the Headteacher, *'Everything we do is so rights driven, but it's not just about you, it's about your place in the world.'* Teachers shared a similar message: *'They have an awareness, they're good at*

UNITED KINGDOM

understanding children in other places... ShoeShare made a difference.' They pointed too to the school's other charitable activities and campaigning work related to International Human Rights Day. Children made those connections, too, understanding that some children faced barriers to accessing rights and were clear that they could take action to try to change that. They mentioned fundraising, but also spoke of awareness-raising, learning about and donating to the local foodbank, and campaigning activity, such as that undertaken by JRSOs (seeking to improve parent parking). This is reflective of a directed effort, explained by the RRSA lead: *'We're moving away from just fundraising, we're now looking at how you can have an impact locally, nationally, globally.'*