

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Netherlee Primary School and Nursery Class
Headteacher:	Yvonne Donaldson
RRSA coordinator:	Kelly Linn
Local authority:	East Renfrewshire
Assessor(s):	Steven Kidd
Date:	21 November 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the children, the 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 completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Children's knowledge of articles is exceptional, as is their ability to discuss important principles such as dignity and equity.
- Charters were clear, consistent and pupils and staff had an impressive understanding of their role and belief in their value to relationships in the school.
- A real sense that rights are woven through everything the school seeks to do.
- Excellent community links and strong parental engagement.

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

2. 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:

- Explore how to extend the in-school visibility of rights externally e.g. into the school's online presence and ambassadorial activity.
- Ensure that children are kept informed on the school's provision to support their learning and wellbeing; give particular consideration to how this is explained to those who are not directly benefitting.
- Support children's involvement in an increasingly impactful range of in-school and out-of-school activism, helping them to develop agency by understanding the difference they make.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Netherlee Primary School is a co-educational non-denominational school covering stages P1 to P7, with attached early years provision. It has a current roll of 736 pupils. The school serves a generally affluent catchment area with just 1.6% of P4-P7 pupils eligible for free school meals, considerably lower than the national average.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / Principal Teacher / RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	17 children in focus group, 5 children on the learning walk and 65 children in class visits.
Number of adults interviewed	8 teaching staff, 5 parents, 1 pupil support assistant.
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus group, class visits, assembly performance, portfolio of evidence.
Registered for RRSA: 02 February 2016	Silver achieved: 22 June 2018

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 development.

Strand A has been achieved

The children of Netherlee Primary had a fantastic knowledge of rights, backed up by strong evidence of learning across the curriculum. Focus group participants shared more than 20 examples of rights including some of the less commonly shared (e.g. Article 18 – “the right for government to help families”) whilst pupils in class visits had no problem in identifying and explaining key concepts such as inherence and universality. Children were equally confident in exploring barriers to accessing their rights that their peers may face locally and around the world and in discussing equity and dignity. The latter area was one to which the school had clearly paid particular attention on the journey to Gold, with many examples of learning visible in the portfolio of evidence and on the walls of the school. The steering group had placed ‘RRSA Butterflies’ on displays and features around the school to draw attention where rights could be seen in action.

The RRSA lead had attended ‘Achieving Gold’ training as well as visiting three other RRSA schools – this learning had been embedded upon her return, in the fortnightly meetings with the steering group and with regular input to staff inset training and discussions. Staff were universally positive about the support they’d received, with one new teacher noting how rights had been a feature since day one: *“It was a big part of my induction day... from the beginning we were talking about the importance of those values.”* A colleague explained that children have now become a part of that support, with the steering group leading a whole staff meeting, something viewed very positively by teachers and children alike: *“They were so proud to be delivering it.”* Credit was given to the RRSA lead’s role in helping colleagues to *“build a really good bank of resources”* and *“loads of really good ideas of how to include rights and Global Goals.”* Prior to the creation of Unicef UK’s ABCDE of Rights resource, the school had created its own BINGO acronym to help children better understand concepts, supported by a mascot. Planning evidence backed up the appearance of rights and the Global Goals across the curriculum, supplemented by successful bespoke initiatives such as a ‘My perfect... [classroom, playground, school etc]’ activity and the school’s Global Rights Week, which had seen each class explore rights from the perspective of children in a different country.

Alongside letters and a stall at parents’ night, parents cited rights homework as helping them to learn about the school’s journey and the assessor was able to see examples within evidence: *“I think the school’s approach has matured, the nature of the activities has evolved...choosing homework activities based on rights... it seems much more sophisticated.”* They were full of praise about their involvement in the creation of the school’s charter, which had also included the participation of representatives from the wider community, reflective of an ongoing engagement with groups in the local area

Netherlee Primary School has demonstrated a strong commitment to rights over a number of years and through changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher last year; the current headteacher credited staff for their hard work in shepherding the journey and, coming from another Gold RRS, she was equally passionate about the impact of rights on school life: *“We made a plan to address that consistency... it’s a natural linkage now rather than something that has to be reminded, not a contrived link.”*

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

During the learning walk, pupils confidently linked aspects of school life to facilitation of rights, ably assisted by the 'rights butterflies' displayed throughout the school. They spoke of how multiple sessions of varied PE each week helped them to enjoy their right to health (Art 24) and of how 'Achievement Alley' demonstrated support for everyone's talents and abilities (Art 29). Throughout, they were clear that their school, and the duty bearers who staff it, must do all that they can to ensure they enjoy their rights. Their peers in the focus group shared that understanding and were sure that they could speak to someone if they were concerned about access to rights. They had a good understanding of the concept of equity and immediately provided examples of where the school had put such an approach into practice e.g. "*my friend has a safe space to go when he needs to.*" Rights-based charters were visible in every classroom visited and children had a clear understanding of their purpose.

When discussing relationships, adults began by talking about class charters and how they were regularly referred to. It was noted that these had been co-operatively created by children and teachers, and that they were seen by all as a live part of classroom life, helping to govern relationships, one teacher explaining that, "*We [the class] had a real discussion about the charter... that's why it's so useful, I think because we've all signed it.*" The development of mutual respect was mentioned often by adults as something which the rights journey had helped to support and this was linked to the concept of dignity, which had clearly been explored in some depth. Children believed the school's approach to managing behaviour to be fair, respectful and intended to help everyone succeed; this view was echoed by staff, who described a restorative approach, tailored to individual circumstances. Teachers explained that it was sometimes hard to put into words, but that there's "*a lovely feel*" in the school, which is about "*how everyone communicates with each other*" – a colleague added that it had a positive effect beyond the school gates, too: "*It filters out into the whole community.*"

Children spoke of their right to be safe and were clear that their school did everything to protect that right, backed up by the overwhelming majority of their peers in the school's pre-visit questionnaires. As well as the physical features of the building, such as the secure entry system and fences, there was much evidence of pro-active intervention to improve safety, whether it was exploration of personal safety in P1 and P2 exploring the NSPCC's Pants Project, Rail Safety presentations from the British Transport Police or JRSO's work to improve parent parking. Children also spoke of the ways in which their peers helped to make them feel safe, with roles including Playground Buddies and Peer Mediators at the fore. A member of support staff explained that the language of rights itself contributed to better safety in the playground, noting how they had heard children use the language whilst the playground charter was "*something I often refer to.*"

A comprehensive Health and Wellbeing curriculum is just the starting point of the school's consideration of its pupils' physical, mental, social and emotional needs. A move to designate a particular afternoon for the subject was viewed positively by adults, allowing for a structured, but responsive, consideration of issues. The school has achieved a sportscotland Gold award for its work to promote physical activity and this is apparent from the range of sporting opportunities available,

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working with Active Schools. As well as regular physical education, pupils also explore growth mindset strategies and have access to a range of learning support. The school offers Seasons for Growth sessions for children who would benefit and has recently started a Nurture Group working with identified children to aid their development; as well as these planned sessions, a Tuesday Lego therapy and a drop-in Wednesday lunch club are available to all pupils.

There is a particularly impressive “Achievement Alley”, an area of the school where displays on all sides celebrate the accomplishments of pupils, from art to athletics. Steering group members explained that this was a great way of “*helping people to have their rights*” by showing the breadth of areas in which people can excel; they were clear, too, that there was no set criteria, “*it’s just if you feel you’ve done something good.*” A section on the school website inviting submissions supported that assertion and made clear the desire to celebrate things which happen outside as well as inside the school. According to parents, this desire to value every child’s unique talents and abilities was typical of the Netherlee approach: “*It doesn’t feel like a school of 700+ pupils. They’re having a small school experience... they’re treated and known as individuals.*” Evidence backed up the anecdotal stories of inclusion, with examples such as subsidies for school trips, a refreshed school uniform initiative and a monitoring system for children’s participation in activities, ensuring that teachers could intervene and “*pick up if anyone wasn’t getting involved.*”

Evidence showed how children are actively involved in shaping their learning, in line with Curriculum for Excellence. Pupils explained how they set targets and choose the way they work, as well as having some choice over activities. The right to an education was talked of throughout the visit and the children readily understood the important role they had in respecting their right and that of others, especially by actively participating in learning and by abiding by the charters which formed the backbone of the school’s approach.

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

Focus group participants believed their views were taken seriously at Netherlee Primary School, pointing to the many pupil groups in operation and noting that “*people who aren’t in it get to tell their class rep.*” Pupil voice groups included Sports Council, the Eco Committee and Dyslexia Ambassadors and children were able to share examples of where each had contributed to making the school a better place, such as in identifying playground equipment or developing wet weather play guidelines. Steering group members explained how participants for each group were chosen through elections and ‘Have Your Say’ sessions ensured they kept the views of classmates at the forefront – the creation of an action plan for each group helped to ensure accountability.

The Global Goals for Sustainable Development are now explored within the school, with set activity, such as that during Rights Week, and staff encouraged to find within their own yearly curriculum overview as part of the planning process. It’s contributed to the global awareness that parents considered had been one area of impact: “*There’s so much you can do to teach them about other children through rights... they can call on it out in the big, wide world.*” They linked it to a great understanding of “*social responsibility*” and “*ownership*” of their community, things they considered

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had evolved positively in recent years. Perhaps the biggest example of this co-productive approach has been the development of the local Linn Park, which has seen the children work together with the Friends of Linn Park community group. Making explicit reference to the right to play and to a clean and safe environment, they've been working together to look after and maintain the local green space and be more pro-active in using it for learning. One parent further explained how children had approached the Headteacher after learning that some children in the area were going hungry – they got permission to approach local businesses for foodbank donations and secured seven car loads worth of produce. As well as tackling global issues at a local level, the school supports a partner school in Malawi through Mary's Meals.

Fundraising is an important part of the school's activism, but a parent explained how they'd worked hard to *"join up the dots"* as part of an inclusion drive, with fewer ad hoc events. This had included working with two other local schools to create a sustainable relationship with the foodbank, recognising that substantial one-off donations are welcome, but a planned approach helps the foodbank to predict supply. Children were heavily involved in this work, with House Captains leading the way in choosing charities to support as well as in shaping how activities are undertaken. There's a strong sense of community, too, and an understanding that the children can make a difference, as the Headteacher explained: *"They understand they'll be listened to and that we all have a part to play. They feel valued... their voice matters."*