

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	St John’s Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Martin Craig (Acting)
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Gillian Tipling
<b>Local authority:</b>	Inverclyde
<b>School context:</b>	St John’s Primary School is a Roman Catholic state primary, with a pupil roll of 261. It also includes nursery provision. 56% of pupils come from SIMD deciles 1 or 2 and 24% are eligible for Free School Meals, whilst 4% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language; 22% receive support for additional needs.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting:</b>	HT (Acting) / HT (Substantive) / DHT / RRSA Coordinator
<b>Number of children and young people spoken with:</b>	8 from P5 class (pupil focus groups were constrained due to covid mitigations)
<b>Adults spoken with:</b>	4 teachers, Active Schools Coordinator, Family Support Worker, former HWB Coordinator
<b>Key RRSA accreditations:</b>	Registered for RRSA: 19 November 2014 Bronze achieved: 29 January 2015 Silver achieved: 05 June 2017
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Jenny Price and Steven Kidd
<b>Date:</b>	12 January 2022

### ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

**St John’s Primary School has met the standard for UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.**

## 1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is based on a virtual accreditation visit. The assessors would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff 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 accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form and provided a good collection of digital evidence.

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

### Strengths of the school include:

- Passionate and confident pupils who are clear on the importance of rights and are empowered to drive change within the school.
- Natural links to relevant rights are fully embedded across the curriculum, including early years, in a way that enriches the learning for all children.
- A strategic approach of senior leaders and the RRSA lead to embed a rights-based approach, putting it at the core of the school's ethos.
- A school with inclusion at its heart, where pupils feel safe and secure and are articulate about the importance of knowing about children's rights and the difference this makes to their lives.
- The school's respect for and empowerment of the children is extremely clear and highly effective. This is evident in the role of pupil voice to shape key areas of school life and practice, particularly regarding learning and teaching

### 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:

- As you move forward on your journey continue to provide opportunities to build explicit knowledge of articles and concepts, especially for new pupils, staff and parents.
- Continue to use Unicef UK's Charter Guidance to ensure charters are best placed to put rights at the heart of spaces where they are used.
- Further develop children's understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen thinking particularly of challenging stereotypes and discrimination. Consider how charitable activity can help to build empathy.
- Continue to develop strategies to empower children to challenge injustice and create further opportunities for all year groups to be involved in campaigning and advocacy work on children's rights. Consider using the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework for this and/or the UNICEF UK Youth Advocacy toolkit.

## 2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p>	<p>Children have a solid understanding of rights, combining knowledge of a range of articles with awareness of concepts, e.g. <i>“Every child has rights, it doesn’t matter who they are”</i>, and also clear on how barriers can stop children from accessing rights, e.g. <i>“If there’s a war then they wouldn’t be safe... their homes might be bombed, or they could be injured.”</i> Evidence showed how this knowledge had been built through a combination of discrete learning, planning for rights learning from nursery to P7 and by making rights a visible part of the school environment, not least in the prominent Rights Respecting display showcased in pre-visit evidence. The Headteacher explained how consideration of rights begins at <i>“the first in-service day at the start of the year, setting the agenda for the rest of the year”</i>, with an expectation that rights will be built into planning and inspire activity in every classroom. The RRSA lead noted that weaving rights through the whole curriculum had been a hallmark of the journey since Silver, teaching colleagues agreeing that they <i>“incorporate it into everything”</i>. Global citizenship and sustainability had been important contexts for learning, but there were many examples given of how rights were woven through learning, complemented on one hand by discrete teaching and on the other by reactive exploration, often prompted by children themselves identifying rights at play.</p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>It was immediately obvious the extent to which the school’s senior leadership team saw rights as underpinning policy and practice in the school, the Headteacher was clear that <i>“rights have always been at the forefront of our agenda... it’s at the heart of our vision, values and aims... it’s a big part of our faith journey as well.”</i> Children believed rights were at the centre of their school experience – <i>“people really respect us and make sure we have our rights no matter what”</i> - and were in no doubt about the role of adults in ensuring access to their rights: <i>“It’s a big, massive role. They’re the duty bearers... they protect you and not let anything bad happen to you.”</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p><i>“There’s an ethos of love and care and nurture... it’s an unconditional positive regard for children,”</i> explained the Headteacher, discussing the starting point for relationships at St John’s. Staff and pupils picked up that theme, both referencing it when describing interactions, teachers also noting the influence of rights. Nurture principles and practice shape the school’s approach, but where incidents arise, restorative practice is used to ensure positive results; children believed the approach was fair and helped everyone succeed.</p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p><i>“We know our rights and can use our rights,”</i> shared one focus group participant, talking about why they felt safe in school – a view shared by all group members, who were similarly definite that they knew a trusted adult to whom they could speak if they were concerned; they spoke of the ways in which the school helped, from <i>“anti-bullying”</i> and <i>“road safety”</i> through to online safety learning (<i>“Strangers can scam you at any minute”</i>).</p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>It was readily apparent that consideration of the holistic needs of children is a top priority at St Johns. Evidence demonstrated the range of opportunities and support available, from embedded nurture practice through work with Barnardo’s PATHS programme to extra-curricular sports provision. Children agreed that school kept them healthy, but focused much of their conversation on mental wellbeing, identifying activities like yoga, meditation and mindfulness colouring as important. They also picked up on the ‘calm corners’ of each class and the bench in Rosie’s Garden: <i>“It helps us to reflect... it’s a place where people can go if they’re feeling stressed.”</i></p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p><i>“You can see the effort that’s put in,”</i> reported a peripatetic staff member, talking about the school’s efforts to ensure inclusion, <i>“St John’s have adapted every single thing they possibly can [to meet a child’s needs] ... they have to adapt every single day.”</i> This was reflected throughout the visit, the Headteacher perhaps summing it up most succinctly: <i>“Rather than children being school-ready, we’re being child-ready.”</i></p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p>When asked about shaping learning, children didn’t hesitate, replying in unison, <i>“Termly education chats!”</i>, before explaining how a random sample of children from each class meets with SLT to talk about what they’ve liked and would like to see improved. It was explained by SLT that a staff collegiate meeting was happening that evening where the latest suggestions would be discussed. Children also spoke of other engagement, such as votes for topics and using <i>“Chilli challenges”</i> to determine difficulty levels.</p>
<p><b>STRAND C</b></p>	<p><b>Highlights and comments</b></p>
<p>8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.</p>	<p>Pupil voice was often mentioned throughout the visit and there is a real sense that it is embedded in the natural way the school operates. Pupils believed very strongly that their ideas were listened to and pointed to the pupil council as the main route for sharing their views: <i>“They try to make the school a little bit better”</i> and <i>“The pupil council is like when all the teachers listen to your ideas and try and make changes on it.”</i> Other leadership opportunities exist, such as the Eco Group and Fairtrade Group, alongside regular conversations, floorbooks, responsive planning and other consultation opportunities, appropriate to age and ability: <i>“They know they’re heard and that’s the really important thing.”</i></p>
<p>9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.</p>	<p>Children were quick to identify a wide variety of actions they’d taken to help overcome barriers to accessing rights, highlighting donations to the local foodbank and to Mary’s Meals, as well as work on Fairtrade. Pupils have been exploring the Global Goals for Sustainable Development, including leading assemblies and sharing with fellow pupils., bringing a strong global citizenship dimension into learning. Very often this learning (and subsequent action) was responding to children’s ideas, as the RRSA Coordinator explained: <i>“The P6/7 class picked up on Attenborough’s statement that ‘the people who do the least are most affected’... we spent a whole week exploring that sentence. They wanted to make a difference.”</i> Evidence showed a wide range of topics and activity, but conversations really came to life when discussing climate change, with children passionately listing the actions they’d been taking to advocate for a more sustainable approach to the way we live our lives: <i>“You’ve got to keep the world really clean, there’s no planet B, this is the only world we’ve got.”</i></p>