

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Holy Cross Primary School
Headteacher:	Marie Murphy
RRSA coordinator:	Carolanne Lalley and Michelle Doherty
Local authority:	North Lanarkshire
School context:	Holy Cross Primary School is a Roman Catholic state school, with a pupil roll of 331, and a further 70 in early years provision. 12.46% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, whilst 9.11% have a Gifted and Talented plan. Fewer than 1% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, Depute headteacher, Principal teacher, RRSA lead.
Number of children and young people spoken with:	25 across two focus groups, plus one class visit during tour.
Adults spoken with:	9 (3 teachers, 2 parents, classroom assistant, early years worker, catering manager, janitor)
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 28 October 2015 Bronze achieved: 09 September 2016 Silver achieved: 20 April 2018
Assessor(s):	Steven Kidd, with Paul Gorman (Scottish Government)
Date:	23 January 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Holy Cross Primary School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessor 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:

- Very articulate children who demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of rights. They knew a wide range of articles and were confident in the concept of rights.
- Rights learning is fully embedded across the curriculum and visible across the establishment; a strong global dimension ensures children are aware of topical issues.
- The 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.
- Engagement of parents is commendable, with events such as the 'Curry and Curriculum' especially valuable.
- Impact of rights principles on consideration of policy practice, in areas such as relationships and HWB provision.
- Range of participation opportunities for children, supporting their involvement in school and the wider community.

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 opportunities for children to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, ensuring that children are supported to see how the voice of pupils has brought about meaningful change.
- 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.
- As a Gold Rights Respecting School, develop your ambassadorial role, promoting the CRC and the benefits of a child rights-based approach.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere	Pupils in focus groups were assured in sharing their rights knowledge, offering a wide range of articles and even the youngest children were confident in discussing important rights concepts, e.g., <i>"they're for all children and they can't be taken away from you."</i> Exploration of Newsround and topical issues in class supported their consideration of the experiences of children in other parts of the world, noting how barriers such as 'war' and the policies of the Taliban in Afghanistan were preventing access to rights for some; closer to home, the cost of living crisis was recognised as a significant issue for children in Scotland. Staff spoke of rights being <i>"embedded in everything"</i> , from the curriculum to pastoral conversations, with evidence supporting the assertion and highlighting efforts to bring rights to the fore through a mix of discrete activity (e.g. Right of the Month) and weaving through the curriculum. Rights are similarly visible across the school environment, further enhancing the sense of rights being part of everything which happens at Holy Cross. Parents spoke of being taken aback at the level of rights knowledge shared by their children, but crediting the shared vocabulary as helping to frame discussions, including some which may be challenging: <i>"It's great to hear it from a child's perspective... You can see it, they enjoy knowing about their rights and talking about it."</i> Staff training and support continues, from inset training sessions, through practical aids such as lanyard prompts, to inclusion as part of monitoring and evaluation of practice.
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	<i>"This journey was essential,"</i> explained the headteacher, <i>"it's been a huge shift in how we think about things. We've been doing it so long now... the RRSA structure gives you a process and makes it who you are."</i> Throughout the visit, the passion for embedding a child rights-based approach shone through, with adults and children alike certain that policy and practice at Holy Cross Primary was inspired by a respect for rights. Principles such as equity were apparent and recognised by children in their experience: <i>"It's about everyone getting what they need."</i> Duty bearers clearly take their obligations seriously, too, the RRSA Coordinator summing things up, <i>"Everything you do, you relate it to rights."</i>
3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights	The headteacher spoke of the impact of rights, and dignity in particular, on systems for promoting positive relationships: <i>"We wanted to make things a bit more consistent and we used a traffic light type system, but then we had a bit of lightbulb moment thinking about privacy... we realised at that point that it needed to be all about relationships. It's not one size fits all."</i> A colleague suggested the common language of rights helps children understand the impact of actions and naturally promotes conversations which are <i>"restorative, and repair and rebuild."</i>
4. Children are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	Children felt safe at school, pointing to secure entry systems and fire drills amongst their examples, as well as to the role of adults; during a short tour the pupils pointed out the signs on each door which highlighted <i>"the duty bearer in that space"</i> , but were quick to confirm that they could raise concerns with any adult, not only those pictured. A staff member noted that rights, <i>"help them to know what they're entitled to, what's right and what's wrong."</i>
5. Children's social and	Pre-visit evidence contained numerous examples of how the school is considering the holistic needs of children and this was reflected in conversations

emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	with both children and adults during the visit. Pupils could easily identify a wide range of supports for both physical and mental health, and were able also to connect this to their enjoyment of rights. The recently redesigned 'Quadrangle' space was highlighted during the tour, children explaining the importance of outdoor learning to wellbeing. Staff have undertaken a wide range of training, from Heartstart/CPR to Mental Health First Aid in order to provide the best possible support.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	Children had an excellent understanding of equity and reflected maturely on the nature of fairness, clear that being fair often meant treating people differently to support them to succeed, sharing examples from their own school experience. The school's Catholic faith was noted as a factor in helping children to understand the uniqueness of individuals and celebration of difference, whilst exploration of world religions was seen as important, too. Staff spoke of efforts to reflect diversity, citing the example of auditing toys and books to ensure representation of different races and backgrounds. The Headteacher explained the importance of tailoring approaches, offering an example of the creative use of PEF money to pay for transport to facilitate a child's inclusion: <i>"Was that a good use of money? Absolutely."</i>
7. Children value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Pupils were positive about learning in school, confirming that they were able to influence several aspects of their learning and explaining that they often have choices around topics and referencing their 'Learning Logs', in which they record aspects of that week's learning. Termly pupil-led focus groups include children in discussion about learning with members of the school's management team. Evidence demonstrated how feedback on learning is sought throughout the year, with children's views encouraged and acted upon.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	There are numerous opportunities for children to be involved in making their school a better place, with groups such as the Mini Vinnies, Digital Leaders and JRSOs. Pupils enthusiastically shared examples of how their participation has affected everything from coding clubs to the reduction of single-use plastic at lunchtime. Adults noted how confidence has grown, with children feeling <i>"able to tell us"</i> when they want to challenge something: <i>"It's opened up a dialogue... we listen to them and hear what they want... we're explaining why we're doing things and open to alternatives."</i> Although children are already involved in shaping school life, senior leadership spoke of widening participation as things normalise post-lockdown, with the return of house groups and greater engagement in the development of the School Improvement Plan.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Staff spoke of a positive impact on pupils' global awareness, even in being able to tackle certain topics, <i>"It can be quite scary, but the rights framework allows you to explore it sensitively."</i> Others spoke of increasing empathy as children consider how those around them enjoy those same rights, <i>"They see things in the news and they think, 'This is wrong, can we do something?' It's empowering them... they're very aware of what's going on locally and globally."</i> Children certainly felt they could make a difference in the world and spoke of participation in UNICEF's ShoeShare initiative and supporting the local foodbank. They mentioned supporting local charity Refuweegeee in providing 'welcome packs' for incoming refugees, inspired by learning in class. Other advocacy activities included awareness raising, prayer services and writing to decision-makers seeking action on causes close to their hearts.