

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	New Monkland Primary School and Nursery
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mary Reid
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Nichola Polatajko
<b>Local authority:</b>	North Lanarkshire
<b>School context:</b>	New Monkland Primary School is a non-denominational state school, with a pupil roll of 152, with a further 32 children in attached nursery provision. 17.8% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and 15.7% have GIRFME plans outlining additional support.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting:</b>	Headteacher and RRSA Coordinator
<b>Number of children and young people spoken with:</b>	26, across two focus groups
<b>Adults spoken with:</b>	2 teachers
<b>Key RRSA accreditations:</b>	Registered for RRSA: 30 August 2016 Bronze achieved: 07 June 2017 Silver achieved: 13 May 2019
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Steven Kidd
<b>Date:</b>	04 May 2022

## ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

**New Monkland Primary School and Nursery has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.**

# 1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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:**

- Confident children who have a good understanding of articles, rights concepts and terminology and are keen to put that learning into action.
- A strong commitment to a child rights-based approach and clear evidence of where it is inspiring policy and practice.
- Pupils feel safe, protected and welcomed in their school, supported by a culture and ethos which puts children at the centre.
- Pupil voice is embedded across decision-making.

## **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:**

- Support the whole school community, including parents, to develop their knowledge of the Convention, focusing on the precision of language.
- Continue to explore with children and staff the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights-based approach, for example 'dignity' and 'equity' and how these are enacted in school practice.
- Continue to develop an ethos of inclusion and non-discrimination, providing opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity in all its forms including race, gender, belief and different kinds of families so that all people feel valued and included.
- Empower children of all ages to take action on issues of importance to them, perhaps using the UN Global Goals as inspiration.
- 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
<p>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</p>	<p>Children demonstrated a good rights knowledge, confident in sharing a range of articles, and even more assured in their general rights knowledge, offering numerous facts and figures alongside impressive usage of rights terminology, for example: <i>“You have children’s rights until you’re 18, but after that you still have your human rights, everybody does.”</i> They were secure in their understanding of key rights concepts and were able to identify the barriers some children may face in accessing rights, before swiftly turning to the actions they could take to help. Evidence showed how rights are explored across all ages and stages in the school, from nursery through to P7, often involving joint learning, such as around their ‘Article of the Month’, and including a global dimension, whether inspired by watching Newsround, events such as COP26 or exploration of the Sustainable Development Goals. Staff spoke of rights being <i>“always there”</i>, proactively considered and reactively embraced, to the point where rights are <i>“naturally coming through and linking to everything”</i>; they credited strong support from the RRSA lead, relevant training, and ready access to good resources as central to their feeling confident and skilled to make rights a prominent feature in their teaching. Rights are very visible in the school environment and in the school’s online presence, with the website and social promoting the school’s journey to the wider school community.</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>The RRSA lead spoke of rights being <i>“something we just believe in... we put the children first, it’s about equity”</i>; evidence backed up the assertion, illustrating how a child rights-based approach was inspiring action at all levels, including refreshing existing policies and the creation of new ones designed to ensure equity. Staff also spoke of the influence on practice, simply noting that <i>“RRS underpins everything we do”</i>. Children from pupil voice groups in the school had come together to undertake an audit of how the school’s duty bearers were facilitating access to rights, compiling their findings, and reporting back.</p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p><i>“Everyone is respectful and kind,”</i> said one focus group participant, as their peers discussed relationships, a view echoed by teachers in their session, too. The language of rights, including the use of Charters, was seen as an important tool in embedding that mutual respect, as was the connection to the school’s values. A refreshed relationships policy, underpinned by the UNCRC and Solihull approach, promotes restorative practice in addressing any incidents, and positive recognition processes are embedded within.</p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>Children were definite that they felt safe in school and immediately turned to the role of trusted adults, all in the focus group confident that there was someone to whom they could turn with any concerns. They clearly understood the importance of having such a person, explaining that even when ‘bubble’ restrictions were in place the school had created a display with staff photos and QR codes underneath which could be scanned to arrange conversations. Submitted evidence consolidated this with further examples.</p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p><i>“When a child’s wellbeing is addressed, then they’re ready to learn,”</i> highlighted the RRSA lead, discussing the priority they placed on the holistic needs of pupils. Staff noted that <i>“health and wellbeing doesn’t need to be on the SIP anymore”</i> as it’s so embedded in their collective consciousness (it has been part of the SIP for some time). Children offered numerous examples of how the school put this consideration into practice, in relation to both physical and mental health, including using Treehouse resources to talk about feelings and emotions. Health and Wellbeing planners are used across the school, which provides for sequential focus on each of the SHANARRI indicators.</p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p>The headteacher spoke of fostering a culture and ethos which seeks to ensure everyone is involved, asking simply <i>“What would I want for my child?”</i> An ‘RRS Pupil of the Month’ award recognises learners who have been particularly respectful of other children’s rights and is closely linked to the school values. An emerging area of consideration is the ‘Cost of the School Day’, looking at the hidden costs of education; the school has created a specific policy which outlines proactive steps to avoid inadvertent exclusion of financially disadvantaged pupils.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p>Evidence of pupil voice in shaping learning was impressive and extensive, detailing engagement from the youngest children through to oldest. Children have a say over areas such as topics explored, or novels studied and are then able to shape the direction of learning through the use of KWL grids, general feedback and techniques such as ‘chilli challenges’. Learners play a part in the termly assessment process, ensuring that they have ‘their ideas, opinions and preferences’ formally recorded as part of the High Quality Assessment.</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><i>“The children make the decisions in here, it’s their school,”</i> shared the headteacher, and children certainly believed that to be true; they had a good understanding of how they could raise their voice, confident they could make suggestions directly to a teacher or feed into the <i>“Wee Leadership Teams”</i>. They spoke of changes to lunchtime processes and the ‘Chill Out Zone’ as examples of where they’d had an impact, whilst evidence showed how they were engaged in significant areas such as school improvement, even having their own version of the School Improvement Plan.</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>Since the Silver accreditation, the school have sought to look outward, helping children to explore their place in the world and how they could affect it. Though efforts had been hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic there was much to shout about, as the school had added greater activism to their already impressive charitable activities. Alongside work to support causes such as the local foodbank and hospice, the school had participated in UNICEF UK’s OutRight campaigns in recent years, tackling issues such as climate change and mental health. In response to an establishment-wide survey of learners’ burning issues, pupils had created the ‘NMPS Community Champions’ group who have since been undertaking litter picks throughout the local area, earning plaudits from the community and even the local MSP. Not to be outdone, nursery children have undertaken their own campaign to improve recycling and reduce consumption. There is a real sense of empowerment amongst the learners, which the RRSA lead neatly summarised: <i>“They see things they think aren’t acceptable and they immediately started thinking about what they can do.”</i></p>