

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO (Gold)

School:	Elmwood Infant and Nursery School
Headteacher:	Zoe Harris
RRSA coordinator:	Helen Gilroy & Chloe Carley
Local authority:	Croydon
Assessors:	Frances Bestley & Wendy Watts
Date:	27 th March 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessors would like to thank the children, the leadership team, staff, parents and governors for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and pupils during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school provided a very comprehensive Level 2 self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form.

It was clear during the visit that everyone placed a real importance on respect for rights and on promoting the school's rights respecting ethos, which was both inclusive and participatory.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- a very strong focus on inclusion and diversity
- confident and articulate children who understood a wide range of rights and could apply them in their own context
- children who were extremely enthusiastic about their school
- a concerted approach to campaigning

Standards A, B, C and D have all been achieved.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING LEVEL 2

No requirements noted.

3. MAINTAINING LEVEL 2

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 Level 2. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Maintain the current excellent practice.
- Continue to embed the knowledge and understanding of articles including the formal language of duty bearers and rights holders and the fact that rights are inherent, inalienable and indivisible.
- Consider carrying out a curriculum review to ensure coverage and depth of learning about rights.
- Continue to be ambassadors for rights based learning

4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

4.1. The school context

Elmwood Infant & Nursery School is larger than the average-sized infant school with over 400 children on roll aged from 3 -7. It's situated in West Croydon, South London. 17% of pupils are supported by the pupil premium which is above that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average; children are represented from over 60 countries. 70% of children speak English as an additional language.

The school's last OFSTED took place in 2014 and the school was judged to be Good.

The school registered to become rights respecting in May 2015 and achieved the RRSA Level 1 Award in November 2016.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, deputy, inclusion manager and RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	60 children
Number of staff interviewed	3 teaching staff, 4 support staff (one is a parent), 2 governors (one is a parent), 1 parent
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence including children's work Assembly Lessons

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

The headteacher explained that she had introduced RRSA at two previous schools and that when she started at Elmwood Infants *“so much was happening here already it felt like a really natural progression; it just fitted.”* The school vision explicitly focuses on inclusion and human rights: ‘We welcome our duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster harmony in relation to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religion and belief and sexual identity. We welcome our duty to promote community cohesion and recognise our duties reflect the international human rights standards as expressed in various UN conventions.’ The impact evaluation form showed significant impact across all areas. The Progress and Evaluation form provided evidence of impact on attainment including narrowing attainment gaps, attendance and behaviour. The headteacher identified that the biggest impact had been on *“children’s responses and attitudes; we’ve moved from children being told, to them understanding the impact.”* Throughout the visit we were told by staff that *“we want to make a difference in the future [of our children.]; when they are older they can use their rights.”*

Each priority within the School Improvement Plan is linked to a relevant article. Achieving RRSA at Level 2 sits within Priority 7 ‘To aim for Outstanding Personal Development, Behaviour and Safety’ linked to articles 29 and 31 and with funding allocated. Policies are linked to articles: Anti Bullying linked to articles 2, 12, 14, 19 and 31; the Data Protection policy is linked to articles 3, 16 and 36. The school prospectus refers to the Convention and to RRSA; leaflets for parents about FGM, internet safety and radicalisation are all linked to

relevant articles. Two coordinators lead RRSA ensuring sustainability and building in succession planning. Interviews for new posts include an observed lesson teaching about rights.

There is a very strong focus on inclusion, diversity and participation, visible throughout the school. Children pointed out references to article 30 on displays linked to statements 'We all speak English and' Staff and children explained that *"We're all different but we're all special"* when discussing article 14. The school celebrates the cultural, linguistic and religious heritage of the community that the school serves and learning opportunities utilise experiences of families wherever possible. The school takes part in the annual Show Racism the Red Card competition and has had winning entries for the last eight years. A recent parent survey shows that 100% of parents agree that the school promotes equality and celebrates diversity. Nurture provision is linked to children's rights *"We make sure we put in the best provision that we can"* explained the headteacher. *"Rights brought it all to the top of the agenda"* explained the inclusion manager. The school provides a wide range of interventions: Nurture groups, buddies for vulnerable children including two children working with the caretaker, speech and language support, breakfast and after school clubs.

Elmwood Infant school has been very active in sharing good practice with other schools. The headteacher spoke at a local safeguarding forum making links between safeguarding and rights respecting work; last year she published an article about RRSA in Nursery World; as part of the 'Schools that stand out' programme the headteacher and deputy share practice with other schools. Croydon's Executive Director of Children, Families and Partnerships visited the school to see the work on inclusion and safeguarding. Rights respecting achievements have been reported in local newspapers and radio. The school has hosted visits from other schools and supported Elmwood Junior School to achieve Silver. They support a foodbank within their own school and donated cans of soup to Nightwatch a local homeless organisation.

There is a systematic and embedded approach to global citizenship and sustainable development across the school underpinned by the Convention. Children learn about local, national and global issues through direct teaching, the use of Newsround and themed weeks which include: Refugee week, Show Racism the Red Card, Black History, OutRight and Friendship week. The school grows fruit and vegetables and has a gardening club. Books and bikes are reused at a second hand book fair and a bike market and recycled materials are used for imaginative play. The school holds a Transport for London Gold Stars award which encourages, walking, cycling, public transport and safer travel to school.

Standard B: The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Children demonstrated knowledge of a wide range of rights which included the right to know about their rights, a name, a family, survival, be able to join groups, privacy, be safe, have clean water, have nutritious food, have a home, be educated and to be able to play. A child

talked about bikes being brought to school, when asked about which right riding a bike linked to, a child from Reception quickly responded with the right to be healthy. Children understood that rights are universal and unconditional. *"You don't have to do anything and no-one can take them away."* Year 2 children confidently explained that rights were inherent and knew that that meant when you're born. A welcome book for new pupils to the school provided very clear descriptions of the role of duty bearers, school council and other actions such as what to do if someone is unkind or they find work hard.

Parents are kept informed about rights through newsletters, the website and workshops and rights have been linked to workshop topics on e-safety, FGM, radicalisation and extremism. Parents have also had the opportunity to learn more about rights through the RRS stand at the summer fair and assemblies. A parent survey revealed that 94% of parents said that their child knew about rights. Parents corroborated this: *"The children are so aware of their rights."* A parent gave an example of how her children made the connection with their rights outside of school and told her how attending Polish school enabled them to practise their rights to their own language and their own religion by going to church. Another parent explained that learning about the Convention was helpful and had influenced her parenting. She explained *"As a Muslim parent, it's different, people see Muslims, not people and that their rights are not respected, that's the problem."* Governors have received briefings about rights, attended an open day and learning walk and provided feedback on the events. The RRS governor explained *"part of the Governor agenda is to talk about rights with children."*

Children explained that they learned about rights in the Wednesday assemblies. *"We think about lots of rights and articles"* stated a Year 1 child. Displays about rights are prominent throughout the school with articles painted on walls such as article 24 in the dining hall, article 15 in the Friendship room and displays linked to appropriate articles. A Year 1 child explained *"This helps us learn rights, they're written on the walls."* During the learning walk children demonstrated their reading skills reading aloud the information on rights posters. The Elmwood Newspaper displays examples of children's work and covers rights including, family life, activities that children liked as part of their education at school and play. Long and medium term planning references rights. A teacher explained that *"Staff time is given to plan together and to identify articles."* Learning objectives sometimes include rights, for example, to understand what the Fairtrade logo means and what child labour is, and in science to understand that animals have basic needs and rights are inherent.

There is a systematic approach to teaching about global citizenship and sustainable development, which resulted in many children referring to the key subjects in which these had been taught. For example, many children referred to Paddington bear and understood that his rights had been affected because he had been separated from his parents and that he was a refugee. Another example of this was the focus on the right to clean water. This was introduced in assembly and also covered in the Year 2 curriculum. A Year 2 class read 'The Drummer Boy' and decided to raise money for clean water. The school has a link with another school in Kenya; children have written letters to pen-pals. The head teacher also explained that where possible they made use of the children's lived global experiences at home and also that of parents; she said *"We recognise that families have a lot to offer."*

Standard C:

The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

Charters clearly linked to rights are visible in all classrooms. Children could describe how they chose three different rights and agreed how they and *“duty bearers as adults”* would respect these rights. A teacher explained *“You agree with the children and it’s personal to them.”* A governor described how children had all been able *“to talk knowledgeably about rights and their charter”* during her first visit. There are school and playground charters and the school is currently developing a lunchtime charter. Children confidently retold the story of the elephant throwing peas on the floor, the parrot putting his beak and wings in the jelly and linked it to behaviour at lunchtime explaining *“Don’t throw food on the floor like the elephant or shout like the lion; the lunchtime charter will keep us safe.”* Children from the RRSA steering group monitored the charters and provided feedback and suggestions to teachers about what the charter should contain.

Throughout the accreditation visit there was good evidence of rights respecting language and attitudes. Children listened to one another respectfully in lessons and in the focus groups and there was a very calm atmosphere. *“We respect other children’s rights”* stated a Year 2 child. The headteacher explained *“We’re not a shouty school”* and this was borne out. Several staff explained that learning about rights had *“given us a language and we don’t shy away from difficult situation.”*; *“We’re not a bubble, the language allows us to talk about things.”* A teacher explained that previously, briefings were required to talk about sensitive issues; they were now no longer required because using the context of rights made it easier to address. Support staff have lanyards as mini charters linking the toilets, playground and school to specific articles to support use of rights respecting language. One teaching assistant explained *“Children treat one another in a kinder way because they know what their rights are.”*

Children were all very enthusiastic about their learning and spoke a lot about the right to education. A teacher explained *“they have real confidence in talking about their learning; rights have helped to embed this.”* When the children were asked about how knowing about rights helped their class learn they explained *“you don’t disturb them;” “you have to listen;” “ask for extra homework.”* Children were very positive about the Challenge scheme where they chose the level of difficulty of their work. *“We get to choose what to do. If you don’t challenge yourself it’s affecting your right to an education”* explained a Year 2 boy. They linked their super skills: perseverance *“when something is tricky, try and try again”*; independence *“believe in yourselves”* confidently to their right to education. Children have been interviewed about what they enjoy and want to improve in school; the video of this is on the website and was shared with staff and governors at their school improvement conference.

All children we spoke to stated that they felt safe at school. *“We’re all friends and can’t be bullied”* explained a Year 2 girl. Another child stated *“The class teacher looks out for me and ensures I am safe”* when describing what they would do if something went wrong. This was corroborated by both children and their parents in the school questionnaire: 98% of children agreed that there is an adult they could go to if they felt unsafe; 100% of parents feel their child is safe at school. A teacher described how, with a rights focus on being safe and being

listened to, more incidents are now being disclosed. A TA explained that she is now *“confident about my role in student safeguarding.”* The school has taught the NSPCC Underwear Rule and children link it strongly to the right to privacy. The headteacher explained that by linking safeguarding, such as the Underwear Rule and FGM, to the right to be safe there has been *“no questions or challenge from parents.”* The Friendship Club, books in the playground and new playground equipment have all contributed to fewer playground injuries.

The headteacher explained that *“Children are more confident about dealing with incidents themselves.”* Staff discuss children’s choices in terms of rights and many staff agreed that this had changed the way incidents are discussed. Restorative practice is used when appropriate.

Staff and parents described that the children are developing a *“better understanding”* of the world around them. Newsround is used in Years 1 and 2. A parent stated *“they watch the news and understand that not everyone accesses their rights.”* A Year 2 child explained that in some hot places *“people drink dirty water”* and that this was wrong. A child explained that Fairtrade means *“you get a fair amount for the work you’ve done.”* Children’s work provided evidence of developing understanding of global citizenship: *“If I were Santa I would give medical supplies to Syria because there is a war;” “If I took over the world, I would make sure every child on earth has the right to privacy.”*

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Children were very confident that they are listened to and their opinions valued. *“Other people listen to me and take it seriously”* explained a Year 2 boy. They explained a range of mechanisms that are in place if you want to be listened to: *“put hands up; ask a teacher; ask the headteacher; tell the rights respecting group; tell the school council.”* A member of the rights respecting group explained that his role is *“We talk to other children about rights. We talked to the juniors.”* The school council board references Article 12. Voting plays an important role in being listened to; children explained they are voted to be on the school council; in the evidence portfolio voting forms showed how children decided to provide soup for the homeless; children explained how they voted in assemblies. Children could explain clearly how the school council operated; *“They give us feedback; they stand up and tell us”* stated a Year 2 boy; and give examples of decisions that had been made: *“We bought new equipment for the playground.”* Children also remembered survey discussions about the school that they had had with teachers. *“Pupil voice has really grown”* stated a teacher. The steering group decided that they needed more books in school so they organised a Book Worm day to raise funds.

Wider personal development and wellbeing experiences are provided through Pride of Elmwood, Achievers celebrations, Keeping Safe Week, Friendship week, a whole school focus on the NSPCC Underwear Rule and visits to the school from the police and

firefighters. Children are taught to make informed decisions about their rights predominately in circle time. The regular school walk, around the local area, promotes exercise and health.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for children to take action to uphold the rights of children locally and globally. This was identified also by a Year 2 pupil *"We make the world a better place – Night Watch, Fairtrade, Shoe Share, Jeans for Genes Day."* Children could all explain what they had done, whether it was raising money or bringing in soup or shoes or Fairtrade stickers and how that helped children access their rights to education and health, particularly clean water. Through taking part in OutRight children had a really strong understanding of and empathy for refugees. Reception children told me *"Paddington is a refugee; something bad had happened in his country, he lost his family; we had to look after him and keep him safe."* Children had taken Paddington home and looked after him and wrote a report saying what he had done while with them. The children invited the local MP to school to talk to him about refugees. They have also collected food and toiletries for the Croydon Refugee Centre.