

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Elmwood Infant School
Headteacher:	Zoe Harris
RRSA coordinator:	Sita Amin
Local authority:	London Borough of Croydon
Assessor(s):	Jenny Price and Isobel Mitchell
Date:	23/03/2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This Gold reaccreditation report is based on a virtual visit. 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 form and provided an excellent collection of evidence.

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 rights are explicitly embedded into school policies, the School Improvement Plan and into the curriculum.
- The language of rights is evident in all activities - in the classroom, the wider school and in conversations with parents and governors.
- The relationship between school staff and families is very strong with a high level of participation from parents in the work on rights and the overall life of the school.
- School support for the health and well-being of the children and their families especially during the Coronavirus pandemic is excellent.

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:

- Ensure that the excellent work to put rights at the heart of school policies, curriculum and practice continues when the new Headteacher starts at the school in September 2021.
- Continue to explore further opportunities to gather and react to pupils' views on activities and systems in school.
- Regularly revisit rights charters to ensure they follow the latest [guidance](#) by focussing on the language of rights and *respect* rather than rights and *responsibilities* and ensure that children know what the rights charters are for and how to use them.
- 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 act as ambassadors for children's rights with other schools in the local area and beyond.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Infant school with nursery attached and 394 pupils on roll. The number of children speaking English as an additional language is above average at 79%, the percentage of children eligible for free school meals/pupil premium is slightly higher than average at 34%. The school identifies 13% of the children as requiring additional support with learning this includes 1.5% with an Education, Health and Care Plan.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator / deputy headteacher/ 2 teachers/year group leaders
Number of children and young people interviewed	8 children from RRSA steering group and 10 children from a range of classes in on-line focus groups
Number of adults interviewed	In addition to staff in SLT meeting, 2 parents who are also support staff, Chair of Governors, Vice Chair of Governors, 1 parent governor who is also support staff, 1 Teaching Assistant
Evidence provided	On-line focus groups, written evidence, photographs, videos, weblinks, sustaining gold evaluation form.
Registered for RRSA: 20/05/2015	Gold first achieved: 27/03/2018

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's knowledge of rights is impressive; the children we spoke with during the visit talked about a wide range of Articles in the CRC and explained to us (unprompted) *that "Everyone has got rights in the world." "Nobody can take them away and you get them when you are born."* They were very clear about rights being unconditional and adamant that no one (not even the Headteacher!) could take their rights away. They knew that all rights are equally important and were aware of the role of adults as 'duty bearers.' They understood that some children do not get access to their rights and talked about how they had helped other children through supporting the UNICEF Paddington's Parcels project. During the recent Coronavirus lockdown the children had been leaning about tackling racism through the 'Show Racism the Red Card' project and they talked eloquently about how *"Everyone has the right to be treated kindly whatever their religion or the colour of their skin."* Every year, Y1 and 2 spend a week learning about refugees and relate this to their right to shelter, food and water and the importance of these rights in every child's life.

Rights are explicitly linked to curriculum plans and lesson materials. For example, in Early Years they have discussed the right to education through sharing their views on what makes a good teacher. Y1 used the story of Goldilocks to learn about the right to privacy and designed a home to think about the right to an adequate standard of living (understood by the children as the right to shelter). Y2 learn about the right to practise your own religion and one of the children we spoke with talked about how he had learnt about his own religion (Islam) as well as other religions such as Christianity and Hinduism. The assembly programme is also connected to rights which, the staff explained, has enabled them to teach the children about some challenging issues such as extremism in an age appropriate way.

The staff attending the focus groups had different roles across the school and were very knowledgeable about rights and how they relate to their work. For example, the office staff member we spoke with made the connection between GDPR and the right to privacy and *said, "rights run through all that we do in the office."* The Governors talked about how rights are embedded strategically into the school at all levels, *"From the first moment I walked into the school the rights were obvious, they are right at the top of the School Improvement Plan and during our Governors' mornings we talk about the rights with the children – it is at the heart of Elmwood and what makes us so special."*

Parents attend workshops on a variety of issues such as FGM, On-line Safety and Sex and Relationships Education and these are all explicitly linked to rights. The level of participation in these workshops is high and has increased since the school has been running them virtually. The Headteacher spoke about how the rights framework has *"become a really helpful way of getting across difficult issues that parents are worried about."* The parents spoken with during the visit said the work on rights has had a powerful impact on their children and in their households; *"rights are embedded in my children, in their kindness and their beliefs."*

The commitment to rights at all levels is clear; a rights framework informs strategic decisions taken in school, such as investment in nurture provision and is central to the recruitment process for the new headteacher. The rights are embedded into all school policies and very prominent on the website. The headteacher summed up their approach by saying, *"We plan for rights naturally now, everything we do relates to rights – we live and breathe it."*



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

The children we spoke with expressed how much they liked being at school. A pupil in Reception told us *“I love being at school, school is beautiful because of all the colourful displays and because we get to do painting and have fun with Play Doh.”* The children we met agreed that the teachers listen to them and treat them fairly. They expressed their understanding of equality by using a hand gesture shaped like an ‘equals’ sign and explained that even though children are all different (*“some are small, some are big, some are boys, some are girls, and we have different hair styles and skin colour.”*) they are all treated fairly and equally. Whilst they didn’t use the word ‘equity’ the children understood that some children need to be treated differently because of their needs and the school have taken an approach based on equity to inform their decision to increase the nurture provision for children with special needs. The staff and parents emphasised to us throughout the visit that the use of rights-based language has really made a difference to the children. The RRSA Lead explained that since the beginning of the Rights Respecting journey, they have noticed an increase in the number of children talking to staff if they don’t feel safe because now they know about their rights, *“they can have a say and express themselves if they feel uncomfortable about something.”*

Rights language is used effectively to support positive relationships. One of the playground supervisors said *“The rights have impacted on all of us – it is amazing. There is no bullying – everyone is so friendly, and rights are displayed everywhere even in Nursery.”* The children told us that they generally get on well with each other at school and that if there are arguments in the playground, *“we play something that we both like and then we are back to friends.”* They explained that *“some children are Friendship Buddies who wear special hi-vis jackets and help you if you fall over and tell the teacher.”*

The children we spoke with confirmed that they feel safe at school and talked about how the fences (made of plants) around school protect their right to be safe, to have privacy and to breathe clean air. The SLT talked about how the language of rights has given them a framework to discuss safety related issues with parents such as online safety, FGM and terrorism. The children have benefitted from extensive learning about on-line safety, linked to the right to privacy, reliable information and to be safe, and have taken part in the NSPCC PANTS programme linked to privacy and the right to be protected from all forms of harm and abuse.

The approach the school has taken to supporting families during the Coronavirus pandemic illustrates their commitment to support health and well-being. During the lockdown, they telephoned every family at least once per week and more vulnerable families were called twice a week. On their return to school, the children were given a daily opportunity to reflect and share how they were feeling for the first week and since then they have a weekly 30 minute reflection or activity on well-being during ‘Well-Being Wednesday.’ The school has recently developed their PSHE curriculum using the JIGSAW programme which is explicitly linked to rights and has an emphasis on health and well-being.

Their work on equality and diversity is a real strength of the school. In February, every year, the whole school takes part in a competition organised by the charity “Show Racism the Red Card.” As a school, Elmwood focus on celebrating cultural diversity and developing the school’s ethos ‘We Are All Different And We Are All Special.’ Every class from reception to Y2 takes part in the competition and dedicate a day in the week to wear something red. Each teacher chooses a book with a culturally



inclusive theme and uses it as a starting point for the children's artwork, poems, writing, songs, films etc. This is the 11th successive year the school has entered this national competition and they have been winners every year and have also won the Jo Cox memorial award 2018 and the Graham Taylor memorial award in 2019. To celebrate the diversity of the community and of the children who attend the school, pupils were encouraged to think about their rights and state what makes them unique and special. Their quotes and pictures were used to create a video for Croydon Voices with the title 'THIS IS ME' which can be found online. In response to the Black Lives Matter campaign the school have further developed their work to promote anti-racism through staff training and have begun a comprehensive audit and review of their provision from an equality and anti-racist perspective. They are also participating in the local authority working party "Curriculum 4 Change" to establish an anti-racist curriculum. The commitment to inclusion can also be seen in the school's support for children with special needs, for example, the differentiated work sent out to children with learning needs during the lockdown.

The children have a voice in assessing their own learning and deciding on the level of challenge they wish to give themselves (hot, boiling, on fire or lava!) and excellent work is celebrated weekly through special mentions in Friday assembly and displays on the 'Wow Work Wall.'

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

The Rights Respecting School Council meet regularly to plan activities and discuss how they would like school to change. For example, children stated they wanted more equipment in the playground. The Council representatives spoke to the children in their class and every child voted on what new pieces of equipment they would like. From their feedback, the school was able to purchase new equipment. When the school kitchen was rebuilt, to highlight the children's right to healthy food, the School Council were involved in most stages of the redevelopment. They visited the building site several times to check the progress and asked questions to the site manager. They were kept up to date with changes and decisions made which they then relayed to other members of their class.

Assemblies take place throughout the year to discuss rights of children locally and globally. For example, the school decided to take part in a UNICEF campaign - 'Paddington's Parcels' The children in school chose what they would like to put in a parcel through a class vote. It was explained that each present that was added to Paddington's Parcel would help other children access their rights. The steering group team decided to ask for a £1 donation on Friday 11th December 2020 where children were able to wear their Christmas jumpers. The money collected was used to fund the gifts that were voted for by the children.

The children have been involved with UNICEF OutRight campaigns in the past including, air pollution, the rights of refugee children and child health. They have also completed a cake sale for 'Bake For Syria' to raise money for vaccines, life-saving food and warm clothes to protect millions of children in Syria. They have also taken part in two ShoeShare events in conjunction with Clarks.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic the school held a Key Worker Thank You day. For a £1 donation, children could dress up as a key worker, with the funds being raised to buy treats for local key works in the community, and the children created a banner which was tied to their school gates to let the local community know how much they appreciate the efforts of the NHS staff.