

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	The Heights Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Karen Edwards
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Elena Cook
<b>Local authority:</b>	Reading Borough Council
<b>School context:</b>	The Heights Primary has 350 children on roll aged from 4 to 11. 3% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, 2% of children have an EHCP and a further 17% have special educational needs. 12% of children speak English as an additional language.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting:</b>	Headteacher and RRSA Lead
<b>Number of children and young people spoken with:</b>	16 members of the School Council and Eco Council and 17 additional children from Y1 to Y5.
<b>Adults spoken with:</b>	Deputy headteacher, SENCO, KS1 lead and Upper KS2 lead
<b>Key RRSA accreditations:</b>	Registered for RRSA: 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2022 Bronze achieved: 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2022 Silver achieved: 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
<b>Assessor:</b>	Helen Trivers
<b>Date:</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023

## ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

The Heights 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:**

- Confident children who clearly know that they have rights and are committed to helping to realise these for other children locally and globally.
- Good use of Picture News and Newsround to engage children in discussions about global citizenship issues. Courage and confidence in using rights to help frame discussions about challenging topics that in the past may not have been approached.
- A strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA from leaders at all levels tied into the vision and values of the school. Quality training and support for staff has been sustained.
- A clear strategic approach to embedding children's rights in school life that has been guided by recommendations from the Silver report.

## **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:**

- Continue to widen the range of articles that the whole school community are familiar with, appropriate to children's age and ability, ensuring that rights are explicitly linked to the curriculum, activities and events throughout the school year.
- Focus on the precision of language used when discussing rights with children ensuring the rights language is true to the content of the CRC.
- Continue to support parents/carers and families to learn about and understand the CRC and engage further with the school's rights respecting journey.
- Continue to create opportunities for children and young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, recognising the role of children in helping adults understand problems and develop achievable solutions.
- Continue to support children to develop and lead campaigns from a rights perspective. Consider participation in [UNICEF UK's annual OutRight campaign](#).
- Continue to act as ambassadors for rights and the RRSA through your networks and in collaboration with the LA and local schools, perhaps through working with schools in the new Multi Academy Trust.

## 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>Pupils talked about a wide range of rights, and how they have learned about them, <i>"In my class we make posters about our rights and link them to our school values."</i> There has been a focus on developing children's understanding of the principles that underpin rights along with the language of rights holders and duty bearers, with children exploring who the duty bearers in their school and community are. One pupil said, <i>"Duty bearers are anyone who has responsibilities to take care of you and make sure you have your rights."</i> Pupils talked about accessing the news and discussing links to rights, with the RRSA lead explaining that the increased use of Newsround and Picture News across the school has supported staff to feel confident with this. One teacher said, <i>"Rights give children a context for discussing global issues,"</i> and another adding, <i>"Rights support us to talk about complex issues – taking it back to rights helps with challenging conversations."</i></p> <p>All assemblies now link with CRC articles, and teachers have been supported by the RRSA lead to make the links more explicit throughout the curriculum. The Early Years team have incorporated activities and approaches from First Steps to Rights into their planning to ensure that the youngest children are developing their understanding. Staff meetings have helped staff to deepen their understanding which the RRSA lead said has, <i>"...helped to make staff more aware of nuances."</i> It was felt that the school's focus on rights supported and complemented the school's strong focus on oracy, the headteacher stating, <i>"Oracy and rights link so well!"</i></p> <p><i>"RRSA fits with our approach as a school – it ties everything we do together,"</i> commented the deputy headteacher. Rights are embedded within the School Improvement Plan, and a child friendly version of this has been created to ensure that children are aware of and can contribute to the school priorities. A number of school policies, such as the Child Protection Policy and Anti-bullying Policy have been reviewed and links to rights made more explicit. Members of the School Council have been involved in some of these policy reviews and have helped to create child-friendly versions so that children are clear about how their rights are being protected. The headteacher said that parents and carers are increasingly familiar with rights, and this is borne out by questionnaire data. Within their documentation, a governor shared: 'There is a strong drive in ensuring that the rights of all members of the school community are respected and considered... Pupils have a strong voice within the school and through the school council and eco council, pupils have direct representatives giving them a voice.'</p>
	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>All classes have a rights-based charter and the use of rights language has increased, with children saying, <i>"We want to show people we're a Rights Respecting School,"</i> and one teacher said, <i>"Rights give children a stronger understanding of the motivation behind decisions. It's the why, not just doing things because we said so."</i> Children understood the concept of equity and gave examples of how children are supported to have their rights met. <i>"Our children are compassionate, caring and understanding,"</i> reflected the headteacher, <i>"Exploring equity has been important, as they now understand that treating people the same is not always best."</i></p>

3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights	The school has a therapeutic behaviour approach and many members of the school community reported that this has led to a calm and respectful atmosphere, one teacher saying, <i>"It's about protecting their dignity."</i> All children spoken with were adamant that adults in the school treat them fairly. Children are supported to use statements linked to rights to resolve disagreements independently and a staff member said, <i>"This empowers them."</i>
4. Children are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	Children said they felt safe at school and knew who to talk to if they had any worries. They said that there are worry boxes they can use if needed which are regularly checked by teachers and added, <i>"We can always talk to an adult."</i> The children spoke about online safety and linked this to their right to be safe, <i>"We learn about staying safe online and we use a special link to keep us safe."</i> One member of staff said, <i>"Our main job is to keep them safe."</i>
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	There has been an increased focus on wellbeing since the pandemic and children were able to link this to their right to be healthy. Children engage in mindfulness activities, and this now forms a bigger part of the curriculum. The RRSA lead said, <i>"There is lots of support for children who are anxious or worried,"</i> and children talked about the nurture room which they can access when needed. The school has worked with parents and families to ensure that there is a holistic approach to wellbeing.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	There is a strong culture of inclusion across the school with one child sharing, <i>"All children are different, and we want everyone to feel included."</i> One teacher said, <i>"There are lots of discussions about diversity and inclusion and a big focus on this throughout the curriculum."</i> Children lead assemblies to celebrate special days and the whole school was involved in the 'Hopeful Futures' project run by the Stephen Lawrence Foundation.
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Children reflect on the curriculum and their learning and share regular feedback with staff, and teachers shape the learning to fit the interests of class where possible. Teachers make use of metacognition strategies to support children to really engage in the process of learning, with children able to choose their own level of challenge in some subjects. The RRSA lead commented, <i>"Children feel they have control over their learning."</i> Children talked about going on, <i>"...lots of trips and residential,"</i> which they said brought their learning to life.
<b>STRAND C</b>	<b>Highlights and comments</b>
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	Children said they feel listened to and have opportunities to share their views, stating, <i>"You have a right to be heard."</i> School Council members have developed a playground charter and have been involved in making improvements to make playtime and lunchtime run more smoothly and, <i>"...more fun,"</i> such as creating zoned areas including quiet spaces and a shelter for when it rains. One child shared, <i>"I had an idea about a tuck shop – I brought it to the School Council and everyone agreed."</i>
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Children learn about their local context and are aware of and take action on issues in their wider community, such as homelessness, the headteacher saying, <i>"We want them to be aware of their role in the community."</i> Children are involved in fundraising for charities such as Jeans for Genes and collecting food for their local foodbanks and the headteacher added, <i>"Children choose charities, and we respond to events in the world. Supporting local charities has helped as children can really see how they are making a difference."</i> The Eco Council regularly takes part in litter picks, and they have been involved in leading the school's work on Climate Change. Children are now making links between the work they do within the Eco group and the school's work on protecting and promoting rights.