

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Teresa Cotter
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Katrina Cowley
<b>Local authority:</b>	Birmingham City
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Hilary Alcock
<b>Date:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, staff and governors 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 assessment visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

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:

- Happy, confident and articulate children who are both enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- The wide range of curriculum opportunities that include learning about the CRC.
- Very positive parents who feel informed and involved in the school’s RRSA journey and who clearly articulated why they consider that their children learning about the CRC is of benefit to them both now and for the future.

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:

- Continue to deepen children’s and staff’s knowledge and understanding of the CRC including the [ABCDE of Rights](#) across the whole school.
- Provide more links and opportunities to explicitly promote the CRC to the wider community and with other schools. For example, build on existing joint working with Forest Schools and consider using the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC on 20<sup>th</sup> November as an opportunity to further raise awareness of rights - [OutRight](#)
- Continue to embed the Unicef RRSA [Charter Guidance](#) and focus on the language of ‘respect for rights’ when reviewing class charters and endeavour to include actions for Duty Bearers as well as for children.
- Ensure that children and adults are kept informed on the school’s provision to support their physical and mental health and well-being, and that information is accessible to all.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	Holy Cross is a small Catholic primary school with 210 pupils currently on roll, the vast majority of whom are of White British heritage. Around 5% of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding, 6% have English as an additional language, and 6% of pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans. Ofsted in November 2016 found that the school continued to be Good.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Head, Deputy Head (RRSA Co-Ordinator), Inclusion lead, KS1 and EYFS lead, and KS2 lead.
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	31 children in focus groups, 6 children on the learning walk and 90 children in class visits
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	2 teaching staff, 5 parents, 2 governors
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits, class journals
<b>Registered for RRSA: July 2015</b>	<b>Silver achieved: November 2016</b>

## 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

Most children know a wide range of articles from the CRC and that these are universal, unconditional, inherent, inalienable and indivisible. They learn about their rights through lessons, assemblies and as part of focus days. Children throughout the school are learning to make connections between local and global issues through exploring the Global Goals, e.g. through campaigning for clean air and raising awareness of the need to reduce plastic usage and waste. They know that they can and are taking action in order to improve children's access to their rights within their own community as well as helping other children in the wider world get better access to the same rights. Through learning about refugees, they are more aware that homelessness is not only an issue for people in far away places and how it affects children's access to their rights.

The whole school environment conveys the message that Holy Cross is a school where the CRC is, *"At the heart of the school's planning, policies, practise and ethos."* The headteacher explained how, *"The CRC fits perfectly with our Christian values and Gospel virtues; it's working within every single part of each day."* She also considers that the school's RRSA journey has provided a vehicle in order to help the school develop within its core purpose a commitment to, *"Develop young citizens who realise that life isn't fair but that they/we can actively do something about it both locally and globally."*

The RRSA coordinator considers that a very significant development since the school's Silver award is that, *"There is a different approach now; it's not 'top down'; children come up to you at any time of day to discuss ideas and ways that they can influence decisions. Our children see themselves as part of the bigger world now; before they were in a bubble and confined but now it's as if we have popped the bubble and they now know that they can have an impact locally and globally."* Within Early Years the school's three fundamentals of 'learn, play and be safe' are constantly referred to using the language of rights. As a result, the EYFS lead considers that the younger children are, *"Better at articulating their rights."*

Parents explained how they get, *"A lot of information about the CRC and Rights Respecting from the school...it's constantly promoted through various media e.g. Twitter and the weekly newsletter."* They gave examples of how their children talk about their rights at home. e.g. e-safety and air pollution. One parent commented that her son, who is a member of the school's steering group, *"Reels off the articles all of the time and other children in school ask him about their rights all of the time."* Another parent considers that referring to the CRC is, *"Now part of normal thought processes."* Parents also spoke very positively about a scavenger hunt activity that was organised for parents to learn more about the articles. One commented that, *"The children knew more than the parents... they were teaching us for example that children don't have a right to be happy (although we want them to be happy) and how air pollution is about their right to a clean environment."*

A governor explained how her induction process had included being made aware of how articles within the Convention relate to daily life in school. She went on to say that now, when she is in school, she can see how, *"Children using the CRC is fluid and natural...it's used constantly...children refer to the rights spontaneously, without prompting."* The headteacher also commented that, *"You can hear the language of rights around school; people are always talking about them."*

**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**

Children know that adults have the responsibility to make sure they access their rights, as one pupil clearly stated, *“To make sure I get my right to be safe.”* They know they can speak with any adult if they have concerns and trust that adults will sort things out. Staff consider that making rights far more explicit within teaching and policies has had a significant impact on children stating that, *“It’s given them more confidence to say what they think and to speak up for themselves... if someone is being treated unfairly the children will use a right to back them up.”* A governor commented that, *“Teachers model the language of CRC all the time,”* and a parent commented that, *“They don’t just tell the children they can’t do something or shouldn’t do something, they try to offer solutions that they can use outside school as well.”* Staff consider that a rights-based approach has resulted in, *“A drastic change within the past year; much less time is taken out of learning time because children can sort out things for themselves.”*

The school’s Behaviour and Anti Bullying policies highlight Articles 3, 29 and 31 as well as reference to the importance of dignity within Article 28. Staff explained how role modelling resolving disputes using rights respecting language has enabled the children to see that, *“They have a right to be heard and peer mentors have given them the tools to sort things out more for themselves.”* Children commented that, *“You don’t just listen to one person; you’ve got to respect both people’s right to be heard.”* Individual class charters support this and one pupil explained that his class charter included Article 12, *“Because if you’re not heard you won’t be able to share your views.”*

Children feel safe at school and consider that their learning in school helps them to know how to keep safe out of school. The year 6 teacher explained how within school they had created learning opportunities for the children to feel more confident around issues relating to transition including road safety and using buses. Children are trained as Digital Leaders through ChildNet and lead computing lessons and lunchtime clubs linked to children being safe online. Children know that that adults have a responsibility to keep them safe. One Y 5 pupil explained that, *“Every child has the right to privacy”* and gave an example of the need to respect an individual’s personal space by, *“Not having the beanbags too close together.”*

Children know that Article 29 is about their right to develop their individual talents and personalities. They also explained how learning about gender equality has made them realise, *“How others are getting treated,”* and they were able to explain how British Values links to different rights. Pupil Mental Health Ambassadors have been trained to know how to talk and help other children with any concerns and thoughts. They run a weekly lunchtime club and are also available/visible throughout the week. The school has consciously diversified the range of sporting after school clubs e.g. introducing fencing, girls’ football and archery. This has resulted in increased, regular attendance.

Potentially vulnerable children are supported through a range of initiatives. Children understand about the importance and fairness of including everyone but also know that, as one member of staff commented, that, *“It’s ok to be on your own if it’s your choice.”* Children made comments about Article 3 and how the best interests of the child are important if children need extra or different help. One

teacher considers that children are now more respectful about differing needs and abilities and, “*Don’t feel embarrassed by things they find hard.*”

Children clearly enjoy school and value the experiences and opportunities it gives them. One child spoke about how, “*We are learning to compare our situation to other people’s and even if we think the world is perfect where we are, we need to tell others that it is not like that for everyone and we can tell the government that they should do things to help to change it.*” Children who are part of the ‘Lead Learners’ group have had training to take part in lesson observations and now contribute suggestions for how to improve lessons, e.g. children commented that they don’t like being taken out of the classroom to do group work as it singles them out and knocks their confidence. As a result, mixed ability seating is now in place throughout the school with children’s needs being met through targeted questioning and support within the classroom.

**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**

There are a range of pupil voice groups within the school e.g. School Council, Eco team, Buddies and peer mentoring. Children are confident that the adults in school listen to them and value their views. They explained that if they make suggestions, “*The teachers don’t hesitate to do it.*” A governor explained that as a result of a safeguarding questionnaire the RRSA steering group identified ways to make improvements on the playground. She commented that, “*It’s all coming from the children; it’s their ideas.*” The RR steering group are proactive in raising awareness about the CRC both within school and for their families. They help with the right of the week assemblies and have also led assemblies about air pollution linked to Unicef’s Outright campaign. As part of this they wrote letters to their local MP. Their awareness raising with parents clearly had an impact with one parent commenting that, “*We walk more now, and my child tells me to turn the engine off so it’s not idling.*” Another parent said, “*I didn’t even know that my child knew about air pollution.*” Parents are pleased that their children are learning about their rights because, “*It gives them the power to question.*”

Children decided that they were unhappy about the poor state of the path around their local community pond and so, again, wrote to their MP to request some action be taken. They received a positive response and were able to see how them exercising their right to be heard respectfully did result in action to change something and making things better. The MP also came into school for a ‘Question Time’ session and was impressed by the children’s knowledge about their rights. Children also organised a local litter pick, again as part of their focus on Article 24 and their right to a clean environment and received thank you letters acknowledging their input into the community.

Children spoke about the range of awareness raising and fundraising they have been involved with and were able to explain how these link in with the CRC. As part of the 2017 Unicef Outright campaign about refugees they were part of a school focus on refugees all around us. One teacher commented on how this project allowed the children to. “*See real life examples*” and that refugees are not only people you see on the news; “*There are refugees all around us.*” Children have taken part in activities to raise awareness about other global issues such as the production and use of palm oil and have taken action to support wildlife through a project with Chester Zoo. They have also raised money to buy books for children in developing countries and understand that they are helping to support



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children in these countries access their right to education. Through a wide range of curriculum learning, taking action within the local community and global focus days the children are developing knowledge, skills attitudes and values that will support them to meet the aspiration shared by the headteacher for them to be, *“Children who will grow into amazing citizens.”* The children are already demonstrating that they are on this journey. One of them explained that, *“Global citizens are born to the earth; they do their part to try to help to make a difference for all of us e.g. with plastic pollution. A Global citizen is just a normal person in the world but in their heart, they want to change the world.”*