

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St. Mary's R.C.V.A Primary School
Headteacher:	Mrs Joanne Walton (Acting Headteacher)
RRSA coordinator:	Mrs Lauren Hullock and Mrs Nicola Key
Local authority:	Durham
Assessors:	Kathy Allan and Chris Shannon
Date:	6 th November 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

This was a reaccreditation visit. The assessors would like to thank the pupils, leadership team, staff, parents and governors for their warm welcome to St. Mary's R.C.V.A. Primary School, for the opportunity to speak to the school community during the accreditation visit and for the detailed evidence provided prior to, and during, to support the process.

Children's rights are embedded into the ethos of St Mary's. The headteacher and chair of governors agree that the CRC is central to the work of the school.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- Pupil voice that is encouraged, respected and acted upon, resulting in pupils feeling valued and supported.
- Children regularly take action to claim their rights and support the rights of others locally, nationally and internationally.

Strands A, B and C have all been met.

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 further embed knowledge, understanding and application of the articles with your whole school community and your curriculum.
- Develop your global work so that it runs through your curriculum rather than ‘one off’ assemblies or events. Consider a greater link to the Global Goals as a foundation for your work.
- Continue to embed the Unicef RRSA Charter guidance and focus on the language of respect for rights and in the next round of class charters endeavour to include actions for Duty Bearers as well as for children.
- Further develop referencing to the CRC in your school policies and paperwork.
- Consider the development of a pupil-led School Improvement Plan and build in opportunities for the Steering Group to meet and consult with governors.
- Enrich the range of campaigning and advocacy opportunities, perhaps with local secondary schools and on other issues of concern to your pupils. Ensure all children understand the clear links between fundraising/advocacy action and rights.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	A smaller than average sized primary school with 60 children on roll. The percentages of pupil entitled to Pupil Premium is 28%, and 10% have an EHCP. 7% pupils have English as an additional language.
School evaluation: Gold form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher and 2 RRS Coordinators
Number of children and young people interviewed	3 pupils for learning walk 9 pupils in focus group
Number of adults interviewed	3 teaching staff, 1 support staff, 1 parent, 2 governors
Evidence provided	Learning walk

	Written evidence Class visits
First registered for RRSA: Dec 2010	Level 2 achieved: Sept 2015

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 living.

Strand A has been partially achieved.

Family groups are a key part of the strategy for teaching about rights at St Mary’s. Each week children meet together and the focus of their work is the CRC. During these sessions, children also chose things they wish to campaign about, such as water safety and litter picking. Children were able to identify a number of articles such as the right to be safe (Article 19), the right to a name (Article 7) and the right to a clean environment (Article 24) and they were unanimous in their understanding on universality, inalienability and unconditionality. Some children could recall being taught about the right to a name through RE work on Baptism and Y6 spoke of a central character of a book ‘Born to Run’ by Michael Morpurgo not having their right to be safe respected. Children recognised that not all children in the world have their rights respected and could provide examples such as bush fires in Florida and war impacting on the right to be safe and access education. They also described how some children are bullied and are not treated with respect and could link their support of a local food bank to the right to nutritious food. Displays around school highlight the importance of the CRC to visitors including parents and carers. A key display in the hall focused on a virtual village supported by the children and was linked to Article 27. Another in the school library highlighted the problems caused in the oceans because of plastic pollution and was linked to Article 24. One child said, ‘If you take something out of the world, you need to put something back, so if you cut a tree down, you should plant some seeds.’

The acting headteacher, staff, governors and parents show a strong commitment to and enthusiasm for RRSA and they were quick to identify the impact of the work. The Chair of Governors said, ‘All children are really respectful of each other. RRS helps to develop their character. It gives children independence to speak out and they know they will be listened to.’ Parents are kept informed about the CRC through the web site and newsletters and they all received a copy of the CRC. They are also invited to share in special school events. Governors are given regular updates about rights respecting and the CRC at termly meetings and they regularly visit the school to see the work in practice. Global work is developing and a recent curriculum review has helped to identify further learning opportunities which will be expanded. Assemblies, charity work and family groups are key areas of learning and a workshop about refugees, with related follow up activities, run by Cafod is planned for March.

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 at St Mary’s understand that parents and teachers are duty bearers and they promote their rights. One child said, *‘all our duty bearers help keep us safe in school and care for us, instead of telling us what to do, they show us. They help us have our right to education met.’* Another added, *‘they give us clean water and make sure we have nutritious food.’* The headteacher has a list of actions on her office door to show how she fulfils her role as duty bearer. Pupils believe that they are treated *‘nicely and fairly’* and said, *‘if we fall out, the teacher would have a word with all people involved.’* All children were confident that they could approach any member of staff if they had a problem and it would be sorted.

The positive and supportive ethos at St Mary’s is tangible on entering the school. It is mutually respectful and rights respecting. The Chair of Governors described RRS as, *‘being woven into everything else we do and compliments our Catholic ethos.’* A child said, *‘They [adults in school] respect us, we get on really well with all the adults.’* There have been significant improvements in behaviour which staff and governors attribute to their Right Respecting work. A staff member thought that knowing about their rights made children stop and think about their behaviour and say to themselves, *‘I shouldn’t be doing that.’* Children all agreed that they are treated with dignity by being given privacy to change for PE and having private chats with members of staff if they have a problem.

All children strongly agreed that school was a safe place and were able to indicate ways in which this was promoted eg gates are locked, a warning bell rings 5 minutes before the end of the day so that external classroom doors are closed before the main gate opens. Children were also able to identify a number of safety issues in the playground such as not playing in an area of the field because tree roots could be a tripping hazard. Children have also challenged visitors to the school if their visitor badge was not visible. All children were aware of the importance of internet safety. Posters are prominently displayed around school and children were clear that they should tell or show an adult anything which they received or experienced on line which was inappropriate.

Children’s social and emotional well-being is high priority at St Mary’s. A range of support is available including a counsellor who visits school weekly and to whom children are able to self-refer. Staff are also trained in Circle of Friends, therapeutic story writing and Listening Matters. One pupil explained that *‘if I have a problem, I know they (staff) will help, they care about us and how we feel.’* School also hosts FISCH (Family Initiative Supporting Children’s Health) which focusses on healthy eating and lifestyle. After school clubs also have a focus on healthy life styles such as a cookery club where children learn about nutritious recipes.

Pupils believe that everyone is included and valued at St Mary’s. There are 7 different nationalities within the school and a refugee family was recently made welcome. According to one member of staff the family *‘slotted in to the school easily.’* Displays are used to help learn about and celebrate diversity. Staff have attended training on Poverty Proofing and following

UNITED KINGDOM

discussions with the school council, it was agreed to recycle school uniforms and Halloween costumes, making them available to families in the school, as they had noticed that some children didn't have new uniforms or fancy dress outfits.

At the start of topic work, pupils identify what they want to learn and how they would like to learn. Their ideas are then incorporated into their teacher's planning. Children also have a say in selecting the novels they wish to read in class. Many ideas for the Family Group sessions, which are based on their RRS work, come from the children themselves. One child said, *'instead of the teacher talking all the time we sometimes lead the lesson.'* Peer marking and monitoring of targets is part of daily work with older children. The children agreed that they all respect each other's right to learn. They explained that if a child disrupts the learning, others are quick to remind the perpetrator that they are denying the right of everyone else to learn.

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.

Pupil voice is a strength of St Mary's. In addition to the Rights Respecting Steering group, children are able to join the School Council, PE Team, Buddies or Mini Vinnies. A child told us, *'everyone who wants to be on a team has to make a speech then go out of the room and the rest of us vote. There is someone from every class in the teams.'* The school council identifies and promotes changes for pupils' daily lives, for example, children wished to improve the outside area, so money was raised to buy more play equipment, next they put in place a rota for the use of the equipment. Children also worked with the school cook and catering company to change the lunchtime menus. There are a wide range of after school clubs, some requested by the children, for them to develop their individual talents. These include sport, dance and cookery. A parent who recently brought her children to St Mary's from a much bigger local school, was amazed and delighted at how her children's voices had been respected and encouraged, enabling them to quickly settle into the school.

Children at St Mary's are very active fund raisers and they are developing their campaigning. The headteacher said, *'children watch more news at home and are increasingly conscious of current events. They bring their ideas into school about how they can help.'* One child wrote to parents asking them to pay 50p to dress their child in green for St Patrick's day. The child and her parent then went to Asda to buy Easter eggs for residents of a local care home. Another child is having her hair cut in school and it will be sent to be made into a wig for a cancer sufferer. Children also support the local food bank and raise money for a virtual village for a global charity. Recent purchases included a toilet, chickens and a donkey. One child explained, *'the donkey can carry fresh water to save the children having to carry it, then they have their right to clean water.'* Pupils have also taken part in the Unicef OutRight campaign on clean air and linked this to having light and energy monitors as ways they support everyone's right to a clean environment. Children explained how left over toast at breakfast club is fed to the birds and contributes to their 'waste free Wednesday's' and about how recycling paper, litter picking and growing their own vegetables in their plastic bottle greenhouse also supports Article 24.