

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO / GOLD

School:	Riversdale Primary School
Headteacher:	Amy Roberts
RRSA coordinator:	Steven de Souza
Local authority:	Wandsworth
Assessors:	Frances Bestley & Paul Harris
Date:	23 rd January 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 comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form.

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

Particular strengths of the school are:

- A strong focus on inclusion
- Very relaxed and respectful positive relationships between pupils and pupils and pupils and staff
- Friendly and confident children who enjoy and are proud of their school.
- Empowered children who understand they have a right to be heard and their views taken seriously.
- A very informative website

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

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:

- Use the CRC to frame work within the School Development Plan
- Continue to deepen and widen knowledge and understanding of the CRC for staff and pupils.
- Carry out a curriculum audit to identify coverage of the articles of the CRC.
- Clarify the purpose of class charters and perhaps move towards a single school charter.
- Continue to develop the coverage of global citizenship including campaigning for global change.

4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

4.1. The school context

Riversdale Primary School situated in Wandsworth is a larger than average primary school with 367 pupils on roll. More than double the proportion of pupils seen nationally have minority ethnic backgrounds. Around 40% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Around 24% of children are eligible for pupil premium and just over 15% of pupils are eligible for free school meals.

The school's last inspection took place in July 2015 and the school was judged to be Good; Behaviour and Safety of pupils was judged Outstanding.

The school registered to become rights respecting in July 2008 and achieved the RRSA Level 1 Award in February 2011.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, deputy headteachers and RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people interviewed	70+ children during learning walk, Year 5 class visit and focus groups
Number of staff interviewed	7 teaching staff (one of whom also provides admin support); 3 teaching assistants, one of whom is also a parent; 1 parent (also a governor and member of support staff), additional quotes from parents; governor and chair of governors.
Evidence provided	Learning walk Assembly Written evidence Classroom visits

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

Riversdale's ethos is founded upon deep respect for the individual and as its website highlights 'as a rights respecting school, we also believe strongly in mutual respect for all members of our community, be that local, national or global'. School leaders are fully committed to the principles and values of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which permeate the life of the school and its everyday practice. The headteacher explained how "*inclusion [is] at the heart of our school*" and that the rights respecting work has been operating alongside this. As a school that has supported children who have been excluded from other schools, she described how "*every child has the right to an education*" and that "*we will do anything to meet that child's needs*". Leaders were able to give other examples of the impact of the school's work. These included commenting on how the school "*definitely encourage[s] pupil voice*" and that pupil "*opinions are valued*", that rights respecting is used to help "*develop children as global citizens*" and to "*treat each other with fairness, equality and respect*". In its self-evaluation of the impact of its rights respecting work, the school identified seven out of eight areas of school life where there had been 'significant impact'.

The school has a very detailed RRSA action plan. Its key priorities link to the four standards of the Award and there are specific actions, resources, personnel and timescales provided for each of these priorities. Clear outcomes are also identified which include 'young people and

adults collaborate to develop and maintain a RRS community based on the UNCRC' and that 'every child has [the] right to say what they think in all matters affecting them and to have their views taken seriously'. Other strategic documentation that refer to children's rights include the Positive Behaviour Management Policy and both the Maths and Writing/Reading policies linked to Article 28. At the first staff meeting of the new academic year, all staff are reminded about the articles from the Convention, class charters and what a rights respecting classroom should look like. The coordinator also meets with newly qualified teachers and provides regular up-dates about the school's rights respecting work to staff. The work is monitored as part of learning walks, book reviews and through the school's Learning Council. When asked whether it would be possible for the RRS work not to be delivered somewhere in the school, leaders were quick to respond that the pupils would soon say! As the coordinator explained the RRSA work is '*very sustainable*' and '*embedded*' within the life of the school.

The school seeks to establish an inclusive culture in a variety of ways. Staff are referred to by their first names. The school's application documentation explains that 'we chose this strategy, based on CRC Article 7, so that everyone would see the person for the person they are. The culture is that everyone deserves the respect through being a person not a different kind of respect because of the title they hold'. The 'RE week' encourages children to share their beliefs whilst also learning about others. Diversity is therefore both respected and celebrated. The headteacher explained how in supporting children the school "*look[s] at where [the] need is*" and is therefore able to be flexible in its response with for example, the recent creation of a new SENCO support role. Similarly, the deputy headteacher explained that staff training is also "*based on [the] needs of the children*". The school has specialist teaching assistants and learning mentors who can provide particular types of support and intervention for children with specific learning needs. Last December the school achieved the 'Inclusion Quality Mark Centre of Excellence' Award in recognition of its inclusive practice.

Riversdale takes part in the 'guided peer evaluation' initiative whereby senior leaders from a range of local partner schools support each in school improvement through local visits and provision of feedback. This has provided the school with an opportunity to share good practice and be 'avid ambassadors for the RRSA'. In the last review, a headteacher from one of the partner schools interviewed children about Riversdale's Rights Respecting work. The school has also worked closely and shared good practice with a local RRSA Gold secondary school in Wandsworth. Riversdale works closely with its parent community. A summer fair held last June had an international theme and in a letter to parents it was explained this was to 'celebrate the amazing diversity of our wonderful school'.

Global citizenship and sustainable development have a high profile at Riversdale with one of the school's aims being to 'empower our children to become global citizens, to enable them to make valuable contributions locally, nationally and globally and to contribute to our world's sustainable future'. This is evident for example in the 'Global Citizens' web page of the school's website which details a range of events and activities that have taken place and which are linked with specific articles from the Convention. These include an Energy Fortnight linked to Article 29 and the sustainable development goal 12 and a year 3 fair trade topic linked to Articles 2, 17 and 24. Members of the school's Learning Council have taken the lead in setting up a campaign connected with the 'The Backpack Project' of the charity 'Mary's Meals'. They have given an assembly, provided information to parents and created marketing materials to encourage the collection of basic learning equipment for children in parts of Africa.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Pupils were able to cite a range of rights. These included the right to an education, to have healthy food and clean water, to have an identity, to be protected from discrimination, to be safe, to be heard, to have access to medical care and the right to rest and play. They were very clear that children's rights were universal, *"for every child in the world"*, inherent and unconditional. The pupil members of the Learning Council (also known as the 'Rights Representatives') are actively involved in promoting the school's RRSA work. Regular meetings of the group have taken place and detailed minutes are published on the school's website about the group's work. Similarly, staff are also articulate ambassadors and advocates for the school's rights respecting work and in discussions with assessors were able to draw upon a range of examples from school life which were linked to rights.

Parents are kept up-to-date about the school's rights respecting work through the website and 'twitter' feeds. Of particular note is the 'Article of the Week' which has a prominent profile in the news section of the website with additional explanatory text provided for each Article. In some instances the 'Article of the Week' has been linked to a particular school event. For example, the summer fair was linked to Article 7. Last May's half term homework project involved pupils creating a piece of artwork connected to one of the rights from the CRC. This is another example of how the school is helping to promote the CRC with parents which was celebrated with artwork being displayed across the school. Some pieces were then exhibited in the 'rights respecting art gallery' at the school's curriculum event held the following month. There is a link governor for the RRSA and following on from a meeting with the coordinator last November a report was sent to governors providing an update on work and progress.

Displays around the school which reference rights include a display in one of the main halls about Articles 12, 22, 28 and 29, a healthcare display linked to Article 24 and an art display of a range of rights. Several examples of curriculum documentation were seen that evidenced how particular rights were linked to subjects. For example, a Year 1 literacy topic on fairy tales was linked to Articles 9 and 11 and topics about the Romans (Year 3) and Victorians (Year 5) were referenced with a wide range of Articles. Similarly, curriculum plans on the school's website also show how links to rights are made. For example, a Year 6 topic about Ancient Greece was linked to Articles 12, 19, 28, 29, 31 and 38. In discussions, pupils and staff were also able to give examples of how connections were made between rights and learning. For example, in Year 3 literacy pupils explored freedom of speech alongside their reading of the book 'The Day the Crayons Quit' and a Year 4 topic about 'refugees and war' began with looking at children's rights.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of global citizenship is nurtured in a variety of ways. For example, last autumn as part of 'Black History Month' pupils participated in an interactive workshop about 'The Empire Windrush'. For Holocaust Memorial Day 2017 pupils explored themes through a variety of activities which were connected to diversity (EYFS and Key Stage 1) and persecution (Key stage 2). As the school website explains pupils 'were able to make very clear links between historical and current events and their human rights'. Pupils also understand that many children in the world are being denied their rights because of issues such as conflict and lack of clean water. 'BBC Newsround' is used on a regular basis across several of the year groups to help develop global awareness. Last year, pupils took part in

an 'Energy fortnight' and explored ways to ensure that energy is not wasted. In an innovative project suggested by the Rights Representatives in connection with the increase of homelessness within the local area, science and PSHE were combined to explore the themes of habitats and what makes a home. This was then developed further in connection with homelessness and activities included some children writing to the local MP asking that there be more help given to support the homeless. In connection with 'Earth Day' one class created an information leaflet about environmental issues and the importance of being responsible, for example, with the conservation of energy.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

The school council agreed which core rights – including Articles 28 and 29 - should be used for class charters; in September classes then agree additional rights which they feel are most appropriate for them. All classrooms visited had well designed charters with articles written in child friendly language and linked to a summary of the CRC. There was some variation in both how the charters were used by the children and staff and whether the purpose of the charter was to learn about rights or to agree rights respecting attitudes for the classroom. One child explained that *"Most people follow it and if they forget we remind them."* The playground charter developed by the school council linked articles and actions more closely and during the learning walk children explained *'We use the charter to support and remind us what to do.'* When asked about reviewing the charter a child explained *"We reviewed it and we think we did a good job."*

Riversdale follows a 'no shouting' policy and all staff are referred to by their first names, linked to Article 7. Throughout the visit there was very strong evidence that mutual rights-respecting behaviours and extremely good and equitable relationships exist between both pupils and pupils as well as pupils and staff. During the assembly, class visits, the learning walk and the focus group, pupils listened carefully but enthusiastically and respectfully to one another. *"It's the language we use with the children – we all speak in the same respectful manner"* explained a deputy head teacher. The Class Conduct award celebrated in Friday assemblies recognises rights respecting behaviours linked to the CRC; a child is nominated by their peers.

Children described how learning about rights had helped them to learn. They knew about their right to an education – Articles 28 and 29 were frequently cited by all groups – and took this very seriously. *"It helps knowing that everyone has rights."* Pupils enjoyed and were very proud of their school. Teaching and learning surveys ensure that staff understand children's views of their learning. This was confirmed by the focus group. *"The teachers listen to our opinions so much in lessons"* stated one child. Children talked about peer marking and assessment and understood their targets. *"We set targets about what we should do next"* explained a child and then discuss them with their teachers. Children were clear that extra help was available if needed and the children on the learning walk showed where you could go for extra help.

All children we talked to unanimously said that they felt safe in school; the results from the pupil questionnaire supported this. They were confident that they could speak to a teacher or someone that they trusted if something was going wrong. *“The teachers do things for your safety; it’s protection for your benefit”* said one child. Adults in the playground with first aid equipment, the playground charter and teachers knowing who is taking you home were cited as things that kept them safe and they understood that this was their right. *“We’re a rights respecting school so children can feel safe and can learn”* explained a child in the focus group.

When we asked children how they sorted things out when there was an argument children explained that any conflicts are treated fairly. A child explained that a teacher had ‘made a mistake’ and so he [the pupil] had been in trouble for something he hadn’t done; he spoke to another teacher and his teacher apologised for the error. All children and staff we spoke to agreed that rights were used appropriately to help solve conflicts. *“It’s the language we use when we discuss a situation and children understand the consequences of their actions on other people’s rights”* explained a member of staff. Children on the learning walk were very proud of their new Kindness Bench.

Staff described how pupils were growing into global citizens and becoming aware of the impact of their actions and *‘were more aware of the world.’* They described how children linked banning carrier bags, pollution and their work with Wandsworth recycling centre to article 24. Children understood that although rights were universal that some children are being denied their rights. They described how children in Syria because of war and conflict may be denied the right to an education, nutritious food and clean water, rest and play and safety. When asked how the effects of climate change such as lack of/too much rainfall are linked to children’s rights, pupils were able to make several connections. For example, in the absence of rain, crops would not grow and there would be no access to nutritious food. Pupils are empathetic about the challenges that children around the world may face. When asked, what difference learning about rights has made to them, a year 6 pupil responded *“When we grow up we’ll know how to treat people around the world and be grateful for what we have – we take a lot for granted.”*

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Children agreed unanimously that they were listened to and their views taken seriously. *“When we suggest ideas our teachers try to include them and we hear about the actions in assembly”* explained a child in the focus group. *“We choose at PE and for Golden Time”* stated a child. This was corroborated by the PE lead. The student council and the Eco group are democratically elected by their peers. The steering group has been renamed as the Rights Representatives; the children held an assembly where they introduced themselves and explained their vision for how the school can be changed. There was considerable interest in this and another child stated *“You can tell ideas to them about what changes have to be made.”* The ‘You said/ We did’ board provided examples of impact. Children described changes that had been made including: purchasing the Kindness bench, new playground equipment and asking to change the menu for school dinners. The school dinners were still

being worked on. A child during the learning walk described how he was going to provide fruit snacks to KS2 so they would have something at break time. He explained exactly where he would site the stand to also solve an issue of “*children sitting ‘in the wrong place’.*”

Pupils are taught to make informed choices about their rights predominately through termly themes such as Equality or Health and Well Being including a focus on topics such as: healthy eating, internet safety, homelessness. The focus on e-safety was highlighted during the learning walk. External visitors such as the NSPCC also provide information about being safe.

Children spoke very enthusiastically about the activities they had undertaken to uphold the rights of children locally and globally. Fundraising links are predominately made to world events that have impacted their pupil body for example flooding in Pakistan, the typhoon in the Philippines, the earthquake in Italy. Children described the Mary’s Meals Backpack where they had brought in things to support the right to education in Malawi; how they had fundraised for Red Nose Day and Water Aid and how this helped other children in different parts of the world access education by helping other schools and access better healthcare and clean water. The school also supports the local foodbank through the church, has raised money for Grenfell and supported and campaigned for homelessness.

Riversdale’s school song aptly reflects its ethos and values, described on the website as ‘rooted in British values and our belief in respecting the rights of children.’

You are my brother,
 You are my friend,
 You are my sister,
 Our love shall never end.
 Whatever colour our skin or our hair
 Let us sing together
 That is our prayer.
 Lift your banners high
 Work for justice and for peace,
 Lift your banners high
 May our friendship never cease
 Lift our banners high
 We shall sing in every land,
 Lift your banners high
 For in friendship's name we stand.