RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Meadowlane Primary School
Headteacher:	Chloe Ford
RRSA coordinator:	Rebecca Williams
Local authority:	The City of Cardiff Council
Assessor(s):	Frances Bestley and Martin Russell
Date:	17th July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This Gold report is based on a virtual accreditation visit.

The assessors 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 accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin all key aspects of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- A sustained commitment to RRSA and to children's rights being promoted across the school.
- A very positive and inclusive ethos with wellbeing, linked to rights, as a strong and consistent focus.
- Highly effective pupil voice which empowers the children to be engaged with all aspects of their life at school.

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 develop everyone's knowledge of the CRC in the wider context of human rights; consider a focus on the concepts of 'rights holder' and 'duty bearers' and explore the concept of 'dignity'. Consider a curriculum audit to broaden the coverage of articles in learning.
- Consider introducing rights based charters to help build on the strong relationships already evident across the school.
- Continue to seek opportunities to extend the breadth and depth in pupil voice and influence in all aspects of school improvement, especially learning and teaching.
- Build on your work around active global citizenship. Think about making fuller use of The World's Largest Lesson materials and Unicef's Outright and Youth Advocacy Toolkit.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Meadowlane Primary has 348 pupils on roll. 21% of the children are identified as needing additional support with their learning. Approximately 18% speak English as an additional language and around 44% are entitled to support through the Pupil Deprivation Grant.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher and the RRSA lead.
Number of children and young people interviewed	26 children from years 4 to 6 in two focus groups.
Number of adults interviewed	Deputy headteacher, 3 phase leaders, three teachers and 2 support staff.
Evidence provided	Extensive digital evidence including images of display and pupils' work, rotas and policies, video and email comments from parents and the chair of governors.
Registered for RRSA: July 2018	**Silver achieved:** July 2019

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 and adults were very knowledgeable about a broad range of rights and understood the importance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The children referred to a range of rights and spoke about them in an appropriate context. It was clear that children and adults spoken with understand the nature of rights being unconditional, universal, inherent, inalienable and indivisible with several explanatory comments shared, including, *"Rights are universal which mean they are for everyone." "You get your rights up to age 18 - they can't be taken away."* An older child explained, *"It is important to know your rights because rights keep us safe and they make sure that our opinions are heard."* The children pointed out that they learn about rights in a variety of different ways including through assemblies, special themed days, displays around the school and the Article of the Month which, during the school closure period, had become weekly. The children were particularly proud of Ricky, their Rights Respecting mascot; created as a result of a pupil competition, Ricky promotes the Convention around school and has featured in a very effective video celebrating Article 28. Staff pointed out that rights are becoming increasing evident in the learning with one teacher commenting that when the children were reading 'Danny-Champion of the World', *"they reflected on his life from the perspective of the rights."*

The children showed a good understanding of how, despite rights being universal, some children in the world may not be able to access their rights. Examples explored included the impact of poverty, *"Some families might not be able to send their children to school*.", lack of access to clean water and the impact of deforestation which *"…affects children in tribes from being safe and protected."* Staff mentioned this too, saying that it was impressive that in the topic on the rainforests the children were spontaneously referring to the rights of the indigenous peoples. One pupil raised the current news story of Shamima Begum recognising that, as a child, her rights had not been properly met. When asked about examples in a UK context one of the group said, *"some children might be abused, or a family might not be able to afford the water bill."*

Parents and governors are well informed about and supportive of the school's commitment to rights; letters home and social media posts, for instance, refer to relevant articles or explain a project the children are engaged with. There is extensive content about RRSA on the school's website including numerous videos made by the children exploring different articles. One of the parents commented, in a written submission, about how the school has *"…used every part of the day to encourage children to be aware of their rights and to give children a voice within the school."* The school's leadership and governors are wholeheartedly committed to embedding a rights-based approach at Meadowlane, making links to rights through policies and the School Improvement Plan. The Headteacher observed, *"Rights are now completely embedded, they have become a natural part of what we do."* She explained that rights respecting has supported the vision the leadership has for the school in terms of empowering the children, *"It has turned their thinking and attitudes around."* The chair of governors made a short video in support of the Gold accreditation visit in which she spoke of the hugely positive impact on the children as a consequence of knowing about their rights.

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 spoke about how the adults in school enabled them to enjoy their rights in a wide variety of different ways. They also saw pupil-led groups as a way of ensuring that all can enjoy their rights; the children can join a range of 'i-Voice' groups – i-Active, i-Tech, i-Com, i-Voice, i-Rights and i-Global. Children of all ages were clear that any concern that they may have about their rights, or those of their peers, not being met could be shared with adults at school. Asked about how they understand the concept of trusting somebody, there were several insightful comments including, *"You can rely on them; they make sure things get sorted out."* The children had a strong, shared view that they were treated fairly in school and they spoke about always being listened to by adults and being respected. One of the adults commented that the children are *"…keen to point out when somebody else is preventing them from accessing their rights."* Although they had not learnt explicitly about equity, the pupils were clear that it can be fair for individuals to be treated differently from others.

Positive relationships based on mutual respect between staff, between children and between children and staff were observed during the virtual visit. The children described how well everyone gets on and that friendships are strong. They spoke positively about how systems such as rewards, class DoJo points and 'Star of the Week' celebrate and recognise positive actions. When fall-outs do occur the children don't automatically refer to adults, explaining that some children are trained as Peer Mediators and they can help to resolve a potential conflict. The school reports that a greater understanding of their rights and the rights of others has led to better relationships and fewer negative incidents at playtime or dinnertime, there has also been a positive impact on attendance. In a discussion about their experience of being treated with dignity, the children referred to being *"Treated with fairness."* and *"Being kind to people."*

Children all agreed that their right to feel safe and protected was upheld in their school and they shared a wide range of actions and systems that ensure this. They described, for example, the work of the i-Rights group to promote all aspects of e-safety across the school. The children have a role in promoting anti bullying work and were positive about how bullying, which is rare, is dealt with in their school. In their recently completed RRSA Questionnaire, almost 100% of the children asserted that they always felt safe at school. Adults commented that the children are empowered by their knowledge of rights and have greater autonomy around their own lives, including keeping themselves safe, "*Knowing these rights apply to you wherever you are - not just school."*

It was evident that the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of the children are a clear priority and are increasingly seen in relation to the CRC. A key component of this, mentioned by both the children and the staff, is the daily 'check in' procedure which has allowed staff to build trusting relationships with the children and children are also aware that they are able to speak to any adult, beyond their own classroom if they choose to, about anything that may have upset them. There is extensive curriculum content around health with the children mentioning everything from PE and sport provision, daily 'Wake and Shake', healthy lunches and activities such as yoga and mindful drawing *"to help with your mental health."* There is also access to ELSA trained staff and the school uses the Thrive programme to frame their approach to wellbeing. The school is proud of its effective systems for promoting wellbeing in normal times, but the headteacher commented that, "*The engagement and*

commitment from all the staff, their absolute passion, has made the pandemic response so much stronger because of their understanding of children's rights."

Meadowlane School has a long established and strong culture of inclusivity and valuing each person as an individual and it was pointed out that Rights Respecting has further enhanced this. There is a clear programme of activities, assemblies and events that sit alongside curriculum content to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion. The children said that, *"If a new pupil didn't speak English very well we would take time to help them."* The children are active in promoting inclusivity for example, the i-Voice group recognised, in a monitoring session, that classes required more calculators and dictionaries, their voice was listened to and these were ordered. Staff commented that the children show understanding and empathy towards peers who have complex needs, they are always keen to support them.

The children were enthusiastic to describe how they respect their right to an education and that of their peers explaining how approaches such as 'growth mindset' helped them to focus on their right to a quality education. The children also mentioned strategies such as teachers marking in green and the children responding in purple, plus peer marking and target reviews with teachers which help them to develop positive attitudes to their learning. Several pupils spoke about how they value any opportunities to make choices in their leaning and staff described the use of the KWL strategy at the start of each topic; there is also ongoing 'pupil voice' within the topic so that the children can shape the ongoing direction of the learning.

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 was strong agreement among the children that they feel listened to and that their views are taken seriously by their school. The innovative i-Voice model is designed to ensure that a broad range of children can take an active role in determining aspects of life at school. These democratically elected groups are recognised as being both accessible and effective by pupils and staff. Examples shared about the impact of pupil involvement included their participation in the appointment of new staff, having their ideas incorporated into the refurbishment of the library and improved lunch provision and playground equipment. Some of the children have recently expressed interest in learning about the Black Lives Matter movement and they told us that teachers are now preparing to make this happen next term. The children were active in planning the arrangements for the visit of the Welsh Education Minister in the run up to World Children's Day last year and they have plans to support other schools in the city on the RRS journey.

The children are involved in fundraising for a number of charities, including, Children in Need, Christmas Jumper Day and a long-established project to support education in Nepal following the 2015 earthquake. Their learning has prompted a number of campaigns for the rights of others including, for example, a whole school topic called Extinction Solutions resulted in a range of awareness raising and campaigning; this included Y1 writing letters to the school's milk company to request an end to plastic milk bottles (a work in progress!) and Y2 writing letters and making banners for an in school march to encourage a reduction in plastic waste.

Although the children at Medowlane have only been learning about rights for two years, they are clearly empowered by their knowledge of the Convention and are becoming active global citizens

whose knowledge of rights informs their actions. Their positivity about their rights is summed up by a poem written and performed (on video) by two brothers at the school:

There are rights for kids like me and you
Articles from 1 to 42
Saying how children should be treated
Super important they cannot be deleted.
An agreement between countries far away,
Wales to Canada, India to Norway.
Having these rights set my mind to rest
Yet 31 is the best
Children have a right to relax and play
So UN Rights of the Child we say hurray