

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Hawthorn Primary School
Headteacher:	Sam Abraham
RRSA coordinator:	Sue Zentani
Local authority:	Birmingham City Council
School context:	Hawthorn Primary School has a pupil roll of 230. It is within a community of high social and economic deprivation, with a large percentage of children living in high rise flats. 54% are eligible for Pupil Premium; 34% of pupils speak English as an Additional Language and 20% receive support for additional needs.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher / RRSA Coordinator (Pastoral Manager) / Head of EYFS
Number of children and young people spoken with:	18, across two focus groups
Adults spoken with:	6 in total (3 Teachers, Teaching Assistant, RRSA Governor, Parent Governor)
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 07 December 2015 Bronze achieved: 01 March 2017 Silver achieved: 15 March 2018
Assessor(s):	Hilary Alcock and Steven Kidd
Date:	15 September 2021

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Hawthorn Primary School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is based on a virtual accreditation visit. The assessors would like to thank the pupils, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff 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 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:

- Children who confidently discussed a range of rights and why they are important and relevant to their lives.
- Natural links to relevant rights are fully embedded across the curriculum in a way that enriches the learning for all children.
- An ethos that places positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust at the heart of school life.
- A clear strategic approach to embedding children's rights in school life that has been guided by recommendations from the Silver report.
- The current focus on working with families and children to reflect the school's diverse community and build children's cultural capital.
- There are several mechanisms for children to feed into decision making and leadership in different areas of school life. Pupils felt listened to, that their views matter and could point to significant examples of where their input had affected change.

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:

- Seek ways of making the Convention and your commitment to RRSA more explicit on the school's website, in other communications and in strategic documentation.
- Continue to explore with children and staff the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights-based approach, for example 'dignity' and 'equity' and how these are enacted in school practice.
- Consider how a rights-based approach to partnerships with other schools can help pupils develop greater empathy and understanding of the lived experiences of children in other places and contexts.
- Develop strategies to empower pupils to challenge injustice and create further opportunities for all year groups to be involved in campaigning and advocacy work on children's rights. Consider using the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework for this and the UNICEF UK [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).

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 and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p>	<p>Children in the focus group were able to share a wide range of articles and were very confident in discussing key rights concepts, especially impressive given the time of year; they spoke also of learning about children who had been denied rights, at home and abroad, and deftly linked this to actions they had taken to advocate for change. RRS ambassadors discussed their own efforts to spread rights knowledge, from poster displays to use of mascots in each class: <i>"We have Bailey the dog, a stuffed animal that we take home each week to teach all about rights, even our parents."</i> Indeed, Bailey (named after the school's therapy dog) was mentioned by adults, too, as having played an important role in bringing the community together in rights learning: <i>"It's looking at things you haven't thought about before... it really gives that depth of knowledge and a purpose."</i> Staff explained how the support they'd received had helped them embed practice: <i>"Every week we get sent emails [with resources] ... and if we need any other help we could go to them... it's all fitted in so nicely, to RE, to PSHE to topical issues..."; "I've had so much information,"</i> explained the Governor responsible for RRS, highlighting the far greater involvement since Silver, <i>"We had a presentation from two ambassadors...I've had assemblies to watch online, meetings with the children... I think it's absolutely wonderful to see them taking control of so many things."</i></p>
STRAND B	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><i>"It's never ending,"</i> explained the Headteacher, passionately describing the importance of the school's rights journey and the continued desire to strive for better, <i>"[after Silver] we unpicked what the feedback was and then started to put together an action plan to move forward... we'll do the same again."</i> Children used the terminology of duty bearers throughout the visit, understanding that all adults in school had a responsibility to uphold their rights, and were definite that they would act should anyone try to deny access to rights: <i>"We would tell the duty bearers and they would come to try to sort it out"</i>, noted one Y5 student.</p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>Relationships were an area where rights were credited with having had a significant impact on life in the school: <i>"All staff have done restorative behaviour training... we're not a shouting school, we unpick every situation, and we listen to all the children."</i> Children agreed, believing the process for resolving conflict to be fair and respectful of their dignity: <i>"We have a fair talk and we each have a voice and say what we think is wrong and then we all shake hands at the end."</i> Evidence showed how negative incidents were on the decline as mutual respect increased, highlighting the impact of 'an open-door approach' and strong pastoral support.</p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>Pupils in the focus group were clear that they felt safe in school and could identify several ways in which the school was actively considering safety. The school continues to challenge any discrimination or bullying which may arise, adopting creative approaches to bridge barriers in the school community, ranging from changes to the playground environment to cultural appreciation activities. Evidence showed the emphasis the school placed on safety, with reactive and proactive measures contributing to continued progress.</p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Children believed the school helped them to be healthy, pointing first to things such as healthy food and physical activity, but extending this out to provision such as ‘The Den’. One staff member explained, <i>“Pastoral support is very strong here... rights have really helped with health and wellbeing, it’s deeply embedded,”</i> before connecting this to the school’s approach to Covid: <i>“When we came back after the first lockdown, it was a real focus... lessons throughout the week link into PSHE.”</i> Serving a community where safe outdoor space is at a premium, the school gives particular consideration to outdoor learning, sport and physical activity, whilst a highlight has to be the ‘healthy lifestyles’ project for which the school has secured funding. Evidence also includes use of the Jigsaw programme in PSHE, emotions coaching, ACES and Attachment training for staff and social skills groups.</p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p>The school’s motto is ‘Individually we matter, together we shine’ and it is an ethos which carries over into the day-to-day practice. Much work has been done on celebrating diversity, working hard to reflect the lived experiences of the pupils and the community it serves, as the RRSA lead pointed out: <i>“Ten years ago we had a White British community – that’s changed, but our school hadn’t... we’ve really worked hard on that.”</i> The school has also made sign language part of learning for all, not only those in the hearing-impaired resource base which is part of the school; children understood, and agreed with, the importance of measures such as this to include everyone.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p>Focus group participants explained how they modelled good learning behaviour, respecting their own and others right to an education. They also shared how <i>“having a growth mindset”</i> helped them to approach learning more effectively. A Parent Governor talked of how an understanding of the universality of rights was having an impact, <i>“They’re better people for it. They’ve got more empathy and I think it’s really helping them,”</i> with exploration of A28 and A29 also credited as improving attitudes to learning.</p>
<p>STRAND C</p>	<p>Highlights and comments</p>
<p>8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.</p>	<p>Pupil voice at Hawthorn School takes many forms, from Pupil Ambassadors to direct discussion with the Headteacher, but pupils are definite in their belief that they are listened to: <i>“We ask for stuff and they always give it to us.”</i> Whilst that may not always be completely accurate, there were certainly numerous examples offered by the children and others of where their views had led to change, including new school meals, the introduction of a therapy dog and a £4500 fundraising effort for a new kitchen. They’ve also worked to develop the Den area as a ‘chillout’ area and are working with a company to improve their outdoor space. Pupil participation is high on the agenda and children are kept well informed about the difference their voice is making.</p>
<p>9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.</p>	<p>The school has developed strong community connections and this has often been linked to fundraising activity and donations, though the children were happy to share how environmental concerns have become something which they’ve been working on more and more: <i>“We’re cleaning up the environment,”</i> shared one, another noted that, <i>“We did litter picking,”</i> whilst a third explained how they’d written a letter to <i>“...ask people to ride bikes or scooters, not cars.”</i> Whilst Covid had impacted, there were encouraging shoots of activism which demonstrated the children’s commitment to social justice and emerging empowerment. A planned partnership project with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games also offers a clear opportunity.</p>