

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Allen Edwards Primary School
Headteacher:	Louise Robertson
RRSA coordinator:	Nicola Harris
Local authority:	London Borough of Lambeth
Assessor(s):	Isobel Mitchell and Kathy Allan
Date:	15 th July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a Gold virtual accreditation report. The assessors would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff 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 and provided a good collection of evidence

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:

- Children’s knowledge of rights was excellent.
- Staff commitment to supporting every child and their family to ensure their rights are met especially during the recent lockdown due to Covid 19.
- Revised policy and practice to support positive behaviour using a child rights-based approach which has had a significant impact on pupils and staff.

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:

- Focus on the language of ‘rights and ‘respect’ rather than ‘rights and responsibilities’ on rights charters and in other displays and ensure that children understand the responsibilities of adults as ‘Duty Bearers’ and the unconditionality of rights.
- Utilise the move to the new school building and other opportunities to continue to engage children with decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school. For example, you could create sub-groups of your large RRSA group to work on topics such as school improvement planning, e-safety or staff recruitment.
- Continue to develop the opportunities for pupils to advocate and campaign to protect children’s rights, for example through developing learning and action relating to the ‘Global Goals’ and developing longer term campaigning and outreach in the local community on Article 2, non-discrimination.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	At Allan Edwards Primary School there are 350 pupils on roll. Of those, 28 have an EHCP, 35 a SEND Support plan (IEP) and 112 children are on the SEND register. There is a speech and language base as part of the school’s provision. 46.6% pupils are eligible for free school meals and 63.4% of the pupil population have English as an additional language. Ofsted rated the school as ‘good’ in 2018.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / 2 Assistant Heads / Deputy Head/ RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people interviewed	7 from the RRSA steering group plus 11 in a focus group (one of whom was at home)
Number of adults interviewed	5 teaching staff, 1 support staff, 1 parent
Evidence provided	Focus groups, written evidence, PowerPoints
Registered for RRSA: 22/08/2017	Silver achieved: 13/06/2018

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 were confident in naming a wide range of rights, including many articles that are less well known, for example, the right to government assistance and the right to be protected from exploitation. They were aware that some children have their rights denied to them for example due to child labour or war - citing examples of how the latter may deny children the right to education, family re-unification, nutritious food and clean water. They were also clear that rights are for all children from birth to 18 and that they do not have to be earned and cannot be taken away.

The staff described how the fundamentals of rights are revisited at the start of every year and the role of adults as Duty Bearers is reiterated. Children and staff learn about rights through rights focus days, held every term, article of the month, assemblies, discrete lessons on rights, and through links across the wider curriculum. For example, in Reception the children have been learning about and celebrating their right to an identity. In Year 3 history children have learnt about how rights were accessed or denied in the past for the Anglo Saxons and how this compares with today. In geography they have been learning about how access to rights varies in different places around the world. The staff told us that children learning about rights *“boosts their confidence and communication and helps them to know their place in their wider world.”* Even the youngest children, in the Nursery, talk about rights such as the right to play and the right to education through their daily routine and learning. The children record and reflect on their learning in Rights Respecting books, one of which was proudly shared with us by a pupil during the virtual visit.

The photographs we saw of the school showed that articles from the CRC are prominent on all displays and the school’s commitment to children’s rights is explained very clearly and in detail on the school website. Additionally, the Teaching and Learning Handbook shows how rights are linked to the curriculum overviews. Assemblies are linked to an ‘Article of the Month’ and to global events such as ‘Walk to School Day’, ‘Anti-Slavery Day’ and ‘International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.’ One example of an assembly script presented to us in the evidence file focussed on the right to freedom of expression with children giving examples of how they can express their feelings in an appropriate way. Many of the assemblies and class discussions on rights are led by children from the Rights Respecting steering group.

Staff, Governors and parents receive regular updates on the rights work and staff receive more in-depth training on rights at the start of every year. Governors are kept informed with work relating to rights through visits to the school and the governors’ meetings. The parent we spoke with was very enthusiastic about the work on rights in the school and told us how she has learnt a lot about rights and what governments can do to respect rights from her son who is in Year 2. She explained that *“My son feels very confident and he knows he will be heard.”* She also said that the school are very good at keeping parents informed through letters, displays and on-line. The school has a very open relationship with parents who regularly visit the school for workshops and events.

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 Senior Leadership Team told us that since achieving the silver award the rights-based framework has become much more embedded and explained that *“everything flows from rights.”* It is clear there is a commitment to children’s rights at a high level as evidenced by the frequent links to rights in the School’s self-evaluation (SEF) and by the thoughtful references to rights in all the school policies. The school values are explicitly linked to rights, for example the school value of ‘respect’ is linked to Article 2 - non-discrimination, Article 12 – the right to a voice and Article 16 - the right to privacy.

The school recently reviewed their behaviour policy with input from the children and revised it to focus more on dignity and respect. It is now based more around positive rewards and creating opportunities for reflection. The children we spoke with felt that this was fair and the headteacher told us that since they have introduced the new policy and practice there have been fewer incidents of bullying or discriminatory behaviour and it has improved relationships throughout the school as children are given more time and space to reflect on their actions. Comparative figures from surveys completed by parents indicate that in 2018 85% of parents felt that the school dealt effectively with bullying compared to 2019 with 96% of parents felt that the school dealt effectively with bullying. There are rights based charters developed with each class at the start of the year which help to guide staff and children as to how they can help respect the rights of everyone. The staff told us that the children understand the concepts of fairness and equity, for example, they recognise that sometimes children with SEND may need to be treated differently in order for them to fully access their rights.

Survey results indicate that 93% of pupils feel safe at school and have an adult that they have identified they can speak to if something is worrying them. Following the survey, actions were carried out by Senior Leaders to ensure that plans were put in place to ensure all children could be supported in ways that would make them feel safe, for example, buddy systems and friendship circles for pupils feeling isolated. The children we spoke to confirmed that they felt safe in school and gave examples of how the staff help them keep safe, for example, having adults in the playground to check everyone is OK. *“You have always got someone to speak to if you need to talk to an adult”* said a child. The children were also clear that if they had a concern or a suggestion about the school, they could raise it with the school council or with one of their teachers.

It is very clear that the school is committed to supporting children’s physical and mental health. The support the school has made available to families during the school closure due to the Covid 19 pandemic has been exemplary. Vulnerable families have received weekly phone calls and the school has worked with local charities to deliver food to families suffering financially. They have also worked with the local housing association to put together well-being packs for children and all parents have been invited to come and collect free books for their children to read. Staff have stayed in touch with all families even if they are not identified as vulnerable to make sure they feel supported and connected to the school, through videos of the staff reading stories or teaching lessons and through regular phone calls. The headteacher told us that *“In an odd way the school closure has strengthened our relationship with the community, they were so scared, and they felt really appreciative of our support.”*

Access to high quality physical education is supported through the school’s employment of 2 specialist sports coaches who also provide bespoke interventions for pupils with, for example, low self–esteem, management of diet, development of gross motor skills from Nursery pupils to Year 6. The school provides a number of free physical well-being activities for parents and children throughout the week e.g. family park run, family boot camp as well as ensuring pupil premium money is used to support families in accessing paid sports and well-being clubs such as yoga. 93% of parents agreed that the school has supported children in knowing how to make healthy choices (Autumn 2019). When the children return to school in September, the staff will focus on the children’s physical and mental health. In addition to the disruption and worry associated with lockdown and Covid 19, the children will also be coming into their new building. To support the children through these challenges, the staff are planning a well-being week before getting back into the formal curriculum and all staff have been trained in how to support children who have experienced trauma.

Ofsted described the school in 2018 as *‘an inclusive and welcoming environment where pupils are well supported to strengthen their learning and well-being.’* This culture of inclusion was apparent to us through evidence shared showing how pupils with SEND are included and supported in school. One parent of a child with special needs, who was moving out of the area, chose not to move her child to another school nearer to their home because at Allen Edwards *‘Everyone has been so welcoming and he has never felt like he can’t do anything or that anyone is being unkind to him because of his needs. He is so happy with you.’* The staff commented that many of the families have also been profoundly affected by the Black Lives Matters campaign and in response the staff are undertaking a review of the curriculum to ensure it reflects and celebrates diversity and they are developing project work over the next year based on Article 2, non-discrimination.

Children have a range of opportunities to influence their curriculum. All new topics across the school begin with a knowledge harvest where children are asked to say what they already know about a topic and what they would like to learn. The Reception teacher explained how children’s interests such as cars and superheroes are incorporated into their curriculum planning and how they make choices in activities during the day. The children were also aware of how they respect their classmates’ right to education by not disrupting the class. They clearly felt listened to and involved, *“When you have a question and you have something to say, everyone will listen.”*

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

Children have a range of opportunities to take part in pupil led groups or take on leadership roles, for example as part of the school council, the RRSA steering group, house captains and a new eco-group instigated by three pupils. Children and staff were able to give examples of changes that have been made as a result of pupils’ ideas, for example improved equipment and systems in the playground, a new talent show and improvements to school meals. All children have been consulted on the design and use of outdoor space in their new school which they will be moving into in September. They were also consulted in the recent review of the behaviour policy. Staff recently created a child friendly version of the school ‘drivers’ and children were able to contribute to developing strategies and spaces to support reading in school.

Becoming a member of the Rights Respecting Steering Group has become very popular, with more than 50 children attending the meetings. The members of the steering group we spoke to explained that their role is *“to make sure every knows their rights and to tell people what’s going on in the world.”* The steering group have created and led assemblies and lessons on rights and have co-ordinated charity events. One of the members came up with the idea of focussing on a charity per month and led the process to obtain pupil’s ideas on which charities they wished to focus on for 2020.

The school have raised money for many charities such as Water Aid and UNICEF and have taken part in a challenge called ‘Miles for Refugees’ where they have run a certain distance every week to raise awareness of how far refugees have to walk and to raise money for the British Red Cross to support refugees. The children showed a good understanding of how their charity work connects to children’s rights and the headteacher commented how *“charity work is so much more meaningful now as the children understand it in the context of rights.”*

The children also talked about how they have been learning about air pollution and plastics in the ocean and have written to their MP as part of the UNICEF Outright campaign on air pollution. The evidence showed that the Outright campaigns on air pollution and the 30th anniversary of the CRC engaged the whole school at different levels. The parent we spoke to explained that she is learning from her son about rights and the environment, *“He said to me, Mum we have to care about pollution.”*