

# RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Oakley Cross Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Rachel Brannon
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Charlotte O’Neal
<b>Local authority:</b>	Durham
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Kathy Allan and Chris Shannon
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2019 and 11 <sup>th</sup> March 2020

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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 reaccreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

This was a reaccreditation visit and it was evident that children’s rights remain embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life. Following the initial visit in December, it was agreed that a further visit would take place to seek additional evidence. On our return the school had implemented a range of strategies to increase the confidence of the pupils in talking about rights. They had focussed on supporting staff, sharing a right of the week with links made between assemblies, learning and children’s own experiences and focusing on supporting children to develop their speaking skills which had all had a positive impact.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Visibility of rights in the school environment and through school activities including curriculum and parent events.
- A strong school ethos and values linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that is well understood and promoted across the school and wider community.
- The developing focus on campaigning which is shown in children’s passion for sharing how they can make a difference to the lives of others.

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:

- Ensure that children are given ownership of their ideas, through pupil groups and the wider school. Consider steering group membership so that pupils are your rights experts supporting progress and learning about rights for the wider school.
- Continue to strengthen work on global citizenship and sustainable development and make links to children’s rights. Utilise the resources available through World’s Largest Lesson and Global Goals to engage staff and pupils in making a difference. Utilise the Youth Advocacy Toolkit to support pupil led campaigns and learning.
- When next refreshed, update and streamline your charters to ensure consistency in language across the school.
- Continue to embed articles through policies and practice making explicit links throughout the SIP where relevant.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	<p>Oakley Cross Primary School has 172 pupils of which 35% are eligible for free school meals. 3.5% speak English as an additional language while 17% receive SEN support or have an EHCP.</p> <p>The school was last visited by Ofsted in May 2018 when they were rated ‘Good.’</p>
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher and RRSA coordinator
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	26 children in focus groups, 2 children on the learning walk and a further 22 children
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	2 teachers, 2 support staff and 2 parents
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits
<b>Registered for RRSA: August 2012</b>	<p><b>Silver achieved: June 2013</b></p> <p><b>Gold achieved: November 2016</b></p>

**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 main focus for teaching about the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are the ‘family groups’ which are mixed ages and meet regularly. In addition, relevant articles are threaded through other areas of the curriculum for example when reading the story, ‘Water Princess’ Y2 children linked their work to article 24. An article of the week is introduced into assemblies and is discussed throughout the week in every class. The RRS coordinator said, *“Stripping back and doing a right of the week is better than the right of the day, it allows time to link to assemblies, the curriculum and the world around and we can build on these.”* The use of an RRS bear, awarded for respectful behaviour to a child every weekend, has helped to develop understanding of the CRC in children and their parents. Children were able to list many articles including the right to safe adoption. They were unanimous in their understanding on universality, inalienability and unconditionality of the CRC and also understood that not all children have their rights respected. One child said, *“we have the right to clean water, but some children in Africa don’t get that, they have to walk 4 miles for water and then it’s not clean.”* Children also shared how they are collecting crisp packets to make blankets for the homeless ensuring they have a dry place to sleep and that they often discussed rights linked to news stories. Other issues that children raised as impacting on rights are poverty, litter, war and not feeling safe. RR focus days and afternoons are held termly and allow children to explore specific articles and how they relate to their own lives and the lives of others.

Displays around school highlight the importance of the CRC to visitors including parents and carers. A key display in the corridor showed the children’s School Development Plan which was linked to relevant articles. Assemblies are regularly linked to the CRC and often these are led by the children. The school web site has an informative Rights respecting section and highlights work done by the children. All school policies now contain links to relevant articles of the convention. For example the Respectful Relationships policy is linked to articles 3, 13, 19 and 37. Children keep their parents informed about their work on rights and parents are invited to all RRS events that take place in school, monthly newsletters have relevant articles threaded through them. An article on attendance is linked to article 28 and another on wearing jewellery in school was linked to the right to be safe. In addition, the pupils now publish their own school newspaper, ‘The Oakley Star’ which gives the children ownership and a strong voice.

Parents and staff spoke passionately about RRS work. A parent said, *“Children are passionate about rights, they soak it up and take it with them, it’s always ticking over in their minds.”* A Y4/5 teacher said, *“Teaching the CRC engrains a lot of respect and understanding in the children.”* The headteacher, staff and governors show a strong commitment and enthusiasm for RRSA and they were quick to identify the importance of the work. The headteacher explained, *“It fits in perfectly with our ethos of ‘respect and success for all’ we have open communication with children, and they come and tell us if one of their rights is not being met.”* Staff access regular CPD and the coordinator is part of a local network of schools who meet and share good practice and supporting them to keep up to date with developments from RRS and Unicef UK.

**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**

Staff and children at Oakley Cross, understand the role of a duty bearer and how they promote the rights of children. All classroom doors have information about duty bearers clearly marked and children listed their duty bearers including teachers, parents and the Prime Minister. Without exception, children agreed that they are treated fairly at school. One child said, *“we are all treated the same here.”* An example given by a year 4 child was that *“we all get the same help, the teacher doesn’t just go to one person.”* Another added, *“we use democracy to vote for our end of term treat.”* Children agreed that in some instances a child may need to be treated differently if they need extra help. Another example was *“that sports leaders help younger children to do sports on the yard because they don’t know all the games.”*

There is a positive and mutually respectful ethos at Oakley Cross. Throughout the visit children listened respectfully to each other and were responsible and cooperative as they moved around school. It was evident from visiting classrooms and talking to staff, that relationships are very positive between adults and children, and children and children. Children say they feel confident talking with adults and wouldn’t hesitate to approach any adult if they had a problem. Children described dignity as being treated equally and with respect. They gave an example of speaking privately to an adult in the reflection room if they felt anxious about anything.

Pupils all agreed that school kept them safe and they were able to indicate ways in which this right was promoted, explaining that visitors wear badges and there is always an adult on the playground to keep the children safe. E-safety is a high priority for children at Oakley Cross, E-Cadets play an active role in keeping children safe online and the NSPCC have visited school to address some of the issues. All children knew that they must keep their passwords private and were clear they should tell an adult if anything inappropriate appeared on their computer screen. Children clearly trust the school systems to keep them safe and know who to speak with if they feel unsafe. Everyone agreed that the playground and football charters have improved the playground. One child said, *“If someone calls someone a name, I would go over and say remember the rights because you’re not respecting them.”* Pupil Guardians are also on hand at playtime to help resolve conflict.

Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a key driver at Oakley Cross. Wellbeing for everyone is a core value. A Calm club for break and lunchtime, developed from a young carers group, aims to reduce stress and anxiety, increase confidence, and encourage children to laugh and move. Children take part in a range of activities including Yoga and eye exercises to support their emotional health. A Learning Mentor in school supports vulnerable children. A wide range of after school clubs are available to encourage children to be active and stay healthy. Healthy diets are regularly discussed and children take part in lots of physical exercise such as ‘squiggle while you wiggle’ box to be fit and morning skipping, because as one child said, *“Physical exercise helps our brain so we try to do 30 minutes exercise a day.”* Another added, *“We use different exercises to reduce stress because we’re all different.”* A recent initiative ‘Eat them to defeat them’ encourages children to try unfamiliar vegetables both at school and home. One little boy admitted that he thought he hated broccoli but because he tried it he now enjoys it.

There is a strong ethos of inclusion at Oakley Cross based on creating a place where all individuals are respected. Pupils believe everyone is included and valued. A member of staff described the school as, “*a family where everyone is accepted and they don’t see differences.*” Oakley Cross is a Stonewall Champion and has an action plan to ensure everyone is included, no matter what their circumstances. The Friends of Oakley Cross work hard to support the children’s right to relax and play. They raise money so every child can enjoy a visit to the pantomime and other trips are accessible to all.

Children agree that they all respect each other’s right to learn. If a child disrupts the learning, children are quick to remind the perpetrator that they are denying the right to learn of the other children. All children realise the importance of coming to school every day and that by not coming to school, they are being denied their right to education. In some classes, children are involved in the planning of their learning. At the beginning of a topic they fill in a sheet showing what they already know about the subject. Children also have Learning Journey sheets in their Maths and English books so they can track their progress towards their targets.

**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 strong at Oakley Cross Primary school. In addition to the Rights Respecting Steering group, children can join the E Cadets, Playground Guardians and Sports leaders. If children want to be part of one of the committees, they write a speech and their class votes for them. All groups feedback to their class and consult their peers for their views. One child said, “*Adults listen to our ideas, if we have a good idea, we tell them.*” Children produced their own School development plan with 4 simple targets: to write a policy statement, improve resilience on the playground, write an Anti-bullying policy and support more local and global campaigns. The policy is displayed in the corridor so all children can monitor the progress towards their targets.

Children at Oakley Cross are active campaigners and are prolific letter writers. Key areas covered include letters to the Prime Minister about getting clean water to all countries, the local MP about air pollution and to a local newspaper about OutRight. A Y1 class became very involved in the plight of orangutangs after reading ‘There’s a Rang Tan in my bedroom.’ They visited the local supermarket to check ingredient lists on chocolate bars for palm oil and collected coins to help save orangutangs. A Y2 teacher said, “*our children are very engaged with the wider world and of making it better.*” Another said, ‘*they are well rounded and understand that they’re privileged compared to other children who don’t have their rights met.*” Locally, children support ‘The Well’ foodbank with harvest festival and advent donations.

Recycling in school is well established, each class has 3 recycle bins, for paper, compost and land fill. Compost produced is used on the garden area “*to help the plants grow.*” A traffic light system on lights encourages everyone to ‘switch off’ and save electricity. Children were very concerned about the use of plastic bin bags, they researched alternatives and costed their proposal then spoke with the headteacher and caretaker. As a result, recyclable bags are now used in bins. Children were also

## UNITED KINGDOM

concerned about the use of plastic straws and milk cartons so now have their milk served into reusable cups from jugs. The headteacher said, "*Children know they're heard and use their voice.*"

The school has a generous tradition of fundraising and children play an active part in organising and planning charity days. Recent events included Unicef Day for Change, Children in Need and wearing a Christmas jumper to raise money for the Butterwick Hospice. Children understand that by raising money they are enabling children globally to have their rights met. A parent said, "*Our children are passionate about their rights and knowing their rights encourages them to speak up and challenge when they see others not having their rights met, not just in school but globally.*"