

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Marlow Church of England Infant School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Sharon Reynolds
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Emma Howarth
<b>Local authority:</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Jilly Hillier and Hilary Alcock
<b>Date:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> March 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Gold accreditation report is based on a ‘virtual’ visit. 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:

- A commitment by senior leaders to providing a learning environment and a strategic view in which rights play a key part.
- Positive relationships and happy children who love their school and know about rights.
- The caring and nurturing ethos of the school, where the values of dignity and respect are lived and valued by children and their parents.
- A commitment to the environment.

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 deepen knowledge and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) throughout the school community and widen the range of articles that children are familiar with and can articulate, appropriate to their age and ability.
- Be explicit about the important role that the CRC plays in your school, what it adds to your ethos and how improved outcomes for children are linked to rights.
- Continue to support staff (including new colleagues) to have the knowledge to confidently teach about the CRC, to model rights respecting language and attitudes in their daily interactions with children and make explicit reference to rights in their planning.
- Continue to develop an ethos of inclusion and non-discrimination, providing opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity in all its forms including race, gender, belief and different types of families so that all people feel valued and included.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	Marlow C of E Infant school has 179 pupils on roll aged 3 – 5 years. 2.8% of pupils are eligible for FSM/ Pupil Premium; 1.7% of pupils have an ECHP, IEP or SEN Statement; 11.7% of children speak English as an Additional Language.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher and RRSA coordinator
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	16 children in focus groups.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	9 adults (including SLT, teachers, 4 parents, 1 RRSA governor/ parent)
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Detailed evaluation form, digital evidence including PowerPoints, video messages, child and adult focus groups.
<b>Registered for RRSA: 21/07/2011</b>	<b>Silver achieved: 11/06/2019</b>



## 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

There was a clear commitment from the headteacher that learning about rights “*Starts here...starts now.*” with young children in her school and that embedding the CRC in school life has been an important part of the school’s journey from RRSA Silver to Gold. She explained how children now, “*Can stand up for what they believe in, understanding their rights and that those rights are afforded to other children.*” Pupils interviewed named a range of rights from the CRC appropriate to their age including the right to be safe, the right to life, to learn, to food and drink, to be cared for and the right not to be bullied. One child also explained that it was important to, “*Include everyone.*” They knew that rights were for, “*All children around the world,*” that children have their rights “*When you are born.*” and that rights cannot be taken away. When talking about why rights were important one child explained, “*Without our rights we wouldn’t be protected.*” They understood that not all children have access to all their rights with one child saying, “*Some children don’t get their rights - water is not always fresh.*” One child explained, “*We have 42 rights and they are up in all the classrooms so children can look at them.*” The RRSA Lead said how proud she was of the children’s knowledge and passion for rights. Children have the opportunity to learn about rights in a number of ways, including in whole school assemblies (worship), discrete rights lessons, Article of the Week, displays, posters and charters. Rights are also explored on specific global calendar days such as World Children’s Day. The Rights Ambassadors play an important role in helping children to know their rights and gave a presentation in worship, giving each class a CRC poster to display in their classroom. The school year starts with an assembly to refresh understanding of rights and RRSA is part of the induction process for new staff.

Staff training has included information on the language and terminology of the CRC and the RRSA Lead explained that RRSA was being embedded as “*a whole school approach.*” She has also supported mid-day supervisors to use the language of rights to help solve disagreements on the playground giving them lanyards that include rights and, “*A few more tools*” for their role. Staff explained how they now include rights in their medium and short term planning. One teacher explained how they had linked their work on Refugees to rights; looking at the story *Escape from Pompei* exploring what it would be like to have to flee your home. Children had also learnt about the Olympic swimmer from Syria and, “*How you can be a hero for your world.*” Parents described how learning about rights issues was helping children’s understanding of the world e.g. “*When they see something on the news ... use this as a springboard for conversations – such as ethnicity or gender ... so they can be a catalyst for change.*” The school has been awarded the Green Eco Flag and children learn about the causes and impacts of climate change on people and the planet. One teacher explained how they were, “*Making sure that global goals are there alongside rights.*”

Governors and parents interviewed were knowledgeable, supportive and feel a rights approach to be an important part of the school. One parent described how, “*When we went to a meeting at school as prospective parents ... it was clear that the vision of the school underpins those values.*” Parents are kept informed of their children’s learning and commented on the importance of learning about issues such as International Women’s Day saying, “*It’s really important for kids to know how they fit into the world.*” Many parents showed their appreciation of the schools rights respecting work in their responses to a RRS questionnaire, with one parent explaining that they could talk to children more confidently at home now and how, “*It helps us as parents think about this as well. We usually chat about the article each week and issues around it.*” The headteacher explained that, “*Children’s understanding has grown even though they are so young.*” The RRS and Wellbeing Governor explained that, “*As parents we have learnt about rights respecting and it helped with parenting ... how to bring up our children.*”



## 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 headteacher described how she was proud of the way RRSA is now, "*Part of what we do*" explaining that the work on the school's vision means, "*We have been able to weave rights respecting into our Christian vision.*" The school website states: 'Within our school, we hold the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the centre of everything we do.' Strategic documentation refers to the CRC such as the Anti-Bullying Policy, Attendance for Learning and the Equalities Policy. One person commented, "*It's difficult to extract it because it's so much a part of what we do.*" Staff explained how the term 'duty bearers' was used for example with mid-day supervisors and that this role is, "*Even more important*" now. The RRSA and Wellbeing governor expressed support and admiration for the school's rights respecting work explaining how it was integral to the vision, strategic planning and policies of the school. He explained how children's rights had been, "*A key component of the return to school*" over the past few weeks including the focus on wellbeing and the impact of Covid-19 has had children's rights. The school charter is based on key articles from the CRC and shows how children and adults respect these rights. One parent commented on the way fairness is part of the school's values explaining that her child had "*Come home from school saying mummy but we must always treat people as we want to be treated.*" Children understood the role of adults as duty bearers describing how, "*Teachers, parents, grandparents. ...help us.*" and keep them safe.

Relationships are positive in the school. There is a strong caring, family ethos in which the values of trust and mutual respect are promoted and practiced. Children are treated with dignity. For example, one child explained how a teacher will talk to a child about an issue individually because, "*Teachers don't want others to laugh at you.*" Children also talked about strategies for resolving disagreements including learning from their charters and, "*You can say sorry.*" One child explained that, "*Rights help to stop bullying.*" 'Mind-up' training was described as another tool for helping to achieve, "*...calmer lunchtimes.*" One child explained that if they felt "*Rights were being taken away, they would tell a teacher, maybe ask them to stop and tell them the rights.*" Another child said, they would, "*Stand up to them...We would put posters up so that teachers know they are important.*"

Questionnaires show that children feel safe and parents feel their children are kept safe in school. On a video presented as evidence one child explained how the school charter, "*Helps to keep each other safe and keep the school a great school.*" Another child explained that, "*Children should know their rights because they should feel safe.*" They were able to give examples of how school keeps them safe such by, "*Looking after us ... helping us*" protecting them from fire and with, "*Signs when the floor is wet and slippery.*" They also described learning about being safe on the internet and about road safety.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of children is an important part of school life. Children talked about the importance of 'Brain Breaks' to have time to relax, think about their learning and, "*Be calm before learning.*" One child explained, "*I like it because it's a bit of quiet time after break.*" The school offers a range of activities that encourage children to stay physically healthy. These include clubs like ballet and sports such as rugby. One child explained that this was important, "*So that you don't always have to think too much*" and that you can, "*Set your mind on something different and get exercise.*" The Wild World and Nature Corridor Gardens play an important part in supporting the wellbeing of children and adults through learning about the natural world.





Children are valued as individuals and the strong family and community ethos promotes the idea that, *“From day one we are part of the Sandygate family.”* This means people treat each other with dignity and respect. The Convention underpins this and is part of the language used to celebrate each child’s uniqueness. The headteacher emphasised that in admissions meetings, inclusion *“Is one of the things we promote.”* She explained how, *“Where adaptations are needed, we do that.”* For example, it was important to the school to be able to offer children with a disability mainstream education and to help all children, *“Understand each other.”* An example of this is the way the whole school has taken on learning Makaton. One child explained, *“It’s fun because we get to learn new things and learn their language.”* A parent described how the school had looked after the wellbeing of all children during lockdown by phoning children and, *“Supporting them with their own emotional journey. ... children will then mirror that and respect others.”* The school celebrates Odd Sock Day as part of Anti-bullying week, *“To show our differences”* and that, *“Different opinions are important”*. One child explained *“When we wear odd socks it shows we’re not under others, no one is better than anyone else.”* Another child added, *“We shouldn’t be under pressure”* to be the same as everyone else.

There was a very clear sense that children enjoy their school and love learning. On the Welcome video one child explains, *“I love learning here because I get lots of support from my teachers and my friends.”* Parents confirmed that it was a, *“Very nurturing, happy place to learn.”* Children and staff described how children are involved in their learning. For example, as part of the Feedback Policy children are involved in reviewing and assessing their learning; at the end of a lesson, children circle a face to show the level of their understanding of their learning and teachers explained how children have a say in topics. One teacher explained how a topic on Water was linked to the right to clean water and also to children’s right to be listened to by incorporating children’s interests into the learning such as pond dipping, and water purification techniques in Australia.

### **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 are empowered to have a voice in school, for example, by voting on the many pupil voice groups including Rights Ambassadors, School Council, Science Council, Arts Council and Eco Warriors. One Rights Ambassador explained, *“We make sure that our classmates know what their rights are.”* Another child commented that, *“It’s important for children to have rights so they can be protected, safe and happy... and to get the stuff they deserve.”* Staff feel that the development of pupil voice has been a key impact of RRSA, and that staff are, *“Now confident and quite happy to let children lead.”* Children took part in the UK Parliament Week, learning about the role of government and parliament, recreating their own parliament in school and voting on different topics to improve their school. These included: installing new Friendship Stops on the field and the playground, *“So nobody will be left out”*, having new designs painted on the playground and new apparatus. One child explained, *“We make the environment better.”* Children described how they can tell their good ideas to their teachers, RRS Ambassadors and to School Councillors and know that they will be listened to. One child explained how he helped to reduce plastic in school, *“When I was in Reception, I wrote a letter to ask them not to use plastic [for milk] that can’t be reused – and so they were changed.”*

In relation to their local community, children explained how, *“We raise money for foodbanks and charities”* and how they had, *“Told people about our rights.”* One child described how *“We don’t always do things for other countries we sometimes do things for families in the UK and people near our school because people can’t survive without food.”* The RRSA Governor explained how important it was, *“To make sure children look at things from different perspectives ... both local and global.”* Being involved in a pilot twinning programme with a school in India is seen as a way to do this. The aim of this programme is to promote mutual learning and strengthen relationships between children and teachers



with a focus on environmental concerns. Children understood that issues such as climate change and the refugee crisis impacted on children's rights and although these are complex issues, it was clear that children felt they were able to influence change in their own way. The Eco Warriors, for example, asked the governors to declare an environmental and climate emergency on their behalf and this was shared in the local press. As part of World Children's day, another child in Reception suggested that the school should support children who have had to leave their homes. A link has been made with Marlow Refugee Action and the school has plans to support a specialised learning centre for children on the Greek island of Samos. Children understood that this was important to, "*Help people to survive and keep their lives going.*"