

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Sydenham Primary School and Lighthorne Heath Primary School The Leamington Federation
Headteacher:	Juliette Westwood – Executive Headteacher
RRSA coordinator:	Josie Martin
Local authority:	Warwickshire
Assessor(s):	Hilary Alcock and Stella Man
Date:	27 th June 2019

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

Sydenham formed a ‘hard’ federation with Lighthorne Heath in September 2010. The two schools share a governing body and members of the senior leadership teamwork across the two schools.

It was evident that children’s rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- Happy and confident children who clearly articulate their enthusiasm for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).
- An energising, contagious and galvanising commitment from the headteacher and RRSA lead for the school to become full rights respecting.
- A very inclusive ethos and 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:

- Weave articles more explicitly into long term curriculum plans and consider including a section on teaching rights on the lesson monitoring form.
- Support the younger children to learn the about the CRC using age appropriate language or (as is the case at Lighthorne Heath) through pictures.
- Include the actions of adults (as duty bearers) on class charters and consider using charters to support your new behaviour policy. See the Charter Guidance on the RRSA website.
- Help the whole school community to develop a greater sense of critical enquiry, informed by the CRC when looking at the world and at global issues consider using the Sustainable Development Goals through [The World's Largest Lesson](#) .
- Develop more of an ambassadorial role, involving pupils where possible, telling others e.g. at other schools and the community about the CRC.
- Increase and monitor the consistency of the impact of RRSA across both schools.
- Extend opportunities for parents to learn more about the CRC.
- Take time to embed and extend RRSA developments and practice e.g. the incorporation of CRC within school policies so that the Federation's rapid journey to Gold is sustainable.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Sydenham Primary School: 382 children on role, 13% pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, 48% EAL learners and 27 languages spoken, 24% SEND Lighthorne Heath Primary School: 48 children on role, 40% pupils eligible for Pupil Premium, 10% EAL learners, 2 languages spoken 25% SEND
Attendees at SLT meeting	Executive Headteacher, RRSA coordinator, 3 assistant headteachers
Number of children and young people interviewed	At Sydenham: 6 Ambassadors plus 17 children in focus groups, 4 on the learning walk and 89 in class. At Lighthorne Heath: 5 children in focus groups, 5 children on the learning walk and 28 children in class visits
Number of adults interviewed	At Sydenham: 3 teaching staff, 1 parent, 3 governors (2 staff and one with a small teaching role within the school), At Lighthorne Heath: 2 teaching staff, 2 parents, and the caretaker

Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits
Registered for RRSA: March 2017	Silver achieved: September 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

Most children at Sydenham know a very wide range of rights. The school environment in both schools show that children’s rights are a high priority; there are specific displays that highlight the work of Unicef which one pupil explained, *“Are important because we can walk past and look and remember.”* The same pupil also pointed out how other displays have labels to show which articles link to the learning. Children spoke passionately about projects they are involved with, *“That make sure that other children are getting their rights both locally and globally”,* e.g. campaigning for a safer route to their own school, organising a litter pick, fundraising to buy water purification and health care kits and being part of a toilet twinning initiative to provide privacy and safety. Children who are RRSA Ambassadors, plus those in the focus groups and within classes all spoke enthusiastically about learning about the CRC. They know that rights are universal, unconditional, inherent, inalienable and indivisible.

The Executive Headteacher considers that a rights-based approach, *“Fits in with the ethos, values and philosophy of the federated schools. It underpins everything we do and provides a cohesion for all stakeholders.”* She commented that, *“The school has always done a lot to keep children safe, but children were not always clear about why those things happened whereas now they know that it is their right.”* The RRSA lead explained how a rights-based approach has, *“Opened up non statutory parts of the curriculum; we always celebrated diversity but now the children know that it is a right for them to do so.”* The assistant headteacher at Lighthorne Heath, the smaller of the two schools within the Federation, considers that through RRS pupils, *“Now see themselves as part of a bigger, global community.”*

Staff identified that since gaining the Silver award a significant change had been the way the CRC is taught about and referenced in all assemblies. The RRSA lead commented, *“This has been an enormous change since our Silver award; we were teaching about and through the CRC but now children are leading assemblies.”* Staff spoke very positively about the evident passion and commitment of the SLT for the schools to become Rights Respecting. There are regular staff continuing professional development (CPD) sessions, utilising the RRSA training that the Headteacher and RRSA lead have attended which, the RRSA lead explained, *“Means that we keep building on what we have done before; we are on a bigger journey; the more we do the more independent the staff are becoming with their knowledge and confidence to include a rights based focus within their teaching.”* A Key Stage 1 teacher at Sydenham explained how reference to relevant Articles is now made at the beginning of lessons and that, *“The CRC is like a concrete base for all learning with children now making links themselves about which articles relate to aspects of their learning.”* Another teacher commented that she considers that incorporating a child rights-based approach has, *“Empowered staff as well as the children, we are learning with them and*

from them.” She also commented that, “The RRSA journey used to be led from above but now it’s coming more from the children.”

Parents are developing their knowledge of how the CRC links to their children’s learning through a very comprehensive weekly newsletter which clearly identifies which rights children are accessing for themselves and supporting other children to do so. They attend regular class assemblies led by the children which increasingly have a child rights focus. One parent commented that her daughter regularly talks about the CRC at home and relates her learning in school to her wider life, e.g. her right to access reliable information and to use the internet safely to support her homework. The schools’ website clearly shows its commitment to becoming full RR. Governors consider that RRS has, “Widened children’s horizons and is completely encompassing within the school.”

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

Children spoken with were able to discuss and give examples of how the schools facilitated them to enjoy a wide range of rights. At Lighthorne on the learning walk the children related every display to their rights and how the school facilitated those rights, from the Reception child who explained his right to health and 'heart' and “Article 31, play and rest” followed by a Y5 child running through the many leisure activities provided by the school “or all ages, respecting our right to play,” while a Y2 child with autism explained that ‘Talk Partners’ are linked to Article 13. Children in the focus groups and in class were able to discuss the concept of fairness and equity. They recalled the song celebrating difference, gave the example of a plaster for an injury should not mean everyone in the class needed a plaster and explained the need for “Extra help for people who find things hard,” such as children with “Illnesses and refugees.” The children were confident that they would be heard if their rights were not being met in school and knew to talk with anybody they trusted.

Children and adults at both sites spoke passionately about how the Rights Respecting journey had improved relationships within the whole school community. The Executive Headteacher saw, “Placing children’s rights at the heart of school life as transformational.” “Children reflect more and can calm themselves down.” A parent explained it has made the school, “More welcoming...it’s increased everyone’s capacity to think for themselves... to help people across the world; since learning about rights my child’s education has been a whole different experience.” Children understand the concept of dignity and could describe how resolving conflict had become more respectful.

Most children said they felt safe in school and could describe how the duty bearers had put several systems in place including gates, fire alarms and First Aiders. They explained that being listened to is an important part of feeling safe and described the Taking Care Project for pupils to report any sense of not feeling safe either within or beyond school. The School Council had also executed a 'To Be Kind survey' as part of an anti-bullying campaign and the right to be safe which had led to school improvement. Children confidently explained that they trust all the adults in school. Children

know that they have a right to safe and reliable information including from online sources. Keeping safe online workshops have been run for parents.

The extensive range of support and information for the physical, mental, social and emotional needs of the children was evident in both schools during the learning walk and focus groups. Children spoke of, *“The extra help duty bearers provide through the ‘Sunshine and Rainbows room.’* Here staff provide sessions in which children can explore their emotions through a safe medium. In focus groups at both Sydenham and Lighthorne a child described how they had been helped through personal trauma by the school, encouraged to talk about it, *“Not on my own, not bottled into myself,”* and confidently shared how they felt to the assessor and other children in the focus group. One child explained how there is, *“Special Lego to help talk to an adult.”* (Nurture ABC (Aspire, Build and Connect) with Lego), and that the school has *“Mental First Aiders”* (staff are trained Mental Health First Aiders by MHFA UK). A parent described how his eight year old child since learning about his rights, *“Thinks more when he is doing things; he has opened up a lot more to the teachers. He feels he can voice his concerns. He now knows his own self-worth.”* Other children talked about the lunchtime and after-school cookery clubs, and children in both schools also highlighted the many opportunities the school provided to support their, *“Right to relax and play”* through a wide range of sporting, physical and other activities. The school identifies that 64% of pupils take part in a sport related extra curricular activity. Children’s physical health is also supported e.g. through extra swimming, bikeability training, Forest School sessions and events such as Walk to School Week.

There was a strong culture of inclusion in both schools. The confidence and openness of the children showed how much they felt included and valued. When asked about how the school included everyone a 'Young Interpreter' explained her role in supporting other ESL children because she spoke another language. Another explained *“We have (audio) spelling dictionaries for children who learn to spell differently,”* and another spoke of the school assemblies that had been delivered by children with special needs, *“So we can understand what they need and how we can help.”* One child with a specific needs passionately voiced that the school, *“110 %, 1000% supports pupils with individual needs.”*

The RRSA Coordinator explained that the learning environment had improved as, *“The children now really understand their impact on others. They are making sensible choices and there is less blame, more engagement and participation.”* Children spoke of 'Talk Partners' being about their right to be heard and a way to share ideas and learn from one another. The feedback system linked to Article 28 and 29, was highlighted in a display at Lighthorne where one of the key messages was 'collaboration is important' and how peer assessment takes place.

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 at Sydenham described how there were several different pupil leadership groups: School Councillors, Unicef Ambassadors, Online Safety Ambassadors, Arts Ambassadors, Eco-School Ambassadors, Royal Shakespeare Company Ambassadors, Learning Detectives and Peer Mediators. The Unicef Ambassadors described their role was, *“To make sure people were safe,”* and *“Help people get their rights.”* Y4 members of the Eco group added, *“We Womble and collect*

litter as part of our right to a clean environment.” They mentioned their work on an Eco Schools Green Flag action plan. Children at both schools enthusiastically and confidently described several school improvement initiatives they had been involved in developing, often asking other children through surveys, including improvements in the playground and wet play. This had led to children initiating the purchase of “Games, to help with maths and literacy... as part of our right to play and our right to education.” They described how they have purchased of a Friendship Stop (a bench),”For children who are feeling lonely in the playground.” They were also developing a Safer Route to School plan and are working with their local councillor to encourage traffic reduction and improve parking issues outside the school. Pupils have also actively engaged with Unicef’s OutRight Clean Air campaign. The RRS Coordinator explained how the Rights Respecting journey had raised confidence in her Y3 children who now brought ideas for campaigning and action, giving up playtime to run activities in school. This confidence was visible in the focus groups where children from Y3 spoke about the actions they had initiated. At Sydenham pupils have taken a lead role in planning and advertising a current multi school arts project called SPLAT. One of the assistant headteachers commented that, “Children are much more empowered and confident now e.g. liaising with other schools and representatives from Warwickshire council about the SPLAT (joint schools art) Project.”

Since achieving Silver, the schools now have a much stronger and clearer emphasis on developing global citizenship. The headteacher considers that children are now much more aware of what it means to be a global citizen. “They are empowered to take action and understand their own voice and value in what they can achieve.” The RRSA lead explained how linking learning to the global goals has, “Increased the children’s passion and excitement about their role as global citizens.” Children showed a growing awareness of how their campaigning and fundraising actions activities contribute to their role as global citizens. They spoke enthusiastically about how their decision to support a Toilet twinning initiative plus fundraising for other causes e.g. Soccer Aid, Macmillan Cancer relief and the NSPCC showed that, “We are caring for others who need help to get their rights.” The school is increasingly finding creative ways to include a global perspective within learning e.g. having an artist in school as part of a biodiversity project about bees.