

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St Edmunds RC Primary School
Headteacher:	Maria Kemble
RRSA coordinator:	Paul Francis
Local authority:	Suffolk
Assessor(s):	Frances Bestley & Sarah Hamilton
Date:	11 February 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor 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.

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 very good and widespread knowledge of rights.
- A strong focus on enabling children to thrive.
- An understanding expressed by many children that their views are taken really seriously.

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 develop the language around rights with older children particularly inherent, inalienable, equity, dignity.
- Support teachers to make more explicit reference to relevant articles when planning topics of learning across the curriculum.
- Continue to link the Thrive work to rights.
- Continue developing children's understanding about the 'why' of global issues, possibly through engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals through [The World's Largest Lesson](#).
- Continue to play an ambassadorial role by enabling children and staff to promote the Rights Respecting Schools Award and knowledge of the CRC with other schools.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	St Edmunds Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided mixed school situated in the town of Bury St Edmunds with 395 children on roll. 8.4% of children are eligible for Pupil Premium; 57% are EAL learners and 3% of children have an EHCP. The school was judged as good by Ofsted in February 2017.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Executive Headteacher / RRSA coordinator / head of school
Number of children and young people interviewed	44 children in 2 focus groups, 4 children on the learning walk and 30 children in class visits
Number of adults interviewed	5 teaching staff, 1 governor and ex parent
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits, Ricky's Rights diaries, planning, SIP and policies, emails from parents
Registered for RRSA: November 2016	Silver achieved: January 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

Children in the focus groups and in classes had a very diverse knowledge of rights. They cited an extremely wide range of articles including ones not generally identified by children and young people such as Articles 3, everything should be in the child's best interest, and 41, the government should not reduce provision if laws for children are better than stated in the Convention, and understood that richer countries should help poorer ones. As one boy explained his understanding of how rights had deepened, *"We now realise that these are what we are entitled to; they are not just a list of rules,"* and understood how his and other children's actions impacted on children's rights. Children understood the concepts of rights although were not familiar with the terms, inalienable, inherent. *"They are for everyone in the world... you are born with rights... children shouldn't work or be enslaved you don't have to do anything to have rights"* were some of the comments made by children.

Children were well informed about war in Syria impacting on children's right to be safe; that in some countries in the Middle East girls might not be able to access their right to education; in some places children only had access to salty or dirty water and that poverty impacted on children's access to nutritious food both globally and in the UK. They described how homelessness is linked to rights.

All staff were clearly committed to the Convention. *"There is an awareness of the whole community working together to achieve rights respecting"* stated the executive headteacher. *"Children initiate discussions about rights."* Staff identified that *"It's part of who we are now... we have a foundation of faith and rights strengthen this... it's now absorbed into our culture."* Recommendations from the Level 1 report had been shared with parents and acted upon. The school website welcome page references the school's current Silver status; Achieving Gold is a priority in the School Improvement Plan; the new behaviour policy references the Convention, planning for World Book Day made links to rights, Early Years had linked duty bearers to their topic on people who help us; Philosophy for Children sessions discussed rights questions often created by the children. There was ample evidence in the portfolio of staff CPD on rights. Children explained that they learned about rights in assemblies including class assemblies organised by children, from the rights diary, from posters and in lessons. *"We've done a lot of work on rights"* stated one child. There are a large number of rights focused displays around the school and many had been created by children. *"The posters remind us of our rights"* explained a child. Ricky's Rights diaries showed a record of parents' and children's experiences when looking after the rights mascot. Children of all ages were enthusiastic about taking Ricky home for a weekend and over a third identified that they had done so already this year. Responses from parents were equally enthusiastic; the Early Years diary particularly demonstrated good understanding about rights from parents.

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 were very clear that they enjoyed their rights in school. *“We know most of the rights in the Convention and get them in school”* stated a child. Two Year 6 girls in the focus group showed a poster they had made showing photographs of children enjoying their rights in school all appropriately linked to articles – among others they referenced privacy, a clean environment, to be looked after and treated fairly, education, to be heard. Other children confidently made links between playtime and Article 31, between school dinners and Article 24. Class, playground and dinner hall charters have been created by children, led by the School Council and *“the school’s got better”* explained one child. Children were very familiar with the term duty bearers and gave examples of adults such as teachers, teaching assistants and the school chef. A large poster in the hall explained ‘duty bearers are responsible for helping to ensure that we experience and enjoy the rights that we are entitled to.’ Children understood the difference between equality and equity and could give examples of practice in school to demonstrate this. They felt that they were treated fairly and that if someone was not accessing their rights they would *“tell an adult who would act...the duty bearers always help us.”*

Throughout the visit there was evidence of respectful relationships between children and between adults and children. Children listened respectfully to one another in the focus group and helped each other answer questions building on previous points. They understood the concept of dignity and all agreed that they were treated with respect. *“Learning about rights has made me become more respectful”* stated an older child. The headteacher explained that the foundation of rights provided *“a means to provide a consistent picture”* when having discussions with children and parents and that rights *“depersonalised”* difficult conversations. Children described the behaviour system as *“fair and consistent”* and appreciated that if something went wrong it would be discussed privately and that the focus would be on unpicking the cause of the problem. Class systems focused on positive recognition of good behaviour.

All children in the focus groups agreed that they felt safe at school. Children explained that since they had been learning about rights more of them felt that they could deal with things themselves although for serious issues they felt confident in talking to a teacher. Pupils are surveyed about behaviour as part of Anti Bullying Weeks and are taught the difference between ‘rudeness, meanness and bullying.’

Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a clear school priority. St Edmunds is accredited as a Healthy School and is actively working towards becoming a Thrive school. The headteacher explained this as *“understanding the wellbeing and mental health of themselves and children, learning to manage your own emotions and to self-regulate.”* She identified that the focus on restorative conversations and improved wellbeing linked well to RRSA. Children learn about healthy lifestyles in science, DT, PE and French. Catering is discussed at school council meetings and children’s views sought about new menus. A very wide range of lunch and after school clubs are on offer catering to children’s physical, cultural and social needs. During the learning walk children explained that if they felt another club should be offered and there was a wider interest it would happen.

Inclusion is taken seriously at St Edmunds. The school is the first in East Anglia to be accredited as a Gold Linguamarque school and although this award has a focus on language teaching it was clear that the school values the award for its promotion of other cultures, languages and religion and linked it to non-discrimination. During the learning walk pupils proudly translated some of the rights displays exemplifying the different languages spoken in the school. The SLT explained that children recognised that some children are different, and that the universality of rights meant that there is a tangible feeling of all being valued.

Throughout the visit it was evident how children valued their right to education. Both children and staff identified that children respect each other's right to learn and are quick to mention this right if they feel they are being distracted. Each week there is a focus on one of the 10 school identified learning characteristics. The assembly planner identified the links made between the learning characteristics and specific articles and children on the learning walk corroborated that the characteristics "*link in with rights*." Children spoke enthusiastically about choosing their level of challenge in mathematics, the accelerated reading scheme, Athletics and choosing their PE topic. They explained how peer and self-assessment helped them understand how to improve their work. Thirty-minute learning conversations are held between the teacher, parent and child where the child contributes their views on their learning and targets are agreed for the future.

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

St Edmunds provides a wide range of opportunities for children to be involved in decisions about school practice. These include circle time and class meetings to agree on solutions to issues as well as pupil groups including: the School Council, Eco-Council, Digital Ambassadors, Language Ambassadors, Sports Leaders, Year 6 Readers, Junior Road Safety Officers and House Captains. Children are democratically elected to all these posts by their peers apart from JSROs who apply for their role. A very large number of pupils are involved in different roles; the school keeps a record of pupil involvement and so can target those pupils who may not have previously been involved.

The school councillors explained that they meet regularly and that their role is "*to ensure that we all have our rights*." They helpfully provided the assessors with a list of activities they had done recently 'to promote and learn about the UN Rights of the Child.' Children in both focus groups were adamant that their views were taken seriously and that if most children wanted something to happen and it was possible it would happen. One of the achievements that both groups proudly mentioned was the school pet which was a request that came from the children and resulted in the school having three rabbits to support wellbeing. Staff also identified that "*children feel really empowered*."

The headteacher explained that the biggest change between Level 1 and Gold is in the advocacy of the children. Children and staff gave many examples of actions that they had taken to promote the rights of children locally and globally. "*We do lots*" stated a child. The children explained that they have raised money during Lent for a rice soup kitchen for a school in Cambodia linked to the parish so all children can have a hot meal. A girl initiated her own cake sale to raise money for UNICEF. Children have taken part in UNICEF's Playground Challenge raising enough money for a playground

in a school in Kenya, Christmas jumper day to raise money for disadvantaged children, twinned toilets, have taken part in 'Fair Share' tackling food waste and donated food to a food bank and brought in articles for a Shoebox appeal. Children could confidently link these activities to children's rights.

Eco councillors support the site team to have a clean environment and promote recycling. Children have taken part in OutRight campaigns for the last three years. The JRSOs successfully persuaded parents to stop their cars idling outside school to reduce air pollution. During the learning walk the assessors saw several displays about this year's campaign. Children have sent postcards to the Secretary of State for International Development advocating for the rights of children living in poverty, for the rights of refugees, for medical care for all children and for the rights of children forced to take part in armed conflict. They have also written to the Secretary of State for the Environment and supermarket chains about sustainability, single use plastic and palm oil. Year 6 pupils have organised stalls about WWF and Shelter at the Bury Christmas Fair. A parent explained that this advocacy continues in the secondary school with examples of St Edmund's pupils organising sponsored runs.