

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Avon House Preparatory School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Amanda Campbell
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Mrs Chloe Britton
<b>Local authority:</b>	Redbridge
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Isobel Mitchell and Helen Trivers
<b>Date:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

## 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 – they were able to speak about rights confidently and articulately and were clear on the concepts of rights.
- The values of equality, diversity and inclusion underpin the life of the school and are lived on a day to day basis.
- Pupil voice in school life is strong with a number of mechanisms for listening to children used well.

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 embed rights learning to expand knowledge of articles and continue to embed learning about rights across the curriculum, encouraging deeper discussion about rights.
- Consider rights as a framework for decision-making and school improvement.
- Support children to engage in campaigning and advocacy work relating to rights issues, exploring who has power to make decisions on particular issues and exploring different ways to influence them. Use the Youth Advocacy Toolkit to support this.
- Work as ambassadors for Rights Respecting Schools across your local schools and senior schools that children normally move on to.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	Avon House is a preparatory school in Redbridge with 252 pupils aged between 2 and 11. 12% of pupils receive support for Special Educational Needs and 35% speak English as an Additional Language. An inspection in January 2020 found the school to be Good in relation to children's achievements and Excellent in relation to pupils' personal development.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	SLT member, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Pre-prep leader, RRSA coordinator
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	10 children from the Rights steering group from Y2 to 6, 10 children from Y1 to Y6 from across the school.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	2 parents, 2 governors (Including the safeguarding link governor and Chair of Governors), 3 teachers
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Evaluation form, detailed digital evidence, focus groups.
<b>Registered for RRSA: 09/11/2017</b>	<b>Silver achieved: 14/01/2019</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

Most children and young people at Avon House are familiar with a wide range of Articles of the CRC. Children spoke confidently and articulately about a number of articles and were able to relate rights to their own experiences, for example talking about Article 2, non-discrimination, one child said, *“This means you shouldn’t leave people out no matter how they look, how old they are, or their skin colour or anything - that doesn’t matter.”* Children understood the concepts of rights being inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional. One child said, *“Rights are for every child around the world under 18. They can’t be taken away,”* and everyone agreed that rights are all equally important. Children also understood who had developed the UNCRC and why and could explain the role of duty bearers in realising rights for all children.

Children explained how they learn about rights saying, *“We talk about a particular article in each assembly. We also learn about rights in subjects like PSHE.”* Avon House focuses on a different article from the convention each month, ensuring that children learn about the articles in depth and are encouraged to have conversations about the articles and their relevance. There is a Rights Respecting display board that changes monthly, and rights are prominent in other displays around the school. The Article of the Month work continued through lockdown with children accessing assemblies and podcasts via google classroom. A member of SLT said, *“It has become a much more integral part of what we do – in our assemblies, through charters, lessons, and children feel more empowered.”* Staff receive regular training and are supported to make links with topics and curriculum subjects, and new members of staff are supported to pick up the approach in their teaching.

Most children and young people understand how local and global issues and sustainable development are linked to rights. Children spoke about how the war in Syria had impacted on children when they should be protected from war, and they knew that poverty impacted on a range of children’s rights, both in the UK and across the world. The RRSA group talked about an international day they had recently helped to organise where children shared their own culture and traditions and learned about other cultures. Each class chose a different country to learn about and all of their lessons that day were linked to this learning, e.g. they learned Swahili and looked at the history of the British Empire in Kenya, and linked their learning to rights. Children were also aware of current affairs and talked about coronavirus and climate change being two of the big issues facing the world today saying, *“The world is getting hotter and it’s affecting the weather and wildlife,”* and, *“We learned about pollution. Lots of people will die because of pollution because it’s causing droughts and makes it even harder to grow crops.”*

Adults and the wider school community are passionate about rights and are positive about the impact a focus on the CRC is having on the school. The headteacher explained that since achieving Silver, everyone in the school had become more involved in the award, including parents, governors and non-teaching staff. Newsletters and the school website keep parents updated with the school’s work on rights and homework regularly includes discussing particular rights. One parent said, *“The school has an emphasis on values, respect and voice. Introducing the articles has made them aware of their rights and other children’s rights.”* Another parent added, *“My children have a better understanding of diversity and equality and are more considerate and respectful.”* The Chair of Governors said, *“The governing body has really supported this journey. Pupils have embraced diversity and equality and now think more globally.”* Another governor added, *“I’ve been astonished at the children’s knowledge of their rights - they know the articles and how they play out in their lives. It’s every day, not just something on paper. It influences everything we do as governors – it’s become the heart of what we do.”*



## 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

Pupils were able to explain how their school supported them to enjoy a wide range of rights. *“Teachers are duty bearers and the pupils are rights holders and the teachers make sure we access our rights.”* Pupils felt that they were listened to and that their rights charters helped them day to day. *“All the rights are on one side and there’s a section with what children can do and a section with what adults can do. Teachers refer to the charters.”* They understood the principles of fairness and equity, one child saying, *“Equality is treating everyone the same, but equity is when you give people what they need,”* and they talked about situations where changes were made to accommodate children’s needs, such as moving a classroom to the ground floor to ensure that it was accessible.

Relationships were seen by all as positive and respectful, *“Everyone in this school is kind and caring,” “Everyone gets along well.”* Pupils talked about the buddy bench in the playground which supported children who didn’t have someone to play with. They were confident that disagreements would be quickly resolved with support from teachers but said that they didn’t happen very often. They agreed that they are treated fairly and with dignity at school, saying, *“Dignity is self-pride. It’s how you feel about yourself.”* Children spend time discussing and exploring friendships and relationships in PSHEE and circle time. The Early Years lead explained that even with the youngest children, class charters are used and rights are referred to in relation to relationships and developing mutual respect for rights. *“They know I respect their rights... We talk about rights when resolving conflict and they understand they should respect each other.”*

Children reported that their school keeps them safe and listed a number of ways this happens including having fire alarms and drills, secure gates, and wearing special wristbands on school trips with the school’s number on so that people could help them if they got lost. The deputy headteacher explained that the school had linked home learning with online safety, *“Children knew that the information they were receiving was safe and trusted and we linked this to keeping safe online.”* Children also explained that they have worry boxes and were comfortable talking to adults if they needed to, *“At any time you can come to a teacher and talk about your worries. They listen to us.”* A parent said, *“The teachers give the children a safe space. They are constantly checking in on them and the children feel able to talk to the teachers openly about what they are doing.”*

The school supports pupils’ health and wellbeing and this was a particular focus during home learning. The RRSA lead explained, *“We ensured that they had time away from screens, walking, cycling, we challenged them to make a difference to someone else.”* One pupil said, *“During lockdown, when it was mindfulness week, we did a morning yoga club.”* The Early Years lead added that they did breathing exercises, mindful walks and yoga and wanted children to understand they had the right to relax as well as the right to play. *“We encourage them to know that these rights are important as well as academic progress.”* Children had opportunities to meet online each day, giving them the opportunity to interact informally with their peers and raise issues of importance to them. Wellbeing has continued to be a priority after returning to school with the younger children being introduced to Mindful Monsters to support them to talk about emotions and a school councillor available onsite.

The school is working to create a strong culture of inclusion. Children said they learned about lots of different religions and cultures through lessons and special days. One pupil said that after learning about famous black people during Black History Month, they wrote to the headteacher and asked her



to include more black history across the curriculum. *“She replied to me and the next month we did a lesson on black people’s involvement in the wars in History. They are doing more than enough now.”*

Children are very engaged with their learning and explained how they play an active role in this. *“In lessons we self-assess our work with red, amber or green and the teacher will go over it with you.” “I go to a teacher to do extra work with her.” “In our class when we finish a topic the teacher asks us if we understood it.”* Teachers explained that during home learning, children took part in live lessons across the curriculum and went above and beyond teachers’ expectations in the work they submitted.

### **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 were clear that they could express their views and that they would be listened to. There are a wide range of pupil led groups that they can join such as the Rights Respecting School Council, School Council, Climate Council and Sports Council to influence different areas of school life. A parent said, *“The school creates a safe environment where they can share their opinions and know they are listened to and respected.”* Members of the Rights Respecting School Council said, *“We make sure the school is a rights respecting school. We often work with the school council - they are the ones that change things around the school.”* Pupils talked about a number of areas where they had influenced decisions; the Sports Council were instrumental in getting a new climbing frame for the playground, the Eco Council introduced an annual meat free week and the School Council had introduced suggestion boxes where children could write down their ideas. *“We have changed a lot of things in school. Now we can have our water bottles on our desks, and we have boxes to put our ideas in and the school council discuss them.”* After lockdown, children had complained to the School Council that the classrooms were too noisy to learn in and so the school is planning to buy carpets. The headteacher said, *“Children are now more involved in the school and are very vocal. They give their ideas and opinions and raise things they want to change. They have really developed confidence in raising issues they feel passionate about both on their own behalf and on behalf of their peers.”*

Children are also engaging in actions to campaign and advocate for the rights of children both locally and globally. The Eco Council and Y5 children participated in UNICEF’s OutRight campaign on climate change, subsequently encouraging the school to make more sustainable choices such as using local produce for school lunches, one child adding, *“We shouldn’t use too much paper – paper comes from trees and if we cut down trees it’s going to affect our air.”* The Travel Council also works on the environment, campaigning for the council to introduce a 20 miles per hour speed limit to increase safety and reduce pollution and also encouraging children to make good choices about how they travel to school, *“We get points for coming in in eco-friendly ways.”* The school also held a shoeshare, *“We have brought in our old shoes to give to charity.”* Children learn how to influence people in power in literacy lessons where they write persuasive letters on real life topics, *“We work on letters in English and the teacher sends them to that person. We wrote to our MP to see if they could help to stop people idling and make it safer.”* The headteacher explained that children are now setting up their own fundraising projects for issues they feel strongly about saying, *“Even the youngest children are inspired to take action.”*