

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

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| School: | Shenley Fields Daycare and Nursery School |
| Headteacher | David Aldworth |
| RRSA coordinator: | Sallyanne Bromley |
| Local authority: | Birmingham |
| Assessor(s): | Steven Kidd and Jenny Price |
| Date: | 22 January 2021 |

1. INTRODUCTION

This is a Gold virtual accreditation report. The assessors would like to thank the children for their video input and the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with them 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:

- Dedicated and passionate staff who share a deep knowledge of rights and have a consistent approach to embedding a right respecting environment.
- The use of charters in different areas across the nursery setting makes rights relevant and cements the positive ethos and use of rights language to support everyone (including children, staff, parents and wider community).
- Learning walks, including children, being used as a regular self-evaluation tool to generate ideas and identify areas for improvement.

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:

- Appropriate to age/ability continue to explore ways for children to have a greater input on whole school improvement ensuring children’s views are heard – and perhaps consider the involvement of parents.
- Adopt an ambassadorial role to help others along on the RRSA journey.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

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| School context | A day care and nursery school with 148 children on roll from babies to age 5, there are currently 29% eligible for Pupil Premium. 16 children speak with English as an additional language with 14 different languages spoken across the school. 1% of children have an EHCP and an additional 6% have a SEND plan. |
| Attendees at SLT meeting | Executive Head; Head of School; Senior Nursery Manager/RRSA Lead; SEND Coordinator; Nursery Teacher; and Trainee Teacher |
| Number of children and young people interviewed | Voice recordings of several children |
| Number of adults interviewed | Parent member of steering group; Community member of steering group; Teaching Assistant; Nursery Officers x 2; Trainee Teacher; SEND Coordinator; RRSA Lead; |
| Evidence provided | PowerPoint (photos, displays, plans), voice recordings, evaluation form. |
| Registered for RRSA: 05 May 2017 | Silver achieved: 19 July 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

All staff spoken with were extremely knowledgeable and passionate about children’s rights, sharing numerous examples of how children’s rights are implemented into practice, citing articles from the CRC. Children mentioned some rights during a recording, such as the right to learn, a safe home and to “*live somewhere*”, clean water, healthy food, a name and medical care. A clear understanding of rights being unconditional, universal, inherent, indivisible and inalienable was demonstrated by staff, and many examples of how children have grown to understand that rights “*can’t be taken away*” and that “*rights are for everyone*” and “*we have them from birth*”, were anecdotally shared. The ABCDE of rights resource has been shared, “*so that staff have a really good understanding and how to make it relevant for the age group of our children*”.

Learning about rights is happening through outdoor and indoor play, stories (such as Jack and the Beanstalk), role play, discussions, charters, and family group sessions. The Executive Head and RRSA Lead explained that the strategic approach to embedding rights was through: staff meetings/training; curriculum planning; display boards; Article of the Week, rights based charters; staff induction packs; and sharing information through social media and the children’s E-learning platform (Tapestry). The RRSA Lead explained how “*a lot of the resources have been adapted so that younger children can learn about rights*”. Coherent weekly plans show links between gardening, imaginary play, skills development, articles from the CRC, Makaton signs of the week, Global Goals, health and wellbeing. Children’s rights (alongside safeguarding) are regularly addressed as a standing item on staff meeting agendas and in-set days. Many staff have attended RRS training and this knowledge has been disseminated to the rest of the school community, ensuring a shared vision for why and how rights are embedded across the establishment.

Rather than assemblies, the nursery hosts family groups which links with the RRSA steering group (with children and adults). The steering group currently has a focus on OutRight and climate change. Staff strongly emphasised the importance of incorporating rights language into everyday life, in all areas within the nursery setting, including the baby room. The Executive Head stated, “*the child is at the centre of everything that we do. Our planning, our whole curriculum, is driven by interests of the children.... We have adapted it (RRSA) to make it more early years friendly which has enabled us to forge ahead with the ethos we believe in but enhanced it to another level*”. The RRSA Lead added that children’s rights, “*is just our life here. It is truly embedded in everything 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

Staff consistently shared anecdotes of when children have referred to their rights whether this be in the classroom, garden, playground, dining hall, bathroom or cooking area. Charters for each of these areas are helping children understand the relevance of rights. A staff member explained that “*children have talked about what rights need to be thought about in different spaces*”, to “*bring rights to life for the children*”, as well as understand that they are in a place to enjoy their rights and where adults (duty bearers) promote and protect their rights. The consistent language used by adults ensures a rights respecting ethos throughout the nursery environment.

Strong relationships between staff are evident at Shenley. Many staff have worked there for over ten years and appear to have grown and evolved together, particularly with their knowledge and application of children’s rights. A discussion around dignity highlighted staff’s effort to inform children about respecting privacy and dignity when it comes to using the bathroom and during group sessions listening to each other. A staff member explained that, “*dignity is about how we treat each other and respect each other’s views*”. A staff member also acknowledged positive relationships with parents, saying, “*We pride ourselves on our relationships with parents*”. The whole school charter, linked explicitly to children’s rights, referencing duty bearers and rights holders, illustrates a coherent approach and ensures positive relationships throughout.

Staff believe strongly that children feel safe in the nursery, with consistent reference to “safety rights” in charters and safeguarding policies. Children have been involved in designing road safety posters relating to parking but also car emissions (linked to OutRight work) and walking to school. Topically, staff explained that children are also very aware of safety and hygiene in the current pandemic, saying, “*The knowledge of the children is amazing*”. Children have created posters to promote washing hands to keep safe. On a recording, some children talked about how, “*teachers keep us safe*” and that doctors will help “*if we get poorly.... or hurt ourselves*”. Another child exemplified the use of “*Stop it, I don’t like that*” in a situation they felt uncomfortable.

Children’s health and wellbeing is important to everyone at Shenley. Some staff have trained as mental health first aiders, while others have become Place2Be Mental Health Champions. They are involved in Startwell (a healthy eating and physical activity programme) to support families learn about healthy lifestyle choices as well as growing food as part of the “Health for Life” in nursery schools programme. It was clear from the recorded discussion that children understand they have the right to be safe and to get health care if needed. One child said, “*People drink medicine when they are poorly*”. One child talked about “*getting poorly if you drink dirty water*” and another pointed out that drinking clean water is “*healthy*”. Staff talked about healthy food choices at lunchtime and a child in the recorded discussion mentioned getting “*energy*” from different fruit and vegetables.

The nursery school is actively working towards a strong culture of inclusion which is evidenced through a number of means: Children’s different learning styles are considered; targeted support for children with complex needs is in place; a number of professionals such as Educational Psychologists and Speech and Language therapists to name only two are involved as part of the ongoing assessment cycle of all children; a wide range of cultural traditions are supported and celebrated; the

use of visual aids (PEC cards); and the school’s improvement plan (SIP 2020/21) not only highlights various approaches to ensure inclusivity but is explicitly linked to articles from the CRC and UN Global Goals. The work of all staff epitomises inclusion. The SEND Coordinator explained, *“We are passionate about our inclusive setting”*. In addition, she added, *“We share the message of rights with families as being for everyone.”*

Children experience a broad curriculum to suit different interests, abilities and learning styles. The recording demonstrated children’s awareness that learning is a right and that *“school is for playing inside and out”*. Staff spoke enthusiastically about how much they listen to the children’s interests and how this informs their planning and practice. A member of staff explained that, *“We all know how to differentiate the learning. we use lots of different resources to suit the individual interests and abilities so that all children are participating”*. Learning Walks happen regularly with children, as a self-evaluation tool to identify interests and next steps. Staff also talked about parents *“being on the journey with us”* and explained that *“We are embedding a rights attitude which they [the children] are taking home, using the same language and we want to start spreading this to the wider community too”*.

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

All staff agree that listening to children’s views and implementing their views is important. The Executive Headteacher stated, *“Children always have a real voice in everything that happens, we work in partnership to drive the curriculum... and children feel empowered by this”*. It was acknowledged that, *“RRS goes hand in hand with our ethos and the right path for our children”* and it was also noted that children bring topics in from the news and that staff adapt their practice to address some of the issues brought to their attention.

Staff outlined examples of how children’s ideas help to shape the life of the school. Some children have been involved in saving water within the nursery, by designing guttering and using water butts outside. They have also created posters to encourage friends to turn off taps in the bathroom and at home. Some children were recorded talking about *“bad plastic”* and how being plastic detectives would, *“help to save sea creatures and birds”*. Staff have also introduced Global Goals (eg Life below Water, Life on Land) when talking about environmental issues that are of interest to the children and have made links to the work of organisations such as Surfers Against Sewage.

Children have been involved in road safety campaigns, talking to parents about different ways to get to school, parking in different areas and also learning about pollution (car emissions) through the work on OutRight campaign. In addition, the nursery school has also taken part in ShoeShare and supported their local foodbank. A member of staff commented, *“Learning about rights is helping for children to develop empathy”*. Staff shared examples of how children feel more empowered knowing about their rights, saying, *“They talk to their friends and family about their rights”* and they are *“more confident to make choices and decisions”*.