

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St Stephen's Community Academy
Headteacher:	Mrs Maura Furber
RRSA coordinator:	Mrs Alison Hobbs
Local authority:	Cornwall
School context:	There are 228 pupils on roll, 45% of whom are eligible for Pupil Premium/ Free School meals. 31% have an EHCP or IEP (64% including pupils 'On Alert'). 4% of children speak English as an Additional Language. The school is part of the An Daras Trust, all Trust schools will be engaged with RRSA from September.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, assistant headteacher and RRSA lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	45 (R – Y6)
Adults spoken with:	9 including Y5 teacher, Y1 teacher/parent, chair and vice chair of governors, staff governor, An Daras Trust safeguarding lead, Area Resource Base lead
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 16/09/2015 Bronze achieved: 20/07/2016 Silver achieved: 30/11/2017
Assessor:	Jilly Hillier
Date:	13 th June 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been achieved.

St Stephen's Community Academy has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is based on a face to face accreditation visit. The assessor 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 digital evidence.

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

Strengths of the school include:

- A passionate commitment from senior leaders to embed a rights-based approach, putting it at the core of the school's vision and practice.
- Pupil voice which is highly valued. Listening to children is embedded in school practice. Children know their opinions are listened to and taken seriously. This was particularly evident in the way children were engaged with, and empowered, to be actively involved in their learning journey.
- A caring and inclusive ethos. All children are valued and supported to be the best they can be. Children's social and emotional needs are a priority.
- A curriculum that is relevant, evolving and responds to current issues, encouraging children to be advocates for rights.

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 create opportunities for children and staff to learn about rights in greater depth, including the origins and wider context of children's rights.
- Continue to support governors, parents/carers and families to learn about and understand the CRC and engage further with the school's rights respecting journey. Consider involving children in leading training, perhaps creating their own video introducing the CRC and RRSA.
- Make use of the training and e-learning available with RRSA membership and work with other schools in the Trust to share ideas and develop the Trust's rights respecting journey.
- Further develop children's understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen, supported by your Climate Change curriculum, so they are informed about the world and current affairs.
- Continue the work that has begun on ensuring positive representation of our diverse society throughout the curriculum and continue to develop understanding and celebration of diversity in all its forms supporting children to be critical thinkers who challenge discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p>	<p>Children confidently described a range of articles and understood that rights are for all children everywhere. They also talked about rights being unconditional and inherent and understand how events impact on rights. For example, they talked about children's right to be protected from war and about the impact conflict is having on children in Ukraine. They explained how learning about the conflict led them to fundraise to support children in Ukraine. Another child talked about the impact of climate change on children's rights such as access to "...<i>drinking water.</i>" They understood the role of teachers, parents and carers as duty bearers, "... <i>responsible for our rights.</i>"</p> <p>Children learn about rights through resources such as the Article of the Week and Picture News. The RRSA Lead explained, "<i>Rights are referenced all the time ... in different contexts.</i>" Teachers described how learning about rights was part of a range of topics and curriculum areas. For example, one teacher described how Hidden Figures, Suffragettes and Windrush all provided opportunities to discuss rights issues. A Climate Change curriculum is being developed by the An Daras Trust, linked to children's rights. Children also learn about rights through their daily interactions with each other, the vocabulary used by children and adults, and through the creation of class and playground charters.</p> <p>The school actively engages with the local community, for example sharing its news and rights respecting activities with parents, carers and the local newspaper. Staff described St Stephen's as "...<i>more than just a school</i>" but also a hub for the community, "...<i>supporting parents and families.</i>" Governors are engaged with, and value the rights respecting ethos.</p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Children's rights are part of the fabric of St Stephen's Community Academy, underpinning the schools' ethos, curriculum, pupil voice, safeguarding, inclusion and children's ownership of their learning. The headteacher stated, "<i>Children are the reason we are here</i>" and it was clear that children's rights and their best interests were driving the school's vision and decision making. There is an inclusive, respectful learning environment – ensuring all children can access learning and have opportunities to achieve and thrive. Children had a good understanding of how the concepts of equality and equity are linked to rights and considered it to be fair that support for children was different and "...<i>fits people's needs</i>" because "...<i>not everyone is the same.</i>" "<i>Different people find learning challenging so they need some support – that's part of equity.</i>" The headteacher described how initiatives such as the Capabilities Curriculum and the Literacy programme were introduced to engage children ensuring they were actively involved in deciding on their learning priorities. The school has high aspirations for its children and provides a range of enrichment experiences in sport, music and drama for children, such as Y3's involvement in a community production of Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i>. Although, the school has a high number of children eligible for Pupil Premium and a high number of children with additional needs, the headteacher was clear that this "...<i>did not define the children</i>" or the school and "<i>The expectation is that every child has the opportunity to succeed.</i>"</p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and</p>	<p>The headteacher said that understanding about rights had had a "...<i>huge impact on children and their relationships.</i>" On the school tour, all classes including the</p>

founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights	Area Resource Base were visited and throughout children were happily engaged in their learning and respectful. Staff were supportive and understanding (<i>"It's ok to make mistakes"</i>). One child explained <i>"Teachers are really caring."</i> Even the youngest children were able to talk about the importance of <i>"...treating each other respectfully"</i> and <i>"not taking away my dignity."</i>
4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	Safeguarding is taken seriously. Children feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have any concerns. One child described how she would use the Pupil Voice Box if she needed to and how it would be resolved by <i>"...going outside with the teacher for a bit"</i> to talk it through. The Steering Group described part of their role as <i>"...making sure everyone respects rights"</i> and <i>"...making people feel safe."</i> One child spoke in a mature way about the importance of the school fence being repaired, because this would make them feel even safer.
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	The RRSA lead explained that supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing is <i>"...part of the whole school ethos... it runs through everything."</i> The school has beautiful grounds that are used effectively for outdoor learning and to enhance children's wellbeing. There is a special room for nurture sessions where children can go when they need extra support or to meet with specialists. Children are treated as individuals and supported in whatever way is appropriate to help them be ready for learning.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	The headteacher stated <i>"Inclusion is important and that all children have the same rights and opportunities."</i> Many of the children spoken with understood the concept of non-discrimination and talked about the nine protected characteristics including <i>"skin colour"</i> <i>"age"</i> <i>"gender"</i> and <i>"disability."</i> The Literacy Programme includes a range of texts that provide opportunities to explore diversity.
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	This was a strength of the school. Throughout the visit, children were engaged in their learning, knew they had a voice and were articulate about the learning process. They are involved in exploring how they learn best and understood how strategies such as Visible Learning and Growth Mindset helped them take ownership of their learning. They described how they respected other children's right to learn by <i>"...listening to other people's opinions"</i> and supporting each other <i>"...if they are stuck in the 'learning pit."</i> Y6 children described how they made choices about who to sit next to so they could best reach their learning goals. One child explained, <i>"We learnt that when sitting next to our friends we got distracted."</i> They also give feedback to staff about their teaching.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	Children spoken with all felt they had a voice in school and are actively involved in decision making. One child said, <i>"All of us have the freedom of speech at school."</i> Another child added, <i>"When things need to change, teachers always let the students speak as well."</i> The Steering Group described their role as, <i>"...making our school better."</i>
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Advocacy is a one of the core values of the school. One child described this as <i>"...standing up for what you believe in ... and for someone else's rights."</i> Another child went on to explain, <i>"I would stand up against climate change"</i> and another added, <i>"...it will get worse if humans stop caring for the environment."</i> KS2 children designed a 'Sustainable Citizen' character and won the Picture News Award for their Eco and environmental work. Children described being involved in organising events and fundraising. One child explained, <i>"We make decisions that help us understand what is happening"</i> in the world, such as supporting UNICEF's Ukraine appeal.