

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD

ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO (GOLD)

School:	Lyme Community Primary School
Headteacher:	Marie Cribb
RRSA coordinator:	Jo Roberts
Local authority:	St Helens
Assessors:	Martin Russell
Date:	19 th July 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the Senior Leadership Team, staff, pupils and parents for the warm welcome during the assessment and for the opportunity to speak to the school community. Prior to the assessment visit you provided both a progress and evaluation form and an impact assessment form. It was clear to the assessor that everyone places a real importance on embedding a rights respecting ethos and the effects were evident throughout the visit.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- Strong commitment to children’s rights from the Senior Leadership Team and a clear understanding of how rights underpin and support all aspects of school life.
- Prominent visibility of rights in vibrant displays throughout the school.
- The children’s knowledge and understanding of a wide range of articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Pupils are empowered to take an active role in their school and wider community.

All four RRSA Standards have been met.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING LEVEL 2

No requirements noted.

3. MAINTAINING LEVEL 2 (GOLD)

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 Level 2. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Continue to use the Convention to underpin the development and review of strategic development of the school and, in particular, to further grow the children's involvement in this process.
- Look at innovative ways to help children and adults develop a strong understanding of the nature of rights as inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional. Build familiarity with the concept of 'Duty Bearers' and the meaning of 'dignity'.
- Explore further opportunities for the school to promote children's rights in the wider community and to establish a strong culture of campaigning.

4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

4.1. The school context

Lyme Community Primary School is an average sized school with around 245 children on roll. The vast majority of the children are of White British heritage and fewer than 3% speak English as an additional language. Around 42% of the children receive support through the Pupil Premium, this is significantly higher than the average in England. Although the school supports a significant number of children with additional learning needs, none currently have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

The school registered to become rights respecting in July 2016 and achieved the RRSA Level 1 (Silver) Award in June 2017.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes

Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, deputy headteacher who is the RRS Coordinator, a governor
Number of children and young people interviewed	22 in focus group discussions plus classes spoken with during the learning walk
Number of adults interviewed	Two support staff (one a parent), Two teachers (one a governor)
Evidence provided	Learning walk; class visits; focus groups; written evidence.

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

The Headteacher and SLT demonstrated a strong and wholehearted commitment to embedding a school ethos which is underpinned by the principles and values of the CRC. It was clear that the Convention is a consistent focus within all aspects of school life. *“It is now seamlessly embedded and has become part of our vision and values.”* Evidence gathered by the SLT and the Pastoral Manager shows how becoming rights respecting has contributed to improved wellbeing of the children and better progress and achievement. It was reported that there have also been reduced exclusions and improved attendance. This has been validated in reports from external professionals such as a Local Authority review, PP review, FS/Y2 and Y6 moderation. The Headteacher sees RRSA as contributing to a long term commitment of the school *“We are changing attitudes here...we want lifelong value and lessons for our children. This is helping to change how they see themselves and their view of the world.”*

The Convention is a key driver for the School Improvement Plan and influences all strategic thinking within leadership and governance. Relevant articles are clearly referenced throughout school policies and planning documents; for example in the Computing and E-Safety Policy articles 13, 15, 16, 17, 29 and 34. The children have met with governors to talk about the Convention and how their rights matter at school and in their wider lives. A governor commented *“The children are so confident and proud. They have really taught us.”* Induction programmes for new families, as well as for staff, includes an explanation of the Convention and of RRSA; this, together with the commitment to RRSA across the school should ensure that a rights based approach at Lyme is sustained into the future.

The school has been building a strong culture of inclusivity and participation over a number of years but their involvement in RRSA is seen to have significantly enhanced this. The Headteacher spoke of the challenge brought to all staff through the adoption of a rights based perspective *“It has made us much more aware of what the children are capable of. It has encouraged a real sense of empowerment.”* Pupils are enabled to fully participate in a meaningful and inclusive way. A range of active strategies have helped to significantly improve children’s attitudes to diversity and to reduce to zero the occurrence of prejudice based incidents. There is an emphasis on diversity, celebrating different faiths in assemblies and ensuring that the books in the library reflect all facets of contemporary UK society.

The school has embraced the challenge of making the Convention known in their locality. Pupils have led assemblies in other schools and they spoke with confidence and passion about children's rights to children and professionals from other schools. The RRS team also had a meeting with Deputy Headteacher from a school in Tameside whose school is about to begin their RRS journey. The school has developed a number of links with the local community including with the police, fire safety and Park Ranger service. Where appropriate these relationships are used as opportunities to refer to children's rights. Some of the children have created leaflets about the CRC and the importance of rights to distribute to their peers in groups such as Cadets.

The promotion of greater global awareness and of the children's understanding of themselves as global citizens has become a major priority for the school and it was pointed out by the SLT that becoming rights respecting has contributed to this. One member of staff commented that *"we wanted our children to be more outward looking."* In order to bring this about, assemblies linked to rights, have been used to promote global citizenship and sustainable development. These have been mapped out across the school year and link to events such as World Refugee Week. The SLT have also introduced a 'News of the Week' feature of daily assemblies which ensures that the children have planned opportunities to engage with current global issues. The UN Global Goals are also being used and a clear link has been made with the school's existing ECO work.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Pupils spoken with were able to confidently cite a wide range of rights including the right to an education, to be safe, to have clean water and nutritious food, to a name and nationality, to have their voice heard and to know their rights. Pupils were able to link rights to practical learning examples and talked about the universal and unconditional nature of rights, *"The rights are for every child in the whole wide world."* The children all understood that, in some contexts, rights cannot always be accessed by certain children. They gave examples from around the world which included reference to child labour *"which might be dangerous and it means you are not at school."* and to lack of access to clean water, *"drinking dirty water can make some children very poorly."* Closer to home they suggested *"Not letting somebody join your group."* and *"Some parents might be over protective."* as examples of rights potentially not being accessed. The children were very insistent that *"Rights cannot be taken away if you are not good....Because they are for everyone."*

Parents and carers are kept informed about RRS through the school website, social media, newsletters and a system of extended homework projects, designed by the RRS steering group, which include an exploration of particular rights. The school reports a positive response from most parents about the school's work on rights; one parent commented *"it's so good for my daughter to know about her rights, it's helped her confidence and will support her as she goes into high school."* The governing body meetings always include reference to RRS as a whole or to particular articles of the Convention, as relevant. One commented about the impact of the RRS work *"It's really added something to the ethos of the school."*

Rights are prominently displayed throughout the school and the children commented that the high visibility of the rights helps them to remember the articles. The steering group chose certain groups of articles to highlight in the corridor, the hall and in the playground. Two of the pupils in the steering group have written their own Rights Respecting song and have taught this to all the children. Rights are embedded into teachers planning; *“the new Learning Challenge Curriculum has been used as an opportunity to incorporate both articles and global goals.”* Examples shared included Y4 learning about recycling and the impact of plastics on the environment and on people; persuasive writing in Y5, linked to Article 12, resulted in letters to the Headteacher about school uniform; the On-Line safety Ambassadors planned and led KS2 lessons about e-safety linked to the appropriate rights. Staff commented that the rights are now referred to naturally across most areas of learning *“The children often mention an article when we haven’t even seen the connection.”*

Conversations with pupils and adults confirmed that learning about the wider world, sustainability and global citizenship is always linked to rights. The staff member leading on the Eco Schools programme explained that links to RRSA and to the Global Goals was very helpful in their recent Green Flag reaccreditation. The children shared many examples, including how their learning about Water Day was just as much about our lives and our appreciation of clean water as it was about the lives of those who can’t always access this right.

Standard C:
The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

Rights based charters were visible in every classroom and children confidently explained that these had been jointly created by children and teachers and that they all contributed ideas to this process. The charters were prominent in most classes and, at their best, set out the agreed actions for children and adults based on the articles selected. The children explained that charters are created annually and they had a good understanding of their purpose in helping to shape respectful classrooms. *“The charter reminds you about the rights and how it’s important to respect everyone’s rights.”* The school has also adopted a dining hall charter and playground charters – these had been developed collectively as part of the recent RRS Day of Celebration, with a commitment to review them annually.

The way in which charters are developed and used has carried over into the language used around the school. The leadership team pointed out that positive behaviour and respect for the rights of others is embedded in all aspects of school life and that this is evidenced in anti-bullying and behaviour questionnaires and in the RRS questionnaires. Observations during the visit confirmed this to be the case with a calm, friendly and supportive atmosphere prevalent in all areas. A member of staff commented that *“The children have become much more aware, not only of their own rights but of the rights of others too and that’s making a big difference.”* Training for site, admin and lunchtime staff in the use of rights respecting language has been led by the steering group and was very well received.

The school’s consistent efforts to promote greater pupil engagement in learning has been underpinned by the principles of participation and the best interests of the child. All pupils are encouraged to have a say in their learning, through target setting and progress discussions

between learners and teachers. A recent redesign of the school's assessment for learning policy included input from the children. Staff have commented on the children's increased confidence and willingness to speak about their learning. Pupils were comfortable speaking about learning, for example a detailed explanation was shared about the reasoning behind different types of intervention support in the months leading up to Y6 SATs.

All pupils spoken with agreed that they felt safe in the school and gave numerous examples of how adults had acted to achieve this. As well as talking about the practical aspects of safety, including secure entry systems and visitor badges, they also explained the role of adults in ensuring their safety and wellbeing. Some of the children referred to various forms of support including the opportunity for one to one support and 'nurture' based provision. Numerous children offered well thought out definitions of the word 'nurture' including help, care, support and one who said *"It's like with plants, you're helping people to grow."* The children also explained the Peer Mentors scheme which supports positive play, inclusion as well as conflict resolution, led by trained Y5 children who have to apply to be considered for the role.

The children have a strong sense of fairness and were keen to point out that, when fall outs or disagreements occur, fair and lasting resolutions are always found. They explained that children often *"Sort it out for themselves."* However, if required, the mentors, the Year 6 Prefects or an adult can be asked to intervene. When asked about the ways in which rights may help in such circumstances one child pointed out that *"Everyone has a right to express their opinions so it's important to listen to both sides."* Another child suggested that *"privacy is important about how it's sorted out. You probably don't want everyone to know about it."* Staff observed that there has definitely been a reduction in fall-outs among the children and the pupils themselves were sure that *"If there is a problem and teachers get involved, it definitely gets sorted out fairly."*

Because children's rights and the UN Global Goals are embedded across the curriculum as well as through displays and assemblies, the children have a good sense of equity and fairness with regard to global issues. They spoke, unprompted, about many global injustices including the plight of refugees and inequalities in access to education. Senior staff are of the view that *"Being a rights-respecting school has made our children, who often can lack in experience and knowledge of the world around them, outward looking Global Citizens who are eager to learn."*

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Pupil voice is a high priority at Lyme. There are many opportunities for the children to express their views and be involved in decision making across the school. Pupils understand that having their opinions listened to is an entitlement. In addition to the RRSA steering group, there is a democratically elected school council, an Eco Committee, Online Safety Ambassadors team and a Sports Council. These take on a range of leadership roles including leading assemblies and running classroom learning activities for their peers. Each team has a box to receive comments and suggestions from pupils across the school. The children are increasingly involved in the development of school policies and there is an established pupil voice component in the school's evaluation system for curriculum areas. The children spoken with were keen to point out that all these structures and systems *"make a big difference. We*

are making our school even better.” Among some of the changes brought about through the children’s views is the provision of new play equipment for KS2 (they expressed a strong opinion about it being unfair when the younger pupils were given new equipment!) and a ban on cycling and scooting on the playground at the end of the school day. They also make decisions about charity fundraising and shaping the content of the Learning Challenge Curriculum.

The school has extensive provision to ensure that the children’s social, physical and emotional wellbeing is effectively supported and that they are enabled to make well informed choices in these areas. A room known as The Hub provides information and advice both verbal and written and this is the base for the Pastoral Manager. A rich PSHE Curriculum covers areas such as smoking and drugs education. The School Nurse contributes to the learning and provides First Aid workshops, as does St. John’s Ambulance. Key Stage 1 children participate in the Walk It Safe road safety scheme; ‘Bikeability’ and Crucial Crew are part of the Key Stage 2 experience. The children spoke positively about the importance of relationships and sex education which is taught across the age range. They also highlighted the access they have to the news via Newsround or Espresso as providing them with access to reliable information about the world.

The school has established a strong culture to support action being taken for the rights of others locally and globally. The children know that they can influence this, that their voice matters and people in authority do listen. Following their ‘Send My Friend to School’ campaign, they met with their MP in school who took the messages to parliament. They subsequently received a response from the Prime Minister’s office. They had a major fund raising initiative for Sports Relief and participated in Unicef’s Soccer Aid Playground Challenge. The children were confident in explaining that they understand the impact of their action *“In assemblies we see that we are helping others to get their rights.”* Another said, *“Raising money helps children that are not safe enough.”* At local level the children have been part of a campaign to persuade their local council to improve road safety in their area. One child summed up the impact of RRSA at Lyme saying *“Knowing our rights is really important. Rights help us but we also know we can help other people too.”*