

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Bridgelea Primary School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Kelly Eyre
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Caroline Gibson
<b>Local authority:</b>	Manchester City Council
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Helen Trivers and Martin Russell
<b>Date:</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> October 2020

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This Gold report is based on a virtual accreditation visit.

The assessors 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 accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin all key aspects of school life.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- A sustained commitment to children's rights permeates the whole school community.
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been used to build a very positive culture of aspiration and ambition for all the children.
- The leadership of and commitment to RRSA which is powerful through governance and in leadership at all levels.
- Highly effective pupil voice which shines through the vision and practice of the school and empowers the children to be engaged with all aspects of their life at school.

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 innovative ways to support parents and carers in developing their knowledge and understanding of children’s rights and the role they play in helping their children to access their rights.
- Continue to seek opportunities to extend the breadth and depth in pupil voice and influence in all aspects of school improvement, especially learning, teaching and assessment.
- Build on your work around active global citizenship and, particularly, campaigning. Think about making fuller use of [The World’s Largest Lesson](#) materials and fully embrace Unicef’s [OutRight](#).

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	Bridgelea Primary School is a specialist provision for children with social, emotional and relationship needs. There are 72 pupils on roll of whom 88% have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Only one child currently speaks English as an additional language and around 90% are entitled to support through the Pupil Premium. The school is the Manchester LA primary ‘Day 6’ provision. This means that children join at sporadic times throughout the year.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher and the RRSA lead.
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	12 children from years 3 to 6 in two focus groups including members of the Article 12 Squad.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	2 governors, 2 teaching staff and 12 support staff.
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Extensive digital evidence was provided including images of displays and pupils’ work, rotas and policies and email comments from parents.
<b>Registered for RRSA: July 2018</b>	<b>Silver achieved: July 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**

The children and adults were very knowledgeable about a range of rights and understood the importance of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The children referred to a variety of rights and spoke about them in an appropriate context. It was clear that children and adults spoken with understand the nature of rights being unconditional, universal, inherent, inalienable and indivisible and all were familiar the ABCDE of Rights resource. One member of staff commented that the realisation that rights are from birth was a considerable shock to some of the children, particularly given the experiences they have had of education prior to coming to Bridgelea. Asked about the importance of knowing your rights, one of the children explained, *“I can say I have this right and you [adults] have to respect it.”* The children in the Article 12 Squad pointed out that they had helped their peers to learn about the idea of adults being ‘duty bearers’ and the concept was referred to throughout the visit.

The children learn about rights in a variety of different ways including through assemblies, special themed days and prominent displays around the school. Throughout the school closure period, extensive use was made of Unicef’s ‘Article of the Week’ resource which was even printed out and posted to families for whom internet access was problematic. Staff and governors highlighted the schools ‘Rainbow Curriculum’ which has been developed around their unique context; it includes their commitment to a rights respecting approach. It was pointed out that rights are becoming increasingly evident in the learning with one teacher commenting that when the children were reading ‘The Village that Vanished’, *“they talked about the importance of having a safe place to live and began to understand a little more about the impact of slavery.”*

Some of the children showed an understanding of how, despite rights being universal, some children in the world may not be able to access their rights. Examples explored included the impact of Covid-19, the fact that *“some children don’t get medicine.”* They also mentioned kidnapping and the effect of war on children’s ability to access other rights. Staff explained that key events are linked to the children’s learning and are used as an opportunity to understand rights in a less abstract way; such opportunities have included Fairtrade Fortnight, work around the Global Goals and both neurodiversity and disability weeks.

The school’s leadership and governors are wholeheartedly committed to embedding a rights-based approach at Bridgelea, making links to rights through policies and in the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher observed that RSA, together with their Nurture status, *“goes hand in hand with the vision we have for our children.”* She explained that, above all else, *“We want them to feel valued.”* and that knowing about their rights is a key part of realising this. Governors explained that their learning walks and scrutiny of pupil questionnaires provided them with the evidence that the schools commitment to rights is having a positive impact. The school works hard to inform parents about their rights respecting work. This is challenging, given that the pupils attend Bridgelea from all over the city. There is however, a growing understanding and commitment from families, demonstrated in a number of written submissions, one of which included the following: *“Bridgelea being a rights respecting school has allowed [my son] to know about his rights and also about other children’s rights. It has made him more aware that all children are equal which is very important. Rights is a part of their everyday journey at Bridgelea and is included in all areas of their education.”*

**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**

The children spoke about how the duty bearers in school enabled them to enjoy their rights in a wide variety of different ways. One pupil explained, *“They always look after us, keep us safe and help us with our work.”* Another explained that *“The cleaner is a duty bearer too.”* Each week the children are encouraged to nominate a member of the school community who they believe has respected their rights and these adults then receive a duty bearers’ certificate. Children can name different duty bearers within and beyond school and it was pointed out that, for some pupils, recognising the police and other emergency services as duty bearers for their rights has helped them to develop a more positive attitude to such roles. Children of all ages were clear that any concern that they may have about their rights, or those of their peers, not being met could be shared with adults at school and it was made clear that they trusted the adults around them to take action on their concerns. They have a very strong sense of fairness but recognise that each person needs to be treated as an individual, so fairness does not mean treating everyone the same. One adult pointed out that *“We have stopped having a blanket behaviour and relationships policy, it’s tailored.... and based on rights and nurture principles.”*

Positive relationships based on mutual respect between staff, between children and between children and staff are fundamental to the success of the school and were observed throughout the virtual visit. Many staff referred to the principle of all behaviour being understood as communication and to the school’s established practice of every session being a fresh start for the children. The children described how well everyone gets on and that friendships are strong. They spoke positively about how systems such as raffle tickets for rewards from the prize cupboard and class Dojo points celebrate and recognise positive actions. One adult commented that, for many children the best reward is having positive relationships with adults and their peers. Another referred to there being *“A strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie.”* School systems such as solution circles, Bigger Picture meetings and multi-agency involvement help to support relationships when things go wrong and the school’s evaluation suggests that these approaches have been significantly strengthened as a result of the use of rights respecting language. The children could speak confidently about what it meant to be treated and to treat others with dignity, *“You respect people and you don’t use unkind words to others.”* and *“It’s about you being happy about yourself.”* One of the governors pointed out that *“Dignity and individuality are crucial in this school; they are at the front of everything.”*

Children all agreed that their right to feel safe and protected was upheld in their school and they shared a number of actions and systems that ensure this such as the provision of Bikeability training and learning about not smoking. One of the pupils linked a litter picking campaign they had undertaken to the right to be safe, explaining that *“Toddlers might pick things up and hurt themselves.”* Events such as Internet Safety Day and Anti-Bullying week are linked to the right to be safe and protected from harm and reinforce the constant messages in this area. Staff explained that *“Any prejudiced attitudes or beliefs are challenged by staff, and in some cases, by the children. ‘Retreat’ interventions are bespoke, target support for children with significantly concerning behaviours and this has been seen to have a positive impact over time.”* The school’s own data clearly shows that incidents requiring physical interventions are reducing in severity, frequency and length over the last academic year; such strategies are used within a very clearly defined policy and after specialist training; the emphasis is always on the safety of all concerned. Parents value the role that the children play in their safety

with one sharing the following, *“The staff Bridgelea let my child be heard, including his thoughts and feelings on situations, this lets him feel safe in school and makes him feel respected, which are very important to him.”*

It was very evident that the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of the children are prioritised and are increasingly seen in relation to the CRC. Consistent approaches such a compliments session each day after lunch break and the application of the six principles of nurture help to support this. One pupil explained that *“If you are stressed you can go into ‘retreat’...it helps you with your feelings.”* The Retreat provision functions as both a planned intervention as well as offering a self-referral option. Another pupil spoke about the use of an emotional scale to help them to articulate the strength of their emotions at any given time. There is extensive curriculum content around health with the children mentioning their enjoyment of PE which promotes healthy lifestyles as well as delivering specific PE objectives. Whilst wellbeing is a key strand of the school’s Rainbow Curriculum, it is also true to say that all other learning supports wellbeing; as one member of staff explained, *“Wellbeing requires resilience and independence.”*

At Bridgelea exclusion is not an option so the school has established a strong culture of inclusivity and valuing each person as an individual, and it was pointed out by many, that rights respecting has further enhanced this. Staff said that the children talk about the provision of an artist, a specialist musician, swimming lessons and Forest School being on offer for all pupils at Bridgelea as curriculum entitlement. There is a clear programme of activities, assemblies and events that sit alongside curriculum content to celebrate diversity and promote inclusion; the children respond positively to this with one adult explaining how children have been shocked and angered by *“learning about the denial of rights experienced by many black people throughout history and today.”* During the recent lockdown, some children had asked for specific staff to contact them and this was actioned so that they could be supported by their preferred adult. A measure of the school’s inclusive culture is that, after months away from school for most pupils, there were none who did not return in September. The school uses CPOMS which it believes to be highly effective in monitoring bullying or discriminatory incidents. Parents are also involved when there is concerning behaviour, to support the child in a holistic way. One parent expressed appreciation that, *“Bridgelea understands and listens to my child and that is really important for him.”*

One of the staff explained that the children’s knowledge of their right to an education *“Gives them a sense of having a role in respecting the education of others in their class.”* A recent learning walk focused on this theme and comments from the children, gathered by the SLT, gave examples such as not being too noisy, completing activities, using the Numicon (maths resources) safely. Pupil voice activities are used to shape and influence aspects of learning and to develop activities/options in class; for example, a few individual children asked for cooking activities and this was built into the lessons taught. There is a whole school focus on metacognition; the headteacher explained, *“We want them to value the learning process itself and come to see and value themselves as learners.”*

**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**

It was evident that the children feel listened to and that their views are actively welcomed and taken seriously by their school. The innovative ‘Smart School Council’ is designed to ensure that all children are able to take an active role in determining aspects of life at school. There is a weekly focus for



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discussion with time dedicated to discussion each Monday; a vote then takes place and the outcomes are actioned by relevant staff, supported, as appropriate, by the Article 12 Squad. This group is open to any interested children and some have been part of it for more than 2 years. Examples shared about the impact of pupil decision making included their project to make and install bug hotels, a significant focus on recycling across the school, improved sensory play and planting strawberries. One of the Article 12 Squad said they were *“proud of doing the votes they did with the rest of the school.”* A member of staff pointed out that it makes a significant difference to the children, *“when they see adults act upon their ideas and suggestions.”* A member of the leadership team acknowledged that in the planning of the new school building (a couple of years ago) things were ‘done to and for’ the children but now all initiatives happen with the children involved from the outset, *“We know that their ideas make our school better. And the more we listen to them, the more relationships improve.”* The school had planned pupil voice interactive days in the spring and summer to support children to further share their experience at Bridgelea, but these had to be postponed.

The school collaborates very effectively with their neighbouring primary school which achieved RRSA Gold last year. The children leading on RRSA in both schools met together for a shared nurture breakfast and there are plans (interrupted by Covid-19) to work together on a ‘Toilet twinning’ fundraising project, linked to a range of rights. The children are involved in fundraising for a number of charities, including the recent Hello Yellow event for the mental health charity, MIND. They are being supported to become campaigners for local and global issues; a group of children attended a Youth Climate Action Summit in Manchester at the start of the year and this has inspired them to seek support for the promotion of recycling with families and pupils in school. Their work on the UN Global Goals has led to an emerging campaign about single use plastics which will develop later this term, together with their involvement in OutRight 2020.