

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Ayresome Primary
Headteacher:	Lisa Biggin
RRSA coordinator:	Rebecca Marine
Local authority:	Middlesbrough
Assessor(s):	Kathy Allan and Chris Shannon
Date:	2 nd April 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

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 assessment visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

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:

- The strong ethos of inclusivity and non-discrimination that is underpinned by children’s rights and the school being a place of sanctuary for all children.
- Respectful and positive relationships across the school where children feel safe, valued and are treated with dignity.
- Pupil voice that is encouraged, respected and acted upon, resulting in pupils feeling empowered and supported.
- Children’s understanding and empathetic view of local and global issues.

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:

- Broaden and develop further explicit links to articles across the wider curriculum.
- Further develop sustainability by referencing the CRC in your school policies and paperwork including making the link to relevant articles more explicit.
- Continue to involve children in policy review and the writing of ‘child friendly’ policies and consider the development of a pupil-led School Improvement Plan.
- Consider giving your steering group a greater leadership role, making more decisions about the direction of their RRS work. For example, giving them ownership over choosing which pupils receive awards and/or developing a way to highlight the role of duty bearers (trusted adults).
- Work to strengthen parental engagement with children’s rights through events, activities, early years provision and links with the Inclusion Team and Redwood House (Extended Services).

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Ayresome Primary has 743 children on roll. English is an additional language for 72 % of children with more than 40 languages spoken in school. Nearly 50% of the school are eligible for Pupil Premium funding and 26% receive additional support for special educational needs. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in 2017 before moving to be an academy. At the time it was given an overall rating of ‘Requires Improvement’ with ‘Good’ for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare and Leadership and Management.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Deputy Headteacher, RRSA coordinator, School Improvement Partner for the Academy Trust, Chair of Governors
Number of children and young people interviewed	60 children in focus groups, 4 children on the learning walk, 17 children in Steering group and 17 children in a Y6 class visit plus KS1 class visits
Number of adults interviewed	7 teaching staff (including 3 Assistant Heads) and the Extended Service Manager
Evidence provided	Learning walk, focus groups, written evidence, class visits
Registered for RRSA: July 2015	Silver achieved: March 2017

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

A range of strategies have enabled children at Ayresome to learn about their rights. Children were quickly able to quote an impressive 15 articles including Article 34 (Sexual exploitation) and Article 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking). Children unanimously agreed that rights were inherent, indivisible and inalienable. They also knew that the rights are universal and unconditional. Children were very aware that in some parts of the world children are denied their rights and referred to the conflict in Syria preventing some children having homes, clean water, education and knew that some children are separated from their parents. Children were also able to talk about rights being denied in Korea and parts of Africa. In the UK they reported that some children are affected by air pollution and so were denied Article 24 and that in China, pollution is so bad that people wear masks. When asked if all children at Ayresome have their rights respected, one Y2 child said, *“Yes, it’s obvious, because they’re ours.”*

Children learn about rights in school through lessons, displays, assemblies, special events and focus weeks. The curriculum is explicitly aligned with the CRC with a bank of RRS objectives for teachers to consult and key articles for each year group to cover. During an International Week, each class learnt about the home nation of one or more children in their class. The work focused on the geography, customs, religion and food. They also listened to traditional stories from those countries and shared children’s knowledge, linking their work to articles. Posters showing the articles are highly visible around the school and assemblies, some led by children, have a regular focus on the CRC.

As soon as a visitor accesses the school’s website, they know that Ayresome is working towards the Rights Respecting School Award. Articles and photographs of children enjoying their rights are the first thing the visitor sees. The website also has an excellent, informative section dedicated to RRS. On entry to the school a screen shows photographs of children enjoying their rights, leaving visitors in no doubt as to the importance of RRS at Ayresome. Around school there are a number of RRS displays and all classes have a copy of the CRC prominently displayed.

The passion of all stakeholders for RRS is tangible. The deputy headteacher, staff and governors show a strong commitment and enthusiasm for RRSA and they were quick to identify the impact of the work. The deputy headteacher explained, *“Rights are at the heart of everything we do. Pupils have a powerful voice. Children are not afraid to use their voice and give their opinions. They are very passionate about their opinions. It’s their school, it’s their education.”* Staff access regular CPD and the co-ordinator is part of a local RRS network of schools. Governors receive regular updates on the progress of the work from children and there are several link governors with special responsibility for RRS. The Chair of Governors said *“Governors have seen RRS developing against the bigger picture and a sense school is fostering different values from those in the community. School is an oasis of respect.”* Children keep their parents informed about their work on rights and parents are invited to all RRS events that take place in school.

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 at Ayresome understand how adults promote their rights. Rather than using the term duty bearer, children have extended their understanding of a ‘trusted adult’ to include their role in ensuring children experience their rights. Children identified that school provides opportunities to meet friends, learn, play and be safe. Children are confident that trusted adults promote their rights and keep them safe. With 96% of pupils surveyed reporting that if they felt unsafe they could tell a teacher and 98% feeling listened to. *“Adults are fair here we don’t get treated differently because we are new or speak a different language, but we might get extra help”* explained a pupil. Rights respecting work is at the heart of all work and is a high priority for everyone at Ayresome. The School Improvement Plan has rights threaded through it and discussions are due to take place regarding embedding rights into Trust wide policies which will then be shared with other members of the Academy Trust.

There is a positive and mutually respectful ethos at Ayresome. Throughout the visit children listened respectfully to each other and were responsible and cooperative as they moved around school. It was evident from visiting classrooms and talking to staff, that relationships are very positive between adults and children, and between children and their peers. One child said of adults, *“They respect us and we respect them.”* There are a range of charters in classrooms and around the school inked to relevant articles selected by the children, some with child and adult actions. Children agreed that they are treated fairly and were confident if there was a problem, teachers would listen and investigate. Children are beginning to address issues in the playground themselves and often quote their right to be safe to children who may be causing a problem. Pupils say they are treated with dignity and described it as *“being treated with respect,”* by being offered tactful help in lessons, *“having private chats with staff if feeling upset about something.”* and girls and boys changing separately for PE.

Pupils were unequivocal that school kept them safe and they were able to indicate ways in which this right was promoted. For example, staff on yard duty, locked gates and fire alarms. Children also take part in lock down drills where they have to close doors and windows and hide. Every half term all children have an e-safety lesson. *“We don’t talk to people we don’t know and never share where we live or things about us.”* explained a KS1 child. If something inappropriate appeared on the screen, they know to report it to a trusted adult or press a report button. Children are also involved in writing their own risk assessments, for example for a visit to a local church. Ayresome is very proud to be one of the first schools in the area to be awarded ‘School of Sanctuary’ status which means it is a safe space for all children no matter what their background.

Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a key driver at Ayresome. They have achieved a gold HeadStart award for commitment to helping children develop resilience and learn about social, emotional and mental health issues. There is a HeadStart steering group made up of children who drive the programme in school. Children and staff spoke very positively about the work and believe it empowers children and encourages them to talk about issues they may have. Children are able to access 1to1 sessions and families can access support too through Extended Services provision. Within classrooms pupils identified the need for quiet corners so that if a child needs time out they can take themselves without asking or being disturbed, while children can also report concerns to staff through classroom ‘worry monsters’. A strong pastoral support system ensures there are a number of trained staff who can support children in crisis. As part of promoting healthy lifestyles pupils

take part in the daily mile and an oral hygiene programme. While a broad spectrum of after school clubs support children’s right to be the best they can be through sports, sewing club, art and family cooking activities, to name but a few. Children all praised the healthy school lunches and understood why healthy choices were important *“we have a right to healthy food to help us grow, in my home country we didn’t always have enough food.”*

There is a strong ethos of inclusion at Ayresome based on their vision of ‘creating a place where all individuals are respected and given a safe space to be educated.’ Pupils believe everyone is included and valued at Ayresome. A quote from the website states, ‘Not a refugee child, not a migrant child # a Child is a Child, no matter what.’ Every child is set an individual ‘This is me’ target at the beginning of the school year. Staff work hard to ensure all nationalities are represented in school committees after one child said, *“no one represents me.”* She had noticed that there was no one of her nationality on the Rights Steering Group. Diversity is celebrated at the school and this is reinforced by School of Sanctuary work which challenges social stereotypes. Wonderful examples of children’s views on inclusion are shared on the school’s website as part of the School of Sanctuary page. The many and wide ranging after school clubs are open to all children and cater for all the children’s interests. One child said, *“if you’re in a group activity and everyone isn’t including you, the teacher will include you.”* A holiday club is run every school holiday and is free or heavily subsidised to ensure accessibility and access for all.

The deputy headteacher explained that, *“children have driven the curriculum and often take lessons in different directions by asking questions. There are lots of opportunities in lessons if children start talking about issues they’ve faced, they’re not shut down. Teachers value what children have to say and adapt lessons as necessary. Teachers are not frightened to let children speak because children have had some horrific experiences.”* Children agree that they all respect each other’s right to learn. If a child disrupts the learning, children are quick to remind the perpetrator respectfully that they are denying their right to learn. On a daily basis, children are also involved in self and peer marking and have a check sheet at the front of their books so they can monitor their own progress. Targets are set and discussed with individuals, so they know their next steps in learning. Surveys show that 93% of pupils know how to make progress in their learning.

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

Pupil voice is a strength at Ayresome with 93% of children believing they can always or sometimes influence decisions in school. As Ayresome is such a large school, there are various democratically elected steering groups to increase the representation of the children. In addition to the RRS Steering Group, children can join the School Parliament, the Eco Council and the HeadStart steering group. All classes are consulted by representatives of the School Parliament and receive feedback after all the meetings. A quiet reading space was developed in the playground as a result of a suggestion from a child and changes were made to the way water is distributed at lunchtime after concerns were raised about waste. The School Parliament organised the Red Nose Day events this year with everyone dressing up as a Disney character and entering a drawing competition, the winner of which was chosen by the children. They have also had a big say in improving the school environment after surveying the rest of the school. Ayresome Community Champions talk about local issues and have taken part in litter picks, bag packs and have sung at the local nursing home.

Young Interpreters play a vital role at Ayresome. They are children who support new arrivals (children and parents) to the school who have little or no English, helping them to settle in with minimum stress. The children are paired with another child who can speak their home language, making the transition to a new and unfamiliar school easier. The deputy headteacher said, *“Children know their rights are met from the minute they walk through the door.”* A reassuring quote prominently displayed is ‘We all smile in the same language.’

Children at Ayresome spoke passionately about their campaigning work. Outright and Show Racism the Red Card are just two of the campaigns worked on this year. Visits have been made by the children to other local schools and to the church to share their knowledge of the CRC. They have written letters to local businesses asking for sponsorship also inviting them to come into school to tell the children about their work. Several Y6 children recently received news that they hadn't been allocated a place at their local Secondary schools and were told they would have to either travel out of the authority or be home schooled. They and their peers have written letters to the local council and MP with regard to their right to an education advocating for a school place and campaigning for their friends to have places allocated to them.

The School Parliament are active fundraisers and have organised several local and global charity events including Comic Relief, Royal British Legion, ShoeShare and Christmas jumpers for Save the Children. Children spoke enthusiastically about the Bake for Syria event when cakes were donated or baked, then sold in school and money raised supported Unicef work in Syria. Some charity work supports children in school such as a collection of winter coats which were either given or sold cheaply to families of the school. The local food bank has also benefitted from collections in school.