



UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

School:	Holmbush Primary Academy
Headteacher:	Rebecca Jackson
RRSA coordinator:	Ian Hudson
Local authority:	West Sussex
Assessor:	Stella Muirhead
Date:	18 th June 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the leadership team, staff, and children for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with staff, pupils, parents and governors during the assessment and for the evidence detailing the work towards becoming a L1 rights-respecting school. Prior to the assessment visit you provided a comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form. It was clear to the assessor during the visit that everyone places a real importance on developing a rights-respecting ethos.

The strength of pupil voice in relation to teaching and learning was particularly notable.

Standards A, B, C and D have all met the necessary criteria

2. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

2.1. The school context

Holmbush Primary converted to Academy status in April 2015 with the University of Brighton Academies Trust. It is an average sized Primary school with 200 pupils on roll. The school is situated in a small seaside town with a mixed catchment area, and has a below average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, offering a breakfast club to support pupils who have Free School Meals. The percentage of School Action Plus and statemented children is above the national average. The large majority of pupils (87%) are of white British heritage, with the remaining proportion comprising 9 categories of ethnicity.

FSM: 13.5% EAL: 4.5% SEN: 16.5% Pupil Premium: 19%

Date of last OFSTED and the judgement: February 2013 Good

Date of RRSA Record of Commitment Summer 2015, Registered for RRSA Summer 2011



2.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator / deputy headteacher
Number of children and young people interviewed	30 children
Number of staff interviewed	3 teaching staff 3 support staff 1 parent governor 1 teacher governor 1 student teacher
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Assembly Lessons

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

Discussions with the headteacher and senior leaders clearly demonstrated their commitment to embedding rights-respecting values across the school. They are developing structures and planning procedures to support this.

At Holmbush Primary Academy rights-respecting values are integral to the school's vision and the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) has been a key tool to the school's development since 2011. The headteacher said "We have used the word respect as a core value and we had lots of different things going on. Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) helped us to link things together". RRS is included in the school's Raising Attainment Plan as an aspect of Behaviour and Safety. Articles 19, 28 and 29 are directly referenced and the success criteria and actions listed reflect the RRS ethos. For example one of the actions given is "To embed the language of 'Rights Respecting'". The school states its intention to "Ensure the school environment reflects our core value of Respect, our Rights Respecting work and British Values". Named personnel are allocated and monitoring arrangements are outlined. In the time frame of the school's RRS journey there has been significant improvement in the number of children achieving L4 in KS 2 tests in English and Maths, also children have achieved higher levels, including L6. Attendance is in the top 40% for all schools and has shown an increase during this interval.



The school's behaviour policy refers to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and makes particular reference to the child's rights to be "included", "to play" and "to learn". It is reported that 'Safeguarding' and 'Curriculum' policies feature similar references. Following the school's recent conversion to Academy status policies are being reviewed as part of a rolling programme, which includes making links with the Convention.

The headteacher and senior leaders demonstrate a good understanding of the Convention, which is promoted in a child-friendly format on the school's website and displayed through the school environment. The values of 'Rights' and 'Respect' are included in the largest font in the school's new 'Wordle' display, "as we believe these are fundamental in achieving all our other values" (RRSA Co-ordinator).

School leaders have ensured that the whole-school community learns about the CRC through its CPD programme which has included co-ordinator training at Unicef UK, staff meetings, circle time for Learning Assistants (LAs) and by using the 'Bigfoot Theatre Company' to deliver creative arts sessions on RRS foci across the school.

The school has engaged in projects which have successfully promoted the Convention to the wider community locally and globally. For example Holmbush has hosted meetings for the local Fairtrade group and children have informed the local community about Fairtrade projects and workers' rights twice a year at a local shopping centre. They have also produced a local directory of Fairtrade stockists and have been visited by a Fairtrade producer. Currently the school is launching the use of the 'Oddizzi' website in school in order to enhance a sense of global citizenship among pupils by making 'Classpal' online connections across the school with schools globally. All staff have received training in using this website and one such link has been initiated. The school has been proactive in its use of assemblies to promote children's rights globally under the CRC to children and staff through planned themes such as 'One World Week' and 'Black History Month'.

Holmbush is developing links to the Convention in the curriculum, planning to incorporate links with the CRC Articles into the new PSHE Scheme of Work and to strengthen existing links in topics. The RRSA Leader is working with the teaching staff in order to build systematic links with the CRC across long-term and medium-term topic planning through the school.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Children across the school know a range of age appropriate rights and understand how rights impact on children's lives. The majority of staff have a clear idea of their role as duty bearers. There are many opportunities for learning about rights in the life of the school.

All adults and children that I met at Holmbush Primary were able to describe children's rights. Children from KS 1 named rights such as 'to learn', 'to relax and play' and 'to be listened to'. They were also well aware of the universality of rights and could articulate their



understanding of how rights affected children's lives. Their comments about what life without rights would be like ranged from: "You wouldn't get listened to!" (Year R girl) to "Life would not be that fair – the bad things like children getting sold and you might have to work for the people that bought you!". (Year 2 boy) The staff interviewed reflected very positively on their RRS journey from their training about the Convention and helpful emails from the RRSA Co-ordinator, to the situation where: "Now we can see how it's embedded in our practice" (Teacher).

Parents were informed about RRSA by letter, through the school website, as well as through receiving leaflets and copies of the CRC. It is evident that they have also learnt through their time spent in school where they have seen the displays and heard the children and staff discussing the RRS ethos. One parent described how his child mentioned rights at home in connection with news items, pointing out that children in Syria had the right to go to school. The Governing Body is informed about the progress in RRSA by the involvement of two governors; one of whom is the RRSA Co-ordinator and the other who serves on the steering group. Governors are involved in monitoring aspects of RRSA through learning walks and the parent governor interviewed felt that the impact on learning and well-being had been "really positive".

Knowledge and understanding of the Convention are delivered through assemblies, not only those themed as RRS e.g. 'Wants and Needs', but also in others related to commemorative events such as 'World Refugee Day' where Articles 14, 19, 22, 28 and 31 were discussed in relation to the refugees' stories read out by children. In response to teacher questioning pupils made comments about the need for food, clean water, education and medical help for children in the refugee camps.

Displays that relate to RRSA are prominent through the school, and the CRC Articles are referenced. For example Article 3 referring to the best interests of the child is displayed on entry to all classrooms; there are large displays in the hall entitled 'Respect', 'Democracy' and 'Rights Respecting'

Examples of topic planning demonstrate generic references to rights, such as 'the rights enjoyed in World War 2' in Years 5/6, as well as 'how rights have changed in the UK –link to the present' in relation to learning about the Stone Age, Ancient Egypt and the Romans in Years 3/4. School leaders report that their learning journey topics such as 'African Adventure' in Key stage (KS) 1 empower children as global citizens.

The Eco Committee has improved the school environment by placing re-cycling bins in all classrooms, litter picking and "making sure everyone puts rubbish in the bins" (Year 2 boy) because "we have to keep the world clean!" (Year R girl) The children interviewed readily talked about children's rights globally, demonstrating awareness of global injustices through their comments. A boy from year 3 said: "In Africa, there is a little boy who has to harvest all the crops, then you have to go to school in the night – so he's not getting his right to relax and play!"



Standard C:
The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

Children and staff talk positively about how their charters are used from day to day and about how this has contributed to building a rights-respecting environment in the school. Staff use the language of rights and respect consistently and children model rights-respecting language and behaviours.

Charters based upon the CRC are in the majority of classes visited, featuring a varied approach which includes some reference to rules, the use of the terms respect and responsibility, and where CRC Articles, rights, agreed actions and adult roles are represented. Charter boards are colourful and creatively designed. Staff reported how the charters were originally created in liaison with the children in class transition days at the end of the summer term; while the majority of children interviewed were unclear about this process. However children at KS 1 and KS 2 were able to tell the assessor how their class charters were used. A girl from year 2 said "If we didn't have charters – you wouldn't know what's on them and we wouldn't know what to do to make sure everyone has their rights". Teachers felt that the charters had impacted positively on the climate for learning and informing discussions with parents: "It's really important to focus on respect for the rights and think about the behaviour in class – rather than blame – keep the learning going!"

The use of rights-respecting language is embedded across the school, "We had it in our initial training and in the rest of our journey we have been using it all the time! The children are so much calmer" (Teacher). Senior managers have monitored this aspect through "a day in the life" learning walks, which give an in-depth view of teaching and learning. A teaching student commented that she had noticed a marked difference in the extent to which children were using rights-respecting language in her visits over time. The right to be listened to is clearly very important to the majority of children and who see listening as an outcome of the charters. A girl from year 4 said: "The teachers listen to you when you are speaking and take in your ideas. Our teacher always does!"

The children interviewed agreed that most pupils followed the standards in the charters: "We all get involved and get on quite easily" (year 6 boy) It is evident that children feel safe in school, which is researched through an annual pupil audit. A girl from year 4 explained "I feel safe at this school because people are always looking out for you, not just the teachers – your friends." Children recognised that the school had acted to provide a higher fence to keep them safe because the previous fence was not high enough. A leaflet on internet safety is available on the school website. The Eco team have made a greenhouse out of plastic bottles as part of their drive to improve the school environment

The school has adopted a system referred to as 'Restorative Justice Chats' which is alongside the values of RRS. This means that rights-respecting language is frequently used to frame behavioural issues, which has influenced children's attitudes to conflict resolution. A boy from year 6 said: "When we have arguments, they're not really big because arguments don't really change anything, now they're about small things not big things." Another year 6 boy added: "If you make them speak their rights it makes them get along".

The children interviewed understand that raising money for particular causes such as 'Day for Change', 'Children in Need' and 'Send my friend to School' are some of the ways that



they can help other children to enjoy their rights. For example, "In India some children have to work like adults do. Seven hours for seven days!" (Boy from year 3).

Standard D:
Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Children are confident that their opinions are listened to and that their views are respected. Opportunities for involvement in democratic processes are embedded in the school culture and children are empowered to make informed decisions about teaching and learning.

Holmbush Academy has a well-established school council (SC), Learning Council (LC) and Eco Committee, which include serving members from years 1-6. Representatives are elected for the SC and for other roles selected on the basis of application. The pupils and staff interviewed gave many examples of how children give their opinions and are involved in decision making. The children interviewed responded, as a group, that expressing their views was a right, not a permission. One teacher articulated the view held by staff and governors alike, "This is very empowering for children and we acknowledge that. We respect their views. It would be pointless unless we then acted on it!" The SC has a formal liaison role with the RRSA steering group, which is currently composed of adults. Children at KS 1 and 2 knew the SC's job was to represent their views and to take action to make the school a better place. The examples most frequently quoted were the SC's role in designing playground equipment, designing the 'Wordle' and in starting a healthier tuck shop, which they recently reviewed through further consultation. On my learning walk, one of my guides showed me the campaign posters for the roles of Head girl and boy, stating "We have democracy here!" (Year 6 boy)

The LC have decided what they would expect to see from an outstanding learner in the classroom, they have also researched the school learning environment and reported their findings in a display. Their statements included "KS1 children liked the bright colours in their classrooms", "Role play areas help our imaginations" and "make sure all the equipment we use is well organised and stored in a place that is easy for us to get to". Pupils are consulted in the naming of classes, currently named after artists, annually. Through 'Talk Shops', Year 6 children visit other classes to discuss themes, including children's rights. Pupil involvement in target setting and assessment processes is celebrated in classroom displays, which empower them to understand their progress in the core subjects and in their social/emotional development. Pupil conferencing on all subject areas is a regular part of the school's annual evaluation. The LC are involved in teacher interviews and greatly impressed the Governing Body with the quality of their questions, such as "How would you motivate us and reward us for good learning and behaviour?"

The school has enabled the pupils to make informed decisions through projects such as the 'Walk to School Scheme' which has empowered them to consider the environmental implications of the increasing amount of traffic to and from their school. The older children told the assessor about weekly 'Holmbush University' sessions where "we are allowed to choose a course" (KS 2 pupil). Currently one course option is the 'Oddizzi Club', through which they have set up a link with a school in Kajjado, Kenya and exchanged emails with



pupils there. A pupil from KS 2 told me: “We had really nice messages from the children and made friends online”. The aim of this project is to help “the children to better understand how the rights of children are enjoyed globally in different contexts” (RRSA Co-ordinator). Through this opportunity children aged from 7-10 have discussed similarities and differences “between our two schools and the children’s lives (Year 6 boy).”

2.3. The future

The assessor would like to encourage the school to continue work on becoming rights respecting and work towards the award at Level Two.

The following recommendations are made to support the journey based on those that have proven valuable in other schools and settings in helping them to develop their practice at Level 2. The recommendations made by the assessors are listed below:

- To continue to emphasise RRSA in the school’s strategic planning documentation and to ensure that policies are reviewed with accurate reference to the Convention and CRC Articles
- To build a systematic approach to curriculum development that is underpinned by accurate reference to the Convention and CRC Articles
- To ensure that the whole school community learns about the Convention and to enhance the promotion of the CRC in partnerships, displays and the learning environment
- To further consider the guidance on the RRSA VLE and continue to work with pupils to develop charters/ classroom agreements in ways that are meaningful for children with a range of needs. Please see the new RRSA website for guidance after 1 July 2015.
- To develop the role of children and staff as ambassadors for children’s rights through involvement in campaigns informed by pupil voice as well as fundraising