

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

<b>School:</b>	St Cuthbert’s Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Angela Garrity
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Angela Garrity
<b>Local authority:</b>	Durham
<b>Number of pupils on roll:</b>	202
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting:</b>	Headteacher and deputy headteacher
<b>Number of children and young people spoken with:</b>	11
<b>Adults spoken with:</b>	2 x teachers and 1 x HLTA
<b>RRSA key accreditations:</b>	Date registered: October 2018 Bronze achieved: March 2019
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Kathy Allan
<b>Date of visit:</b>	18 October 2021

### ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

**St Cuthbert’s RCVA Primary has met the standard for UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.**

## EVIDENCE FROM THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

### 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 living.

- Children spoken to were familiar with a range of rights and could relate these to their own experiences and the world around them. Pupils explained that *“every child has all of the rights,” “they are for every child up to 18”* and *“if you can’t access one right it means you might not get others, they are all linked.”*
- Pupils spoken with understood that not all children are able to enjoy their rights and were confident in sharing issues such as: poverty impacting on health or a safe place to live; harassment; lack of family support and illness preventing access to education.
- Article 29 is used as the framework for learning with younger children who are supported to explore and develop their skills to be the best they can be. Staff explained how *“teachers have really learnt the rights”* and *“I don’t think I’d be so confident without the rights to explore some of the challenging issues.”*
- Articles are embedded across the curriculum with a focus right each term ensuring depth of learning. Children explained that *“we learn about rights in class and have charters.”* Links are also made through worship, article of the week and what is happening in school and the wider world.
- Display across the school links to rights and children are confident to share their understanding of rights with visitors. Newsletters and social media raise awareness of articles with families and during lockdown children’s rights remained part of the curriculum with home learning activities encouraging discussion about rights.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the CRC, its origins, values and principles and, for older pupils, its place within the wider framework of Human Rights.
- Continue to support children to develop their understanding of sustainable development. Consider exploring the [UN Global Goals](#) (Sustainable Development Goals) through [The World’s Largest Lesson](#) and how they impact on children’s rights and the wellbeing of the planet particularly in relation to your current focus on climate change.
- Ensure the school community have a clear understanding of the concepts of ‘rights holders’ and ‘duty bearers.’ Consider using the language on Charters in the next round and explore creative ways to develop awareness duty bearers in school and the community.
- Continue to develop relationships with families and the wider community through promoting children’s rights across communication, social media and through home learning opportunities.

## 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.

- Children spoken to clearly recognised how the schools upholds their rights citing, “*healthy food*,” “*playtime and PE*” and “*mindfulness*.” Rights Respecting awards are handed out during celebration assemblies promote respectful actions. One child explained (with support) how he received the award for helping others with their learning making the link to Article 28.
- Relationships at St Cuthbert’s are reported as strengthened by staff and children’s understanding of rights. A restorative approach is taken in managing behaviour and children reported that this is respectful and fair. Explaining that if there is a problem or disagreement “*the teacher will take both of them into class and have a word, they listen.*”
- The headteacher reported how children are empowered about their own safety and how she has heard children saying, ‘I know how to keep myself safe and it is my right.’ Children are confident in reporting concerns to ‘a trusted adult’ and know how the schools keeps them safe by having gates, and fire drills. E-safety is high on the agenda “*we don’t share pictures*,” “*we can block people and keep things private.*”
- Promoting wellbeing has been, and continues to be, a priority for all staff. Measures include support from Tranquil Treehouse, a health and wellbeing week, mindfulness training and counselling for identified pupils. Worry boxes in class allow children to report any issues to be discussed with staff or anonymously.
- Key worker children who remained in school during lockdowns became ambassadors for rights as they received increased opportunities to explore the CRC. The previous headteacher explained in a written statement how ‘children have become far more enthusiastic and reflective in their learning than they had been before. This permeated the entire school as we moved out of lockdown and into the new academic year.’

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Create opportunities to explore the concepts of fairness and equity and ensure children can describe how school promotes these concepts.
- Explore with staff and children the concept of ‘dignity’ – what it means and how it underpins policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school.
- Continue to promote an ethos of inclusion, where all feel supported and valued, relating this explicitly to non-discrimination.
- Consider developing the school’s strategic documentation to link to and reflect the values and articles of the CRC so that school improvement priorities and relevant policies include reference to children’s access to specific rights. You might find [Articles in Action](#) a helpful resource.

## 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.

- Children spoke positively about their right to a voice and understood that their views are taken seriously. A wide range of committees provide opportunity for children to influence change in different areas of the school and when many children were learning from home staff used DB primary to gather views and opinions. Suggestion boxes allow all children to share their ideas and representatives give feedback on discussions to their classes. Pupils often lead assemblies and *“we share our knowledge and talk about rights”* explained a committee member.
- Children are regularly supported to engage in fundraising and action for rights. *“We had harvest festival and helped people get the best possible health, for this we collected for the Durham food bank”* explained one pupil. Another explained how they wore purple and raised money to support an arthritis charity in support of a child in school.
- Life skills weeks and the broader curriculum provide children the opportunity to learn about the wider world. Staff report that children are *“much more aware of their role in the world”* and another said, *“I am proud that they are so respectful of other cultures.”* They understand their role in ensuring others know about rights so that they are empowered, *“we need to tell people who don’t know about their rights.”*
- Children are actively engaged in learning about climate change. They have taken part in a COP26 debate and the CAFOD ‘Eyes of the World’ campaign. A pupil explained that *“we need to act now as we are damaging the world, animals are dying, and polar ice caps are melting.”* The school plans to continue a focus on climate change for the next year and local MP Kevan Jones is visiting the school to discuss their ideas after pupils wrote letters to him.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to provide and develop opportunities for children to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school. This could include explicit involvement in school improvement planning, policy review processes, the evaluation of learning and teaching, nominating peers for the Rights Respecting Award etc.
- Continue to develop children’s understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen. Support them to be informed about the world so that they are critical thinkers and challenge discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.
- Continue to develop campaigning from the perspective of rights, justice and equity maintaining the understanding that children are rights holders rather than just recipients of charity.
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by encouraging children and staff to promote knowledge of the CRC and the Rights Respecting Schools Award with other schools, particularly the Catholic secondary, and in the wider community.