

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	The Sir John Colfox Academy
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Adam Shelley
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Rebecca Hatch
<b>Local authority:</b>	Dorset
<b>Assessor(s):</b>	Frances Bestley & Jilly Hillier
<b>Date:</b>	2 December 2020

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a Gold virtual accreditation report. The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff 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 and provided a good collection of evidence.

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:

- Very confident and articulate students with a good understanding of rights.
- Learning about rights is prioritised and systematically embedded into personal development and wellbeing.
- Curriculum coverage of rights is strong.
- Students feel listened to, nurtured and supported by the school.
- Very effective links with the local community.

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 building on the very effective practice evidenced.
- Continue to ensure the expertise of rights ambassadors is spread across school.
- Continue development of the curriculum including work on decolonisation and climate change.
- Work with students to develop meaningful global action.

## 3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

<b>School context</b>	The Sir John Colfox Academy is situated in Bridport, Dorset with 820 pupils on roll. 20% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium, 2% are EAL learners. Ofsted judged the school as Good in March 2018.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher, RRSA coordinator, 2x Deputy Headteachers and 2x Assistant Headteachers
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	18 students in different focus groups
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	6 teaching staff, 2 parents, 1 governor
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Very detailed evidence PowerPoint, focus groups, letters from chair of governors and RRSA governor
<b>Registered for RRSA: January 2009</b>	<b>Silver achieved: June 2018</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**

All students spoken with were knowledgeable about a wide range of articles, citing many not commonly identified. For each article students had a clear understanding of what it meant to their lives in school and in their town. A RRSA Ambassador explained *“It’s important to know about your rights. It makes it a fairer, a safer school; knowing about rights is improving the school and the community. It makes it a happier place.”* Students understood the concepts of rights *“They cannot be given away or taken away; you get them from birth and all rights are equally important.”* explained students in one of the focus groups. Another student explained confidently how the four General Principles underpin the whole Convention.

A student stated *“When we learn about our rights, we can get the community to understand about our rights and so it’s wider than school, it extends to the world around us. We learn about refugee children and why we need to help them. They have the same rights as we do.”* Another student described, *“Rights respecting links really well to global citizenship.”* Students understood how some children may not be able to access their rights both in the UK and in other parts of the world. They explained that for some families over lockdown it was hard to get food as they had less income. Students had some awareness of Global Goals mentioning no hunger and poverty, quality education and gender equality.

A new headteacher and deputy have been appointed since the Silver accreditation. The headteacher, previously at Bronze and Silver schools, showed a huge commitment to the CRC; *“Rights are at the heart of everything we do; new policies make it better for the students, they make sure their rights are in place; we’ve broadened the curriculum developing the rights to education, to voice and their talents – everything that the children want to do is based on rights. It’s about students having that power to influence change, to make the school the best possible. They have confidence in their own abilities. They are safe, happy and secure.”* The School Improvement Plan refers to rights and to achieving Gold accreditation. Regular staff meetings are held, led by the RRSA lead and Ambassadors. *“Moving from Silver to Gold has widened our remit, we’re working with local schools, with the town and with Unicef UK’s Youth Advisory Board”* explained the assistant headteacher.

*“Rights respecting is at the very front of what we do in terms of personal development and wellbeing for students. Students appreciate what the rights mean and how they apply in everyday life. We are making rights more and more visible”* explained an assistant headteacher. The assembly planner shows clear and appropriate references to rights. The tutor programme has one session each week on Culture, Character and Rights and the End the Week focus on Newsround, current affairs, student voice and debate. Both sessions provide regular structured opportunities to discuss rights. The Ambassadors planned and ran their own ‘Rights Day’ for KS3 students in November 2019 to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CRC. Their video shows examples of games and discussions about rights by both pupils and staff. *“Everyone enjoyed the day and learned more about their rights ... We made rights fun and how rights are in real life ... We had debating and drama workshops and got people talking about rights in a fun way ... We catered to everybody’s interests”* explained the ambassadors.

All staff spoken with were very committed to the CRC. Curriculum planning, lesson activities and students’ work all provided evidence of teaching about rights. Examples included music linked to resistance songs, art linked to identity, and in Y7 students make a rights keyring in design and technology. The English lead explained *“In core texts in English it’s all about voice and communication, in a lot of the books and the texts we choose we get the students to think about their*

*rights, to see different people’s experiences through literature. We’re developing a reading curriculum linked to rights.” The Modern Languages lead stated “It’s become a lot more proactive – we looked at our scheme of work and embedded rights into it, looking at Francophone Africa or South America and considered rights in those countries. We display rights in different languages.” Students corroborated this explaining that they had learned how to talk and write about the right to an education in Spanish. Teachers stated “We’re much more aware of rights – our conversation starts at a different level” ... “We’re more explicit about teaching about rights.” Students described how everyone “Subtly embeds rights into lessons ... “Rights are everywhere, rights are on our knowledge organiser, so we are reminded about rights every day.”*

The parents of RRSA ambassadors we spoke to agreed that they were well-informed through their children. They described how parents received information through Twitter and the website. The home-school agreement is linked to rights, and there was reference to rights in the virtual school open morning. A parent of a younger child explained that at the induction evening *“The whole evening was centred around rights. It made a big impact on me.”* Both parents identified that they did not just learn about rights through the school, *“We hear about it in the community, through children’s involvement in rights in the town, in their protesting about climate change and their work with Town council.”* One parent explained that her son had been involved in discussions with school staff and described *“his confidence and pleasure about being involved at that level.”* Both parents attributed their children’s involvement in RRSA as leading to increased self-confidence. Governors have been informed about the RRSA journey by the ambassadors. A governor has responsibility for RRSA and works closely with the RRSA team to ensure progress.

**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**

Students spoken with could explain how they enjoyed their rights in school. *“Teachers make sure that everyone has rights in this school, if someone can’t access them, they would provide support”* stated a student. RRSA Ambassadors designed the school charter based on Articles 12, 15, 24, 28 and 29. It is refreshed each year with all students and is very visible around school. From the charter the school has designed a learning promise linked to the right to an education. Students could clearly explain equity and equality and link it to rights. *“Rights give us equity and equality. People get additional things if they need them...if you have a learning disability, inclusion and support would be provided so they could access their right to learn.”* explained students. Students explained that knowing about rights *“Makes children more confident and know if their rights are being breached.”* They were certain that any breach or their rights would be addressed.

Throughout the visit there was evidence of mutually respectful relationships. Students, despite being in small groups on Teams in different areas of the school, listened carefully to one another and built on each other’s responses to questions. They understood the concept of ‘dignity’ and could explain how their Behaviour Policy ‘exit’ approach focused on rights and treating students respectfully. They described that if someone is not behaving in the classroom they get sent out for a short exit to *“protect everyone’s right to learn.”* While you are outside the classroom you are asked to think about how your

action may have impacted on children's rights. The RRSA Ambassadors explained that they ensured that teachers also discussed rights with the student to uncover what might have caused the poor behaviour and so treating the student with dignity. Most students feel that the policy is fair.

Students agreed that they felt safe at school. School data shows an increase in students always or mostly feeling safe over the last three years. They explained that during lesson time doors are locked so no external visitors can enter; that to keep students safe during Covid-19 the school is well ventilated with doors and windows open, hand sanitisers are available, outside and inside zones are in place and students wear masks. The House System has a buddying scheme, where Y7 students are 'buddied' with older students when joining the school. This gives students an older student to talk with and to give advice on what to do or who to speak with. Assemblies and PSHE are used to teach about drug and alcohol use and there is teaching about internet safety, social media and the impact it can have on young people. Students knew what to do if they felt unsafe explaining, *"We always have someone we can talk to... there are teachers we can go to who will provide support ... Protection from harmful drugs.* The Inclusion Centre is valued and well-used. One student explained, *"There's a place where we can go if we don't feel safe where we can talk to someone."*

Social and emotional wellbeing is a clear priority. Students were aware of how getting involved in sports activities helped mentally and physically. They described how there is a good mix including activities such as Yoga and mindfulness; *"We're always doing different sports."* PSHE covers a wide range of wellbeing issues and visiting drama groups provide performances to teach students about aspects of physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing. The school has signed up to the sanitary products for schools' scheme. The Inclusion Centre set up a Teams link so students could call whenever they needed to. Students appreciated how their tutors called them regularly during lockdown to check how they were. *"I was emailed once a week to check how I was doing, not just the work done"* explained one girl. SLT stated, *"Children feel their voice is heard, feel valued and mental health improves."*

There is a strong culture of inclusion. Students feel free to be open about their sexuality and gender and created a LGBTQ+ group by students for students. There is a focus on anti-racist education following Black Lives Matter. An open letter sent from a group of ex- and current students instigated a process of working with students, staff and parents to consider anti-racism and climate change within the curriculum. *"I loved the way it's been dealt with – a fantastic example of a student driven initiative that was taken seriously."* stated a parent.

Students value their education. School data showed an increasing proportion of students enjoying school over the last three years. *"Education is really important here"* stated one student. *"All staff are really good at pinpointing what each student needs in each lesson"* explained another. Students were clear about how they could make progress and appreciated the support they received from teachers and how they responded sympathetically to difficulties. Students have also been involved in working parties, providing feedback on certain areas of learning to the SLT. This has included reviewing the Homework Policy and how homework is set across the school. In September 2020, a group was gathered from across year groups to provide feedback on the use of Teams and student experiences of remote learning. *"We've learned loads and have changed our approach to how we use our learning platforms"* stated the SLT. Expressive arts co-create drama and music events and activities with students.

**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**

Students know that their views are taken seriously and have an impact on school improvement. *“Our decisions create a better and fairer school”* explained a student. Views are systematically sought and acted upon. *“At Colfox there are so many opportunities to get your voice heard... We go through things in tutor and you speak to your councillor or there are boxes to put your comment in... there are surveys where we answer questions.”*, were some of the examples shared. The SLT consider school priorities with the School Council and use the student survey results to change things. The school is developing an ‘Alternative School Council’ to engage those students they know who do not get heard on specific issues. The Inclusion Centre has its own forum which feeds into the School Council. Students felt that *“You can really bring up anything.”* They described that through the School Council they have obtained water refilling stations, requested improved staff consistency, encouraged recycling and *“skirts we are comfortable in.”* Students are regularly asked to be on interview panels for new teachers. Groups of students prepare questions about candidates’ beliefs and fit to the school. This was especially important for the appointment of the new headteacher. Students wanted a head who was passionate about rights and would continue to support a rights respecting school.

One of the students from the school is a member of Unicef UK’s Youth Advisory Board. He described how being in a rights respecting school empowered him to apply for the role, and since becoming involved *“made me feel I can bring the knowledge back to the community and help me bring things back to school.”* He has appeared on Newsround and chaired the Unicef UK’s World Children’s Day OutRight event. His parent said, *“His confidence has been amazing -it’s done ‘everything’ and it trickles down, making other students see what is possible.”*

Charity days are held every term with stalls and activities or performances to raise money for different causes. Each house chooses a charity and a right to support. These have included the Children’s Rights Alliance England, Help for Heroes, Save the Children, Cancer Research and Children in Need. Students have helped restore the Forest School area in Allington. The local MP has visited the school to discuss children being taught about rights.

The Sir John Colfax Academy plays an important role in supporting Bridport to become a Rights Respecting town. *“We’re really proud of extending our rights into Bridport town, there are events to do with rights in and out of school”* explained the headteacher. RRSA Ambassadors attend town council meetings. The secondary school works closely with the local primary schools, which are also rights respecting. Several arts project have taken place. Students have created a rights mural for the Town Charter Fair and young people attend the fair promoting the charter. Concerts are held in the school and town which celebrate and inform people about rights. Students have also been asked to work with the local museum. *“The town puts human rights at the heart of its decisions.”* explained the governor.