

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Icknield School
Headteacher:	Sean Cannon
RRSA coordinator:	Sean Cannon
Local authority:	Hampshire
Assessor(s):	Jilly Hillier and Kathy Allan
Date:	22 nd July 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

This reaccreditation report is based on a virtual visit. The assessors would like to thank the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults for the video of 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:

- A strong commitment to providing an inclusive learning environment based on respect for each child, including giving pupils opportunities and experiences they would not ordinarily have access to outside of school.
- A continued focus on ensuring that all children and young people attending Icknield can be the best they can be, and that children's best interests are at the heart of decision making.
- Work undertaken to start ensuring that children's rights are more explicitly embedded throughout the whole 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 deepen the understanding of rights across the school, specifically the terms ‘rights holder’ and ‘duty bearers’. Utilise Unicef UK’s RRSA online and virtual training which is currently available and explore opportunities for whole school inset.
- When next reviewing the school development plan, prospectus and policies endeavour to explicitly embed articles and a rights respecting approach throughout. Consider ways to promote your rights respecting approach through your ethos and values to continue to strengthen your RRSA journey.
- Continue to innovate and look for new ways to share knowledge of rights across the school and the wider community.
- Explore ways in which pupils can be supported to campaign locally or globally on an issue that is important to them. Consider using Unicef’s Advocacy Toolkit to support the process.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Icknield School is an all through special school for children with severe learning difficulties. There are 81 children on roll. 39% of children are eligible for pupil premium and 6.1% speak English as an Additional Language. In February 2019 Ofsted judged the school to be ‘Outstanding’.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher (also the RRSA coordinator) and 3 x assistant headteachers
Number of children and young people interviewed	4 pupils on a video tour of the school
Number of adults interviewed	4 x teaching staff, 1 x parent, 3 x governors
Evidence provided	Video learning walk, adult focus groups, e-portfolio
Registered for RRSA: March 2009	Gold previously achieved: July 2012 then July 2016

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

Staff at Icknield explained the progress they have made since the last Gold visit. *“Rights were implicit through everything. Now it is much more explicit. Staff are pointing out rights regularly. We now have a greater emphasis on rights across all areas and everyone is engaged through assemblies, curriculum and newsletters.”* All pupils are taught about the CRC and the most able can express an understanding of some rights. A member of staff described how, *“Children know what they are entitled to, they can learn about rights and do learn it.”* A half termly article means that children receive sustained learning opportunities. *“We need a half termly focus to ensure articles are embedded with children”* explained an assistant head. A pupil described how *“we learn about rights in the hall...and the classroom.”* The comprehensive assembly programme allows each class to run an assembly to share their understanding with peers. *“It all filters through so pupils, staff and parents are engaged.”* said a member of staff. Pupils also learn about the different ways children experience rights for example different types of food and homes around the world. Through topics such as Egypt, Keeping Safe and Refugees’ children learnt about when rights are denied.

The school environment reflects the commitment to children’s rights with a notice board that shares photos of children enjoying their rights and accessible copies of the half termly article. The headteacher has also produced a mural showing how rights respecting is integral to the school’s values. Rights are referenced in the school development plan within ‘Behaviour and Attitudes’ and staff now place articles into medium term plans to ensure there is wider coverage. Within the portfolio, links were seen between learning about communication, asking for help and article 13; food shopping and writing lists and article 24; puberty and article 6. Topic days are also linked to rights such as keeping safe (article 19) and sharing individuality (article 29 and 31). Weekly newsletters celebrate pupil’s achievements, identify links to articles and the article of the half term. More recently, newsletters have promoted Unicef’s Article of the Week as part of their home learning package.

All adults spoken to showed a commitment to the CRC and becoming a Gold Rights Respecting School. Some staff have attended external rights training and internal training has taken place to support everyone to embed articles into everyday teaching. Additionally, the staff handbook helps new staff to understand the ethos of the school. Governors have a keen focus on rights as they explained, *“We are now more aware of how rights are experienced in school.”* They were closely involved in the recent curriculum review which included rights.

A member of staff explained how, *“...engagement with parents about being rights respecting has improved.”* The DOJO system is used to communicate with parents and ‘evidence for learning’ links parents with pupil progress and targets. As the parent spoken to attested, *“It makes so much sense for any child with a disability, we need to remind people that there is more to him than you can see. Rights do this. They bring together the curriculum and what we want for our son to help him understand.”*

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

When talking to staff they explained their role in ensuring children access their rights saying, *“It is part of everyday and is embedded in everything.”* Adults take their role as duty bearers very seriously, particularly for those pupils with communication challenges. Nearly fifty staff completed the RRSA questionnaire with the majority feeling comfortable discussing rights with pupils and all feeling respected by pupils. Communication is a key part of the curriculum and each child is supported to access their own strategies to ensure they can be heard. One of the children on the video explained how adults in school will help if they have a problem and that adults listen to them about things that happen in school and at home.

A governor explained how children’s rights have been an integral part in decision making in school over the last year adding, *“Some of these decisions have been really challenging...using the rights has helped us justify and support decisions.”* By keeping the best interests of the child at the heart of the process, respect and the dignity of the child are obviously integral to the school life. Over 85% of children who completed the questionnaire feel they like the way adults treat them and staff report respectful relationships between staff, pupils and staff and pupils. One pupil described how *“friends play with me; we take turns and they help with work in class.”* A member of staff also said, *“children are amazing at respecting each other and making sure they are included.”* Another described how staff are *“very aware of individual needs to ensure that children are given space to be themselves...if a pupil is anxious, we will ensure they have what they need to calm down.”*

Supporting children to keep safe is a key focus at Icknield. Pupils explained on the video evidence how during Covid19 they were only in schools two days a week due to *“a bug”* and the need to keep safe. Another child confidently referred to the NSPCC ‘Speak Out Stay Safe’ work they had undertaken. 100% of pupils report feeling safe in school with 86% confident that if they felt unsafe, they would tell an adult. All children have a ‘safe circle’ of adults who they know they can talk to about any concerns at home or school. When some children in school identified that having a buddy on the playground or in different situations during the school day would help them children were paired establishing a system of peer support.

Pupils’ health and emotional wellbeing is taken very seriously with strategies across the curriculum and school day to support children. Lunchtime is an opportunity to learn about healthy choices while cooking and shopping are key skills that are taught across the school. Children described *“drinking water, staying fit, eating lots of fruit and keeping moving”* as ways to keep healthy. A recent sporting challenge for children unable to attend school had a huge uptake from families with children engaging in a variety of different ways based on their ability. When asked about Article 15, pupils described *“amazing clubs,” “art club with my friends”* and *“football club after school.”* A wide range of clubs run at lunch times and after school allowing children to access extra-curricular activities and engage with peers socially. Staff have received ELSA training so can support any children who have emotional difficulties. Time is given each day to explore emotions even if the children cannot fully understand. Circle time, switches and symbols help children to express themselves. A member of staff explained the importance of managing emotions for pupils, providing the example that many children feel they need to be happy all the time and that some struggle with disappointment and being happy for others.

Children are supported to use sensory media, stories, music, objects and Proloquo if they have limited language so they can express themselves and engage in school life as fully as possible. One child with limited language has recently started using a switch to express when he does not like something. This has had a positive impact reducing negative behaviour and allowing him to have this feeling recognised.

Inclusion is a key strength of the school and staff are passionate about removing barriers for children and young people with disabilities and making activities open to all children. The individualised curriculum provided by Icknield allows each child’s need to be considered and catered for. Staff take great care to ensure that adaptations are made so that everyone can be involved. *“Everybody is included, and everyone has a voice. Every lesson and activity are open to everyone”* explained a member of staff. For example, all children in the school have been skating and in the upper school everyone is offered the chance to engage with Shakespeare for Schools, *“We ensure that if a pupil is motivated by a song or book then we include them in the classes and activities so that children can engage”*. A child in an electric wheelchair has represented the school at sporting events and when a young person played the role of a vicar in a Shakespeare production at the local theatre he had a copy of the Gruffalo in his bible as a comforting and familiar object to help keep him focussed and engaged.

A wide range of opportunities are provided for pupils to be involved in their own learning and make choices. The school have ensured that class charters are personalised, as an assistant head explained, so that they *“...now have more meaning to the children.”* As part of Education, Health and Care Plans, pupils are engaged in contributing their views by answering questions directly, using pictures or with support from staff. Children also understand what they need to do to make progress with 95% answering positively in a recent questionnaire. The strong personalised curriculum supports young people learning about their rights and the rights of others through its focus on personal, physical, independence, communication and cognition.

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

Developing children’s communication skills is a key aim of the school and a range of alternative means of communication methods are used so that children can engage with decision making at different levels within school. This includes signing, symbols and Information Communication Technology. Children know their ideas are taken seriously with 98% reporting that adults in school listen to their ideas. As a parent explained, *“Staff are fantastic at allowing children to try and communicate and ask for what they want/need rather than automatically meeting that need.”* A governor also described how *“children, staff and governors are all involved in strategic decision making.”* There are pupil panels involved in staff appointments and the School Council provides an opportunity for all children to contribute ideas and to decisions in school. All children whatever their ability are able to be part of the School Council and a representative is voted in from each class. When two children were very enthusiastic about joining, both were able to attend. They gather ideas from their classes, LSA’s and teachers before attending the whole meeting, or just part of it if they wish. The Council meets with the headteacher and has influenced decision making such as lunchtime clubs, having a trampoline in school and having *“...a big role to play in choosing new class names.”* based on musical instruments

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explained a deputy head. School Council also vote for 'Superstar' of the week and lead on updating the display to reflect the recipient.

Alongside formal opportunities for participation children's strong relationships with staff mean that confidence is high in talking to adults. When a young person expressed their concern and anxiety at moving onto the FE provision with their peers his teacher brokered a meeting with his parents and the staff where he was able to share his fears. After listening to him the decision was made to keep him back a year and a smooth transition ensued a year later.

Pupils regularly go out into the community to learn about the world around them. The 'Glee Club' and choir have visited local care homes and when learning about independent living in FE pupils go food shopping and visit key services. Children have also been involved in litter picking and tree planting in the community. The school's allotment supports learning about the environment and each class has recycling bins. Pupils have met with the town council to talk about the allotments and how they can provide more support. Icknield have also supported another school to develop RRSA and staff have run workshops for special schools locally. They have also worked with the local mainstream secondary school with whom there are many joint projects and working opportunities.

Opportunities regularly occur for pupils to engage with a range of charities including Jeans for Genes, Odd Socks, Red Nose Day and Sport Relief. Charities that promote and support inclusion are commonly supported, and important days are celebrated such as 'Young Carers Day.' A pupil animatedly explained that they had made donations to the Shoebox Appeal and local foodbank to help other children and adults. As part of the National Citizenship Service, young people have been engaged in a community action project to create a 'Rainbow Corner' for the local Mencap respite centre; they painted items and upgraded the garden area.