



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| School: | Sixpenny Handley First School |
| Headteacher: | Clare Hewitt |
| RRSA coordinator: | Rachel Hampshire |
| Local authority: | Dorset |
| Assessors: | David Powell, Mike Hillary (RRS Partners and Dorset Inspectors) |
| Date: | 21 June 2011 |

Assessment result

We would like to thank the leadership team, governors, parents, staff and young people for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with governors, parents and pupils during the assessment and for the extensive portfolio of evidence detailing the work towards becoming a Level 2 rights-respecting school. Prior to the assessment visit you provided a very comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form. It was clear to the assessors during the visit that everyone places a real importance on developing and embedding a rights respecting ethos.

It was particularly notable that the school has explicitly placed the rights respecting ethos at the centre of all pupil and adult learning. Sixpenny Handley takes a very creative approach to learning, with all children contributing impressively to the design of their learning journeys.

Standards A, B, C and D have all met the necessary criteria. All standards have elements that have exceeded expectations.

As a result of the visit and evidence provided we would like to recommend to the Accreditation and Standards committee that the school has attained Rights Respecting School Award Level 2.



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

How we recommend Level 2 standards are maintained

These actions are those that have proven valuable in other schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Level 2. The recommendations made by the assessors are listed below:

Areas relating to each standard as in current recommendations

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

- Because this is a relatively small school and there had been considerable turnover of staff for a period the senior leadership team had had to led the development of RRS. We now recommend that the school establish a steering group to support the senior leadership team. This will help to steer, monitor and evaluate the impacts of the RRS journey
- Continue to act as an ambassador for RRS, e.g. within the local community and local schools pyramid

The whole school community learns about the CRC

- Continue to increase younger children's knowledge and understanding of the articles of the UNCRC and the role played by children in drafting the original articles. Also develop younger children's knowledge of the part played by the United Nations and Unicef in supporting children's rights across the world
- Develop even further specific links to UNCRC articles in lesson and topic planning
- Develop the school web site further – both as a record of achievements, as a good practice example for other schools and as an aide to informing parents further, e.g. posting class charters after next September

The school has a rights-respecting ethos

- Continue to encourage the use of rights respecting language by younger children, e.g. in low level conflict resolution
- Develop a Governor link to the school council

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

- Widening even further the opportunities for all children to be involved in the school council/pupil voice process
- Continue to develop children's understanding of the wider world by exploring images and perceptions of people and places in the existing topics connected to (South) Africa, India, Australia and Mexico
- Develop the link to a school in a contrasting locality in the UK to help children appreciate and celebrate the different cultures, languages and customs



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

The school context

This is a smaller-than-average-size school serving mainly the village of Sixpenny Handley, although a small minority of pupils come from surrounding villages. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British origin and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. More pupils than average are on the school's register of special educational needs, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The pupils' needs cover a wide range, including hearing impairment, but the majority of SEN pupils have moderate learning difficulties. All teaching staff are new to the school since the headteacher was appointed in 2008. The school has very recently opened a breakfast and after-school club.

The last OfSTED inspection was carried out in November 2010 with all judgments being outstanding. This is a significant improvement from the 2007 inspection where the school was judged 'satisfactory' and the headteacher deserves great credit for building a truly collaborative learning community that has the UNCRC at its heart.

The school attained Level 1 in 26th March 2010

The care, guidance and support in this school are exemplary.

Assessment information

| | |
|--|---|
| Self-evaluation form received | Yes |
| Impact evaluation form received | Yes |
| Attendees at SLT meeting | Headteacher / RRSA coordinator / assistant headteacher |
| Number of children and young people interviewed | 30 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 4 teaching staff 3 support staff 2 parents 1 governors |
| Evidence provided | Learning walk Written evidence Assembly and DVD + Powerpoints Lessons Any other – Eco Club – School Council Fairtrade Café DVDs PowerPoint's |



Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Discussion with the leadership team provides evidence of their strong commitment to incorporating the values and principles of the CRC within the school. The leadership team has built impact evaluation into their SDP and their plan, do, review cycle. The impact evaluation form provides evidence of significant impact in all key areas. For example children are more engaged in their learning through the placing of pupil voice at the heart of learning design. This is achieved through 'Pupil Voice' afternoons when all children question each teacher about their learning, with key issues raised then being reported by School Council to a staff meeting for SLT to reflect on and modify learning journeys.

Another example is the process whereby pupils select the themes the school will hang its learning round for the year. Children already help teachers plan the learning around the theme, but the latest initiative has seen all staff providing all children with the opportunity to select the themes. This is outstanding creative practice!

Comments from the recent Ofsted report support the claim that the RRSA has contributed to improved well-being and achievement including attainment, behaviour and improved attendance. For example, the 2010 report stated 'Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong through the work on Rights Respecting Schools' In the submitted impact report the headteacher evidences no exclusions since the RRSA was introduced, no bullying reported over the past year and behaviour and relationships have significantly improved since her appointment. Both members of the accreditation team saw outstanding behaviour and relationships during the day. Two playground staff who attended the school as children identified the huge improvement in behaviour, with one saying 'Before Clare (the present headteacher) arrived there were regular incidents of bad behaviour, I can't remember when we last had to tell children off.' Both emphatically put this improvement down to the introduction of the RRSA.

These observations and other evidence were strongly supported by the evidence gathered during the course of the assessment visit from interviews with children and adults.

The leadership team have developed strong strategies to ensure RRS will be sustained through its explicit inclusion in the SDP. All new policies are underpinned by specific rights and these are written clearly throughout the policies and all teacher planning has to identify the link to the UNCRC. There is a rolling programme of policy reviews which include embedding the relevant CRC articles and principles. Examples seen include the 'Intimate Care' policy, built around Article 6 and the 'Behaviour' policy that clearly references articles 3, 12 and 28.

The pupil council, which acts as a steering group for the RRSA meet regularly with the school governors. At a recent meeting the pupils gave a presentation on the RRSA which concluded with all governors adding their signature to the whole school charter.

All children contribute to the school's development planning through the 'Pupil Voice' afternoons described above and through pupil questionnaires that allow issues around learning and rights to be identified and developed.



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

The school ensures that all new staff appointed know about rights-respecting schools or are clearly articulating a willingness to learn themselves and embrace the values of the UNCRC. There is work currently underway to improve the induction process for new staff to ensure that this happens.

The school's leadership team have a strong commitment to seeing that a highly inclusive and participatory ethos is maintained by making prominent use of the CRC. The school presents as a very strong collaborative learning community underpinned by the values of the UNCRC. The children's explicit understanding of article 12, impressively articulated by most children interviewed in Y3 and Y4 evidences their confidence in how their school leadership values this. The school council has been positioned at the centre of school leadership and management, currently leading on RRSA and Eco school award. The school council reflects the different ethnicities and backgrounds of the school's community.

The self-evaluation form provides evidence of how the school has shared rights respecting practice with other schools and communities. For example, at a recent county conference, Sixpenny Handley children gave an impressive presentation on the RRSA and its positive impact on school life. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly contribute to county conferences and workshops, exemplifying their innovative approach to learning and the UNCRC. The school communicates activity regarding the UNCRC through community open days and articles in community magazines.

The SLT provided examples of planning and actions to ensure coverage of global citizenship and sustainable development across the school curriculum is linked to the CRC. For example, the strong link to a school in Limpopo provides a rich two way learning opportunity, with children from both schools exploring similarities and differences in lifestyles. All planning has global citizenship built into it to ensure all staff engage with global learning fully.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Pupils have learned about the CRC and the RRSA via specific curriculum and activities, especially in their SEAL/PSHE lessons and "Rainbow" activities. (Rainbow is a local Dorset LA pack containing RRS activities)

All the pupils and staff interviewed could describe key articles and how these can be used to inform their behaviours and how each right implies responsibilities for supporting the rights of others. Children in particular referenced both their class charters and the playground charter.

During the tour of the school children described the relevance of key articles displayed around the school and why they were in particular places. Children of all ages knew the link between rights and responsibilities. Some older children knew the link to Unicef and the United Nations. Staff, including lunchtime supervisors and teaching assistants, were also aware of the key articles and the relevance to school life. This was borne out during discussions held on the day of the assessment.



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

The school has become a beacon of good practice for their rights work. Pupils and staff have acted as ambassadors for the CRC and their rights respecting school. This is clearly documented in the self-evaluation, including hosting joint training and contributing to local authority courses.

Parents, carers and governors are informed about the CRC including an informative section on the school's website explaining the thinking behind being a rights respecting school. The school leadership team were responsible for this and were already aware of the ways this might be improved.

The school prospectus and newsletters provide opportunities to show the links to the rights respecting ethos. Parents mentioned regular references to RRS in newsletters, which are also available on the web site.

The SLT explained how there has been a steady increase in parental support and their readiness to engage with the school, e.g. special assemblies in support of Red Nose Day

Governors and parents we met actively support the school in becoming rights-respecting, particularly some of whom were also supporting aspects of sustainability, such as Eco award, and were very clear in their support for the rights respecting schools approach and what it had brought to the school.

Displays including children and young people's work about CRC and RRSA are prominent throughout the school in all areas. These included displays linked with articles; such as the school council, Eco club, Class, school and playground charters, links to work in the curriculum and in appropriate places, e.g. next to the sink or in the ICT suite.

The range of evidence observed together with responses from both adults and children interviewed support the conclusion that learning about the CRC is extensive and that a rights-respecting ethos is modelled in the learning environment, e.g. during the planning phase of teaching and learning. This was exemplified by an excellent assembly where children said "goodbye" to the "traditional" areas of learning. This was available on a DVD which we enjoyed on the day of the visit.

Lesson plans and schemes of work covering the CRC have been developed for curriculum areas/topics, eg SEAL/PSHE and the topics, some of which are now chosen by the children. Further references to articles can be made during the planning phase of the teaching and learning of topics.

Staff interviewed explained how this provision includes setting global citizenship aspects of the curriculum in a CRC context and nearly all pupils interviewed were able to talk about how they have learned to link rights with global citizenship and sustainable living, e.g. some older children (Years 3 and 4) could make the links between Fairtrade and children's rights in other parts of the world and also between Eco/environmental issues and children's rights.



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Charters, based on UNCRC and clearly linked to specific articles, were in all classrooms visited as well as the school charter in the hall and playground charters in both playgrounds.

The role of adults as well as pupils is apparent in many classroom charters, e.g. teachers signing class charters and in the case of the school charter which has been signed by staff and governors

Staff and pupils interviewed explained clearly how the charters are developed in a collaborative way, how they could be revised when they needed to be and how they are used. For example, children reported that teachers made reference to the language of the class charter as did the lunchtime and playtime supervisors.

Both teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, governors and parents all commented on the fact that the language of rights, respect and responsibilities had become an “every day” language for all.

Nearly all classroom practitioners and support staff interviewed use rights-respecting language and behaviour. One support staff commented that she would feel “lost without it” and would not want to be without the RRS ethos, “because it works”.

Relationships were described by all interviewees consistently as mutually respectful, and several adults, other teachers, commented that behaviour and relationships had improved even further as a result of the continuing and developing RRS ethos in the school. Our observations confirm this.

Lunchtime supervisors felt using the language of rights had helped them to resolve disputes more effectively and they had observed that often children were resolving issues and problems among themselves. One support staff commented that children could not, “play one us off against the other - because we all use the same language.”

Nearly all pupils interviewed report that they and other pupils respect the right of other pupils to learn. This was an important part of every class charter and children of all ages could explain what this meant in the classroom context.

Most pupils were confident in expressing their opinions about their learning and were able to explain the importance of being able to discuss their learning with their teachers. A DVD we viewed on the day showed the children’s excitement in choosing their own topics to study and being involved in planning their learning.

Pupils are increasingly involved in evaluating their own learning and in understanding their targets for improvement and how to achieve them. The parent and parent/governor that we spoke to both commented on the fact that their children knew what their targets for improvement were.



In a discussion around pupil designed learning journeys, Ben and Jasmine commented that 'Choosing our themes makes us clear about what we are learning. We are inspired to want to learn.'

The word 'inspiration' along with other words identified in the Olympic ideals are in frequent use. The school places much emphasis on Olympic ideals and their relationship with the UNCRC. (as seen in during the school assembly on the day of the visit).

Nearly all pupils interviewed were confident that they are able to resolve conflict in a rights-respecting way. They consistently described the school as fair and inclusive.

Many of the pupils interviewed were able to go beyond describing charitable actions to illustrate what might be done so that more children can enjoy their rights both locally and globally, for example the Fairtrade café and their understanding of the links between Fairtrade and the rights of the children in other countries.

Children had also been studying the lives of children in their link school in South Africa and explaining how the children there could be helped to enjoy more of their rights.

Some older Year 3 and 4 children could also explain the link between their work around environmental issues and the link to children's rights both locally and globally. This is commented on further in the following section.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Pupil voice has an exceptionally high profile in school, and there is a commitment to an extensive range of opportunities to engage in learning. The 'Pupil Voice' afternoons and pupils' engagement in designing their learning are powerful examples, documented earlier in this report.

Children we spoke to were clear that the actions of their representative groups in school had an impact on their rights and their learning. A good example of this is the work undertaken by the pupil Eco group. They have developed an extensive action plan, including key goals, success criteria and clearly defined tasks and actions. The initial drive for the plan came from a successful application by the pupils to a county carbon reduction pilot. The Eco group gave an excellent presentation evidencing the significant impact this has on learning and environmental behaviour across the school. (Some pupils were also able to explain the link to rights (Article 24)

The visit provided evidence of pupils being consistently involved in decision making at the school – examples include;

- In the classroom, children have a strong voice in designing their learning journeys
- The 'Pupil Voice' afternoons and theme choices position pupils at the heart of evaluating teaching and learning and curriculum development.
- Key staff appointments are made with pupil involvement and pupils report direct to the governing body on key school initiatives such as Eco-School and RRSA.
- Pupils act as RRSA ambassadors within their own school, showing visitors round, and across Dorset, providing excellent presentations to conferences.



Denying
child rights
is wrong.
Put it right.

- Pupils lead and run the pupil council, with minutes provided to all classes, SLT and governors. There is a clear process of feed back, to the classroom and forward, through the school council to SLT and governors.

Ellen, a school councillor explained that 'The school council teaches you the skills of leadership and how to be a good group member.'

School councillors are voted on every year following the writing and presentation of personal manifestos. Roughly 50% of pupils submit manifestos, a number that is rising. The school is looking to ensure all pupils feel confident to stand for election. More vulnerable or 'quiet' pupils are supported in getting their voice heard through personalised approaches by teachers and TAs and strategically placed 'worry boxes' that allow them to post concerns or thoughts

Nearly all pupils interviewed reported that the school provides a range of opportunities to access information which equips them to make informed decisions. Key to this is the high quality basic skills teaching and learning, giving all pupils the tools to communicate effectively. Thinking and listening skills are well developed and all pupils interviewed displayed confidence in discussion and debate.

Nearly all pupils interviewed report that they have had opportunities to take action to uphold the rights of children locally, nationally and globally. For example, Harry (Y4) made the link between Fair Trade, rights denial and the school's Limpopo partner during a presentation on the importance of Fair Trade. 'Fair trade allows us to support farmers in Africa to get a good price so their families are less poor and can have more rights, such as clean water.' The school has embraced the Fair Trade strategy and the impressive presentation provided clear evidence of how much pupils run this including selling and ordering new stock.

Some of the staff interviewed were very clear on the importance of their role in ensuring that global citizenship in the curriculum makes provision for challenging stereotypes and extending the understanding of interdependence. The deputy headteacher explained how the school has shifted position from raising money to support projects abroad, to developing beneficial two-way partnerships, such as the relationship with the school in Limpopo. There is clear evidence from staff and pupils that both schools have much in common, and much to learn from each other.