

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Ash Grove Academy
Headteacher:	Judith Ceuppens
RRSA coordinator:	Nicola Lucas
Local authority:	Cheshire East
School context:	233 pupils on roll with 37% of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding. 5.5% of pupils have an EHCP and 9% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Vice Principal, Headteacher and RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	27 pupils from Reception to Year 6
Adults spoken with:	Chair of Governors, 3 Class Teachers and a HLTA
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: April 2019 Bronze achieved: March 2020 Silver achieved: April 2022
Assessor:	Sarah Hodgkinson
Date:	28 th February 2024

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Ash Grove Academy has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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 digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- Very articulate children who demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of rights. They knew a wide range of articles and were confident in the concept of rights.
- Consistent messaging about rights and respect underpinning every dimension of the school's work.
- Pupils were keen to share their opinions and were positive that they could make a difference in school and in the wider world.
- A strong desire to develop students' understanding of inequalities around the world and the actions they can take to address this.

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:

- Ensure there is a clear plan in place to ensure the sustainability of the excellent rights respecting practice.
- Continue the good practice around rights that has become embedded across the school. Ensure that all new initiatives are related back to rights.
- Further develop opportunities for children and young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, recognising the role of children in helping adults understand problems and develop achievable solutions.
- Continue to act as ambassadors for rights and the RRSA through your networks and in collaboration with the LA and local schools.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere.	Children at Ash Grove have an excellent knowledge of the CRC. They can confidently discuss a range of rights and understand the principles that guide the Convention. A Y6 pupil explained, <i>"All rights are inherent and indivisible,"</i> and another child added, <i>"Rights don't have to be earned."</i> Pupils understand that not all children around the world can access their rights and pupils shared examples of this including children living in places of conflict, such as Gaza and the Ukraine, and girls who are forced into marriage. Staff demonstrated a strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA and this is tied into the vision and values of the school. The headteacher explained, <i>"RRSA has given us a framework and enhanced what we do and driven us forward strategically,"</i> and the vice principal added that learning about rights has, <i>"...empowered our children in a positive way."</i> A member of staff commented, <i>"...children are the future, and they are the voices of change,"</i> and the Chair of Governors added that learning about rights gives children, <i>"...confidence to know their voice is going to be heard."</i> Parents and carers shared their comments in the evidence pack submitted prior to the visit. One parent said, 'I really like that my child learns about their rights at school and this threads through the whole curriculum. Thank you for ensuring my child knows they have a voice.'
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.	The language of rights is evident in all activities throughout the school and in conversations with parents and governors. Children understand the importance of learning about their rights. One pupil commented, <i>"We learn about our rights because our duty bearers help us learn and help us to live a nice life with good wellbeing."</i> There is excellent use of charters across the school. Class charters are developed each year with pupils, and regularly revisited to see how well the rights are being respected and if there is anything that needs to change. Staff spoke about how the children enjoy learning about their rights. A staff member explained, <i>"Children love learning about rights. They use the language of rights to debate tricky situations."</i>
3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights.	Ash Grove have recently consulted with children on the development of their behaviour policy, and this has further strengthened mutual respectful relationships across the school. When asked about the fairness of the new behaviour policy, one student commented, <i>"I think it's fair because there should be consequences."</i> Pupils confidently explained that dignity means, <i>"...treating each other with respect,"</i> and children also demonstrated an understanding of equality and equity. One child explained, <i>"Some children have extra reminders and I think that's fair because they need extra."</i>
4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	All children agreed that they feel safe at school and were aware of the procedures in school designed to keep them safe and protected such as learning about online safety, regular fire alarms and staff supporting the children at playtimes. One child commented, <i>"The duty bearers keep us safe."</i> A member of the ELSA team explained how understanding about the right to be protected helped a child to understand the reasons behind the extra support and intervention that they were receiving and that the adults were supporting them to access their rights. They explained that it, <i>"...made the child feel safe and more empowered."</i>

5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	There is a strong focus on the health and wellbeing of students within the context of rights so that young people feel supported and protected. Children are aware of the support available in school to help them with their social and emotional wellbeing and staff and pupils have a good understanding of the different needs of different pupils. One child commented, <i>"Some children might need extra support, like a fidget."</i> Children at Ash Grove are also involved in a multigenerational play scheme where they visit local residential care homes and the time spent there helps develop an appreciation of emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	All children feel valued and supported to be the best they can be. Staff shared how they created the school values in collaboration with pupils as they wanted children to feel involved in the process and develop a deep understanding of the meaning of the values. Staff spoke about welcoming new pupils into the school and how using rights to learn about the experiences of children all around the world helps to, <i>"...build a moral compass."</i>
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Children value education and learning about their rights. One pupil explained that rights, <i>"...help children survive and lead happy and healthy lives."</i> One child shared how they like, <i>"...learning about rights in history,"</i> and another child added, <i>"I just like going to school and learning the rights because if people know more about them, the better it will get."</i> Staff shared how children are involved in making decisions about their education. They explained how the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors did not feel comfortable with their title and, after consulting with the children, they are now known as the Kindness Ambassadors and look to shine a light on all acts of kindness occurring around school.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	Pupils were keen to share their opinions and were positive that they could make a difference in school. There are various pupil groups for students to share their thoughts and opinions and these have contributed to making change around the school such as improving playground equipment, the creation of an Interhouse Sports Competition, Friday assemblies where pupils can vote on a topic, and the creation of after-school Chess Club.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Children see themselves as global citizens and each year group is learning about a different Global Goal. Children have taken part in OutRight campaigns including last year's campaign about healthcare and the RRSA Lead explained this, <i>"... opened their eyes to the different experiences of children around the world and really allowed them to understand healthcare around the world."</i> This year's OutRight campaign on climate change has helped children to understand that even, <i>"...a small change can have a big impact."</i> Conversations happen linked to news and current events and children are supported to make positive changes. One class is focusing on the Global Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) and have linked this to rights and their support of the foodbank. Children have also been learning about the proposed building of houses on a local green space and how they had been encouraged to look at both sides of the argument before writing persuasive letters and holding a debate. Children are encouraged to use a 'Problem Tree' and 'Solution Tree' to discuss issues that arise and how they can best advocate for change. Children have already been acting as ambassadors for the RRSA, organising workshops for the local high school and hosting visits for other schools. One pupil shared, <i>"We had a school come here and we've inspired them to start their RRSA journey."</i>