

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Blanford Mere Primary School
Headteacher:	Kerry Crook
RRSA coordinator:	Jennifer Cartwright
Local authority:	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
School context:	Blanford Mere Primary School has 311 pupils aged between 4 and 11 on roll. 8.6% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, 9% of pupils have special educational needs and 3.8% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	A total of 38 Pupils from Years 1-6 consisting of 20 Rights Respecting Champions, 16 School Councillors and 2 pupils involved in the creation of the Blanford Mere Rights song.
Adults spoken with:	2 Teachers, 1 Parent/Governor and 1 Teacher/Governor
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 1 st September 2014 Bronze achieved: 2 nd December 2014 Silver achieved: 24 th April 2016 Gold achieved: 21 st June 2019
Assessor:	Katelyn Farrenson
Date:	11 th October 2023

REACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Blanford Mere Primary School continues to meet 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 accreditation visit 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 range 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:

- There is an excellent knowledge of rights across the school community and children use the language around rights in a mature and reflective way.
- Highly effective leadership of the rights related work at all levels, including from young people.
- Relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Learning about rights is clearly affecting relationships in a positive way.
- The school's work on health and wellbeing, in particular the introduction of daily mental wellbeing soft starts, was notably strong.
- Meaningful pupil participation. There are many different mechanisms for children to feed into decision making and leadership in different areas of school life. Children felt listened to, that their views matter and that they could make a positive difference.

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 revisit RRSA guidance around language, wording and vocabulary of rights. UNICEF UK's [ABCDE of Rights](#) resource will support staff.
- Continue to explore with children and staff, the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights approach, for example dignity and equity and how these are enacted in school practice.
- Continue to develop an ethos of inclusion and non-discrimination, providing further opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity in all its forms including race, gender, belief and different kinds of families, so that all people feel valued and included.
- Continue to develop strategies to empower children to challenge injustice and create further opportunities for all year groups to be involved in campaigning and advocacy work on children's rights. Consider using the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework for this and the UNICEF UK [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- 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
<p>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.</p>	<p>Pupils talked confidently and articulately about a very wide range of CRC articles and demonstrated their understanding of the unconditional nature of rights, asserting that, <i>"All children have rights but not all their rights are met,"</i> explaining how children in Ukraine might be denied <i>"their rights not to fight because of the war."</i> Pupils also explained how they were able to support those children who <i>"don't get the right to eat because they can't afford it,"</i> by collecting food for a local foodbank.</p> <p>Pupils at Blanford Mere learn about rights as soon as they enter the nursery, with the creative use of the Rights Respecting mascot, the Blanford Squirrel, whose diary goes home with the mascot to educate children and their families about rights, asking them to share weekend activities in nursery and reception through the lens of child rights. The inclusion of all pupils in rights education, including Early Years, is strengthened by the year 5 and 6 Rights Respecting Champions teaching rights to reception and year 1 pupils about the Article of the Week on Talking Tuesdays. All staff and governors have regular CPD to ensure they are also up to date with their rights knowledge.</p> <p>The headteacher explained how <i>"...rights are embedded, and the children are invested in Rights Respecting and take it very seriously."</i> All adults spoken with also referred to rights being <i>"embedded"</i> in the curriculum and school life. Lesson plans are linked to CRC articles and teachers described how <i>"children make the links in class."</i> Parents spoken with explained how their children <i>"bring rights home," "share the article of the week,"</i> and <i>"respond to the news at home"</i> because they have been learning about rights at school and have rights linked homework projects. One parent went on to describe the <i>"...positive impact that RRSAs has had on their lives,"</i> and another talked about how learning about the <i>"wider world makes them more thoughtful."</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>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</p>	<p>There is a strong focus on health and wellbeing at Blanford Mere, with children interviewed being clear that the school keeps them safe and supports their needs. Pupils explained a number of ways in which they felt that the school keeps them safe and noted that if they were worried about anything, they would <i>"tell a teacher."</i> One pupil asserted how the teachers' role was to <i>"protect our rights."</i> Pupils were enthusiastic to explain how soft starts in the mornings, with Meditation Mondays, Talking Tuesdays, Wellbeing Wednesdays, Thoughtful Thursdays and Fun Fridays, support their right to be healthy. One pupil said of Thoughtful Thursday that it <i>"makes us feel happy and ready for the day,"</i> and a parent said, <i>"...this helps them calm down and get ready for learning."</i> The headteacher reported improved attendance and punctuality after this change to the school morning routine which was requested by the children and welcomed by the parents.</p> <p>Relationships are strong, with children agreeing with a pupil that people at Blanford Mere are <i>"kind."</i> The School Council made changes to the playground following whole school consultation so that years 1 and 2 and years 5 and 6 no longer have zoned playgrounds but can mix with more pupils, leading to</p>

	<p>more enjoyable free time, because, as one Rights Respecting Champion asserted, <i>"We have the right to play."</i></p> <p>There is excellent use of Rights Respecting charters across the school from the nursery to year 6. School and playground charters form the basis of the school behaviour policy. One pupil described how <i>"the playground charter helps us to be kind to people."</i> Charters are regularly referred to by children and staff, with the RRSA lead reporting how <i>"Rights are a shared language with all adults."</i> She also explained that children are regularly heard saying: <i>"We've got the right to learn."</i></p> <p>Policies at Blanford Mere are linked to CRC articles and the school has created a child-friendly School Improvement Plan in consultation with the Rights Respecting Champions and School Council for pupil representatives to share with their classes. The headteacher explained how initiatives like this make sure the <i>"children feel listened to and can talk about their learning."</i></p>
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
<p>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 children experience their rights.</p>	<p>There are many opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles and to ensure that their voices are heard and acted upon. These roles include Rights Respecting Champions, School Councillors, Digital Leaders, PE Ambassadors, Librarians, Art Ambassadors and trained Peer Supporters. These roles are taken very seriously, with published job descriptions that pupils can articulate. One Rights Respecting Champion distilled their job role as, <i>"...helping people to know their rights and making sure that everyone's rights are respected."</i></p> <p>The School Council talked about many examples of changes brought about by pupils, including getting a therapy dog; improving Friday Golden Ticket Time; getting new and improved water fountains for the playground; putting up lower coat hooks; getting more recycling bins and installing mirrors in the bathrooms. One member of the School Council said of their role, <i>"We ask people if they like things and if they don't, we can change it."</i> The headteacher explained how <i>"impressed"</i> she was by the representatives from the School Council who formed part of her interview panel and described the children as <i>"leaders who have made a big impact in school."</i> The School Council explained how their role is also to raise money for charity after <i>"getting opinions of which ones they'd like to do."</i></p> <p>Recently, the School Council held a pupil conference, inviting local primary schools and their constituency MP and facilitating the carousel of rights activities. Pupils have also presented their work on rights to the Rights Respecting link governor and have performed the Blanford Mere Rights song, made in conjunction with Dudley Performing Arts. This has also been written in widget symbols to make it accessible to the whole school community.</p> <p>Rights Respecting work is also taken out into the community with rights displays on show at the local supermarket and the library. This <i>"gives rights a wider platform,"</i> explained the headteacher. One parent commented, <i>"It was interesting to see the children's work in the local community and my children were excited to learn more about RRSA by finding their classmates' work to read."</i> Each class also has a campaign book which charts child-led campaigns from reception to year 6, including OutRight, all explicitly linked to rights.</p>