

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	St George's School, Edgbaston
Headteachers:	Gary Neal and Jenny Shaw
RRSA coordinator:	Daniel Lumley (upper school), Lorraine Sparks (lower school)
Local authority:	Birmingham City Council
School context:	St George's is an independent school with 383 children aged 3 to 18 years on roll. Under 2% of pupils are eligible for FSM or Pupil Premium funding. 13% of pupils are in receipt of an EHCP with a further 17% receiving SEND support. 26.9% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school currently has 20 pupils from Ukraine on roll.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, head of lower school, both RRSA coordinators
Number of children and young people spoken with:	45 pupils from lower and upper school, some with leadership roles
Adults spoken with:	15 teachers, 1 teaching assistant, 1 school nurse, 1 housekeeper, 3 parents
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 30th November 2016 Bronze achieved: 25 th May 2017 Silver achieved: 17 th January 2019
Assessor:	Hilary Alcock
Date:	24 th November 2022

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

St. George's School, Edgbaston 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:

- Children and young people who clearly know that they have rights and are committed to helping to realise these for other children locally and globally.
- Consistent messaging about rights and respect underpinning every dimension of the school's work.
- Relationships based on mutual respect and trust. Learning about rights is clearly affecting relationships in a positive way.
- The school has a strong culture of inclusivity and respect which is understood and articulated by children and adults alike.
- Confident pupils who know that their views are taken seriously and will be acted upon.

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:

- Seek ways of making the Convention and your commitment to RRSA more explicit on the school's website and involve pupils with this development.
- Strengthen early years engagement with the RRSA journey. Consider utilising First Steps to Rights to support teaching and learning. Also consider how to increase the visibility/accessibility of the CRC within lower school curriculum planning and the environment.
- Continue to work on enabling the pupils and adults use of rights vocabulary such as dignity, equity, duty bearers and rights holders. Encourage everyone to actively use rights language when managing positive relationships in the playground and around school.
- 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.
- 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. Continue to use the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework for this and the UNICEF UK [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).
- As a Gold Rights Respecting School, develop your ambassadorial role, promoting the CRC and the benefits of a child rights-based approach, e.g. with other schools that you network with.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>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</p>	<p>Pupils had an excellent knowledge of children's rights and understood the principles which underpin them. Children from lower school explained, <i>"Rights are for all children everywhere in the world. We get them when we are born and they can't be taken away from us."</i> They gave examples of how children can be denied their rights such as not having access to clean drinking water or adults to keep you safe. One said, <i>"If you have to collect water from dirty lakes you can become poorly and you might fall in and drown."</i> These children also commented, <i>"People in power should make sure that children can get clean water."</i> Upper school pupils consistently commented that the impact of the school's rights respecting approach had resulted in improved relationships, an increased focus on inclusivity and a much stronger voice for students. They gave examples of how knowing about their rights impacted positively on their lives e.g. <i>"Learning about rights is knowing about the basics of life...we are developing as a whole person."</i> Older pupils consider that learning about rights is helping them to, <i>"Develop empathy...we recognise how people should and should not be treated."</i> They described a video they made, published on the school's website, linking children's rights to the Global Goals and raising awareness of issues linked to global poverty and climate change.</p> <p>The headteacher said, <i>"Children's rights are interwoven into the fabric of the school."</i> Rights are clearly identified within assembly and curriculum planning. Staff commented, <i>"Rights are central to everything we do...the school is more student led and relationships are more respectful."</i> Parents consider that a rights based approach is very much part of the school's welcoming, inclusive, respectful and kind ethos. One said, <i>"Rights are explicit here...my child is teaching me."</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Older pupils showed and talked about the extensive range of displays that highlight how children's rights are part of everyday life at the school. Comments included, <i>" We genuinely do talk about rights all the time in our lessons, form times and assemblies... it's what the school is all about."</i> Students understood about rights holders and duty bearers. Sixth form students described projects that are supporting them, <i>"To be good duty bearers when we are 18."</i> Strategic development planning identifies ambition and actions for the RRSA.</p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>Pupils commented upon improved and mutually respectful relationships. One said, <i>" Teachers are really approachable now...talking about rights is less formal."</i> They described how they are treated with dignity and in a more mature way, <i>"Behaviour in school has improved greatly since the introduction of Rights Respecting at our school. Restorative conversations and techniques are now increasingly being used by members of staff."</i> Non-academic staff also described mutually respectful relationships.</p>

4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	<i>"We know that all adults will listen to us and that makes us feel safe. We feel comfortable approaching them," said one pupil.</i> Others commented on how the school's inclusive approach, anti-bullying activities plus online safety lessons and information all contribute to their safety. The anti-bullying policy makes links to specific children's rights. Safeguarding staff consider that a rights based approach has resulted in, <i>"A real shift,"</i> in conversations resulting in earlier referrals and consequently reducing escalation within many situations.
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	<i>"Having lots of activities and learning about our mental health and wellbeing and the importance of friendships can help us get better grades,"</i> commented one pupil. They described Zones of Regulation, Wellbeing Wednesdays and yoga as supportive strategies. Others commented on how a Buddy System helps new children to settle in. A new starter thanked the Steering Group for promoting her rights, which supported her overall sense of wellbeing and safety.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	<i>"A massive focus and huge improvements in respect for individuals as well as gender equality,"</i> was how older pupils described changes to inclusivity since the school began its RR journey. Younger pupils spoke about the right to non-discrimination. One commented, <i>"Through rights we've taken being safe and included to the next level. It's more open now."</i> Another said, <i>"I can see the growth and confidence in LGBT+ students."</i>
7. Children value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Students know their views about their right to learn are taken seriously, through written feedback they provide from their Rights Awareness Learning Walks. Pupils undertake immersion tasks, topic journey planners and choose levels of tasks difficulty to support them to make decisions about their learning. Changes to lower school curriculum topics have been made in response to suggestions from the children.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	The school has a wide range of student leadership roles and groups which are voted for by pupils. Student leaders gather suggestions, report to SLT and feedback outcomes. One lower school pupil explained, <i>"We write down the ideas and then talk about what we want to change, like the playground and the lunch menu."</i> Upper school pupils are proud of their 'Leave No-one Behind' inclusivity initiative, energy saving projects, menu alterations, sport equipment and playground changes and the installation of new window blinds. They value being involved in staff recruitment. Senior leaders consider that the 'development of rights across the school has had a big impact on student voice across the school.' The Steering Group have taken an active role in the development of enrichment afternoons, assemblies, creating displays and monitoring the focus of rights learning within lessons.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	One younger pupil described how, <i>"We took part in World Children's Day to help tell everyone about children's rights."</i> Following watching and discussing children's news, lower school children have initiated collections for food banks, toys and teddies for homeless children and making sandwiches and care packages for the homeless. An older pupil who initiated a fundraising campaign noted 'that it was through knowing that the school was empowering rights that made him want to make a change for others.' Staff said, <i>"Pupils now see how their actions at a local level can affect global issues and they link these to the Global Goals."</i>