

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Houldsworth Valley Primary Academy
Headteacher:	Lisa Tweed
RRSA coordinator:	Sarah Eaton
Local authority:	Suffolk
School context:	Houldsworth Valley is situated in Newmarket and has 336 children on roll. 24% are eligible for Pupils Premium funding, 2% have an EHC plan and 30% speak English as an Additional Language. The school was judged as Good by Ofsted in November 2019.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher and RRSA coordinator
Number of children and young people spoken with:	10 children
Adults spoken with:	3 teachers, 2 parents and a governor
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: May 2018 Bronze achieved: June 2018 Silver achieved: July 2019
Assessor(s):	Frances Bestley
Date:	1 st April 2022

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Houldsworth Valley Academy has met the standard for UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is based on a virtual accreditation visit. 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:

- Happy, confident children who clearly know that they have rights and are committed to helping to realise these for other children locally and globally.
- A clear strategic approach to embedding children's rights in school life that has been guided by recommendations from the Silver visit and report.
- An ethos that places positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust at the heart of school life.
- A caring and inclusive ethos where staff and students ensure that everyone particularly those with learning differences or a disability feel supported and fully involved in school life.
- The school's work on health and wellbeing, in particular the consideration of mental health and emotions was notably strong.
- Confident, articulate children who know that they have a voice, and who are engaged in school improvement and campaigning at a local and global level.

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 widen the range of articles that the whole school community are familiar with, appropriate to children and young people's age and ability.
- Continue the good practice around rights that has become embedded across the school. Ensure that all new initiatives are related back to rights.
- 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>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p>	<p>Children were knowledgeable about rights and talked confidently about a wide range of articles from the CRC saying, <i>“We know rights are important in our life.”</i> They explained that they learned about rights in assemblies and lessons giving examples from PSHE, science and history. Pop up rights displays keep the learning fresh each term. Children understood the nature of rights saying, <i>“You cannot take rights away, they do not have to be earned, all rights are equal.”</i> They explained clearly that although rights are universal, that some children in poorer countries do not have access to clean water. Work on Article 27 led to a good understanding that children in the UK may not have <i>“an adequate standard of living, are homeless or don’t have food or clean clothes.”</i> The headteacher identified the change since Silver as <i>“absolutely massive ... everything is based around rights. It’s in every lesson, in the curriculum, staff meetings, school development plan, policies ... it’s what we do.”</i> She explained that children understand why their rights are important and that <i>“Exclusions are down, behaviour has really improved as has attendance, children want to be here, and they enjoy school, their perception of themselves has improved.”</i> Staff, governors, and parents corroborated this saying <i>“Rights are really embedded ... just part of the school day ... she [my daughter] will ask questions about other children’s rights.”</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>Children explained how their class charters <i>“showed all our rights and help us to remember them and behave in a good way to respect them”</i> and that the charters had made a <i>“total difference.”</i> A child explained <i>“equity and equality are really good words”</i> – they alongside dignity are displayed in every classroom beside the charter; children readily gave examples of what the words meant and agreed they were all treated fairly. Children consistently talked about duty bearers as <i>“adults that protect and uphold your rights.”</i> Children agreed that concerns about their rights not being met would be listened to and acted upon. <i>“They’re very confident in claiming their rights,”</i> said a teacher.</p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>It was evident throughout the visit that relationships are positive. The headteacher agreed that <i>“children are respectful of one another.”</i> Children understood dignity and felt that they and their teachers were all treated with dignity. <i>“We treat people how we want to be treated ... it goes both ways”</i> explained a child. All children have been trained in restorative justice and a girl confidently explained how they use a series of questions to identify what has happened and how to solve the problem. She was adamant that this approach worked well.</p>
<p>4. Children are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>All children spoken with felt <i>“really safe”</i> at school explaining that fences and lanyards helped them feel safe. A boy linked feeling safe strongly to Article 19 saying <i>“it’s a right so it enables me not to worry.”</i> Everyone was confident they <i>“would talk to a teacher or duty bearer”</i> if they needed support. Children valued the ‘reset room’ that they could go to at any time if they wanted to speak to an adult about a concern.</p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>The school still has a soft start with a Houldsworth Huddle used to meet and greet children and check in with them each morning. Children can choose yoga, running, mindfulness or other activities at the beginning of the day so they are <i>“ready to learn.”</i> The headteacher explained this approach meant <i>“children felt safe, valued and heard.”</i> The school council planned activities for Mental Health Week. Wellbeing Wednesdays provide opportunities for children and parents to discuss mental health. Children learn about health and nutritious food in science and have influenced school lunch choices. Classes take part in Forest Schools and children choose clubs for PE.</p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p>Houldsworth Valley holds the Inclusion Quality Mark, and the report draws strong links between their work on rights and inclusion. APEX, a specialist unit on site, opened after the Silver accreditation. Children explained <i>“children with disabilities have help ... wheelchairs and members of staff to help them learn.”</i> <i>“Everyone is treated equally”</i> added another child. There is a focus on celebrating different languages, religions, and cultures. School questionnaires identify an increase in the percentage of children liking the way they are. Rights Respecting Stars are celebrated each week.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p><i>“I really like school ... I like learning”</i> said a girl when talking about Article 28. Talk Tuesday oracy is linked to Article 12 and provides opportunities to develop pupils’ expertise in discussing rights issues and the headteacher identified <i>“impact on the standard of education.”</i> Children described how they can <i>“choose their tasks in maths”</i> and are asked what they want to learn about in their topics. One child explained enthusiastically that <i>“sometimes you get to learn extra things ... this adds to the right to a quality education.”</i> Children requested a ‘No Pens Day’ so they could learn in different ways.</p>
<p>STRAND C</p>	<p>Highlights and comments</p>
<p>8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.</p>	<p>Children agreed <i>“teachers listen to us.”</i> Children on the school council explained that their role is <i>“helping our school”</i> and described how they had led on the OutRight campaign on mental health. The school council organised the Dress to Express day to support Place2Be also as part of their work on mental health. Children apply for the role of mini headteachers (3 per class) and are trained to observe and give feedback to teachers. Children explained <i>“they walk around the school, and they fix the problems or report them to the headteacher... things have improved.”</i></p>
<p>9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.</p>	<p>Children talked passionately about the mental health kits they had created as part of their OutRight work on mental health. They described how they wanted to share their campaign across Newmarket and were going to hide the kits <i>“like an Easter Egg hunt so that people could find them and read the positive messages.”</i> Children and adults talked about fundraising for Water Aid and very clearly explained how their money was used to build wells, so children had access to clean water. Children have taken part in a change maker project around climate action. Children explained that they <i>“switch off things, put posters around the school, recycle food, and reuse things.”</i> Children have also taken part in Fair Trade fortnight and contributed clothes, shoes, and food to local collection centres. A teacher explained <i>“they have an awareness of what is happening outside ... they bring stuff to us and want to do something to help.”</i></p>