

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO

School:	Cotsford Infant School
Headteacher:	Rachel Cook
RRSA coordinator:	Allison Simpson
Local authority:	Durham
Assessors:	Kathy Allan and Chris Shannon
Date:	24 January 2016

1. INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the leadership team, staff, parents, Governors and children for their warm welcome to the school. Prior to the assessment visit you provided a comprehensive Progress and Evaluation form and Impact Evaluation form and well evidenced portfolios supporting your progress during the visit.

It was clear to the assessors that everyone in the school community places a real importance on placing rights respecting values and principles at the heart of all aspects of school life. It was particularly notable that the school embraces and encourages children's voices and supporting all children to make choices and decisions is given real weight and focus in school.

Standards A, B, C and D have all met the necessary criteria.

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING LEVEL 2

No requirements noted.

3. MAINTAINING LEVEL 2

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 Level 2. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Continue to develop community links and raise awareness of the UNCRC building on the great work started by staff and children.
- Consider simplifying your Charters to include fewer articles and actions so that they are more accessible to children. Also consider positioning them where they are visible to children within the classroom.
- When next reviewing policies consider if child friendly versions can be developed (linking rights where relevant) and where relevant embed articles into the main body of the text.
- Explore ways in which children can monitor their version of the school development plan and work with Governors to monitor rights respecting progress.

4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

4.1. The school context

Cotsford is a smaller than average infant school serving an ex-mining community with high levels of deprivation. There are currently 63 pupils on roll, the majority of which are of White British heritage. Those eligible for free school meals is well above average at 55%. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is also high at 32%.

The school has achieved Basic Skills 6, Infant School Gold Sports Mark, Enhanced Healthy School Status, Eco Status and Foundation Level of the International School Award.

Cotsford Infant School registered for the Rights Respecting School Award in 2011 and achieved Level 1 in October 2013.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people interviewed	28 children
Number of staff interviewed	4 teaching staff 3 support staff 3 parents 3 Governors
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Portfolio

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

The leadership of Cotsford Infants is thoroughly committed to placing rights respecting values at the heart of the school. The head described how rights *'are now the starting point'* and *'before we do anything we talk about rights.'* Recently the school have reviewed and updated their curriculum to ensure that global citizenship, SMSC, British Values and the UNCRC are cross referenced and embedded in learning. As the Impact form outlines the school evidences rights respecting as making an impact in all 8 areas with 6 areas being significant. The Deputy Head described how the increased profile of pupil voice and sense of ownership means children are *'really engaged in what they are doing and motivated – they want to learn.'*

The school's development plan is clearly linked throughout to articles and specifically references achievement of the award. This is supported by policies which again include the school rights logo and relevant articles. The marking and assessment policies also make reference to all staff using gold stars in children's books to identify where work is linked to the CRC. Children have developed their own version of the SDP and a child friendly version of the anti-bullying policy in leaflet form. The RRS lead has no concerns about sustainability, as she explained *'it's not just me now - children are really leading rights respecting and all staff are now fully engaged'* meaning we will all ensure we continue to be a rights respecting school.

Cotsford Infants has clear policies and actions in place to ensure they are inclusive and encourage all pupils to participate fully in school life. The Children's Voice group have been involved in making decisions such as designing a child friendly SIP but increasingly, as explained by the RRSA Lead, the whole school are consulted on issues such as improving school meals and involved in developing campaigns.

Rights respecting has been integral to the school's recent focus on building community links with the Children's Voice group designing posters which focus on articles 12, 13, 15, 17, 28 and 29. They then walked around the local area and asked businesses to display the poster with 100% success rate. The school also hosted a festival for the Junior School which focussed on rights and team work. Efforts have been made to engage them with the RRSA but to no avail as yet. Additional opportunities for sharing occur at RRS network meetings attended by the Lead and PING meetings where local schools meet to share good practice in relation to global work.

During the recent curriculum review global citizenship and rights were a key focus and the approach has been systematic and thorough helping to raise the profile of the Convention across school. Global work and sustainability are now interwoven throughout lessons, assemblies and family group time. As the Deputy Head explained '*the Convention is cross referenced in everything, at all levels, at every stage.*'

Standard B:
The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

All pupils and adults spoken with during the assessment visit demonstrated a very good knowledge of a wide range of rights from the UNCRC. Pupils quickly and confidently listed the right to an education, to shelter, to be safe, to healthy food and water, to play, to meet friends and to a voice. They understood that the rights were for every child up to the age of 18 and that adults have similar but different rights in the form of Human Rights. They also knew that not all children were able to enjoy their rights. One child said, '*Unicef teaches children about their rights.*' Pupils in school are clear about the role of duty bearers. Displayed around the school are speech bubbles with the picture of a duty bearer explaining how they respected the children's rights. For example the Caretaker keeps our school clean and safe. This is linked to article 19 and 24.

Parents are kept fully informed and involved in RR work. They are invited to weekly Family Group activities with their children which are always linked to the Convention. They attend assemblies and other events such as a recent 'rights trail' around the school. Each Friday pupils take home a rights respecting soft toy. Children in the class choose the child who will take the toy home. Parents get involved with their child drawing / writing / photographing rights respecting activities the soft toy is involved in. Parents and staff believe that this has had a very positive impact on parental involvement in RR work. Documentation from the school in the shape of newsletters, half termly Cotsford Courier, school prospectus, policies

and the school web site all help to inform the school community about their rights respecting work.

Rights respecting displays around the school are plentiful and highlight the schools RRS status and commitment. When entering the school visitors are greeted by a display of 'duty bearers'. When entering the hall, all 42 rights are displayed around the room. Other displays show the lunchtime charter, and aspects of British values all linked to rights. For example democracy is linked to articles 12, 13 and 31. Also clearly displayed is the Children's School development plan. Teacher's long, medium and short term planning sheets reference the articles in the CRC, for example in the Reception class, pupils were learning about their local area, what they liked and didn't like about it. This work was linked to articles 13 and 19. A Family group planner demonstrates how rights are to be covered in weekly sessions and an assembly overview reinforces opportunities for teaching and learning about rights.

Global Citizenship and sustainability is developed through Family groups, cross curricular work, sustainability and assemblies. Children were able to talk confidently about a Fairtrade display and understood that farmers were paid a fair amount of money for their produce. One child said, *'it's fair to people round the world so they get their money.'* A topic on Africa focused on comparing the rights of children in Kenya and Horden. They also have a partner school in France and occasionally communicate through Skype. Children's rights have been discussed and staff have taken part in an exchange visit. Cotsford Infants is also part of the Global Learning Programme.

Standard C:
The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

Charters feature in every class and in the hall there is a new lunchtime charter. All children were clear about their role in choosing the articles and identifying respectful actions with some being in photos depicting right respecting behaviour. A year 1 boy explained that *'every day you can look at it and remember.'* With others adding *'it reminds us of our rights'* and *'helps us play safely.'* Staff explained how previously charters were developed in September and hardly changed, whereas now *'we review charters with every new topic'* (TA).

It was apparent that all staff are experienced in using rights respecting language and modelling behaviour around school. A teacher reported that this consistency *'has created respectful relationships between all in school.'* The use of staff photos on speech bubbles, identifying rights across school creates a personalisation that the children respond to very positively. All staff are known by children as duty bearers (or duty 'bears' by some of the younger children) and training for lunchtime staff and developing a charter means they are now also using the language. *'Rights language has helped at lunchtime as children now respond better to lunchtime staff'* explained the Deputy Head.

Classrooms were positive and engaging and children took pride in explaining their charters, display and noticeboards. Target boards were seen where children were able to physically

move their names onto the correct target and toolkits have been developed to support them with their work. Staff described how children developed topic webs for each new topic and picture stamps in EYFS are encouraging children to achieve. Significant impact in educational achievement is cited on the schools impact form and is linked to children knowing their targets, evaluating progress and taking greater ownership over their work through engagement with topics.

Nearly all pupils we talked to said they felt safe at school and this is supported by the schools anti bullying questionnaires and parents feedback. The two children who weren't sure were confident that if they didn't feel safe at any point they would talk to a member of staff or friend. On starting the focus group one of the assessors was quizzed as to where their sticker was by a Year 2 girl. She explained that a sticker meant visitors were safe to be in school and if someone didn't have a sticker she'd *'tell the teacher straight way.'* The right to be safe features on all charters and is regularly discussed by staff.

Children clearly linked charters to their behaviour reward system and golden time, explaining how the system was fair and worked well. Staff explained that charters and rights, are the basis of resolving conflict with all staff carrying cards that reminded them of the most used articles from the Convention; they are seeing that rights are helping children to develop empathy for others' opinions. These skills are linked to the schools exploration of democracy and Year 1 and 2 children were able to describe democracy *'we all get to choose'* and talked about having a democracy when choosing the *'focus of the week'*, behaviour treats and improving school meals.

Fairtrade topics, a school link in France where children have shared experiences and discussed cultural differences, and a Kenya topic comparing rights to those of children in the UK are some of the ways children learn about rights in relation to global citizenship. Enterprise projects and campaigns on road safety and reducing dog waste on the pavements are some of the ways children have explored rights and the denial of rights closer to home. Children were able to talk about the children not getting their rights met at home and in other countries and how they can make a difference.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Pupil voice at Cotsford Infants is very strong. As the school is small, all children have the opportunity to express their opinions led by the Pupil voice group. Children's voice created their own child friendly School Development Plan. The plan shows what the school are doing in school and in the community. Pupils contributed to a recent staff appointment and their views were given to Governors. At the beginning of all topics a planning meeting is held and children are asked what they would like to learn in that topic. Teachers then include children's ideas into the topics. Children are more engaged and this has had an impact on their learning. Targets are negotiated between teachers and children. Children express their opinions on a range of issues in regular questionnaires eg Anti bullying and food. It was noticed that there was a lot of waste at lunchtime so children were asked which foods they

enjoyed and a tasting session was held. As a result menus were changed and waste was reduced.

Pupils at Cotsford Infants access appropriate information to support their well-being in numerous ways. Children are taught about keeping healthy and safe and there are strong links with 'Place to Be' counselling service. NSPCC Childline visited the school to talk to the children about Speaking out and staying safe. A visitor from 'Barnabas' spoke to the children about Fairtrade. Staff say that children feel empowered after such visits.

Cotsford pupils engage in a wide range of charity fundraising events, linking these clearly to the denial of rights for those concerned. They raised funds for a water pump in Gambia and also collected school uniforms to send, as children in Gambia can only attend school if they own a uniform. Campaigning is an important activity for children at Cotsford. Children have an understanding about different children within their local area and have a positive attitude to help. A TA said, *'Children realise that deprivation is not just in Africa, it is on our own doorstep. Children have ownership now and this has made them more vocal.'* They have created cards, campaigned for presents and decorations etc for a very poorly child in the next village. As a result of traffic safety work done by the children, the council changed the local road signs. Rights respecting posters made by the children have been put into the local shops and community centre to inform the local community about Children's Rights. All children were involved in the Outright campaign and were overwhelmed when they received a letter in reply. Dog Fouling is the most recent campaign in which the children have been involved and as a result, the local councillors have promised more bins for the area. The RRS co-ordinator said, *'Children now think more about what's happening and what they can do about it. They have realised that they have the power to change things.'*