

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO (GOLD)

School:	St Catherine's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher:	Maureen Kelly
RRSA coordinator:	Mary Ainger
Local authority:	Barnet
Assessors:	Paul Harris
Date:	19 th April 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the children, the leadership team, staff, parents and governors for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and pupils during the assessment, and for the very detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school provided a comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- a very clear strategic commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which is interwoven with the school's Catholic values
- an ethos which is underpinned by respect and where rights are actively promoted and upheld to help create a welcoming, supportive and inclusive learning community
- pupil's views are listened to and taken seriously
- an outward looking community where children are encouraged to learn about and engage with the wider world

Standards A, B, C and D have all been met.

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 the use of the Convention as a ‘thread’ and ‘framework’ for the school’s improvement plan and policies. Explore the possibility of creating a ‘pupil friendly’ version of the school improvement plan as well.
- Continue cross-referencing particular rights with curriculum areas and where appropriate include these in relevant documentation.
- Explore further opportunities for the school to promote its Rights Respecting work; for example, with an introductory resource about the Convention for new parents.
- Continue to develop pupils’ understanding of the global dimension and sustainability through themes such as the ‘UN Sustainable Development Goals’ and Fair Trade.

4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

4.1. The school context

St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. There are currently 498 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 15.6% and 42% of pupils have English as an additional language. 2.2% of pupils have a statement of special education needs or an EHC Plan. The school was inspected by Ofsted in April 2009 and was graded ‘outstanding’ in all areas.

The school registered for the RRSA in January 2015 and achieved the RRSA Level 1 Award in June 2016.

4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, 2 Assistant Headteachers, Key Stage 2 Leader, Pastoral Leader and the Deputy Headteacher who is also the RRSA co-ordinator.
Number of children and young people interviewed	Focus Group: 22 pupils (years 1 to 6) Learning walk: 4 pupil ambassadors (year 6) Class visits: total of approximately 60 pupils (years 3 and 6).
Number of staff interviewed	3 teachers (includes one teacher who is also a staff governor & a parent), 1 member of support staff, 3 parents (includes a parent governor) and the vice chair of the Governing Body.
Evidence provided	Learning walk, class visits, feedback from meetings and written evidence.

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

St Catherine's is a particularly welcoming school with a very strong sense of community underpinned by its Catholic values and mission statement of 'loving and learning together as Jesus taught us'. It is very evident that school leaders are committed to the principles and values of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and have interwoven this into the school's ethos and everyday practice. The headteacher explained how the Convention was a *'thread that goes through'* the school and complements its values. It is noticeable that in the school's self-evaluation of the impact of its Rights Respecting work on different aspects of school life, all areas were assessed as showing 'significant impact'. Since achieving RRSA level 1, the coordinator described how it was *'far more visual'* and *'more embedded in [the] whole school community'* and another school leader commented that *'children can talk about it more easily'* and that their global awareness has grown. Connections are made between the Convention and wider aspects of school life. For example, when leaders were asked by the assessor whether attendance is being linked to the right to an education there was an emphatic 'yes!' St Catherine's also has a strong emphasis on developing pupil's understanding of the global dimension and sustainability. There is a termly focus on a particular aspect of global learning and the global goals are promoted through the school's weekly newsletter. The school's website refers to Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* about caring for the planet and also how the 'Rights Respecting Ambassadors have been making our school community aware of global goals

and the important part we all play in looking after our world'. St Catherine's achieved the Transport for London's 'STARS' (Sustainable Travel: Active, Responsible, Safe) Gold Award in 2017.

There is a very clear strategic approach to the school's Rights Respecting work. The exceptional commitment and enthusiasm of the RRSA coordinator alongside the whole school community embracing the Convention has ensured that the work is purposeful and for the long term. Recommendations from the RRSA level 1 report were used to create an initial action plan and the current school's development plan contains several action points to support the school in progressing to RRSA Gold. Other strategic documentation also references particular articles from the Convention such as the anti-bullying, SMSC and behaviour policies. Staff have received INSET about the Convention and the coordinator provides a weekly email of up-dates and suggestions. A range of 'rights respecting newsletters' on the school's website reflect the breadth of the school's work and how it is integrated with wider school life. For example, a year 5 class prayer service, which had as a focus 'Black History Month', included a poem by Benjamin Zephaniah and as the school newsletter commented 'emphasises what a rich melting pot of cultures and ethnicities we have, can learn from and celebrate in Britain'.

One of the school's values (alongside love, faith, integrity and excellence) is 'diversity' and that 'we recognise that each individual is unique'. Inclusion is therefore an integral part of the school's philosophy and the headteacher explained that St Catherine's is '*known for being an inclusive school*'. A beautifully created 'wordle' display about St Catherine's is made up of contributions from across the school community and aptly reflects the importance given to being a community with shared beliefs such as being 'fair', 'respectful', 'compassionate', 'thoughtful' and 'honest'. The school's SEND report states that 'children with SEN are inclusively educated within an age appropriate classroom with their peers most of the time'. Another way inclusion is promoted is through the school's 'talk partners' programme. Each week children are placed in mixed ability pairs and discuss with their 'talk partner' aspects about their learning. Pupil participation in sports and physical activities is an important focus for the school; St Catherine's has achieved the 'School Games Silver Award' for 2015-16 and the Healthy Schools London, Gold Award in 2016. Priority is given to children wishing to join a club if they have not done so before. There is also a very active 'after school' club with between thirty to fifty children attending and a range of activities for them to choose from. St Catherine's was awarded the 'Inclusion Quality Mark' in 2015.

The school's website is a very effective medium for sharing St Catherine's Rights Respecting work to a wider audience. Back copies of several of the school newsletters (which include a regular item about the RRS work) and bespoke rights respecting newsletters can be found on the website. RRSA documentation can also be found on the website including copies of the evaluation and impact forms submitted as part of the application for Gold Award. The RRSA coordinator has been proactive in working with other schools. In the last two years or so, this has included supporting a school which is working towards the Silver Award and also visiting, with pupils from the school's steering group, two Gold Award schools to learn more about their work. Links with one of the Gold Award schools is particularly strong as they are also a global learning expert centre (which St Catherine's is engaging with through the global learning platform) and steering group pupils have visited each other's schools, taken part in activities and shared ideas. Headteacher local meetings, primary school hub meetings and the school's 'Parent Partnership Group' meetings have also provided opportunities to highlight the school's Rights Respecting work.

An integral part of the school's values, as its website makes clear, is that 'each member of our school community is expected to contribute to the good of society, in the interests of justice and in the pursuit for the poor'. Consequently, the whole school community has supported the work of a range of organisations and in so doing has helped to develop pupil's knowledge and understanding of the global dimension. For example, speakers from FSSA Zambia, one of the school's key charities, have visited St Catherine's to speak about their work in supporting children's education. The school registered for the global learning programme in 2017 and has promoted the global goals through its newsletters in a systematic way. For example, the accompanying newsletter text for global goal 5 and gender equality included 'At St Catherine's we truly believe that in God's eyes we are all equal and show respect to and for one another'.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Pupils know a wide range of rights. Examples include the right to an education, to learn, to be safe, to have healthy food and clean water, to be heard and listened to, to have freedom of speech and to be able to practise one's own religion. They were very clear that rights are universal, inherent, do not have to be earned and cannot be taken away. The school's steering group is made up of twenty two pupils (from years 2 to 6), three parents and three members of staff. The group plays a strategic role in promoting the school's Rights Respecting work and pupils have led on a number of initiatives. These have included reviewing and up-dating different types of charters, visiting classes to inform them of the new 'Article of the Month', carrying out a learning walk around the school to look at displays and creating a PowerPoint presentation about the school's work which can be found on the website.

Parents are kept informed about the school's Rights Respecting work through newsletters, via the website and when attending assemblies and prayer services. The steering group also includes three parent representatives and a parent worked with pupils from the steering group in the revision, up-dating and design of a range of different charters that are to be used by the school. The governing body is very supportive of the school's Rights Respecting work. A governor explained that *'so much of what we do is part of the UN Convention'* and that it *'has been embedded in [the] school'*. As part of listening to 'pupil voice', governors from the school's 'Catholic Life Committee' have met with pupils from the steering group to explore aspects of Rights Respecting work and looked at themes such as 'what does a rights respecting school look like?' and 'why does [the] school promote equality between boys and girls and different groups?'. Governors articulated very clearly the impact of the school's Rights Respecting work and several comments reflected this including that the *'children know what they are entitled to'*, it is *'in [the] lexicon of the children'* and *'it is a way of being'*.

Pupils learn about rights in a variety of ways including through an 'Article of the Month' which is well publicised around the school. The Unicef primary school assembly resource

has been used for some themes such as the Holocaust, World Water Day and 'Martin Luther King Day'. Several displays around the school also link pupil work and school activities to particular rights. During the learning walk, steering group pupils were able to make links from a display of the global goals with rights to an education and clean water. A key way in which pupils learn about rights is through the curriculum. A range of examples were seen in curriculum documentation and included themes such as a year 1 topic about families (linked to Article 5), a year 2 science topic 'looking after yourself' (Articles 27 and 31) and a year 5 topic about crime and punishment in Victorian times (Article 19). Articles are also sometimes included in learning outcomes. A year 1 teacher described how links are made between topics and rights '*all the time*' and a year 3 teacher explained how the novel 'Matilda' has been linked to rights as part of literacy work. A year 6 teacher commented that RE '*lends itself very well to the rights*' and developing respect for different faiths and cultures. For example, year 6 pupils have attended a workshop about Judaism.

Curriculum topics such as learning about Fair Trade in year 3, help pupils develop their understanding of global citizenship. The school participated in the 'world's largest lesson' last autumn and its theme of 'every plate tells a story'. They are able to make connections between their knowledge of rights and what is happening in the wider world, understanding that for many children their rights are being denied. Pupils gave as an example the conflict in Syria and how rights such as the right to safety and shelter are being affected. Similarly, in a focus group discussion about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, excellent understanding was shown about how discrimination can impact upon rights. Last autumn, year 3 global goal work about recycling led to every year group having a recycle bin.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

Charters are a key way in which the school community upholds its Rights Respecting ethos. Class charters were seen in all the classrooms visited, including a nursery class. These were prominently displayed and bespoke to each class. Charters contained various articles from the Convention and were often accompanied with signatures or hand prints to show that everyone was committed to the charter in respecting these rights. In addition to class charters, a school charter and charters for the hall, dining hall and playground have been developed. These charters (currently in the process of being published) follow a similar design to each other in highlighting particular articles along with how children and adults will help to respect and uphold these rights. The school charter for example has Articles 12, 13, 15, 19, 24 and 28.

Throughout the assessment visit a Rights Respecting ethos was very apparent. There is a strong sense of community with everyone working together to make the school a harmonious and inclusive learning environment. There is also a consistency in the use of Rights Respecting language to help support this. A school leader explained how the '*children are very inclusive*' and show '*real empathy*' to their peers. Rights Respecting behaviour is celebrated with 'stars of the week' and there is also a trophy awarded to the school house that has gained most stars. An article in one school newsletter commented 'it

is important to celebrate the way the children and staff work together to ensure that our school is loving, secure and stimulating where everyone is inspired to be the best person they can be’.

Pupils understand that they have a right to learn. A governor explained how *‘children are very aware of each other’* and had heard a child say to another *‘I have a right to learn’*. ‘Talk partners’ help support the learning process. A year 6 pupil explained how *‘[you] can share your ideas’* and *‘if you’re stuck you can ask someone’*. When asked about ‘talk partners’ a pupil member of the steering group explained how it was a good idea as *‘in life you’re going to work with different people’*. At a weekly celebration assembly, a child’s name is randomly selected and they and their talk partner explain what they have been particularly proud of regarding their learning for that week, with certificates being given to the children who have spoken. The school uses a ‘growth mindset’ approach to encourage pupils to develop resilience in their learning. ‘Green pen questions’ are used by staff to help pupils evaluate their work and further develop their learning; ‘purple pens’ used by the children visibly show how this learning is taking place. Self and peer assessment form part of the learning process and pupils also choose a level of challenge from three different types of activity. Staff select pupils to answer questions (for example, by use of ‘lolly sticks’) rather than through use of ‘hands-up’.

When asked, pupils said they felt safe at school. They were able to describe ways in which the school helps them be safe. These included adults being present on the playground, school security such as gates and adults wearing lanyards, and also learning about e-safety. With the latter they understood how this upholds their rights to safety and privacy. The school took part in ‘Safer Internet Day’ in 2017. In addition to speaking directly with staff if pupils have a concern, classes and the ‘after school’ club also have ‘worries boxes’. A school leader explained how the school’s work is *‘about empowering children to keep themselves safe’* and to *‘know that they are listened and heard’*.

The resolution of any conflicts should they arise is supported by the school in several ways including through the use of restorative justice approaches. Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour is key and centred around the message of ‘you own your own behaviour’. A member of staff explained how the *‘voice of the child is very important’* and circle time can provide an opportunity to help resolve any differences. In the autumn term the school held an anti-bullying week with a focus on ‘All Different, All Equal’.

Global and cultural diversity are celebrated. Each classroom has a large map of the world and there are opportunities to use this as a display to show the different countries that families have come from. Pupils are also able to make links between global issues and rights. For example, when the assessor described the possible effects of climate change and asked how this might be connected to children’s rights, pupils were able to explain that flooding could affect rights to safety, shelter and access to crops. Recently, year 4 pupils took part in ‘The Pollution Solution’ show which looked at topics such as global warming, air pollution and more sustainable ways to travel. Plans are in place for key stage 2 pupils to participate in ‘WE walk for water’ later this month. Pupils’ understanding of global issues is therefore being developed and alongside this, an empathy for those less fortunate. A member of staff described how pupils were *‘becoming mini- ambassadors’* against injustice.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

A school leader explained that '*children have a right to be heard on every level*' and this is a strong feature at St Catherine's. In addition to the steering group there is a school council which is made up of pupil representatives from years 1 to 6 (with one representative from each class) who meet on a regular basis. Drawing upon ideas from class suggestion boxes and aspects of school life, the council discuss a wide range of issues. Minutes are published on the school website. Examples of the impact of the council's work has been the inclusion of additional activities at lunchtime, having the playing of music trialled in the dining hall, choosing charities for the school to support, helping to organise fund raising events for the charity FSS Zambia and discussing the 'talk partners' scheme with some of the governors. Other pupil leadership roles (depending upon year group) include house captains, junior travel ambassadors, sports champions and science ambassadors. Pupil voice also played an important role when the school introduced 'shoeless learning' for key stage 2.

The school's PSHE programme helps supports pupils' in having an informed knowledge and understanding about their health and well-being. Additionally, outside speakers have visited the school in connection with a wide range of topics. For example, nursery to year 1 pupils have learnt about road safety, key stage 1 about healthy lifestyles and key stage 2 pupils about rail safety. Last year, the NSPCC delivered key stage assemblies and year 5 and 6 pupils also participated in workshops. Last October the school took part in the 'Be Bright, Be Seen' day as part of 'Road Safety Week'. Key stage 2 pupils have also been given information about safety, crime prevention and internet safety from the police. Some year 3 pupils have taken part in 'bikeability' training and year 6 pupils have also attended a junior citizenship event. Last September the school also took part in 'National Fitness Day'.

The school has supported a very wide range of charities including FSSA Zambia, Catholic Children's Society, Macmillan Cancer, Jeans for Genes, Unicef's Day for Change, Save the Children, The Royal British Legion and NSPCC. More local charities which have been supported include Grenfell Tower, Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, and through the food donated at the school's harvest festival, 'Homeless Action in Barnet'. St Catherine's is a very outward looking community which sees engagement with the wider world as a natural part of the school's ethos and values. Children are able to organise events to help raise funds and the school supports them in learning more about the work of particular charities. For example, last autumn a speaker from CAFOD gave a talk about farming in El Salvador. Alongside this, the school's work in connection with the UN Global Goals has helped to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the global dimension.

Part of St Catherine's vision is that: 'Each child is encouraged to achieve their full potential and celebrate their uniqueness. At the heart of this is our strong caring ethos based on mutual respect and gospel values'. This was very evident during the assessment visit and supported by a school culture that promotes and upholds children's rights. It was a privilege to see it in action.