

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Whiston Willis Primary Academy
Principal:	Ian Cooper
RRSA coordinator:	Amy Askew
Local authority:	Knowsley
School context:	Whiston Willis Primary Academy has 354 pupils on roll. 34% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium, 17% have SEN needs and 5% of children speak English as an Additional Language.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Principal, Deputy Principal and RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	21 pupils including 12 from the Pupil Leadership Group
Adults spoken with:	4 Teachers, 2 parents and 1 Governor
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 11 th October 2017 Bronze achieved: 16 th April 2014 Silver achieved: 24 th January 2020
Assessor:	Katelyn Farrenson
Date:	14 th July 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Whiston Willis Primary 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:

- Very articulate children who demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of rights. They knew a wide range of articles and were confident in the concept of rights.
- A strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA, following on from Silver recommendations. Quality training and support for staff has been sustained.
- 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 pupils ensure that everyone, particularly those with additional needs, feels supported and fully involved in school life.
- Pupil voice is valued highly; the range of pupil voice groups gives ample opportunities for all children to put their suggestions forward and for these to be acted upon.
- A strong desire to develop pupils' understanding of inequalities around the world.

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:

- Further support parents/carers and families to learn about and understand the CRC and engage with the school's rights respecting journey.
- Continue to explore with children and staff, the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights-based approach, for example, equity, and how this is enacted in school practice.
- Further strengthen the impact of pupil voice by closing the feedback circle; perhaps a 'You said, We did' approach, showing how the voice of pupils has brought about meaningful change.
- 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 in collaboration with local schools and the Wade Deacon Trust.

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>The Whiston Willis Primary Academy community learn about rights through assemblies, floor books, displays, article of the month, parent coffee afternoons, little books of rights, the curriculum, school choir rights songs, charters, the school website and school policies. Children interviewed spoke confidently about a range of rights and were able to link them to their everyday lives. They also demonstrated their knowledge of the ABCDE of rights, saying, <i>“Every child here knows there are duty bearers here – adults over 18 – which have to give children under 18 rights,”</i> and <i>“Rights don’t have to be earned, automatically you get them from birth.”</i> They also spoke about children who <i>“...are affected by war and have lost their rights to shelter and safety,”</i> showing their awareness of issues that might affect children being denied their rights.</p> <p>The principal spoke of how rights had been <i>“...in the forefront of our minds during the pandemic”</i> and had introduced <i>“Wellbeing Wednesdays and Article of the Week over lockdowns.”</i> He described how, <i>“...COVID gave us the impetus when we returned to relaunch and take the opportunity to ensure that the rights respecting work underpinned all that we do.”</i> He described the rights respecting approach as being <i>“a way of life.”</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>Whiston Willis Class charters, Jigsaw charters, the playground charter and the whole school charter are developed with pupils who all agreed that their rights are respected at school, including the <i>“right to play,” “the right to a name and nationality,” “to have my voice heard,” “to know our rights,” “to have an education,” “to have healthy food and an environment,” “to have an identity,”</i> and <i>“to be private.”</i> One member of staff explained how, <i>“From Reception, the children have got the language and are able to articulate their class charter and their rights.”</i> One pupil explained, <i>“...the duty bearers make sure we have all of our rights.”</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>Whilst pupils agreed that, <i>“If we are upset or need somebody to talk to, we can tell our teachers and they’ll help us,”</i> they also described the ways in which pupils are empowered to use the language of rights to resolve disputes. One pupil explained how <i>“...the play leaders in Year 5 and 6 help Year 1 if there’s an argument by going up to them and asking them if they’re OK.”</i> The pupil leadership team explained their understanding of the concept of dignity as they described an initiative to change the KS1 wording of a display of rewards and sanctions from rainbows and clouds to a rainbow wall to <i>“...stop children feeling sad”</i> and to <i>“...keep dignity.”</i></p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>All children spoken with agreed that <i>“...the duty bearers make sure we’re safe and we’re protected.”</i> Pupils listed a number of ways in which the school keeps them safe and one explained how, <i>“If somebody wanted to talk about anything, the teachers will talk to us.”</i> All children agreed they could ask any duty bearer for help or use the “worries, feelings and wishes boxes” to get support. The school helps families as well as pupils access support. One parent explained how <i>“...the emotional maturity”</i> of their child <i>“...would not have happened without the support of the school.”</i></p>

<p>5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Children’s wellbeing is supported at Whiston Willis with pupils learning about the “5 ways to wellbeing” linked to Article 24. A parent interviewed described how this approach had <i>“...built confidence and resilience to take outside school.”</i> A member of staff explained how the pupil wellbeing group, led by the nurture team, had been <i>“empowered to support each other.”</i> Pupils talked about the worries and wish boxes, classroom calm corners, rainbow walls, wellbeing club and different sensory rooms as ways that the duty bearers help them to <i>“feel better.”</i> The school is currently working towards a school wellbeing award.</p>
<p>6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.</p>	<p>One pupil described how, <i>“No matter who you are, you get your rights.”</i> Pupils talked about how, <i>“...some pupils need more help than others”</i> and how, <i>“if you are new, you are welcomed.”</i> Pupils have also been involved in a project to support disability rights and inclusion with a design a t-shirt campaign, have been following the No Outsiders series of books and learning about neurodiversity to celebrate differences.</p>
<p>7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.</p>	<p>Pupils talked about how they were active participants in their learning by <i>“choosing class readers”</i> and being able to change them <i>“by democracy”</i> if they didn’t like them. Pupils on the Leadership Team described how they <i>“interviewed the principal about the behaviour policy to change it to make it better for learning.”</i> <i>Oracy has an important place at the school through the Voice 21 programme with a parent explaining how their child “...has more of a voice.”</i> One pupil asserted how, <i>“The duty bearers will listen to us.”</i></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>All children spoken with agreed that they are listened to at Whiston Willis School, with one pupil asserting, <i>“Rights holders talk to the Pupil Leadership Team and can sort difficult things out.”</i> Pupil voice is strong with a number of groups including Pupil Leadership Team, Eco Team Warriors, Play Leaders, Librarians and Bully Busters. The principal described the Pupil Leadership Team as the <i>“life and soul of the school, moving other children forward.”</i> One member of the team bore this out by explaining how anyone <i>“...can come to me or anyone in here [the Pupil Leadership Team] and we will sort it out.”</i> A member of the Eco Team described how they <i>“...plant trees and help the environment.”</i> A KS1 pupil described themselves as a <i>“water protector”</i> and talked about their campaign to stop water pollution by writing to their local utilities company. Other year groups have been involved in working with local campaigners to save the local Whiston Woods.</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 spoken with, from a variety of groups in the school, articulated ways in which they had contributed to positive change. One project about which the Bully Buster team spoke very proudly, was an assembly about the dinner ladies who pupils <i>“...didn’t think had 100% respect and should have as much respect as the other duty bearers.”</i> They agreed that <i>“...there is more respect now.”</i> Pupils at Whiston Willis spoke enthusiastically about their project to support a former pupil, who returned to speak to the assessor, to visit Kenya and deliver money raised for sports equipment and <i>sportswear “...to support the children’s rights there.”</i> Alongside their link school, Whiston Willis organised an RRSA Pupil Conference, with seven other local primary schools, enabling pupils to advocate for a rights-based approach to learning.</p>