

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Longwill School for Deaf Children
Headteacher:	Alison Carter
RRSA coordinator:	Charlotte Firstbrook
Local authority:	Birmingham City Council
School context:	The school currently has 60 pupils on roll aged 2 – 11 years. 100% of pupils have an EHCP. 100% of children use sign language. Some children have some hearing and speech skills. 68% of pupils receive FSM/PP. The school's most recent Ofsted inspection (Nov 22) rated the school as Outstanding.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, deputy headteacher, RRSA coordinator and BSL interpreter during the visit.
Number of children and young people spoken with:	12 pupils from Reception to Year 6
Adults spoken with:	2 teachers, 2 support assistant, 2 parents and 1 teacher governor
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 2 nd February 2016 Gold achieved: 15 th July 2019
Assessor:	Hilary Alcock and Katelyn Farrenson
Date:	6 th December 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Longwill School for Deaf Children continue to meet the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessors would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak, using a BSL interpreter, 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 Reaccreditation 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:

- A school with inclusion at its heart, where pupils feel safe and secure and are articulate about the importance of knowing about children's rights, the difference this makes to their lives and their desire and determination to help realise these rights for others.
- A continued commitment by leaders and the whole school to place the CRC at the heart of policy and practice. Quality training and support for staff has been sustained.
- A nurturing family atmosphere with strong relationships with parents and carers who also value the school's rights respecting work.
- A rights respecting steering group who are increasingly taking ownership for reaching out to their community to share their knowledge of children's rights.
- Children are increasingly being empowered to be campaigners for their rights and the rights of others, and have collaborated with other schools in the Birmingham Special Schools' Co-operative Trust.

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 support families to learn about and understand the CRC and engage further with the school's Rights Respecting journey.
- 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 embed the UNICEF RRSA [Charter Guidance](#) and focus on the language of 'respect for rights.' When charters are next reviewed, include actions for duty bearers as well as for children.
- 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. Consider how to demonstrate the impact of pupil voice on your school website and other communications.
- Further support children to develop and lead campaigns from a rights perspective and continue participation in UNICEF UK's annual [OutRight campaign](#).

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>On a tour of the school and during British Sign Language interpreted discussions, all pupils spoken with demonstrated a good knowledge of articles from the Convention and how these are relevant to their lives and the lives of others. They understood the concepts that underpin their rights commenting, <i>“As soon as you are born you get your rights...they are for all children in the world...they are not allowed to be taken away from you.”</i> The children pointed out photographs of all staff on the doors of their workbases explaining, <i>“The adults are duty bearers and look after our rights.”</i> Children explore current affairs through the use of children’s news media as well as make their own ‘Newsround’ videos and Sustainable Development Goals are now included within relevant curriculum topics. Pupils explained how. <i>“War can take children’s rights away from them...and people are not taking care of the environment...there is too much deforestation and we need trees to help us breathe.”</i> Children spoke passionately about the fact that, <i>“We all need to use safe cars... reduce pollution and use solar powered electric cars.”</i></p> <p>Senior leaders consider that since the school first gained the RRSA Gold Award, <i>“We have much more of an impact on the wider community...our pupils are now much more confident about being active little campaigners.”</i> The school has developed its own Connected Curriculum which has children’s rights as a central theme. There was a consistent message from all staff that, <i>“Rights are embedded within the curriculum... all lesson objectives link to an article...rights are part of the vernacular here.”</i> A governor commented, <i>“On learning walks you can hear the language of rights all around the school.”</i> The RRSA coordinator has delivered training on the CRC for lunchtime staff and conversations about rights feature with visitors to the school. Parents commented that they consider their children learning about rights helps them to, <i>“Think beyond themselves and to consider different perspectives.”</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations CRC.</p>	<p><i>“Our teachers look after the children and help them to learn more... they will always help to sort things out for us,”</i> commented pupils. They described different ways that individual children are offered support to help them access learning which they consider is fair, as well as emphasising, <i>“Deaf people want to be equal to hearing people, so they need support to do that. Polices make explicit reference to specific articles from the Convention which the headteacher considers, “Cements our commitment and practice to children’s rights...sustaining our rights based approach is not reliant on individuals.”</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights.</p>	<p>Children used words such as, ‘happy, supportive, kind and respectful’ when describing their school. They explained how their charters, <i>“Remind us that if we make a mistake with our behaviour these words will help us to think about making good choices.”</i> They described being treated with dignity saying, <i>“Teachers always help us to feel calm and be better by talking with us.”</i></p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and</p>	<p>Children feel safe in school and said that first aiders support if they feel unwell plus their ‘helping hands’ adults, that they have chosen, all contribute to this. They commented, <i>“We have a right to be safe and feel safe in the world...and it’s my right not to be bullied.”</i> They spoke about being safe Online saying, <i>“You have a</i></p>

know what to do if they need support.	<i>right to protect yourself from harm.</i> ” The Safeguarding governor meets with the school council to discuss their views. As a result of pupils expressing their concerns about safety in school, a new fence was installed. A recent Ofsted inspection noted, ‘Pupils are taught about their rights and feel confident to stand up for themselves.’
5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	School being fun and children having lots of friends was a consistent theme from pupils spoken with. One said, <i>“I love everything about this school!”</i> Parents also commented on the difference their children attending the school had made for their children’s attitude towards their disability, enjoyment of school and overall mental health and wellbeing. In addition to Forest School sessions, swimming and a regular daily mile, all children enjoy a wide range of clubs and activities which support them developing healthy lifestyles. Children understand that this range of experiences is linked to Article 29.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	Children and adults spoke about the importance of Article 30 in relation to children learning and using sign language in order for them to enjoy other rights. They understood about other ways that people can be discriminated against commenting, <i>“It doesn’t matter what religion you are, what skin colour you have, all children have the same rights.”</i> Children created a bilingual celebratory song for the Commonwealth Games and made a teaching video so that hearing children could learn to sign the song, breaking down language barriers amongst children across Birmingham. They also participated in a Common Ground Arts Project where they produced a documentary about deafness, diversity and inclusion and contributed to the Birmingham Co-production SEND initiative.
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	The school uses Building Learning Power as an approach. Pupils explained, <i>“If we are stuck on something we can try and find out for ourselves before we ask the teacher.”</i> Several children said they enjoyed, <i>“challenging maths”</i> and spoke about their right to learn and respecting other children’s right to this too. Children negotiate and review individual half termly learning targets and take an active part in their EHCP review process. They plan and design their own products to sell in the annual ‘Enterprise Week’ and choose what to spend their profit on.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	Pupils vote for their School Council representatives. They meet regularly, collecting ideas from classes and feeding back. The School Council has identified priorities, <i>“... to improve our school”</i> and these are now incorporated into the School Development Plan. Since the previous Gold accreditation, the RRSA coordinator has introduced a debating club about which pupils spoke enthusiastically. They decide upon the topics, make notes and vote. Staff consider that this has really helped children to, <i>“Think about both sides of an argument and developed their confidence and skills.”</i> Pupils help to plan and run an annual RRSA conference.
9. All children have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Pupils are proud that they facilitated the school kitchen stopping wrapping sandwiches with single use plastic. They ran a successful campaign to reduce the use of electricity in school and at home. They spoke about the good luck cards they have sent to the UK government’s Climate Minister ahead of the COP 28 Summit as part of the OutRight Campaign, commenting, <i>“We have sent pictures of what we want to see change...our local area has too much flooding, just like other countries do.”</i>