

# UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO – Re-accreditation

<b>School:</b>	St Norbert’s Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Joe Burns
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	India Whyles
<b>Local authority:</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Assessors:</b>	Martin Russell
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> April 2017

## 1. INTRODUCTION

I would like to thank the children, the head teacher, the staff and governors for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and pupils during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the assessment. Prior to the assessment visit you provided a particularly detailed and comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form. It was clear to the assessor during the visit that everyone at St Norbert’s is wholeheartedly committed to maintaining a strongly rights based culture and ethos.

It was particularly impressive to discover the extent to which the children and adults are enthusiastic and passionate ambassadors for the UNCRC in their locality and the wider region.

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

## 2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING LEVEL 2

No requirements are made

## 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 excellent ambassadorial work undertaken with schools and the wider community which is helping to raise awareness of the UNCRC and to promote Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award.

Be ambitious in continuing to find innovative opportunities for the children to have even more involvement in school improvement and decision making at all levels.

Further explore the concept of campaigning and consider joining Unicef's Schools Campaigns Network.

## 4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

### 4.1. The school context

St Norbert's Catholic Primary is a smaller than average primary school, with around 200 children on roll, serving the town of Spalding and the surrounding villages. The children come from a very wide range of national backgrounds, mostly European and around 65% speak English as an additional language which is over three times the national average. However, only about 8% are entitled to additional support through the Pupil Premium and the numbers with an SEN Statement or EHC Plan are small, both indicators significantly lower than both the local and national averages.

The school was judged by Ofsted to be 'Outstanding' in July 2015. The school registered to work towards becoming rights-respecting in 2011, achieving Level 1 the same year and Level 2 in March 2014.

## 4.2. Assessment information

<b>Self-evaluation form received</b>	Yes
<b>Impact evaluation form received</b>	Yes
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator/ 2 Senior Leaders
<b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b>	22 children in meetings plus discussion with two classes during the tour
<b>Number of staff interviewed</b>	4 teaching staff 3 support staff 2 parents 2 governors (inc. the chair and a parent governor)
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Learning walk Written evidence Lessons

### Standard A:

### Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

#### Standard A has been achieved

It is very clear that being a rights based school community is integral to life at St Norbert's; as the headteacher, who has recently joined the school, said '*Seeing the CRC in action here gave me a whole new dimension...it chimes totally with our Catholic values and vision it permeates everything we do, all children are totally involved.*' Their strong focus on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is described by the senior team as '*intrinsically linked to everything we do. It has never been an 'add on' and it just flows naturally.*' The impact of embedding their rights respecting work at St. Norbert's is wide ranging and varied; school leaders are confident that many aspects of school improved and their 'Outstanding' inspection judgement are supported by their commitment to children's rights. Overwhelmingly positive responses are given by children in regular surveys with questions such as "I am beginning to be more confident and independent." Wider academic outcomes are significantly positive with 2016 phonics results praised in a Ministerial letter. The leadership assert that the school's success is underpinned by the fact that '*Everyone is welcomed and valued...rights go hand in hand with that.*'

A rights respecting focus and appropriate reference to the CRC is routinely part of the school's strategic thinking. Governors spoke confidently about the natural way in which the Convention has become part of their strategic oversight of the school and is integrated into

all relevant practice, for example, *'All SDP headings are linked to relevant Articles.'* Senior staff and governors have incorporated direct reference to RRS and relevant Articles into all relevant school policies; examples shared and discussed during the assessment include the English as an Additional Language, Anti-Bullying and Gifted and Talented policies. The fact that the school has built upon its previous Level 2 status is testament to their capacity to sustain the work. All governors and SLT are entirely committed to a rights based approach and as one person said the children and staff *'would never let this go.'* Induction for new staff and ongoing CPD to revisit rights based practice ensure that enthusiasm for and commitment to children's rights is sustained. One member of staff commented that *'RRS promotes positive learning attitudes which leads to success.'*

The nature of the school's intake means that children are immersed in a diverse varied culture; making this a cohesive and supportive community does not happen by accident. The school's success in doing so has clearly been helped by the principles and values of the CRC. A senior leader commented that *'From the very early years, the children's sensitivity to others becomes the norm.'* Governors explained their decision to write to families after the result of the 2016 EU Referendum offering them reassurance regarding their relationship with St. Norbert's. The school's Ofsted inspection identified numerous ways in which the leadership of the school secures a systemic approach to inclusion and participation, examples include 'language buddies' and targeted coaching. The importance of pupil participation at St Norbert's is clearly evident in the system of policy review which involves discussion and consultation with the children; furthermore staff described a thorough process of *'consultation with the children in all our curriculum planning.'*

St Norbert's has established itself as a powerful ambassador for children's' rights and the CRC in its own LA and in the wider region. The children enthused about 'Child Meet' days, which involve children and staff from other schools in visits to see how they can help each other's school to improve. For St Norbert's, this inevitably involves sharing their rights based approach. Feedback from these events, which are planned and facilitated by the children, was seen by the assessor and made clear that the events were very well received. In addition, the school is currently giving direct support to three other schools locally which are at earlier stages of the Rights Respecting Journey. The school shares its rights based work with the local community and the parish. Local businesses are aware of the work of an RRSA school and messages are shared to members regarding work that supports the Rights of the Child such as the promotion of Fair Trade.

This is a school in which global citizenship and sustainable development are understood and promoted at strategic level and by all staff. Governors spoke of their desire for *'the school to look outwards...to build a strong sense of global awareness and activity.'* The school served as an Expert Centre for the Global Learning Programme which involved the promotion of good practice between a number of partner schools. Planning for assemblies and worship as well as for themed days and deeper learning experiences frequently reflect issues relating to justice, the environment and the children's place in the wider world. Use of BBC Newsround is expected weekly in classes as part of building 'Global affairs thinking skills.'

## 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 CRC. The children were clear that *'everyone under 18 should have all these rights.'* The unconditional nature of rights was widely understood with one child explaining in detail *'Every child is born with rights. You don't have responsibilities but you should appreciate and respect everyone else's rights.'* They were confident in discussing situations both locally and globally in which children may not be accessing their rights such as food, shelter, freedom, health, family life and safety and they were able to discuss reasons why access to such rights may be limited. During this conversation an historical perspective was offered by a year 4 girl who remembered that *'Rosa Parks stood up to segregation in her state.'* When asked about the value of being in a rights respecting school, one year 5 pupil said *'Knowing your rights is really important to help you in your life now but in the future too.'*

Parents, carers and governors at St Norbert's are very well informed about the Convention and have many opportunities to deepen and develop their understanding. For example, the children ran a P4C 'Research Café' for parents linked to articles. The school also hosted a Unicef-BT Right Click workshop on E-safety which was well attended. Parental commitment to the children learning about rights is very strong, one parent explained *'We really want them to know about their rights. When the pressure comes in later years they can stand up and be strong and make the right decisions.'* Another described how *'you really notice the confidence they have in themselves and their awareness of other people.'* Families are invited to take part in learning walks around the school and in one there was specific reference to CRC articles and parents were asked to review the evidence of global citizenship and rights work evident in classrooms and around school. As well as governor involvement in leading the Rights Respecting work alongside children and staff, the full Board is briefed termly on new elements of the work. Effective use is made of 'Twitter' to regularly mention different articles of the Convention.

The curriculum has been deliberately planned and audited to ensure a broad and frequent coverage of a range of different articles. This has ensured excellent knowledge and awareness described by one child as *'The rights are in our heads!'* All staff have been involved in mapping their curriculum with reference to the Convention and the children have been engaged in this process too. One member of staff asked *'How can you not have it across the whole curriculum?'* Among topics and themes discussed were clean water, the right to use your own language, life for refugees and a workshop and project on modern slavery. The children also spoke about celebrating Chinese New Year and learning about other religions such as Hinduism in their RE lessons. Teacher planning and a range of pupil work as well as wall displays showed that curriculum coverage of the Convention continues to be embedded. Special events reinforce the curriculum such as a European Café run by the children for the community on European Day of Languages. Rights are highly visible all around the school with a range of relevant articles referred to in appropriate contexts. Each class has a 'celebrating diversity' board which refers to the rights to identity, name, nationality and language.

The children had a clear understanding that global citizenship is all about *'Respect for others no matter who they are.'* and *'Doing world wide work to help other people.'* An excellent discussion took place around the saying *'Teach a person to fish...'* which demonstrated that many of the children understand the concept of sustainable development. When asked about Fair Trade, pupils could readily explain how such an approach enabled farmers in less developed countries to access rights like better food and education for their families. During one of the conversations with the children there was an unprompted mention of the Global Goals which indicates that this important area of learning is being introduced by the school. The school uses every opportunity to engage the children in understanding complex global issues, for example they explored the Pope's Encyclical Letter, *'Laudato Si'* which was all about respect for the environment – all such learning is inevitably connected to rights.

### Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

**Standard C has been achieved**

Children of all ages at St Norbert's have been actively involved in discussing and creating class charters based on relevant articles from the Convention and this is now established practice, having been introduced several years ago. The pupils and staff described how they discussed which rights to include and then agreed what they should do to respect each right. A member of staff said that *'For the children to see adults thinking about their role in respecting an article, really encourages them to do the same.'* Children clearly had ownership of their charters with various strategies used to show their agreement or commitment including signatures and self-portraits. One member of staff commented that *'The charters are a real focus in our classrooms; they help to set the tone.'* The children have also developed a playtime charter to help remind everyone about respecting rights outside the classroom.

All conversations during the assessment visit made clear that the use of rights respecting language is a natural part of life and relationships at St. Norbert's. Respectful attitudes and actions are not, however, taken for granted. Regular staff training about rights and frequent reminders at assemblies and in school worship keep a rights based approach at the forefront of everyone's minds and all adults are confident in modelling the language of rights and respect. As one member of staff said *'We naturally refer to rights when dealing with a situation...we might ask if what you did respected the other person's right to...'* Various systems in the school link to and reinforce a rights respecting approach including a wide range of reward systems. Lunchtime staff have had training about the CRC and are comfortable in using rights based language. Recently they worked with the children to introduce new play activities to engage children during lunchtime. All staff clearly expressed the way in which speaking about rights now comes naturally to them with one commenting *'if I ever moved schools I would take the language with me, I couldn't help it!'*

It was evident to the assessor that the knowledge of rights and use of charters at the school contributes to effective learning. When asked about situations when some pupils might be



disturbing the learning of others one pupil said *'Teachers would get you to talk about how you have affected the rights of others to learn.'* Staff were very positive about the impact of RRS on the children's experience of learning with one teacher explaining *'They know that they are really listened to, that we will stop and really take them seriously.'* The children described their experience of learning as one in which they had frequent opportunities to express their own opinions and to ask questions. They have a role in planning and evaluating learning and various peer and self evaluation strategies are deeply embedded. The children are fully involved in discussing and setting their learning targets and these are recorded in their 'star target' books. Although this is a school with a long history of excellent practice, adults explained that the continuing incorporation of rights into all aspects of school life strengthens things further and *'you see a noticeable difference compared to other schools.'*

The children were confident in stating that their school is a very safe place and they gave many examples of actions taken by adults to ensure their safety. These included keeping the gates closed, fire drills and playground duty staff. The children also explained that parent and pupil questionnaires are used regularly to check that everyone feels safe and the very positive data from these was seen during the visit. They spoke about the roles of Junior Road Safety Officers and Junior Community Support Officers who remind everyone about being safe in and around the school. Regular anti-bullying work is undertaken, led by the children and when the NSPCC came in to work with pupils, the CRC links and expectations were discussed with the NSPCC worker prior to the visit. Some of the children serve as 'Digital Leaders' and have a role in promoting good computer practice and, in particular, e-safety.

A strong understanding of the CRC clearly contributes to conflict resolution and a culture of reconciliation within the school. One of the younger children explained that *'Rights remind us that we don't have to be friends with everyone.'* One of the other children added to this by saying that *'You should respect everyone though even if you don't get on with them.'* The children described how, when misbehaviour or bullying does occur *'You have to see both sides...if you can't sort it out you have to tell a teacher.'* The school has a number of strategies such as worry boxes in classes, a friendship stop on the playground and a nurture room all of which are seen and understood in the context of supporting children's rights. The Children at St. Norbert's have a strong sense of what is fair and right. One year five child summed up an opinion expressed by many that *'The world is a better place with rights. If you didn't have rights it would be a giant mess.'*

The school's active promotion of the rights of the CRC undoubtedly influences the children's perception of the world and their concept of global citizenship. The motivation for their many actions for others, locally and globally, is clearly moving from sympathy and 'feeling sorry for...' (which are in themselves commendable) to incorporate a growing sense of equity and justice and the desire to change things that are wrong. One parent said that her child *'expresses frustration and outrage when they see some of the global tragedies such as Syria.'* A member of staff said that their knowledge and understanding of rights had *'changed how the children speak about global issues... they are really passionate and articulate and they confidently spot where rights might not be met.'*

## Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

### Standard D has been achieved

Opportunities for pupil participation and leadership abound at St Norbert's with examples including School Council, Eco-Schools monitors, E-Safety Monitors, Young Leaders and a Chaplaincy Team. The democratically elected school council is widely valued and respected by children and adults across the school. There are high levels of trust that the council makes a difference and the children were able to list numerous actions resulting from council led action; examples include the 'Trim-Trail' in the playground, movie night and decisions about charity fundraising. A class based suggestion box system helps to facilitate this. The pupils can, however, email the headteacher directly with ideas, comments or examples of their success. They value the fact that they always receive a response. The children were involved in an evaluation of learning and teaching which led to some activities and planning being modified to enhance their enjoyment and achievement. They routinely help to plan and shape the content of learning topics and evaluate the outcomes at the end. Among other activities valued by the children was their participation in the Children's Commissioners 'Takeover Day' with the children explaining how much they enjoyed applying for different roles *'but planning lessons was hard work!'*

The school ensures an extensive range of opportunities for the children to access information which helps them to make informed choices and decisions about many aspects of their lives. The children spoke of *'Healthy eating information'*; *'staying safe – crime prevention walks'*; *'positive relationships work'* and *'Democracy Day all about voting and parliament and having our say.'* The children's learning includes access to Philosophy for Children approaches, consciously chosen by the school to encourage wider thinking and to encourage the children's capacity to engage more fully and deeply with many of the complex issues of today's world – the work in this approach is almost invariably linked to a range of articles from the Convention.

The children at St. Norbert's have a strong sense of their capacity to bring about change. The pupils wrote, for example to their local MP explaining their commitment to RRSA and inviting him to school, he subsequently attended and praised their work. Other children have participated in local action to raise awareness of and support for those suffering with Dementia. The school has links with a village in Cambodia and has begun to actively support a school there in a two way shared learning relationship. When the school recently won a prize through a Co-Op competition the children decided to give the prize money to their partners to help them with learning resources. A staff member suggested that *'by having a true reflection of what life is like for others'* the children are inspired and empowered to act. Other support they show for the rights of others locally and globally includes contributing to the the local foodbank, the annual Samaritan's Purse Shoebox appeal and ongoing work with CAFOD. The children spoke with enthusiasm about raising money but also using their knowledge of rights to deepen understanding and raise awareness. As one pupil said, *'Every day we still do more to help the world.'*