

# UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO

<b>School:</b>	The Iver Village Junior School
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Jill Digweed
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Sarah Chapman-Allen
<b>Local authority:</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Assessors:</b>	Paul Harris
<b>Date:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> June 2018

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The assessor would like to thank the children, the leadership team, staff, parents and governor 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 form.

Particular strengths of the school are:

- a clear and purposeful commitment to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 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
- pupils 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:

- Explore further opportunities for the school to promote its Rights Respecting work in the wider community and with local schools.
- Continue cross-referencing particular rights with curriculum areas and where appropriate include these in relevant documentation.
- Explore further ways to celebrate the impact of 'pupil voice' (for example, in displays, presentations and newsletters, as appropriate).

## 4. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

### 4.1. The school context

The Iver Village Junior School is a community school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. There are currently 213 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is 27.6% and 14.6% of pupils have English as an additional language. 4.2% of pupils have a statement of special education needs or an EHC Plan. The school was inspected by Ofsted in June 2016 and was graded 'good' in all areas. The report commented that 'The headteacher, together with an increasingly strong staff team, has transformed the school'.

The school registered for the RRSA in March 2016 and achieved the RRSA Level 1 Award in June 2017.

## 4.2. Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, Upper School Phase Leader and the Inclusion Manager who is also the RRSA co-ordinator.
Number of children and young people interviewed	Focus Group: 30 pupils (years 3 to 6; includes 11 pupils from school council and 11 pupils from school's eco council). Learning walk: 4 pupils (years 3 to 6; pupils are from school council or eco council and attended focus group meeting as well). Class visit: 26 pupils (year 4).
Number of staff interviewed	3 teachers (years 3, 4 and 6), 2 learning support assistants (includes the school's ELSA), 2 parents and a governor.
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

School leaders are highly committed to the principles and values of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and clearly articulate how the Convention is supporting the school's ethos and everyday practice. They described how The Iver Junior School has been on a journey in recent years and explained how pupil confidence, self-esteem and 'voice' have grown alongside a greater engagement with learning and a more outward-looking perspective on the wider world. In the self-evaluation of the impact of its Rights Respecting work, the school judged this to be 'significant' in all areas, commenting that *'we feel becoming a Rights Respecting School has made a real difference to our school'*. The headteacher described how through growing 'pupil voice' children have *'got a say and [are] happier coming to school'* and that the right to an education is being valued by the pupils. The school also reports that both attendance and punctuality have improved, particularly with key groups such as pupil premium pupils. Strategic approaches to pupils learning about rights, sustainability and the global dimension alongside the provision of a range of pastoral structures to support pupil's well-being, have successfully dovetailed together to making the school a Rights Respecting community.

The school's values of respect, consideration, perseverance, commitment, honesty and effort have been linked with particular articles from the Convention. For example, Articles 3, 13, 14, 23, 28, 29, 30 and 31 are linked to 'respect'. This 'big picture' of the school's 2017/18 work reflects how the Convention is becoming increasingly embedded in the strategic work of the school. The current school development plan also includes achieving RRSA level 2 and the draft version of the 2018/19 plan is linking key areas of strategic work to particular articles. Several policies reference articles from the Convention. These include the attendance (Article 28), behaviour (Articles 15, 22, 23, 28, 29 and 31) and the equality and cohesion (Articles 13 and 14) policies. Training has been provided for both teaching and support staff, with regular up-dates provided about the school's Rights Respecting work. It is clear from the feedback provided in discussions during the assessment visit that there is a consistency in approach across the school with regards to the use of Rights Respecting language. Links are also made to pedagogic practice such as 'philosophy for children' (in which all staff have been trained) and pupils right to a 'voice'. The school's Rights Respecting work is therefore well embedded and sustainable for the long term.

There has been a strong emphasis on the development of positive and supportive relationships within the school community. The headteacher explained how important this has been and a '*very stepped approach*' has been taken to build this up, underpinned by a Rights Respecting ethos. Inclusion and developing a sense of community have therefore been a major focus for the school and several staff have specific roles to help support pupils, including for example, an attendance officer, family link worker and play therapist. The school also has a trained Emotional Learning Support Assistant (ELSA) who explained how their work linked to rights connected with safety and well-being. The school's special needs policy which references Articles 23 and 28, states that 'all children have a right to fulfil their potential' and a variety of support and intervention approaches are used to support children with special education needs. Hugo and Ralph, the school's therapy dogs are also used to support children emotionally and during their reading sessions. This strategic and holistic approach to inclusion has helped to create a cohesive school community where children's rights are upheld. Pupil participation in clubs and sports activities is also monitored and children encouraged to join clubs, as appropriate.

The school actively engages with the wider community. An information leaflet (also to be found on the school's website) about the Convention is available for new parents. This covers a range of articles and provides examples of how these are realised within the school's context and everyday practice. For example, 'approaching lessons in different ways, providing a range of after school clubs, having a choir and sports teams and providing opportunities to share talents with others in assemblies' is referenced alongside Article 29. Pupils have written to the local council in connection with traffic conditions and earlier this year, the pupil eco-group took part in an air quality survey which was being carried out for South Bucks District Council. They have also participated in a video being made by the council about air pollution. School leaders in their roles as a local leader of education (the headteacher) and specialist leaders in education (the deputy headteacher and the inclusion manager) have informally promoted aspects of the school's Rights Respecting work at local school meetings. During the assessment visit, a senior citizen afternoon tea event led by year 6 pupils was observed and aptly reflects the school's community work.

Developing pupil's knowledge and understanding of the wider world is a strength of the school. Curriculum topics that support this include year 4 geography ('where does my chocolate come from?'), year 5 with a study of the book 'The Journey' about refugees and year 6 with a focus on North and South America. A further example is the school's

involvement in 'arts trading cards' which pupils design and exchange (along with letters) with pupils from other schools around the world and which has also included discussions about rights. Of particular note is the school's eco-work and focus upon sustainability through initiatives such as recycling and walking to school. This is also reflected in the recent re-accreditation of its 'Green Flag' award where pupils played a key role in the assessment.

## Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Pupils have a good and secure knowledge of a range of children's rights. These include the right to an education, to a safe environment, to be treated equally, to be able to '*grow to your full potential*', to have clean water and healthy food, to be able to practise one's own religion, culture and traditions, the right to have a name, to privacy, to have an opinion and the right to rest and play. They were very clear that children's rights are inherent ('*from the minute that you exist*'), universal (for '*children all around the world and under eighteen [years of age]*'), unconditional and inalienable. Pupils are very aware that many children and young people are being denied their rights because of issues such as child labour, the lack of clean water, natural disasters, conflict and terrorism. In connection with the latter two, pupils were able to explain how this would affect children's rights to a safe environment, to an education, to access food and to be able to play and rest.

Governors are fully supportive of the school's Rights Respecting work and are kept up-to-date on the progress being made. A governor commented that the impact of the work over time has been '*huge*' and that '*behaviour has massively improved*'. Similarly, parents also spoke very positively commenting how there is a '*real sense of camaraderie*', a '*more community feel*' and how it is '*coming into everyday life at home*' through awareness of not wasting water, fairtrade and recycling old shoes. In addition to the school website, there is an 'article of the month' in the newsletter and a commentary which also provides question prompts that can be used for discussions at home. Parent 'coffee mornings' which have covered a range of topics such as healthy lunch boxes, maths, e-safety and philosophy for children, also provide opportunities to make links to the school's Rights Respecting work.

An innovative approach to displaying rights across the school is used in the form of 'cut-out people' figures. These have a specific article associated with them and some accompanying text explaining how this relates within the context of the school. The figures are displayed in many parts of the school and help to act as a regular reminder about the Convention. In addition, other displays highlight particular rights (for example, a display about fairtrade was linked to Articles 2, 32 and 36) and a large 'Rights Respecting School' display in the main hall included children's work and a range of articles from the Convention. As well as displays, pupils explained that they learnt about rights in assemblies, lessons and through 'British Values' event days about themes such as fair trade. PSHE, RE and 'philosophy for children' (P4C) activities were also highlighted as areas where they had discussed rights. When asked how P4C links to rights, a pupil explained how this connected to the right to have an opinion and in the case of a P4C discussion about



bullying, the right to safety. Staff are implicitly making links between rights and their everyday practice in the classroom. Examples given included year 4 P4C discussions about child labour and 'what is fair?', a year 6 topic about the Mayan civilisation and a year 3 topic about the Victorians and children being forced to work. Pupils visited a museum in connection with the latter and were *'very quick to understand'* the issues involved. In year 3 English, when pupils were reading the novel 'Gregory Cool' themes linked to rights were *'constantly being brought up'*.

Pupils are able to make connections between rights and the wider world. When the assessor described some of the effects of climate change such as flooding or the long term absence of rainfall, pupils were able to use their knowledge about rights to show how this would impact upon children. For example, they explained that flooded areas would affect the right to be safe, to shelter and may prevent access to school and therefore the right to an education whilst in very dry areas the *'crops would dry out'* thereby affecting the right to healthy food. Access to 'First News' is also used in guided reading activities to help explore global themes and with regards to sustainability, examples include a year 4 persuasive writing literacy activity in connection with the book 'One Plastic Bag' (which is set in Gambia) and pupil's involvement with the schools' gardening club.

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

**Standard C has been achieved**

Class charters were seen in the classrooms visited. These are prominently displayed, include a range of rights and are often supported with examples of rights respecting actions. A teacher commented how charters are *'very much child led'*, provide a *'good reminder'* as to what has been agreed and that pupils are *'very good at linking back'* to the charters. Pupils also commented that charters can be helpful in supporting a respectful learning environment. There is also a playground and a school charter both of which include several rights from the Convention, the latter is displayed in the library and had been reviewed by the school council earlier in the year.

Respect is an integral part of the school's ethos and this was evident during the assessment visit with a genuinely friendly, supportive and positive learning environment. As a member of staff commented *'levels of respect have significantly grown'*. The very vast majority of pupils agreed that views are respected, listened to and supported within the school community. In the focus group discussions, pupils listened politely to the contributions of their peers. The school's culture of inclusion was encapsulated during the learning walk, where a 'celebrating different cultures' display linked to Article 30 was discussed with the pupil guides. They explained how this *'stops discrimination'* because *'you have the same rights'* and *'the right to be treated in the same way as other people'*. A 'Friendship Friday' event has been held to celebrate differences and equality and a 'British Values Day' held last autumn about mutual respect and tolerance was linked to Articles 2, 14, 19 and 30.

Weekly 'philosophy for children' sessions are held. These enable pupils to explore a range of questions and support an enquiry based approach to learning. Questions discussed by a

year 6 class have included 'what is freedom?', 'what are rights?' and 'what is true happiness?'. Pupils are active participants with their learning. For example, a member of staff explained how they can '*self-select [the] level of challenge*' for particular pieces of work which are differentiated as 'hard, harder, hardest and herculean' and that in English, pupils are encouraged '*to take more ownership of their editing*'. During the learning walk, pupil guides were able to very clearly explain how a display about the 'learning pit' was linked to their right to a '*good education*' which in turn helps to '*grow your full potential*'. Charters also help to support a class environment where learning is nurtured, respected and valued.

When asked, all pupils agreed that they felt safe in school. They were able to give a range of examples of how the school helps them be safe. These included having school gates, lanyards for visitors, fire drills and '*adults on [the] playground*'. The school has held a 'safety week' which covered issues such as 'stranger danger', water safety, road safety and online safety. In connection with the latter, pupils also receive guidance about e-safety and in February of this year a 'Safer Internet Week' was held. Pupils in years 3 and 4 have met the police to learn about their role in helping keep children safe. Workshops have also been delivered by the Dogs Trust about being safe and responsible around dogs. The school reports that 'we feel as a school that our focus on Rights Respecting has been the driver behind our focus on creating a safe, stimulating environment for all; our children to learn in'.

The school has been proactive in helping pupils develop skills to resolve any potential conflicts. For example, some pupils have joined the 'ear-wiggers' programme which equips them with listening skills to help resolve any potential playground disagreements that might occur between children. Pupil sport leaders are also being trained to lead playground games. Learning about democracy is actively promoted through events such as a 'British Values Day' which was linked to Articles 4, 12, 13 and 14 and there has also been a presentation to year 6 pupils on this theme from the chair of governors.

Through their knowledge and understanding of the wider world, pupils are empathetic to those who are less fortunate and who may not be enjoying their rights. During the assessment visit, the Unicef 'Playground Challenge' was taking place and one pupil explained this it was being done to '*raise awareness about other people in countries who don't have the same opportunities [as] us*'. A 'British Values Day' about fairtrade provided opportunities for pupils to learn about how fairtrade links in with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. For example, some pupils prepared baked banana bread using fairtrade products only and had explored the country origins of the ingredients with the help of an atlas. The 'left over' banana skins were used for composting, thereby also highlighting the importance of sustainability.

## Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

**Standard D has been achieved**

'Pupil voice' is a strength within the school. There is a school council made up of two pupils from each class who have been elected by their peers. Each class has a 'suggestions box' and ideas from these such as changing the lunch box shelving arrangement are discussed

at council meetings. Council members and the enterprise club have helped to raised funds for a proposed 'outside classroom' by organising a 'welly walk' and book sale. Many members of the council are also the 'RRE' ambassadors who help to promote the school's Rights Respecting work. The ambassadors have provided the text for the 'cut-out people' figures which are displayed around the school and linked to particular articles from the Convention. They have also given assembly presentations about 'next steps' after achieving RRSA level 1 and an up-date on the progress being made towards level 2. Along with year 5 pupils, the ambassadors helped to design the obstacle courses as part of the 'Playground Challenge' event. When the school holds a 'British Values Day' event, an ambassador is in each of the vertical pupil groupings to help promote rights linked to the particular theme being explored. The school's eco-group have delivered assemblies and promoted 're-use, reduce and recycle'. For example, with the latter the school's table tennis tables and a 'buddy bench' have been made out of recycled plastic water bottles. A range of other pupil leadership roles also exist. These include year 6 pupil digital ambassadors who are currently creating a promotional video about the school's e-safety work, financial ambassadors who help with the collation and counting of monies raised from charity events, year 5 sports leaders and year 6 prefects. Pupils have also taken part in providing feedback in connection with staff appointments.

The school's PSHE curriculum helps pupils have an informed understanding about health, safety and well-being. Topics (as appropriate to the year group) include embracing differences, controlling anger, road safety, equal opportunities, drugs awareness, healthy eating and money management. Reading is actively promoted through the school's library facilities and participation in 'World Book Day'. Pupils were articulate in explaining how the school supports their health with comments referring to the healthy school dinners provided, a range of PE and sports activities that are available and free fruit at break time on 'Fruit Fridays'. Visits from outside organisations have included workshops for years 5 and 6 pupils in connection with learning about diversity, equality and inclusion and also 'Show Racism the Red Card' (linked to Article 14). School trips such as to the Reading Museum (for year 5 pupils in connection with their Victorians topic), Science Museum (year 6 pupils) and an eco-group visit to an 'energy from waste' recycling centre are examples of opportunities that pupils have had in order to gain a deeper insight into particular aspects of the curriculum. Year 6 pupils also participate in the Chiltern and South Bucks 'community card scheme' which supports pupils in learning about a range of topics (such as safety and wellbeing) alongside activities to support engagement with the local community. A 'growth mindset' approach to learning is being used to help equip pupils to be resilient.

A range of charities have been supported by the school. These have included Unicef (including 'ShoeShare' with Clarks Shoes), Save the Children and Comic and Sport Relief. In addition, harvest produce and Christmas boxes have been given to local charities who help support the homeless. Pupils have participated in 'Send My Friend to School' and learnt how this is connected to every child's right to an education and they have also participated in Unicef's 'Outright' campaign. The school described how 'a pupil who felt so strongly about the traffic concerns outside the school gates' had created a petition and met the local MP. 'Walk to School Week' and 'Bag 2 School' are two examples of the ways that pupils learning about sustainability have been fostered. These alongside the work of the eco-group ensures that children are learning about stewardship of the planet and what it means to be a global citizen.