

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Newman Catholic College
Headteacher:	Danny Coyle
RRSA coordinator:	Susan Grace
Local authority:	Brent
Assessors:	Frances Bestley with Isobel Mitchell and Aleisha Hadwin
Date:	4 th July 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessors would like to thank the students, the leadership team, staff and parents for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and young people during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school provided a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

The ethos of the school is summed up as ‘Everyone counts, everyone contributes, everyone succeeds’ and it was clear throughout the visit that there is a very strong focus on inclusion, participation and learning. Everyone was really committed to and valued the impact of the rights respecting work; adults stated on several occasions that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child provided a framework for their work, *“It’s added in and lifted the culture of the school.”*

Particular strengths of the school are:

- excellent relationships between adults and students
- a very strong focus on inclusion providing exceptional support for refugee children
- students who liked school and valued the opportunities provided
- empowered students who felt listened to and taken seriously

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

2. REQUIREMENTS BEFORE ATTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

None required

3. MAINTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING STATUS

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 with the excellent practice seen during the visit.
- Continue to embed the explicit knowledge and understanding of articles including the formal language of duty bearers and rights holders and the fact that rights are inherent, indivisible and inalienable.
- Develop external supporters' (e.g. the police) understanding of the CRC.
- Act as an ambassador for RRSA with local secondary schools.

4. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	A smaller than average sized secondary Catholic boys school with 760 students on roll; 95% of students are from minority ethnic groups, 78% are EAL learners, 64 different languages are spoken, 25% of students are eligible for pupil premium. A large number of students arrive at non-standard points in the year; about 5% of students have refugee status.
School evaluation: Gold form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator / deputy headteacher / 2 assistant headteachers
Number of children and young people interviewed	16 students in focus group, Year 8 and Year 9 classes, EAL class
Number of staff interviewed	5 teaching staff, 4 support staff, 2 parents 1 staff governor, the chaplain, 3 Safer School Officers (police), Sport and thought officer

Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence including students' work Videos of drama performance
First registered for RRSA: March 2014	Silver achieved: November 2014

STRAND A: TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT RIGHTS
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is made known to children, young people and adults, who use this shared understanding to work for improved child wellbeing, school improvement, global justice and sustainable living.

Strand A has been achieved

The students in the focus group were familiar with a very wide range of rights including: the rights to be heard, to be protected from violence, drugs, trafficking and sexual exploitation, the right to education and the goals of education, the rights of refugees and of disabled children to receive additional support, to a name and an identity and to know your rights. They understood the role of the government in ensuring children in the UK accessed their rights and knew that parents and teachers are duty bearers. All students understood that you didn't have to do anything to access rights and that they could not be bought, sold or taken away and that they were for "anyone under the age of 18"; they were not yet familiar with the terms inherent, inalienable and indivisible. Students had an up-to-date and good awareness that local and global issues were linked to rights. Students in the Year 8 class cited examples including: the children of Mexican immigrants in the US were not able to access their right to live with their parents; women in Saudi Arabia faced discrimination as they were only recently able to drive; in war torn countries you may have no access to some rights.

The headteacher explained in the initial meeting that "RRSA provided an outstanding opportunity to create a culture that didn't exist...an umbrella to bring things together." He explained that learning about rights underpinned "the journey of the school, which has been phenomenal." Each priority within the School Improvement Plan is linked to articles, hence each senior leader is responsible for ensuring those core articles are enjoyed by students. The assemblies in the portfolio provided evidence of explicit coverage of a range of rights. Articles were displayed in public areas; "It's a constant reminder of our rights" explained a student on the learning walk. The Unicef mural showed how we "really care about the rights." The header on the school website, which is visible on every page, states that Newman Catholic College is a Unicef rights respecting school and the Rights Respecting page provides detailed information about the CRC. The 'SMSC Across the Curriculum' mapping links every curriculum area to specific articles. Staff and student discussion and examples of students' work provided very good evidence of coverage, for example: in maths analysing gaps in provision for children in different countries; looking at article 35 linked to financial mathematics; in drama celebrating culture and identity linked articles 30, 7 and 8; science exploring how to make water safe to drink referenced article 24; in citizenship looking at child labour and blood diamonds. The Whole School Read in 2018 was 'Silverwing'; students explained that the book was linked to discussions about rights. The Student planners all have a list of articles which the students tick off and date when they have learned about them. We saw a range of planners, all with the majority of rights ticked.

STRAND B: TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH RIGHTS – ETHOS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children, young people and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners and promotes wellbeing.

Strand B has been achieved

Students explained very clearly how the school enabled them to enjoy their rights. They gave examples including: the wide variety of after school and lunch clubs which contributed to the goals of education, the role of the student council linked to the right to be heard; trained staff made them feel protected. The Newman Values, developed through a thorough consultation process including the students, are underpinned by some articles of the CRC. During the learning walk students explained that the Newman Values acted as *“a constant reminder of our rights.”* All students agreed that they were treated fairly. Students described how understanding their rights ensured *“we know what we are supposed to do and you know what you can do.”* When asked what would happen if they felt their rights were not being met a student explained *“I’ve the right to information and I’ve the right to express my opinion”* and was confident he would *“make a complaint.”* Other boys supported this.

Throughout the visit in the classrooms, at the start of school, in break and lunch times and in the focus group there was evidence of very strong and respectful relationships between adults, between students and between students and adults. A student explained that *“understanding about rights creates a better atmosphere.”* Ofsted described relationships as ‘superb’ in their November 2016 report. *“Teachers and students are more like a family; students are more caring and kinder”* explained a student when asked about the impact of RRSAs. *“I feel welcome at school”* explained a relatively new student. The Behaviour for Progress policy focused on 3Rs: Ready, Respect, Resilient and encouraged students among other things to respect rights, respect difference and use respectful language. The headteacher explained how the policy encourages staff to be more thoughtful and to build relationships with students. Young people contributed to the policy through workshops and consultation assemblies. The reward system is taken very seriously by students; they described how the reward structure follows rights and they are *“respected for respecting rights.”* During the assessment visit we visited Damascus which students attend if they have been involved in a serious incident. A student on the learning walk explained that the student council had asked for the name to be changed – it reflected Saul’s journey to Damascus and it emphasised changing for the better. Damascus also provides respite and therapeutic support for other schools in Brent through ‘sport and thought’ (partly because there were low numbers of students from Newman Catholic College being referred). During the assessment visit there was only one student attending Damascus from Newman Catholic College; he explained how being there *“gives me time to reflect and think”* and agreed he felt treated with respect.

All students agreed they felt protected at school, understood that this was their right and attributed this to *“trained staff everywhere.”* Staff explained how the understanding about rights *“changed completely how we tackled safety and behaviour – we have worked towards a goal together [with students].”* The Safer School Officers explained that their role was safeguarding and focused on prevention; at least one officer is in school every day and their aim is to *“build a rapport with students and parents.”* Students agreed *“we don’t see a lot of fights”* and were adamant that *“teachers are available to talk to if there are difficulties”* and that there was a

strong focus on preventing trouble. Teachers agreed with this, *“They are comfortable to talk, know who to go to.”* Photos of designated safeguarding officers are displayed around the school. The anti-bullying team meets regularly and is part of the Brent anti-bullying council. Students felt that there was very little bullying and if something was happening *“teachers stop it.”* Students established an anti-bullying email where concerns could be reported anonymously. The London Citizens Group of Year 8 students have established a City Safe Haven in Harlesden; 64 businesses display a logo and students know that they can go into one of these businesses if they feel unsafe on the way to school.

The Behaviour for Progress Policy encourages healthy eating and the school is ‘water only’. PSHE and Drop Down Days each term support social and emotional wellbeing. The Safer Schools Officers described how they had held workshops on sexting, drugs and gangs. Other topics have included careers support, yoga, sex and relationships and healthy eating. Art therapy and a partnership with the Tavistock provides support for the most vulnerable children; Newman Catholic College has a large number of unaccompanied minor refugees on roll. A trained bereavement counsellor supports students. The deputy explained that all students *“know they have a way to express themselves, a place and a person.”* The chaplain, trained as a safeguarding lead, explained the *“the chapel is a quiet place to be and I’m someone to talk to”* regardless of the religion practised. A student explained that *“teachers know us pretty well”* and that if someone was behaving uncharacteristically it would be followed up.

Students and adults described the positive impact of becoming rights respecting on inclusion. *“The school is more diverse and more welcoming to different nationalities”* explained a student. *“Everyone respects each other regardless”* stated a teacher. The Newman Values state ‘We respect the faiths, cultures and values of others in our community.’ This value was recognised by the Diocesan inspection in May 2017. School liturgy groups are open to all; the chaplain attended prayers at the local mosque during Ramadan. A LGBTQ+ group has been established. The school is an accredited Refugees Welcome School and has contributed a case study to the Unicef UK ‘Access to education for refugee and asylum seeking children’ research report. Newly arrived EAL students arrive frequently; are inducted and supported in language ability rather than age ability groups. *“We take emotional needs into account”* emphasised the EAL teacher. Students in the EAL class were very positive about their school experience.

The headteacher identified article 29 as his responsibility in the SLT meeting, *“every child has the right to the best quality education no matter what their previous experience.”* During the learning walk several students cited the right to education as ‘their most important article.’ The Newman Values state ‘We respect the right of others to learn’ and this was evident in all lessons visited which were calm and purposeful. One student explained *“having rights builds an atmosphere- we push ourselves further.”* Students valued the support they received from teachers. They understood their targets and knew what they needed to do to progress in lessons; they discussed their targets regularly with teachers. The SLT explained *“We respect their dignity; we listen to the young people themselves to identify barriers to learning.”* The student council provides an open forum for students to express concerns about teaching and learning, the curriculum and progress. One student councillor explained that following feedback about some subjects, *“We asked for more fun materials from teachers.”*

STRAND C: TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR RIGHTS – PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION

Children are empowered to enjoy and exercise their rights and to promote the rights of others locally and globally. Duty bearers are accountable for ensuring that children experience their rights.

Strand C has been achieved

Students agreed that they felt listened to and that their views were taken seriously and could link this to their right to be heard. A teacher agreed reflecting, *“rights have made them much more vocal.”* The student council has a clearly understood remit with aims explained clearly on the website: To promote the views of students through discussion about issues raised by students and staff which affect the life of the school both in the present and in the future; to help the people who make decisions in the school understand and respect the students' point of view. *“It’s very much led by the students”* explained a member of staff. Students are democratically elected from each tutor group. Non student council members understood clearly how it operated, how they could contribute their views and receive feedback and had confidence in the system. *“We talk to the student council to request something and usually it does work out”* stated a Year 7 student. A student councillor explained *“we get asked what we want for the future.”* Actions they had influenced included: water fountains, toilet locks, the respect garden, providing an anonymous student suggestion box as well as reviewing teaching and learning. The student council also represented students’ views on external bodies such as Brent Council, Harlesden Neighbourhood Forum and NHS Imperial College London. Staff also identified the impact of the school council in their subject areas, *“We know about the school council – they make such a huge difference.”* As well as the student council students can be members of: the student liturgy group, anti-bullying council, youth travel ambassadors, London Citizens.

Students could give lots of examples of how they had taken action to uphold the rights of others locally and globally. A student explained that understanding about rights meant *“showing mutual respect towards humanity.”* There is a fundraising group which identifies which charities they support including: Cafod, Soccer Aid for Unicef, Cancer Awareness and they have raised money through own clothes days, sports challenges *“to support countries that don’t have a lot.”* A member of staff described *“students are better connected to the wider world.”* The chaplain described this as *“Faith in action”* and explained that children would also come to him to discuss issues that they felt were wrong and wanted to support. Students understood how the money they raised mainly linked to children’s rights to education or health. Following masses students have contributed food to the local food bank to support families locally. The school acted as ambassadors for RRSA and hosted a visit from some Belgian teachers. *“The London Citizens group are all about rights and holding people accountable”* explained the LSA. In addition to the City Safe Haven the group have raised awareness of homelessness through a sleepover, and campaigned about the London Living Wage. A Year 7 student explained that students are working with Brent Council to get better lighting in the local park so they are safe on the way home. Year 12 students explained that they are involved in the Citizenship campaign to lower the price for under 18s to apply for citizenship; this is something that is directly affecting some of them. They have met their local MP and have contacted the Home Office.