

UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD

ASSESSMENT REPORT

LEVEL ONE

School:	St Teresa's Primary School
Headteacher:	Terry Rodgers
RRSA coordinator:	Liz Branniff
Local authority:	Education Authority Belfast Region
Assessor:	David McGimpsey
Date:	19 th October 2016

The school context:

Saint Teresa's Primary School is situated on the Glen Road in West Belfast. The enrolment of the school currently stands at 507 pupils. The majority of the children come from the immediate and surrounding area. 44% of the children are eligible for free school meals and 30% have special educational needs. 4% are registered as ethnic.

The school has received numerous awards including the Pearson's Primary School Teacher of the Year Award, PSTT Science Teacher of the Year Award, Northern Ireland winner of the Sentinus Industry Challenge, Belfast Healthy Cities Award, Eco Schools Bronze Award and numerous other music, drama and sports awards.

A recent Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) Report said '*The children have a keen sense of social justice through their participation in a wide range of community and global projects....their views and opinions are sought and valued.*'

First Registered for RRSA: Oct 2014

Recognition of Commitment: March 2016

Assessment information:

Progress and evaluation form received	Yes	Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Principal / RRSA coordinator / Vice Principal		
Number of children and young people interviewed	30 children in focus group, steering group ambassadors and 50 in class visits		
Number of staff interviewed	4 teaching staff 1 governors/parent	3 support staff	3 parents
Evidence provided	Learning walk Assembly	portfolio of evidence	Class visits



The Assessment Judgement:

Saint Teresa's Primary School has met the Standards for Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at LEVEL1

The following good practice evident at the assessment contributes to the school's success at Level 1:

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

- The Principal described how the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) complimented the school programme for improvement and reinforced the school logo '*Deeds not Words.*' A whole school review was implemented and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was made explicit in the school vision and mission statements. '*It was therefore obvious to everyone that RRSA was not a short-term measure but a whole school initiative that would impact on every aspect of school life.*' (Principal) Adequate time, resources and personnel were allocated to ensure a successful outcome. The Rights Respecting Coordinator (RRC) attended the Regional Training Unit (RTU) summer school and Unicef RRSA training before delivering the programme on designated school improvement days. The RRSA Professional Adviser also delivered in-service training to staff and targeted support for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- RRSA was given a key priority in the short and long-term school development plans. School policies were reviewed through the lens of the Convention and 24 policies have since been rewritten or updated making explicit reference to the relevant Articles. The central status of the Award was reflected in the detailed minutes of the Board of Governor (BOG), SLT and staff meetings all filed in an extensive portfolio of evidence.
- The school has a long involvement with international projects such as the Comenius project and learning about the Convention forms part of its key partnership with St John Bosco Primary School, Katende in Uganda. St Teresa's has also registered with the Global Learning Programme.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

- Staff interviewed were enthusiastic supporters of the RRSA and exhibited a good understanding of the key articles and benefits of teaching in a rights respecting classroom. '*RRSA is a living example of added value, making children's rights explicit and providing a common language for school improvement.*' (Vice Principal).
- The children described numerous lessons and assemblies they had received on rights. They understood rights were universal, unconditional and inalienable. One child said '*Knowing about your rights is important so you will know if someone tried to take them away.*' Another added; '*Now we know rights are for everyone we can try to help those not as lucky as we are.*' Visits to the school assembly and P1 and P5 classes demonstrated the opportunities children had to make connections to the Convention on a daily basis.
- Parents said they had been kept fully informed about the RRSA/CRC by regular newsletter updates, the school website and face book. One parent added '*I am kept up*



to date about children's rights by helping with their homework and attending special assemblies.' Parents said their children's knowledge of the CRC had made them more self-confident and responsive to rights denied. One parent recalled her 5 year old child reminding her daddy at a family wedding that; *'Every child has the right to relax, play and join in.'*

- A school governor said everyone in the management of the school was convinced that the RRSA had made a positive contribution to school improvement. *'The principal has used the CRC to put the school up a notch.'*

Standard C:

The school has a rights-respecting ethos

- Charters were present in all classrooms visited. Children explained how they had selected specific articles. Children said that adults respected their rights, treated them all equally and listened to their point of view. *'Teachers encourage us to be ourselves.'* The staff said the charter process had encouraged a positive review of existing classroom pedagogy. *'RRSA has helped us to reflect and build on the loving, caring relationships already evident throughout our school.'* (Teacher)

During the school tour the children were very welcoming and enthusiastic and the staff displayed a positive energy and focus. All children interviewed felt safe in school and valued the relationship they have with adults. They said knowing about their rights had contributed to this by making them feel more confident. They explained how the school kept them healthy and fit and understood this was a right.

- Children discussed the universality of the Convention and could recall lessons and assemblies that highlighted global learning. The children displayed a strong sense of empathy with children denied rights and offered possible solutions e.g. *'Rich countries should do more to help children in poor countries.'*

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

- Children are encouraged to express their opinions and to be active participants in the classroom. The steering group, school council and eco council provide opportunities for the children to be heard. The school council is democratically elected, has regular meetings with an agenda and minutes. The children explained how seriously they took their role and said they had a major say in the design of the new playground. They had held meetings with the BOG, the Lord Mayor, the Children's Commissioner and elected representatives. They had visited Stormont and understood that the government had signed the CRC. The children pointed out the impressive Post Box in the foyer that doubles as a suggestion box and a worry box. Children also discussed how they are involved in setting targets and taking decisions on learning goals.
- The Rights Respecting Coordinator said *'Since becoming a Rights Respecting School the children have become increasingly involved in developing ideas and participating in projects to make a positive impact within our local community, within our city and within the world we live in.'* Locally the school council led a coffee morning for the Macmillan cancer charity and coordinated a school collection for the homeless for the Belfast Morning Star appeal. They have also raised funds for the NSPCC and the SUSTRANS Active schools programme. Globally the children have supported the Trocaire charity, TUNSIP Global Partnership, the China Bridge Project and the NICRAS refugee support programme.

Moving to Level 2:

Level 1 is an important milestone on the Rights Respecting journey. In the light of the assessment visit, the assessor has identified the following priorities for further progress. These recommendations, based on Unicef's experience with schools across the UK, will have been discussed in more detail during the assessment visit:

In order for the school to progress successfully to Level 2, the following steps and actions will be required:

- Ensure that most school policies are explicitly cross-referenced to appropriate rights from the Convention, are written in child friendly language and Involve pupils in the policy review process. (Criterion 2)
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by enabling children and staff to promote and encourage rights respecting values and actions and knowledge of the Convention with other schools and in the wider community. (Criteria 4 and D 18)
- Find creative ways of making rights even more visible and high profile around the school and on the website. (Criterion 8)
- Work towards an increased knowledge of the history of the Convention and its place within the wider picture of Human Rights (Criterion 6)
- Build upon the work already begun to promote the Convention within the curriculum, particularly with reference to global citizenship and sustainable development. Consider engaging with:

[The World's Largest Lesson](#)

[Outright 2016](#)

[Day for Change](#)

(Criteria 8&9)

- Continue to embed the Unicef RRSA Charter Guidance and focus on the language of agreement and respect by moving away from golden rules and conditional responsibility. (Criterion 10)
- Enable the children to look at global issues from a perspective of rights so that they develop a heightened sense of justice and equity. (Criterion 15)
- Continue to strive for more creative and significant opportunities for the participation and decision making of children to influence and shape the life and work of the school, perhaps through explicit involvement in school improvement planning and/or the evaluation of learning and teaching. (Criterion 16)
- Seek ways to engage the pupils in making their own choices about charity work in school and facilitate opportunities for the children to initiate powerful advocacy and campaigning work, particularly with regard to children's rights. (Criterion 18)

In addition, the school might also consider:

- Participate in [RRSA training](#) to support your journey to Level 2.
- Participate in [Unicef UK/BT The Right Click](#)