



# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

### ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

This has been a virtual accreditation.

<b>School</b>	Ty Gwyn Special School
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cardiff
<b>Number of pupils on roll</b>	200
<b>Headteacher</b>	Diane Stones
<b>RRSA Coordinator</b>	Chris Owen
<b>RRSA Assessor</b>	Jilly Hillier
<b>Date of visit</b>	14/07/2021
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>	Assistant headteacher, RRSA Lead
<b>Number of pupils interviewed</b>	5 plus 2 pupils in recorded video interviews.
<b>Number of adults interviewed</b>	3 (plus 2 staff supporting students with interviews)
<b>Evidence provided</b>	Self evaluation, evidence PowerPoint, focus groups, videos
<b>Date registered for RRSA</b>	14/09/2018
<b>Bronze achieved</b>	14/02/2019

### ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Ty Gwyn Special School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

#### **Silver: Rights Aware report**

Rights Respecting Schools Award | UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK)

[unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools](https://unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools)



## EVIDENCE FROM THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

### 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.

- Ty Gwyn School's vision statement says, 'We believe that every child has the right to an education of high quality where everyone is valued.' Children who attend the school have a range of complex needs and it was clear that staff support them to understand key rights that are most accessible such as the right to an education, to be safe, to relax and play and the right to be listened to. During the visit, staff used icons, pictures and symbols to remind pupils what articles they had learnt about and some pupils used technology to help them respond. Importantly, it was clear that the school provides a child centred approach, so that every pupil regardless of learning need, background or barrier has access to a caring, inclusive, rights based learning environment. At the heart of this is Article 12 and enabling children and young people to communicate and have a voice.
- Staff showed a good understanding of the CRC. Whole school training has been delivered by a member of the UNICEF UK RRSA team and staff have received ongoing support by the RRSA Leads. Evidence was provided that shows how aspects of daily life in school are underpinned by the CRC. This includes lesson planning, IEPs, Communication Passports, Reviews and Pupil Profiles ensuring that children are given a voice and treated with dignity and respect. Displays reinforce learning about rights.
- Parents/ carers are kept informed about the school's rights respecting journey through letters, newsletters and their child's IEP which refers to children's rights. Supporting families is an important part of school life and there are three full time members of staff whose role it is to provide that support. A range of workshops are made available for parents/ carers. The assistant head explained that it was important for "*parents and staff to be in a good place*" so that children can be too. There is a home learning page for families that include schedules, symbols, pictures and sensory ideas as well as more focused work activities. During Covid-19 restrictions, online lessons were provided.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Be more explicit about the CRC in your communications and celebrate being a rights respecting school. Consider including reference to your rights based approach in your welcome email and values and vision statement.
- Continue to build staff knowledge about the CRC and ensure they have an understanding that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional, using language appropriate to children and young people's age and ability. Consider using the RRSA resource ABCDE of Rights.
- Ensure the school community has a clear understanding of the concepts of 'rights holders' and 'duty bearers.'
- Consider running a workshop for parents to raise awareness of the CRC perhaps using the Wants and Needs activity.

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- Support pupils to understand the universality of rights. Perhaps develop your café as fair trade café and link environmental explicitly to children's rights.

## 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.

- The best interests of children are a top priority when decisions that affect children are made. The school works with many agencies and specialists to ensure they have the support they need to access their rights. This includes specialist equipment, accessible learning areas indoors and outside and appropriate training for staff *“to reduce children's limitations.”* With support, children were able to talk about their right to be safe and who they would talk to if they did not feel safe. One pupil talked about the life-guard who kept them safe during swimming. They also talked what they enjoyed doing in school and how they enjoyed their right to be healthy. This included circle time, yoga, Lego, going on the computer, rugby, football and a foot spa! It was clear that a creative, multi-sensory curriculum was in place.
- Relationships based on respect and trust are fundamental to the school. The headteacher explained how the value of *“dignity runs through our ethos.”* Classes are small and staff explained how supporting children to form positive relationships is important as many children find communicating and interacting challenging. When friendships have formed, these are supported for example, by keeping pupils in the same class when they move up a year. It was clear when talking with pupils that a strong bond existed between them. The Anti-Bullying Policy is clear and supportive and underpinned by articles from the CRC.
- Every child's health, social and emotional wellbeing is central to daily life in school. Pupils are encouraged to interact in groups as well as in one to one sessions. Time to relax is important and children indicated which members of staff helped them with their right to *“relax and play.”*
- The school has an inclusive and welcoming ethos that has been recognised by Investors in People. A range of therapy sessions to engage learners include rebound therapy, touch therapy and Lego therapy. Staff are knowledgeable about the needs of pupils in their classes and adapt activities to meet their level of need.
- Pupils in the videos interviews and in focus groups engaged with staff and their learning in ways appropriate to their ability. One pupil said that *“School is the best”* and talked about what she enjoyed most such as being in the sensory room. Pupils are encouraged to make learning choices based on their interests using different technologies. This information is shared amongst teaching staff so that feedback from pupils can be part of the next step strategies. One pupil explained how he liked to use the laptop when he has ‘choice time.’

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The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Be explicit that the school's values and ethos are based on the CRC and explore with staff how positive outcomes for children are enhanced by embedding a rights-based approach.
- Ensure that children, young people and adults know how the school supports their right to physical and mental health and wellbeing, that information is available and accessible to all and that they understand how this provision relates to rights.
- Provide opportunities to explore and celebrate diversity in all its forms and link to topical events.
- Continue to develop the role children and young people have in engaging with their right to learn. Consider, with them, how they can be more active participants in deciding what and how they learn and what they need to do to progress.

### 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.

- Pupils are supported to communicate their choices and preferences at every opportunity, using their preferred method of communication. To do this, staff teams have regular meetings "*daily, sometimes hourly*" to share what has been learnt about a child's preferences, abilities and needs. One child talked about enjoying "*football and ruby*" and "*music with Andy*" which was extra support provided by the school. A Total Communication Approach is employed to enable all children to communicate in the best way for them and this includes objects, pictures, signing, eye gaze and voice communication aids. It was clear during the visit that communication tools were used effectively to ensure children with different needs can have the opportunity to participate in decisions about life in school and in decisions about careers and life after school.
- Children and young people have opportunities to have their views listened to for example through the school council which has been involved in the interviewing process for the Federation Head and in developing the school charter. As part of the school's involvement in Cardiff's Child Friendly City award, children celebrated World Children's Day and took part in UNICEF UK's Shoe Share initiative.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to develop children's participation in their learning and life in school in appropriate ways, ensuring their views are considered and acted upon when decisions are made.
- Provide opportunities for more children and young people to be involved in pupil voice groups and can articulate the positive impact they have on school improvement.
- Ensure children have regular access to local and global news (appropriate to their age and ability) and have time for sensitive reflection and discussion within the context of rights. This may provide stimulus for campaigning or other action on a rights issue.
- Consider engaging with other Rights Respecting Schools to share ideas and good practice.

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