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RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO

School:	Hamsterley Primary
Headteacher:	Mrs Lynn Cowans
RRSA coordinator:	Damien Hassan
Local authority:	Durham
Assessors:	Beverley J Noble
Date:	29 th June 2011

Assessment result

I would like to thank the leadership team, governors, parents, staff and young people for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with governors, parents and pupils during the assessment and for the extensive portfolio of evidence detailing the work towards becoming a Level 2 rights-respecting school. Prior to the assessment visit you provided a very comprehensive self-evaluation form and impact evaluation form. It was clear to me during my visit that everyone places a real importance on developing and embedding a rights respecting ethos.

It was particularly notable that all children are valued as individuals whose opinions, interests and contributions are an important factor in the school's improvement, successes and achievements over recent years. I was particularly impressed with children's knowledge of the work undertaken by UNICEF, across the world, and their interest in making a personal contribution towards ensuring that all children can access the rights described in the UNCRC. With regard to sustainability, I am totally convinced that commitment to the UNCRC is so inherent in curriculum, policies and practices that children and adults in Hamsterley Primary will continue to act as ambassadors for children's rights, locally, nationally and globally.

Standards A, B, C and D have all met the necessary criteria. Standards A and C have exceeded expectations.

As a result of the visit and evidence provided we would like to recommend to the Accreditation and Standards committee that the school has attained Rights Respecting School Award Level 2.



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What is required before attaining Level 2

If any requirements are made, these are listed below. The Accreditation and standards committee will be asked what additional evidence is required. This may be written evidence or a follow-up assessment, usually within the next six months.

How we recommend Level 2 standards are maintained

These actions are those that have proven valuable in other schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Level 2. The recommendations made by the assessors are listed below:

- Ensure that all newly appointed staff receive an induction which includes their responsibilities in promoting the UNCRC
- Explore a wider range of strategies, tools and techniques to allow children to further develop their skills as independent and reflective learners



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THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

The school context

This very small primary school is situated in a rural, isolated location. During the last year there has been a significant increase in the number of children on roll – from 24 to 30. Currently, 10 children are recorded as having additional or special educational needs and/or disabilities (School Action or School Action Plus). Children are taught in two classes: the Head Teacher leads KS1 and the Deputy Head Teacher / RRSA Coordinator leads KS2.

A new leadership team initiated the RRSA in November 2009, and the school quickly achieved Level 1 accreditation in July 2010.

Hamsterley Primary has not received an Ofsted inspection since March 2008 as the school was then judged to be 'good' with some 'outstanding' aspects. It is a Healthy School, and has recently been awarded Investing in Children Membership, Anti-bullying Accreditation, and Eco-School Status.

Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes / No
Impact evaluation form received	Yes / No
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher & RRSA coordinator / deputy headteacher
Number of children and young people interviewed	10 representative of ages and abilities across the school
Number of staff interviewed	2 parents 2 governors 1 school administrator
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Whole-school Assembly Focus Group interviews



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Standard A: Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Discussion with the leadership team, confirmed by parents and governors, provides evidence of their strong commitment to incorporating the values and principles of the CRC in all aspects of school life. Every initiative has a 'Rights-Respecting' focus e.g. promoting Olympic values; 'Recharging the Earth' (a project undertaken in conjunction with a local secondary school and other primary schools); Refugee Week. The Deputy Head Teacher expressed his belief that *"the UNCRC should be at the heart of a decent primary education"*. The impact of the RRSA is noticeable or significant in all areas, including "dramatically improved academic results at the end of KS2" (Impact Measures & SEF).

The actions necessary to become a Level 2 RRS are clearly referenced in the School Improvement Plan, (to which children contribute) and Governors have discussed procedures to ensure sustainability and continuity with regard to leadership. They have formally agreed that any future appointments to staffing will stipulate commitment to the UNCRC, and will 'challenge' any actions which deviate from that course. Children have already begun to ask, *"What do we do after Level 2?"* The Home-School Agreement, Teaching and Learning Policy and a 'Friendship Policy' (formerly the Anti-Bullying Policy which has been re-named by children), were offered as evidence that all policies are being reviewed to incorporate reference to the UNCRC and RRSA.

All adults to whom I spoke communicated a strong belief in a highly inclusive and participatory ethos, making prominent use of the CRC. Governors act as 'critical friends', challenging staff to ensure that the language, as well as the particular articles introduced to children are 'age appropriate', and accessible to even the youngest children. Children are aware of the ethos of 'inclusivity' and acceptance of difference and diversity. As a boy in Y6 explained, *"We welcome everyone here. That's why we have a notice outside school which says 'Welcome' in 14 different languages, so that anyone can see that we respect everyone."* A wonderful display of Rights and Responsibilities in the hall, depicting children from different nationalities, and including an amputee (a land mine victim) and a child in a wheelchair, epitomizes diversity, not least because it incorporates such a wide range of materials and techniques, but every child in the school contributed to its design and construction.

In recent years, the school has played an increasingly substantive role within the local community, a development welcomed by governors, parents/carers and other adults living in Hamsterley. Children are actively involved in local events, e.g. designing posters for a 'litter-pick' even though, for health and safety reasons, they could not take part in the actual event; advocating the purchase of Fair Trade products, through an event they organised themselves; acting as ambassadors for the RRSA and UNCRC with other schools which have not yet received accreditation; and demonstrating the effective and efficient running of a School Council and the impact of Article 12 as they host meetings with the School Council from another small rural primary school. In addition, the UNCRC provides a focus for work with a partner school in France.

The SLT provided examples of planning and actions to ensure coverage of global citizenship and sustainable development across the school curriculum is linked to the CRC. Evidence of a systematic and embedded approach also includes planning of topics across the curriculum, including History, Geography, PSHE, Literacy and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning).



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Standard B: The whole school community learns about the CRC

All adults in the school have a knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC, and its relevance to their particular role. The school secretary talked about her responsibility in ensuring children's safety as being paramount. The usual language of adults is explicitly related to rights as expressed in the UNCRC. The head Teacher modelled this approach extremely well in making additional contributions during the assembly I observed, the first led by Canon Trevor, a relatively new governor. He later commented on the way in which the UNCRC is infused across the school and the *"sheer enthusiasm generated by RRSA"* which he described as *"refreshing"*. As a governor and an adult member of the community, he admitted that the global and economic lifestyles of his generation were being challenged by the more enlightened views and actions of these school children. All parents/governors to whom I spoke were knowledgeable about the UNCRC and RRSA, due almost entirely to the efforts of the children in promoting awareness, and encouraging others to change or modify their behaviours in order to live by the ethos of the convention e.g. purchasing Fair Trade products; conserving energy; taking the opinions of children seriously when making decisions that directly affect children.

Parents/carers are informed regularly of RRSA progress and achievements, via newsletters, the school website and special assemblies. Every parent/carer received an Information Pack containing a UNCRC brochure and a link to the UNICEF website. More parents now have a much greater understanding of the rationale (e.g. specifically supporting children's rights) which directs the work of UNICEF. However, it is the enthusiasm with which children talk about their school, their learning and their involvement in all aspects of decision-making in school which conveys most information to parents. Written comments from parents/carers include: *"A great idea and fantastic initiative."* RRSA is a regular agenda item for discussion for meetings of the governing body, which is extremely supportive.

Displays of children's work are prominent around the school. In every location there are references to specific rights and responsibilities, ensuring that the principles of the UNCRC maintain a high profile. A child in the Focus Group alluded to *"Rights being everywhere ... I mean everywhere"* e.g. throughout the curriculum as well as throughout the actual building. Lesson plans and schemes of work in most subject areas have been developed systematically to incorporate reference to the UNCRC, as well as specific themes e.g. Refugee week; The Meaning of Red Nose Day; World Education Games; A recipe for friendship. According to a parent governor, *"RRSA and UNCRC are woven into everything the school does"*.

Children are very aware of their role and responsibilities as global citizens, an aspect of the RRSA emphasised by school leaders and appreciated by governors and parents/carers. Children understand that rights are universal, and that they have an individual and collective responsibility to ensure that the rights of children everywhere are being met. A governor summed up very succinctly the school's approach to global education, *"Education is not just about children, but relationships with the rest of the world"*. Of particular importance as a learning tool is a huge world map, displayed in the hall, which is annotated with commentary and photographs on the work of UNICEF in Haiti, Libya, Pakistan, the Phillipines and Japan. 'Bad habits cost the earth; my good habits will make a difference' is one of the first displays a visitor notices on entering the school. Whilst making a strong visual impression, it also challenges on a personal level, encouraging a response or pledge, in the same vein as those



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recorded by children, e.g. to conserve energy and valuable resources, reduce waste and be more generally aware of the needs and entitlement of others.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

A School Charter, a Playground charter and Classroom Charters, reviewed regularly with children, are used consistently across the school. They are now “almost taken for granted” as the UNCRC is so embedded; there is little need for constant reinforcement of appropriate language. Even the youngest children I interviewed could speak with eloquence about their rights and responsibilities with regard to expectations for behaviour and attitudes in school.

All adults interviewed modelled rights-respecting language and behaviour. Children know that they are respected as individuals, and offered many examples of how that respect is demonstrated on a daily basis, by all adults in school. As a result, the behaviour of children is commendable, and acknowledged by adults.

All pupils interviewed report that they respect the right of others to learn, and recognise that it is their individual choice whether to engage in learning or not. All children expressed a keen interest in learning, mainly because their views and opinions are taken into account when planning and reviewing a topic. The SEF records significant impact on engagement with learning, a contributory factor being identified as the introduction and promotion of peer tutoring which has also impacted on improved relationships between older and younger children.

All pupils interviewed report that they feel safe in school, and explained how safety precautions are in place to prevent intruders from entering the school building, whilst adults are always present when children are in the playground or on the field. Perhaps of more significance is their ‘emotional safety’ and the systems which are in place to ensure that if anyone has a problem, they can seek adult help. Children explained the continued use of the ‘worry dolls’ and the ‘lock’ now placed on the box in which they can post any concerns. “Now no-one but Mrs Cowan can open it – not that anyone ever would – but we know that no-one else can see what we’ve written”. Privacy and confidentiality are very important issues, respected by adults and other children. One parent commented that her daughter loves being in school, and can rarely wait for the end of holidays.

The principles of the UNCRC and various charters provide the language for children to resolve conflict, although there is very little conflict, as children were eager to inform me: “There might be niggles, but there isn’t any bullying; We never have behaviour problems in this school; We think more - before we act.” Children provided examples of using timers, so that everyone was assured of ‘fairness’ in sharing equipment. They also expressed gratitude for space afforded for play in their wonderful school grounds, and the extensive range of play equipment which they have available. In their conversations and in their behaviour, children demonstrated an appreciation of ‘justice, fairness, equality and democracy’.

All children interviewed are aware of their responsibilities as citizens of their school, their local community and of the world, in respecting the rights of others. Comments by parents confirm the emphasis placed on ‘globalisation’ e.g. “It’s important for children to understand how



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children in other parts of the world survive and how children in the UK are suffering.” There has been a significant impact on children’s attitudes to equality and diversity, as children are made aware, through studying other cultures and events (e.g. Chinese New Year; Buddhism; the Meaning of Red Nose Day; World Education Games; World Book Day to support Water Aid) that access to rights is a fundamental unifying value. Strategically placed photographs of Suriah, an Indonesian girl washing her hands under an outdoor tap, provides a constant reminder to children and staff that water is a precious commodity, and we have a responsibility to use it sparingly. *“Children’s language has changed from ‘helping those less fortunate’ to that of helping children to get the rights to which they are entitled.”* (Impact Measures).

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

All children interviewed are confident that everyone in school has a ‘voice’ and their opinions are ‘sought’ and ‘valued’. In addition to having a School Council which is allocated its own budget and is a model of excellence for other schools, each of the two classes has its own Class Council. Furthermore, members of the School Council regularly meet with the ‘Friends of the School’ and work collaboratively with adults in organizing a range of community events, many of which have a Rights-respecting theme (e.g. Fair Trade coffee morning). As a result of the children’s suggestion, Fair Trade tea and coffee is now purchased for the staffroom. Taps in the bathrooms are now ‘push’ rather than ‘turn’ in an attempt to save water; a suggestion made by the School Council. Children also continue to contribute to the school’s SEF, and are actively involved in strategic planning for school improvement, as well as planning and evaluating learning experiences on a regular basis. Specific questions children have discussed include: *‘What makes a good teacher? How do I learn best? What do I want to find out more about?’* Parents and governors confirmed that *“dialogue and decision-making is two-way between children and adults”*.

I observed many instances which provided opportunities for children to make informed choices about their learning e.g. three children using the computer suite, to prepare for a competition event; posters reminding children of the need for ‘E-safety’; vocabulary for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning; information in classrooms to support independence in maths, literacy and science; and motivational / inspirational posters e.g. ‘You are valuable. Don’t let anyone make you believe differently.’

Because the population of Hamsterley Village is predominantly white British, it is an aim of the school to make the global dimension meaningful for children, and so much emphasis has been placed on raising children’s awareness of themselves as citizens, not just of the village, but of the world. Local residents acknowledge the contribution the school is now making to village life, and are reciprocating, taking more interest in children and their learning e.g. two ladies from the local Women’s Institute now teach knitting to children. Many resources and displays have a ‘multi-cultural flavour’ and so children accept ‘difference in appearance’ very readily, almost to the point of ‘not noticing’. Across a range of interventions, e.g. Links with a French school; Shoebox Appeal; promoting Fair Trade products; World Education Games 2011; Recharging the Earth; acting as ambassadors for RRSA in other schools and supporting the work of UNICEF, children are campaigning for the rights of others. And they intend extending their ambassadorial role, as they were very keen to discuss with the Head Teacher and RRSA Coordinator, *“What happens after Level 2?”*