

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	The Howard School
Headteacher:	Mr Jasbinder Johal
RRSA coordinator:	Mrs Catherine Cleall
Local authority:	Medway
School context:	The Howard School has 1507 pupils on roll, boys only in Y7 to Y11 and a mixed sixth form. 15% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium funding, 14% of pupils have special educational needs and 12% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, RRSA lead, deputy headteacher, 5 assistant headteachers including the SENCO
Number of children and young people spoken with:	8 Ambassadors from Y7–10, 8 further students from Y7-10, 12 students spoken with informally at break time, 5 students on a tour.
Adults spoken with:	LSA, 2 teachers, teacher/Student Voice Lead, governor
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 5 th January 2012 First Gold achieved: 7 th July 2014 Gold reaccreditation: 7 th December 2017
Assessor:	Helen Trivers
Date:	21 st June 2023

REACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

The Howard School continues to meet the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form and provided a good range of digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- Rights are explicitly built into the curriculum, visible on displays across the school and prominent on the website and school communications.
- The morning meetings which give pupils the opportunity to discuss issues of concern and explore issues in a safe space, with rights used as a framework for discussions.
- A strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA from leaders at all levels tied into the vision and values of the school.
- An ethos that places positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust at the heart of school life.
- The school has a strong culture of inclusivity and respect which is understood and articulated by children and adults alike.
- Pupils who are listened to and are involved in decision making at all levels.

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 the good practice around rights that has become embedded across the school. Ensure that all new initiatives are related back to rights.
- Support parents/carers and families to learn about and understand the CRC and engage further with the school's rights respecting journey.
- Consider creating a [whole school rights charter](#) which highlights how students will respect key rights and reinforces the roles of duty bearers in respecting and protecting rights.
- Continue the work that has begun on ensuring positive representation of our diverse society throughout the curriculum and continue to develop understanding and celebration of diversity in all its forms.
- Continue to develop strategies to empower children to challenge injustice and create further opportunities for all year groups to be involved in campaigning and advocacy work on children's rights. Consider taking part in [UNICEF UK's OutRight campaign](#) and use the [UNICEF UK Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#) to support this work.
- Act as an ambassador with schools in your local trust.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>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.</p>	<p>Students learn about specific CRC articles through the Culture, Development and Wellbeing programme, where rights are explicitly mapped through the curriculum, and relevant CRC knowledge for each year group is included in Knowledge Organisers. Students also take part in Drop Everything And Read sessions with their form each day, the RRSA lead explaining that the texts are chosen to enable students to, "...explore complex rights issues." Sixth form students have morning and afternoon meetings where they discuss topical rights issues, as well as focusing on wellbeing and resilience. The schoolwide weekly message also highlights the school's focus on rights. Pupils spoken with talked confidently about a range of rights and understood that duty bearers including, "...teachers, parents and the authorities," are responsible for protecting their rights. They were aware of situations around the world where rights are not met, "<i>Disasters, like the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, can create hazards and destroy homes and access to health care,</i>" another student explaining that rights are not always protected closer to home, "<i>There's also racism and crime and some children are mistreated.</i>" Students felt that rights are important, "<i>It's important we know about rights, so we know if they aren't being respected.</i>" Students learn about the Sustainable Development Goals across the curriculum, for example one teacher said, "<i>It's a big part of Geography; we look at issues such as maternal health and global partnerships.</i>"</p> <p>Staff have been trained in rights through CPD sessions and each subject area has mapped articles to their curriculum to ensure that there is good coverage. Displays across the school strongly reflect the school's focus on rights, one student saying, "<i>Any student can glance around the school and see them,</i>" and another adding, "<i>Rights are everywhere!</i>" Rights are threaded through some relevant policies such as the Equalities Policy and underpin the school's approach to inclusion, wellbeing and safety, the SENCO saying, "<i>An explicit focus on rights helps.</i>" The headteacher said, "<i>The global dimension is important and increasing as a focus,</i>" and leaders felt that the work on rights opened students' eyes to the wider world, "<i>They now see the local to global links.</i>" The deputy headteacher said, "<i>We are good at communicating what we do and why we do it and we reference things like their right to be safe and our focus on the best interests of the child.</i>"</p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>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,</p>	<p>"<i>The holistic development of students is very important to us. We want our students to be happy and safe,</i>" said the headteacher. Pupils were confident that their rights are respected and promoted at school and confidently talked about the principle of equity. A staff member said, "<i>They know their peers are at base [where they receive additional support] ...there's no embarrassment; they respect that some people need additional help.</i>" The headteacher explained that if a pupil comes to school without uniform or equipment, the school provides it so they can get straight on with their learning. The school considers how to make every pupil feel respected and valued, a staff member saying, "<i>There's a diverse range of activities making it tailored towards</i></p>

<p>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</p>	<p><i>everyone,</i>" explaining that they have introduced House spelling bee and chess competitions alongside football and basketball so that all students can get involved and see their interests represented.</p> <p>Students said that people get on well and that there is no bullying that they know of. They appreciated that teachers dealt with issues swiftly, with restorative conversations held when needed and a fresh start approach. There is a strong pastoral support system and one assistant headteacher said, <i>"We are good at building relationships and letting them know they are valued and have a voice."</i> One student said, <i>"We talk about dignity... we think about what it means,"</i> and reflecting on how the principle of dignity is lived at school said, <i>"They educate us to respect each other, they treat us equally."</i></p> <p>Students shared that they feel free to be themselves and if a fellow student said something discriminatory, <i>"...everyone would tell them it is wrong."</i> Diversity is celebrated, for example the school celebrated Autism Awareness Month and World Languages Day. The SEND department makes sure that all can access the curriculum, and the SENCO talked about the principles of dignity underpinning their approach, <i>"Pupils have a passport to ensure that teachers know exactly how to support them,"</i> meaning that pupils don't have to reiterate their needs in front of peers in different lessons.</p>
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
<p>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 children experience their rights.</p>	<p>The Ambassador programme is growing again post covid with pupils proud to take on leadership roles, one saying, <i>"We represent the school. It makes me feel like I'm taking care of people."</i> Ambassadors are self-selecting and feed into the development of school policies such as the Equalities Policy and have considered the school's work on sustainability such as removing plastics from the canteen and creating more green spaces across the school site. The wider student body is aware of how to affect change within the school and beyond, with students taking petitions to the headteacher about issues such as the sixth form dress code, a member of staff saying, <i>"They know the system."</i> Pupils are involved in a trust-wide Pupil Parliament who discuss issues that cut across all trust schools, and this includes policy development. Pupils spoken with were clear that adults listen to them and that they can influence decision-making, <i>"They really do listen."</i></p> <p>Students are empowered to take action on rights issues and said they, <i>"...raise awareness and spread the word about rights,"</i> and also, <i>"...call people out on social media,"</i> if they see something that wasn't respecting rights. Ambassadors planned and led a successful Soccer Aid Schools Challenge event. Each house has a charity chosen by students, which include local, national and international charities, one student saying, <i>"We all wore odd socks and collected donations. This celebrates the fact that everyone is different."</i> A new Eco Ambassador group has been set up as pupils were so passionate about taking forward action on climate and sustainability. One member spoke about their recent work to design stickers to encourage everyone to switch off the lights when not needed. Students are given many opportunities to travel overseas to experience different cultures with students sharing their experiences of trips to Croatia, Majorca and Germany and talking about a planned trip to volunteer in a school in Tanzania in 2024, the RRSA lead saying, <i>"We've already been thinking about how to build a focus on rights into this trip."</i></p>