



UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

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| School: | Marykirk Primary |
| Headteacher: | Fiona Thomson |
| RRSA coordinator: | Fiona Thomson/Lynsey Houston |
| Local authority: | Aberdeenshire Council |
| Assessors: | Maxine Jolly, Christine McLennan and Emma-Jane Whitehead |
| Date: | 01/04/15 |

1. INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the leadership team, staff and young people for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with staff, parents/carers, pupils and community representatives during the assessment, and for the evidence detailing the work towards becoming a Level 1 rights-respecting school.

Prior to the assessment visit you provided a comprehensive self-evaluation and impact form. It was clear to the assessors during the visit that everyone places an importance on developing a rights respecting ethos.

It was particularly notable the key strengths of the school were:

A warm and welcoming atmosphere

Polite, respectful pupils

Pupils are empowered to campaign on issues that matter to them

High level of pupil participation in their learning and the life of the school

Positive relationships between staff and pupils

Attractive displays linked to UNCRC

The school improvement plan is utilised as a working document and staff are encouraged to contribute to it on an ongoing basis

Standards A, B, C and D have met the necessary criteria



2. THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

2.1. The school context

The Village of Marykirk is settled in an attractive rural location 5 miles east of Laurencekirk and 16 miles south west of Stonehaven. Within the village there is a hotel and a well-utilised village hall. There is also a bowling club with respective grounds. A picturesque church and play park completes the picture.

The school is non-denominational and the catchment area is the village of Marykirk and the surrounding rural area. The school's current roll is 39 in total.

Marykirk School provides education for children aged 4 – 12.

Marykirk Primary School has 1 full time teacher and 3 part time teachers. The Head Teacher is class committed. Specialist teachers help with the delivery of Art and Design, Drama, Music and Physical Education. We also have one visiting specialist who provides support for learners one day each per week. The school also works closely with a range of other support agencies and volunteers in order to provide the best possible experience for children with additional support needs. Our Active Schools Coordinator provides a range of additional active and sporting activities for the children.

The staff are supported by 2 pupil support assistants, 1 school administrator, kitchen staff, 1 cleaner and a part time janitor.

On leaving Marykirk Primary School the pupils transfer to Mearns Academy, Laurencekirk. Marykirk School is part of the Laurencekirk Community Schools' Network and works closely with the other 6 schools in the Network.

HMIe last inspected the school in February 2015. The visit was very positive and it was commented in the report that the school made good use of Rights Respecting Schools initiative to teach children about Global events and help them develop positive attitudes. The school is accredited at commended level as a Health Promoting School, has a silver Enterprise Award and a Silver Eco School Award. The school has also been recognised as the first school in Scotland to implement Adventure, Service Challenge.



2.2. Assessment information

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| Self-evaluation form received | Yes |
| Impact evaluation form received | Yes |
| Attendees at SLT meeting | Headteacher / RRSA coordinator |
| Number of children and young people interviewed | 6 RRS group 8 young people from P1-3 5 young people from P4-7 |
| Number of staff interviewed | 2 teaching staff 2 support staff 1 parent 2 community representatives |
| Evidence provided | Learning walk Written evidence Displays Website Pupils work |

Standard A:

Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Standard A has been achieved

The head teacher, appointed in June, 2014, has recently reviewed the vision and values and his linked these to the UNCRC, in consultation with young people, teachers and parent council. The head teacher has taken steps to ensure the school community are aware of the UNCRC

RRSA sits in the school improvement plan, child protection policy and school hand book. As new policies are amended, references to the articles will be included. The school improvement plan, with reference to UNCRC, is on the school website for anyone to view.

In consultation with young people, the curriculum rationale has be redrafted and linked to UNCRC. RRSA is now a permanent feature on the school website, Twitter and the regular newsletters.



Collegiate time has been allocated to the development of RRSA and there is ongoing work within the cluster to share good practice. Teachers planning in RME and HWB is linked to articles. There is evidence of enterprising activities which encourage pupil voice and participation.

There is a rights respecting pupil steering group and they organise events to promote UNCRC. Pupils learn more about UNCRC through a whole school citizenship topic during term 1 and this has been further developed by 'Free the Children' charity work, which included a visit to WE day. This proved to be inspirational and motivating for the P6/7 pupils who attended.

Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Standard B has been achieved

Some children in P1-3 could describe a number of articles and knew they were unconditional. In P4-7, children were able to describe many articles and are beginning to link their global citizenship and charity work to the UNCRC. They were able to give many examples in both Scotland and the wider world where children's rights were denied. Children have been discussing wants and needs and are able to articulate the differences between these and how needs and wants are different across the world.

Since becoming a RRS, pupils have become much more aware of global issues and are linking this work to rights, for example, free the children and buying a goat. When asked about this, young people were able to explain why it is better to buy a goat than to give money directly to an organisation and are beginning to understand the need to provide support which will lead to sustainable development.

Displays in the school have a rights and pupil participation focus. Young people can also feed their views directly to the head teacher, or pupil council. Some assemblies show a focus on the UNCRC and a number have been pupil led.

Parents and carers are informed that their children are doing RRSA. They felt that their children had a strong sense of right and wrong and that homework on the UNCRC allowed connections to be made with the local and global issues of the day.



Standard C:

The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Standard C has been achieved

There is a whole school charter and each class has their own charter. Some children were able to connect work on rights to the charters in their classes. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and develop skills in self-regulation. The children we interviewed said they felt safe and happy in their school.

Staff use rights respecting language and treat children fairly. A teacher commented, "The young people in the school are more aware of their rights and how that impacts on others". Another said that children know they are entitled to rights and that children had developed a greater sense of fairness since being involved with RRSA

Catering staff commented on how polite and friendly staff and pupils are. One PSA also stated that there have been some improvements in children trying to solve disagreements themselves in the playground since the introduction of RRSA.

Classes use Circle Time, PSD and RME lessons as a discussion and listening time to promote respect and explore moral dilemmas.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Standard D has been achieved

Pupils and staff interviewed were able to give examples of how young people can express their opinions and have been involved in decisions about their learning and well-being, for example: Pupils decide which charities to raise money for and how this will be done; the P1-3 class have asked for a class pet and have been tasked with how they are going to make this happen; the P4-7 class wanted to learn more about Minecraft during class time. They have been tasked with finding out how this links with their current project and CfE. In addition to the RRSA steering group the school has an active Pupil Council which takes ideas from, and also feeds back to their classes. There were also "you said, we did" boards, suggestion boxes and a worry box.

Young people have personal learning plans and can set their own targets in discussion with their teacher. There was evidence that young people are consulted on their preferred learning styles. The HWB curriculum gives pupils information on how to stay safe and well, including internet safety.



The majority of pupils interviewed have been involved in fundraising to improve the lives of children globally, e.g. community café and a toy sale to raise funds to buy a goat.

Children have been inspired to campaign for others through attendance at WE day and subsequent discussions have taken place.

2.3. The future

The assessor would like to encourage the school to continue work on becoming rights respecting and work towards the award at Level Two.

The following recommendations are made to support the journey based on those that have proven valuable in other schools and settings in helping them to develop their practice at Level 2. The recommendations made by the assessors are listed below:

Review charters regularly and use them to reinforce positive behaviour. This should replace existing golden time rules, where the language of positive behaviour is created with the pupils and for the pupils

Ensure that the language of respect is used rather than responsibilities when referring to rights

Continue to work with other schools and the community to raise awareness of the UNCRC

Embed language and further understanding of rights in P1-3

Further staff development regarding RRSA, including visiting staff, catering staff etc.

Investigate twinning with another school as a context for learning about rights e.g. British Council

Continue to encourage campaigning on local and national issues avoiding stereotypes of developing countries

Visit other level 2 schools

Set up a RRSA section in school library