

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Wildern School
Headteacher:	Executive Headteacher: Marie Louise Litton Headteacher: Ceri Oakley
RRSA coordinator:	Becky Burden and Beth Watson
Local authority:	Hampshire
Assessor(s):	Paul Harris and Martin Russell
Date:	22 nd November 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

The assessors would like to thank the students, the senior leadership team, staff, parents and governors for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and young people during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the assessment visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form.

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

This is a reaccreditation assessment.

Particular strengths of the school include:

- A community whose inclusive ethos and everyday practice are framed by the principles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.
- Students who are knowledgeable about children's rights and the Convention.
- Extensive opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the life of the school and where their views are listened to and taken seriously.

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

2. MAINTAINING GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING STATUS

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 to develop ways to highlight the Convention as a strategic framework for the school’s everyday practice (for example, inclusion of relevant articles within the school improvement plan). The ‘[Articles in Action](#)’ resource will help with this.
- Further promote the visible presence of the Convention around the school by identifying links between specific rights and subject displays.
- Explore additional ways to promote the impact of the wide variety of ‘student voice’ activities and also to systematise a campaigning and advocacy culture which is pupil initiated, particularly with regards to children’s rights.

3. REACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	Wildern secondary school is part of a multi-academy trust and has 1920 students on roll (11-16). The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium is 13%. 2.7% of pupils speak English as an additional language and 1% of pupils have an EHCP. The school was graded ‘outstanding’ in all areas by Ofsted, November 2012.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Executive Headteacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and RRSA coordinators.
Number of children and young people interviewed	Approximately 147 students; from meetings with a group of students [year 8 and above] & some members of the rights respecting committee and four class visits [3 year 7 and 1 year 10].
Number of adults interviewed	9 staff (includes head of student services and 8 teaching staff with various additional responsibilities), 3 parents (includes a parent governor and 2 members of staff) and a staff governor.
Evidence provided	Learning walks, meetings, written evidence and class visits.
Registered for RRSA: July 2008	Silver achieved: June 2009 Gold achieved: January 2011 and January 2016.

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 development.

Strand A has been achieved

Students gave numerous examples of rights from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Their collective responses from discussions with the assessors reflected a secure understanding of rights being for “*all children under eighteen*”, “*every child is born equally*”, rights are there “*at birth*”, that “*rights should not be earned*” as they are “*unconditional*”, that rights cannot be taken away and are all equally important. They demonstrated a clear understanding of the universal nature of rights but all understood that, as a student explained “*the rights are not always accessible to everyone*”. Issues such as war and restricted access to information were given as examples that would cause rights to be denied. When asked how the effects of climate change such as extreme flooding or drought are linked to children’s rights, students described how the former could impact on rights to an education and shelter, and the latter to not being able to grow food.

Students are able to learn about rights in a variety of ways. Copies of the Convention and the newly revised school charter are displayed in classrooms and student planners include reference to particular articles from the CRC linked to specific calendar days. The school’s tutor group programme of activities also provides opportunities for students to explore topics about rights such as the ‘ABCDE of rights’, wants and needs, Unicef and ‘rights and respect’. Links to rights, as appropriate, are also made in some assemblies and in curriculum areas. Examples of the latter include Moral and Social Studies (MSS), discussions around China’s former ‘one-child policy’ (Humanities), stem cell research (Science) and child labour issues in the global economy (Design Technology). An English department display highlighted a range of texts in the curriculum which have clear links to many of the articles of the CRC.

The Wildern school community is rooted in a clear strategic commitment to the Convention. The headteacher explained that “*we are embedding a lot of the ideals of rights respecting in our strapline*” which is ‘every student matters, every moment counts’ and that this is the “*heartbeat of the school*”; this also aligns to the Multi Academy Trust’s principles and ethos of ‘care, opportunity and quality’. Similarly, the executive headteacher described how the school’s rights respecting work has “*never been about the badge*” per se and that the school’s ethos and culture are embedded in the principles of the Convention. The promotion of the CRC across the school and the provision of staff induction, training and updates about the school’s RRSA work has helped to ensure a consistency in approach and use of rights respecting language. For example, the current school development plan includes reference ‘to promote the key principles of Rights and Respect which underpins the school’s ethos and culture’ and teacher planners have a section about Wildern being a rights respecting school. School leaders, staff, parents and governors are enthusiastic advocates of Wildern’s rights respecting work. Their comments about its positive impact included how it “*underpins the culture of the school*”, gives pupils a “*sense of community*”, that the “*voice of [the] children has really evolved*” and students have become “*more aware of [the] world around them*”.

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.

Strand B has been achieved

Students were very articulate and confident in explaining how the school supports their safety, wellbeing and learning. They understand the primary role adults have to help ensure that their rights are facilitated and upheld whilst also recognising how they themselves can support and contribute to a rights respecting ethos. As students commented *“adults actually want to listen to you and hear what you say”* and *“our teachers want us to be the best we can be”*. They understand that access to a right may involve different types of support; when asked if the right to an education always looks the same, students described how there are *“extra support sessions”* for anyone who may be struggling with their learning, that *“those with disabilities also get special support”*, *“some people have a reader to support them in exams”* and *“learning support”* is also available. Students also agreed that the school’s behaviour management approach was fair.

Respect is one of the school’s attributes (along with ‘determination, curiosity, pride and reflection’) and forms an integral part of Wildern’s ethos. Throughout the visit a caring and supportive learning environment was evident and as a parent commented *“knowing about their rights gives them ownership. It’s built a culture of respect. It’s for the students by the students.”* During group discussions students listened respectfully to the contribution of their peers. When asked about respect and dignity, student comments included describing respect as *“being kind, treating them [others] with dignity”*, that *“rights remind you to respect other people as human beings, it’s about valuing them”* and that *“you can’t use your rights in a way that stops somebody else getting their rights!”*.

Students were able to give examples of how the school supports their safety. These included describing the school’s ‘emergency procedures’, how they *“do a lot on internet safety”* and that there was *“no tolerance for bullying at all”*. Students are confident that if they had any worries they could speak to a member of staff and their concerns would be listened to and taken seriously. When asked, students confirmed that they felt safe in school. In addition to learning about e-safety in the ICT curriculum, safety issues are also addressed through a wide range of school activities and events such as ‘Safer Internet Day’, ‘Anti-Bullying Week’ and visits to particular year groups from external speakers about topics such as drugs education, the law and road safety. Senior school leaders also regularly meet with a random selection of students from across the school to discuss safety related issues.

Students spoke very positively about how Wildern supports their wellbeing, with a student commenting that *“[they] can approach any adult around school and they actually want to listen to you”*. Wellbeing provision includes the school’s pastoral system, student services, learning hub, school counsellor, school nurse, first aiders and ELSA. The student planner’s information page, ‘the Wildern wellbeing tree- we are all here to help’, signposts this provision and information is also available in a ‘student mental health menu’ leaflet. Students explained that counselling services *“are there if you need them”* and that it *“helps you to know that there is someone there”*. Several staff also have a role as ‘mental health first aiders’. The ‘mind, body and soul’ (MBS) student focus group helps

to organise the school’s ‘mental health awareness week’ and as a student commented “*mental health [is] not forgotten and [is] at the forefront*”. Other examples from students of how their health and wellbeing are being supported included learning about healthy lifestyles through the MSS and PE curriculum areas, PE activities, provision of a salad bar at lunchtimes and support for medical conditions.

Wildern is an inclusive school community; students’ contributions in group discussions reflected this and conveyed an affirmative narrative of how the school values and supports individuals. Their responses included “*I’m being listened to*” and “*I’m not just another name on a list*”, and as an adult commented “*this school is about so much more than the learning. There is something for every child to flourish. They have a real sense of belonging.*” Some of the adults spoken with expressed a very strong view that the school prioritises inclusion; “*for young people with disabilities Article 2 and Article 23 are absolutely paramount in every lesson.*” Examples of the school’s inclusive approach include the learning support department providing differentiated support for students with special educational needs, provision of a tailored curriculum to help support development of literacy skills for some students in year 7, students voting on Wildern’s revised school charter (which highlights Articles 8, 12, 23, 29 and 31) and at the request of students, a ‘Rainbow Day’ being held in the summer term as part of National Diversity Week.

Students know that they have a right to an education. They are actively engaged with their learning in a variety of ways including through self and peer assessment, ‘philosophy for children’ activities and participation in ‘personal learning reviews’. Students gave several examples of how the school supports their learning including the availability of a ‘Google Classroom’ resource, an ‘extra support programme’ of after school classes, homework clubs, maths intervention and staff giving up their time at break and lunchtimes to help answer students’ queries. A student commented how staff are “*helping you cope with the workload*” and another student explained that one of the impacts of being a rights respecting school is that “*teachers and all staff make sure students enjoy their journey*” at school as they progress towards taking their examinations. ‘Student voice’ is an integral part of the school’s pedagogic practice. Trained student ‘Learning Leaders’ can provide staff with lesson observation feedback and the ‘students as evaluators’ group work alongside departments in reviewing schemes of work.

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.

Strand C has been achieved

‘Student voice’ at Wildern is a major strength of the school’s rights respecting culture and as the website explains ‘student leadership and student voice (linked to Article 12 - the right to express your views) is highly valued at Wildern and plays a crucial role in driving improvement across the school’. There are school leaders who have an ambassadorial role, transition leaders to support students in lower years, diversity leaders to ‘promote tolerance and respect amongst staff and students’, learning leaders and students as evaluators. In addition to the Rights Respecting Committee and MBS groups there are also eco leaders, e-safety leaders, ‘googlers’ and careers leaders focus groups as well. Supported by head and deputy head students, year 11 senior prefects and a prefect team, all of these different groups alongside other student leadership roles such as house captaincies, reflect the high levels of student participation and engagement in the life of the school. As a student commented,

'pupil voice' is "*massive in this school*" and students agreed that their views are listened to and taken seriously. A half termly 'summit group' made up of the head and deputy students and two representatives from the focus groups and diversity leaders meet with the senior leadership team to give feedback about their work. A member of the RRC focus group commented that the impact of the school's rights respecting work has been that "*everyone really listens to you- you are being heard.*" The RRC has supported the tutor group programme by preparing PowerPoint presentations about rights based themes and are also involved in projects such as annual appeals for a local food bank and the Rotary Shoebox scheme, fund raising for Toilet Twinning and supporting the school's Fairtrade Fortnight. Earlier in the year the MBS focus group organised an 'Outrun Cancer Fun Run' with proceeds helping to support 'The Brain Tumour Charity'.

Wildern is outward looking and helping its students to become responsible, active citizens. As a parent commented "*it takes them way beyond the school gates, they are empowered to take all this into the wider community.*" Students are learning about the wider world and global dimension in a variety of ways. These include through elements of the curriculum, tutor group discussions, school events such as 'European Day of Languages', lunch menus which celebrate different foods from around the world and through the school's support of several charities. The latter includes 'Jeans for Genes Day', Comic Relief, Save the Children's 'Christmas Jumper Day' and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance. Environmental awareness is also being promoted within the school. For example, a 'Big Clean' event held earlier in the year was attended by several students, staff and parents on a Saturday morning to pick up litter on the school site and arising from 'student voice', the school is planning to review its use of plastic in the canteen. The Eco Focus Group has helped the school achieve the Green Flag Award this year and organised several activities to promote environmental issues such as biodiversity and recycling. The group have also helped to promote sustainable modes of transport such as the use of 'park and stride' sites as part of Hampshire County Council's 'My Journey' initiative and the school participated in the Council's 'Air Your Views' competition with two short films being produced to raise awareness. The films were also shared with the school community via tutor group sessions and there were opportunities for students to explore issues about the effects of air pollution on health and sustainable transport alternatives. In association with the Council, diffusion tubes were also used to measure pollution levels around the school site.