



RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL TWO

School:	Newfield School
Headteacher:	Geoff Fitzpatrick
RRSA coordinator:	Jenny Riley
Local authority:	Blackburn with Darwin
Assessors:	Pat Peaker Martin Russell
Date:	17 th June 2014

We 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 the assessors during the visit that everyone places a real importance on developing and embedding a rights respecting ethos.

It was particularly encouraging to see that the pupils of Newfield who present with a range of severe and complex learning need are being empowered to take an active part in their school and ultimately in the wider community on an equal basis.(Article 2) The staff of Newfield School are committed to ensuring that the pupils have their right to an education which develops their personality and talents to the full (Article 29). Supported access to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child(UNCRC) underpins the ethos of the school.

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



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.

No requirements are made

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:

In addition to the areas you have identified in your self-evaluation statement for further steps, the following recommendations are made:-

- School has begun to take on an ambassadorial role in neighbouring schools. We encourage Newfield to continue actively in this role with a view to encouraging these schools to begin the RRS journey.
- Promoting work on fairtrade has contributed to an understanding amongst the pupils of the wider world they inhabit. Raising their awareness of themselves as global citizens is challenging with some pupils but worth pursuing and looking for ways in which they can continue to understand the role they play.

THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

The school context

Newfield School is a non-denominational school providing high quality education for pupils aged from 2 to 19 years. There are currently 141 pupils on roll. Approximately half of these are from backgrounds other than White British. The pupils have varying degrees of difficulty ranging from profound and multiple to severe and may also have additional complex medical needs and sensory impairments. The school has a specially resourced area to meet the needs of pupils on the autistic spectrum. Newfield School provides a multi-disciplinary approach to pupils' education and care that involves full-time medical staff, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech and language therapy support working collaboratively with a highly qualified and dedicated staff. In November 2012, OFSTED judged the school to be good. They found progress in pupils' personal and social development outstanding. The school achieved Level 1 status of the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) in May 2013.



Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	RRSA coordinator / deputy headteacher, 2 other deputy head teachers, school finance manager.
Number of children and young people interviewed	35 children/pupils/students
Number of staff interviewed	6 teaching staff 4 support staff 2 parents 1 governor 1 parent/governor Building and facilities manager
Evidence provided	Learning walk Written evidence Meeting with full steering group

Standard A: Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Summary Standard A has been achieved.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has a high status at Newfield School. It is embedded in all aspects of the life of the school as much as can be realistically and reasonably expected. This has been achieved as the result of very high quality leadership and management committed to ensuring that the rights of the child remain paramount at all times. Staff are dedicated to helping pupils achieve the very best outcomes in their educational and personal development. They attribute significant impact to the enhancement of educational achievement as a result of placing the UNCRC at the heart of the school's culture. Pupils are understanding that they too have a voice and are increasingly confident in making choices regarding their curriculum options. This has led to increased motivation and outcomes. Older pupils are highly motivated by bespoke work placements, enhancing their learning and increasing their desire to learn further. The learning of PMLD children has benefitted by other children assuring their rights are met in lessons.

The principles, ethos and philosophy of the UNCRC are interwoven into all curriculum planning and school development planning. The school has built into the new national curriculum, a curriculum which is relevant to the needs of its pupils. Children's rights are



now an integral part of the ethos of the school. Articles of the UNCRC are incorporated into all new and revised policies with great thoroughness. The school development plan is used to set targets within teacher appraisal, resulting in some staff working explicitly on helping the school to become a sustainable rights respecting school. This can be seen already as a development from the time of the Level 1 assessment. There has been a devolution of leadership. The co-ordinator has overseen the setting up of several separate committees linked to the principle steering committee for the RRSA which in addition to pupils includes teachers, parents and governors.

There is a deep sense of inclusion rooted in rights and this sense of entitlement is clearly held by everyone. The school holds flagship status of the Inclusion Quality Mark(IQM) which they received in June 2013. Virtually all pupils have some opportunity to experience mainstream primary or secondary sectors. Pupils of a younger age group link with two primary schools whose pupils come to Newfield on a weekly basis. All benefit from this partnership. Particularly strong links exist with a local high school. This gives older students not only curricular opportunities but forges social links leading to friendships. Pupil voice is a strong element of Newfield's inclusion ethos.(Article 12). In relation to the development of total communication in the school, IQS stated in their Flagship Report that in this aspect *'Newfield is one of the leading schools nationally'*.

The school website showcases the successes of the pupils and provides opportunities for all stakeholders to share the pride which these successes bring and understand how the school is developing. Professionally produced photograph boards lining the corridors leave the visitor in no doubt that Newfield pupils enjoy a range of activities which enhance their rights in a variety of ways. At specific UNICEF and UNCRC events, display stalls have been created to promote this aspect of work to parents and visitors. Pupils have visited other mainstream primary schools to share their ideas and approaches to rights respecting work. There is a programme of work experience for older students who are placed according to their choice in businesses in the local community. This is not only supporting the community with its own inclusion agenda but giving the students the opportunity to learn about work in a local and global sense. Feed back suggests that the employers who have students on placement are finding it successful and supportive of their development as inclusive employers. Visitors to school and the link schools both locally and internationally are able to learn more about the UNCRC from the actions and events which Newfield introduces.

Promoting global citizenship is a challenge in this school but one which is being addressed. Particularly successful was Fairtrade Fortnight which included parents and catering staff in the curricular activities of the pupils. A sub committee of the Steering Group helped to plan and co-ordinate events which included a fairtrade tuck shop with food donated by a local supermarket. Special assemblies were held and special meals were prepared by the kitchen staff who have now committed to purchase certain fairtrade items. Pupils know that rights are for all children in the world but also realise that many do not actually experience them and they know that this not right. They engage in fundraising activities to support the wider global community, an additional way of making their voices heard. The scheme of work for PSHEE links articles of the Convention and suggests activities to assist understanding of rights, promote celebration of diversity and discussion about moral dilemmas.



Standard B:

The whole school community learns about the CRC

Summary

Standard B has been achieved.

Although the children at Newfield School find learning in traditional ways very difficult, the staff have met the challenge of becoming a rights respecting school by finding ways to adapt the ethos of the UNCRC into the curriculum to make it not only meaningful but also enjoyable. The success can be judged in the positive outcomes it has brought in letting pupils have their voice. Pupils are increasingly aware of their own rights. Verbal pupils can identify where rights are not being met and will act as advocates for less able pupils. In the meeting with pupils, one boy intervened and said *'Billy wants to say something'*. Pupils were patient with the boy who used an iPad with speech function in order to communicate with us. He too had 'his voice'. Pupils could identify some of their rights, were quite emphatic that these rights were for all children and understood that not all could enjoy them as they did. All staff have attended training sessions on the RRSA and support the pupils to create class charters detailing specific article from the UNCRC which the pupils have identified as being important in their classroom. A parent representative from the steering group said *'I feel empowered by the knowledge about rights which I have acquired at Newfield and I'm proud of what the school is doing to make sure my daughter has her rights'*. There is an extensive outreach and inclusion programme which promotes the equality and rights of children through a range of activities which includes pupils from the steering group acting as ambassadors and taking the message of the UNCRC to link schools. Along with their teachers, they lead workshops in which they have used the wants and needs cards with great success.

The school has an excellent web site which keeps parents/carers informed about developments and events in school. There are regular news letters compiled by older students and staff. These are also available on the web site showcasing the school's work to the community. The regular 'blogs' give prominence to the many activities in which pupils are involved and some of these are linked to the RRS agenda. Many pupils come from homes where English is not the first language so the school charter has been translated for their benefit. During their assessment for the Leading Parent Partnership Award, the school submitted evidence from their work on rights respecting schools. Many parents/carers are pro-active in their support for the school. They sit on steering groups, are represented on the governing body, act as ambassadors in their enthusiasm and support for the work of the school. The school has ensured that the UNCRC articles are highly visible at the Parent Information Point. A parent questionnaire was overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school, the UNCRC and the support which they received from the staff. Parents of older pupils have often needed support to allow their children to make their own choices. For some parents who are naturally very protective of their vulnerable children and for whom they have been accustomed to making all the decisions this can be a difficult step. One teacher described the reluctance of a parent to allow the child to go into the hydrotherapy pool. The child wanted to and eventually the parent saw that this was a choice that had to be acknowledged. (Article 12). As one parent/governor said *'the school challenges and educates children'*. It surely is educating parents as well.

There is evidence all through the school of the articles of the UNCRC not only in the displays but through planned inclusion in various aspects of the curriculum. The displays in the corridors are all accessible to the children utilising pictures and auditory buttons, all at an



appropriate level to accommodate those in wheelchairs. Much of the PSHEE curriculum is based around the UNCRC. A large part of the core offer of school is personal development which may be communication, physical, sensory, academic or behavioural. In the latest OFSTED report in 2012 inspectors commented '*Students make good and sometimes outstanding progress in personal and social development, especially in their ability to make choices.*'

Pupils could refer to their fair-trade project and speak about the injustice of situations where children do not have their rights. They referred to those who did not have a home to sleep in or had to work instead of enjoying their right to education. Staff capitalise on events such as the World Cup which has led to work on different countries. The foods of European countries have been prepared and served with great success. In a KS1 class a travel agency has been established to help children understand the concept of distances and transportation to far away destinations.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Summary **Standard C has been met.**

Charters continue to have a significant impact. Pupils took us into classrooms to show the class charters. A new charter is negotiated at the beginning of each school year. There is a focus on making them accessible, relevant and easy to understand for all levels of ability. A whole school charter has been drawn up by the steering group and is part of the anti-bullying policy. This too is revised yearly. An audit group selected from members of the steering group is particularly proud of its role in carrying out regular checks of displays and charters.

The school's anti-bullying policy promotes a no-blame approach and there is the expectation that staff will be respectful of children's rights. Staff themselves model rights respecting language and behaviour throughout their interactions with the children. In a school where conventional oral communication is often difficult or non-existent, children are helped to express their views in whatever way is appropriate for them. Signs and symbols are used to help non-verbal children communicate. Training is in place for all staff to ensure consistency in communication. All are trained in the use of Makaton and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Symbol). Addressing these needs is enabling children to communicate to the best of their ability and give them their voice. Each child has a communication passport which is displayed in the classroom so that visiting staff can interact appropriately with the child. (Article 23) The buddy system helps children to act as advocates for one another. In their interactions, they often show thoughtfulness and patience. The assessors heard staff comments such as '*so willing to support each other; they look out for each other; a sense of respect for each other can be felt*'. In 2012, OFSTED rated pupils' behaviour '*outstanding*'.

As children with disabilities are more vulnerable to abuse and neglect than other children and are likely to come into contact with a greater number of services than non-disabled, the school places great emphasis on child protection and safeguarding. Staff report that through questionnaires all pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parent questionnaires have also provided positive feedback on how safe they consider the children to be. All believe they are well cared for. Central to the work of the school counsellor is ensuring that all pupils are



valued and have a voice. The school upholds the rights of the UNCRC as expressed in Article 23 which concerns children who have any kind of disability. Their personalised learning plans reflect children working on communicating their preferences and making choices.

Outreach links to local and international schools and learning about life in developing countries has raised in some children feelings of injustice. They are keen to address this through supporting fundraising for Red Nose Day and Children in Need.

Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Summary

Standard D has been met.

Pupil voice and respect for the individual has a high profile at Newfield. As the initial structure of the RRSA steering group evolves with the establishment of specific sub-committees, increasing numbers of pupils and students have the opportunity to shape events in school. These committees always involve representation from staff, parents and governors, in part to facilitate communication needs where this is necessary but it has the very real advantage of ensuring that the voice of pupils is heard by those who can help to make things happen. Recently, the school has created a sensory garden. This is not only making a contribution to pupils' learning but is a good example of the consultative process of design which really engaged the voice of the older pupils. In addition to the steering group, there is an active school council. The influence of these young people extends to having a vote in the local authority youth parliament elections. All have the opportunity to talk with a trained counsellor to discuss issues that affect their lives in school or at home. They celebrated 'Take Over Day', in November which provided another opportunity for them to be involved in decision making and experience the world of work.

Specific teaching is delivered in PSHEE and science to help pupils understand why being healthy is important and to help them accept a broader selection of foods (Article 24). Newfield holds healthy school status. The school website offers advice and guidance for parents. Importantly, they have recently been informing parents about how they can support their child in making decisions (Article 12). Pupils take part in joint annual reviews and social care reviews, placing them at the centre of any decisions made about them. In English lessons, some pupils access newspaper information and discuss moral dilemmas which helps them to develop reasoned arguments and to make informed decisions. In their final year at Newfield, all students have 1:1 sessions to prepare them for transition. These sessions support them on making choices about their continued learning. They are helped to articulate these decisions effectively so that their views are adhered to. School has bi-lingual staff who assist in removing language barriers and support pupils' access to information.

The school is developing a pro-active role in supporting the rights of children locally and globally. Pupils from the steering group have acted as ambassadors in local primary schools engaging these children in role play activities connected with rights and using wants and needs cards. The school has links with a school in Bangladesh and via video presentations can share aspects of their village life and compare the differences. They are anxious to make a difference for other children's lives and take ownership of fundraising activities. For example their Fairtrade Fortnight raised more than £80 for that organisation. Some pupils are developing a better understanding of children's lives on a global scale.