

# RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

## GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

<b>School:</b>	Calthorpe Academy
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mounir Meghalsi
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	Laura Williams
<b>Local authority:</b>	Birmingham City Council
<b>School context:</b>	The school has 431 learners on roll aged 2 to 19. 57.5% of learners receive FSM and 63% receive PP. 100% of learners have an EHCP. 23% of learners speak English as an additional language with 23 languages spoken across the school. The primary needs of learners are: 50% on the Autism Spectrum, 33.5% with Severe Learning Difficulties and 16.5% with Profound and Multiple Difficulties.
<b>Attendees at SLT meeting:</b>	Headteacher, RRSA Coordinator, Deputy Headteacher, 3 Assistant Headteachers.
<b>Number of children and young people spoken with:</b>	14
<b>Adults spoken with:</b>	6 teachers, 1 speech and language therapist, 1 parent governor, digital evidence from parents, 1 external learning consultant
<b>Key RRSA accreditations:</b>	Registered for RRSA: 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2020 Bronze achieved: 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2021 Silver achieved: 13 <sup>th</sup> July 2023
<b>Assessor:</b>	Hilary Alcock
<b>Date:</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

## ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Calthorpe Academy has met 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 collection 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:

- Learners who understood a range of rights and why they are important and relevant to their lives.
- A strong commitment to children's rights and to RRSA from leaders at all levels tied into the vision and values of the school. Quality training and support for staff has been sustained.
- A school with inclusion at its heart, where pupils feel safe and secure. Senior leaders and staff spoke passionately of a desire to ensure the best interests of each learner are met. Policies and practice appeared to be geared to realise that ambition.
- A determination from all adults to develop approaches to enable all learners, including those who are non-verbal and/or with complex needs, to express their views and for these to be acted upon.
- Learners whose leadership roles are having a positive impact on school improvement and supporting other children to experience their rights locally, nationally and globally.

## 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 links between children's rights and your Learning Pathways, encourage adults to articulate this and enhance the visual representation of how learners are experiencing their rights throughout the school.
- Continue to support parents/carers and families to learn about and understand the CRC and the impact this has upon their child/ren. Encourage all staff and external professionals to use the language of rights during their conversations with them.
- Strengthen the impact of learner voice by closing the feedback circle; perhaps a 'You said, We did' approach, showing how the voice of learners has brought about meaningful change. Find ways to share this approach and impact on your school website and other communications.
- Seek to make links more explicit between the school's charity work and the realisation of children's rights.
- Continue to act as ambassadors for rights and the RRSA through your Trust and wider networks of schools.

## 2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere.</p>	<p>Learners across Calthorpe Academy are experiencing their rights and being taught about them in a range of ways to meet their very differing, and often complex, needs. Those within the focus groups identified articles from the UN Convention on the rights of the Child (CRC) that are especially relevant to their school and home context. They spoke about the right to be safe, to come to school, to express their views, to have healthy food, of support for their mental health and wellbeing and the right to relax and play. Comments from learners included, <i>"I love the school... we have the right to speak...the teachers listen to us, they put things in place for us."</i> Learners understood that adults are there to take care of them. Some learners said they learn about rights during assembly times and lessons, while others described how they sing a song about rights every morning. Displays around the school make reference to rights. Learners in the Steering Group have taken an active role in helping to organise events to support children accessing their rights locally, nationally and globally. The headteacher commented, <i>"The Convention gives us a framework and a common language...it's really helps us to focus on the autonomy of the child...doing things with them, not to them."</i> The RRSA coordinator described how the school has developed new ways of working that have improved learners access to Articles 12 and 13 saying, <i>"The best interests of the child, their needs and voices are at the forefront of what we do."</i> This was consistently commented on by other staff; one said, <i>"We try to find out what works best for our learners...to broaden their experiences...to say, 'yes' to new things, to find safe and fulfilling opportunities for them."</i> The link governor for quality of education undertakes learning walks and feeds back to other governors. He commented, <i>"Learners understand their rights in different ways...time is taken to make sure their best interests are met...it's just part of the culture here."</i> A parent noted in digital evidence, <i>'My child is happy to go to school now and she looks forward to going in the taxi each morning and she comes home happy too.'</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p>During focus group sessions it was evident how learners were developing social skills, such as turn taking and sharing attention, through staff modelling positive language and social interactions. Adults described how they, <i>"...push for external support,"</i> to get the best provision for each learner at school and at home. Individual department action plans have resulted in more personalised teaching and learning about children's rights across the school. Senior leaders and other adults commented, <i>"Learners know their rights...we use the CRC to promote their voices and empower them...we get more feedback from learners in order to provide more choices and autonomy."</i> One learner said, <i>"I can tell an adult at school if I need any help or I could tell my mummy and she could tell the school."</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights.</p>	<p>Learners demonstrated respect for each other during the focus group discussions. One said, <i>"Everyone is friendly here."</i> Adults commented, <i>"Through the focus on Articles 12 and 13, learners can now choose who their key worker is... we respect them to tell or show us...we have got much better at building up our knowledge and understanding of how learners are expressing their needs which in turn helps our relationships with them and how to better meet their needs."</i> A parent commented on how positive relationships and behaviour</p>

	strategies at school were impacting on their child at home noting, 'My child is behaving really well out in the community now - not presenting with challenging behaviours anymore.'
4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	Learners in the discussion groups said they felt safe in school and knew that adults at school and at home keep them safe. They described a range of ways they know how to keep safe, including, <i>"We get changed for swimming in the changing room because it's private...I know not to talk to strangers...don't give your personal information to anyone online and 'no' means 'no'."</i> As a result of learner voice monitoring in relation to anti-bullying, the school put in place additional learning opportunities and extra communications with parents/carers. Learners also said that knowing they can speak up helps them to keep safe.
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	<i>"I had fun there,"</i> said one learner about a recent school residential visit she had been on. Another commented that becoming a sports leader, <i>"...developed my confidence."</i> Learners choose and prepare healthier snacks for the tuckshop. One teacher commented, <i>"This has 100% increased their cooking and independence skills."</i> Learner wellbeing passports have been reviewed to improve teaching and learning and ways to interpret behaviours/communications to support learners with complex needs. The MOVE programme enables learners to develop physical functional skills. Learners have redeveloped the outdoor learning area. An external consultant commented on the commitment of all adults for the project. Feedback evidenced increased confidence and high levels of engagement from learners and noted, <i>"They are learning how to transfer skills from the outdoor classroom to the local park and out into the community."</i>
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	The RRSA coordinator considers that a child rights approach supports adults to continually challenge their practice in order to best meet the needs of every learner, including working with their families within a welcoming, inclusive and celebratory environment. The headteacher commented, <i>"Children's rights help to bring everything together to make the capable environment a reality."</i>
7. Children value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	One adult said, <i>"It has been a joy to see how much learners can input into the curriculum."</i> This has developed through the use of Rights Passports, regular learner surveys and a focus on Articles 12 and 13. Teachers also feel more empowered to advocate for learners' rights. In response to one learner's comment, they devised an access plan for a wheelchair user to be able to visit the beach and ensured that learners continue to use the swimming pool.
<b>STRAND C</b>	<b>Highlights and comments</b>
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	Learners are supported to make post 16+ development plans, choose their own sports within the PE curriculum and review work experience placements. The Steering Group helped to choose new books for the library following a wider learner consultation; they also designed, made and ran stalls for the summer carnival and instigated a school talent show.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Sports Leaders described how they were encouraging children in other schools, <i>"To be fit, safe and healthy...we make sure they warm up and then we guide them and show them what to do."</i> Learners were consulted on their views for the local SEND Offer by Birmingham City Council and a group of 6th Form learners were interviewed by ITVX about the importance of social inclusion and being a young citizen of Birmingham. Learners engage in a wide range of events to support children's access their rights including Autism and Downs Syndrome Awareness Days a local foodbank, Birmingham Children's Hospital, Children in Need, Clarks Shoe Share and World Book Day.