

RRSA REACCREDITATION REPORT GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Beatlie School Campus
Headteacher:	Carol Robbie
RRSA coordinator:	Debbie Green (Also Depute Headteacher)
Local authority:	West Lothian Council
Assessor(s):	Gerry McMurtrie & Martin Russell
Date:	18 th May 2021

1. INTRODUCTION

This reaccreditation report is based on a virtual visit. The assessors 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 observe learning 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 evidence.

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

Particular strengths of the school include:

- Highly effective leadership at all levels underpinned by children's rights and the RRSA Outcomes.
- A passionate commitment to children's rights from all duty bearers ensures that the Convention is evident in all aspects of school life.
- A strong desire to promote the children's awareness of the wider world and a commitment to global citizenship.
- Exemplary use of the voice of the pupils to shape key areas of school life and policy.

The 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:

- Maintain the current excellent practice, particularly the involvement of the children in school improvement and strategic development.
- Be systematic in revisiting, for all staff and adult partners, the origins of the CRC and its place in the wider framework of human rights.
- Continue to be ambitious in seeking to promote awareness of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and engagement in RRSA outwith the school, in the locality and through wider networks.

3. ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

School context	The school provides co-educational and non-denominational education for pupils with profound, severe and complex learning difficulties aged between 3 and 18 years of age. There are 36 children on the current school roll all of whom receive free school meals. One of the children's home language is not English.
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher, RRSA coordinator and Principal Teacher
Number of children and young people interviewed	Over 20 children and young people were observed across a range of activities around the school.
Number of adults interviewed	2 specialist therapists, a member of support staff, a parent and Principal Teacher were spoken with in a formal meeting. At least eight other staff were spoken with in different learning settings.
Evidence provided	Detailed evaluation form and a PowerPoint containing a variety of evidence including a wide range of videos and testimonials from parents and other school partners.
Registered for RRSA: 25th February 2011	Gold first achieved: 31st May 2018

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

Adults in a wide range of roles spoke confidently about children's rights, citing many examples from the CRC during discussions. They demonstrated a well-developed understanding of how they, as duty bearers, facilitate and advocate for the rights of all their pupils. The school actively promotes an awareness of the nature of rights being unconditional, universal, inherent, indivisible and inalienable. Rights are referred to spontaneously throughout the school both in day to day interactions with the children and in formally planned learning, this was evident a number of times in the activities observed during the visit. The SLT explained that their scrutiny of planning is mainly about the appropriateness of the content for the individual child, but they also look for relevant links to the CRC.

The school has worked hard to strengthen global awareness and the introduction of a calendar of events to link with significant themes and international days has helped all staff and families connect with wider issues. It was pointed out that home learning tasks are as much for the parents and siblings at home as for the children themselves. Several staff have undertaken formal training to support their teaching of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the school is involved in the British Council Connecting Classrooms for Global Learning programme with partners locally and in South Africa.

The senior leadership team and staff are highly committed to and passionate about sustaining a deeply embedded rights-based approach across their whole school community and beyond. The headteacher explained that *"The nature of our school means that rights have to be embedded all the time and in all that we do. RRSA helps us to make them really explicit."* They have ensured all staff are involved in ongoing professional development about RRSA; lately this has included many staff completing the Unicef UK e-learning package 'Strengthening the RRSA'. One member of staff explained that *"Rights respecting is the real umbrella for everything we do as a school."* The school's vision statement and aims are specifically linked to a range of articles from the CRC. *"Adding rights to our policies helps staff to reflect on the articles more deeply."* explained one senior leader. It was pointed out that, since their previous Gold accreditation, rights practice has become even more consistent across the whole school. Parents, carers and the wider school community are made aware of rights through the school's blog, social media platforms and attractive, informative displays. A detailed but accessible leaflet for parents and families has been developed to explain what rights are and the school's commitment to being rights respecting. Parents express a very deep appreciation of the school's work with comments including, *"Beatlie is a safe haven for the children to be themselves. Beatlie is like a home from home. We would be lost without them."* and *"The school really listens to the parents and builds a situation where we are all working together."*

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

Every adult at the school knows that their role as a duty bearer is to create the rights respecting ethos in which all the children are nurtured and can thrive. The highly personalised provision across the school embodies the concept of equity and there is a strong sense of each child being recognised and valued as a unique individual. A very effective display near the entrance to the school takes observers on a journey through the SHANARRI indicators, showing how these are fundamental to the school's practice are inextricably linked to children's rights. Nobody is left in any doubt that all aspects of provision at Beatlie are the entitlement of the children and young people under the CRC. Each class continues to create a class charter at the start of the year; more recently, staff have been asked to think about what they must do as a class team to ensure each of the rights they mention on the charter are realised for their pupils; the school points out that this has made the charters even more meaningful.

Strong and mutually respectful relationships are a very positive feature of the school. Despite the virtual nature of the visit, it was clear that relationships between children and staff, between children themselves, and among staff were positive, caring and supportive. Dignity and respect characterised all interactions seen across the school. The dignity of each child is specifically referred to by teachers in planning for the intimate care of the pupils and the school is currently bringing together best practice in this area to create an Intimate Care Policy which will fully explain the meaning and importance of dignity. With their commitment to continually improving the quality of relationships in the school, they are in the process of introducing a new approach called Intensive Interaction, a strategy to build relationships and teach the fundamentals of communication to children with severe learning disabilities.

The right of the children to be safe and protected from all forms of harm is paramount at Beatlie. This is at the forefront of the mind of all staff in all that they do; for example, individual support plans include the specific intent of identifying strategies which ensure safety whilst encouraging active participation and independence. One pupil who is ambulant but has limited control and can't move around safely, even when supported by 2 adults had benefitted from innovative and pro-active staff in finding ways to allow her to still maintain some independent movement safely. As a result of Covid vulnerabilities, a room has been provided for the sole use of one pupil to enable her to attend, supported by staff who are fitted for FFP3 masks to meet risk assessment criteria set by NHS. She is provided with social opportunities through planned time outdoors.

The school has an entirely holistic approach to the health and wellbeing of the children; whilst this is long established and deeply embedded, it is also ever evolving in response to new insights and changing circumstances. Recently, all staff completed a wellbeing self-evaluation on behalf of pupils based on close observation of behaviours, body language and vocalisations at different times throughout the day as well as a deep understanding of the pupils. The school has increased and developed the provision of music therapy which has been judged by staff and parents to have a very positive impact on pupils' emotional wellbeing. Other sensory provision and support with self-regulation are high priorities within the curriculum for all the children and elements of mindfulness have been introduced, if appropriate, for particular children. Healthy food choices are actively supported, consistent with the capacities of the children; in one of the classroom visits we observed



a boy actively opting for an apple over a banana as his morning snack. A staff member has worked alongside a school physiotherapist to develop a PE programme for all pupils in the primary department. This was developed to support individual physical development as well as independence and confidence and helping them to be as healthy as possible.

Beatlie is the embodiment of inclusive practice and is founded on the concept of non-discrimination. All staff spoke of their commitment to inclusivity; one person for example pointed out that, *"We see all forms of communication by the children as being of equal value."* The parent spoken with commented that she was *"amazed at the lengths the school went to during the periods of children learning at home, to make them feel involved and to continue to access their education."* As well as support for their learning, social and cultural celebrations such as Christmas and Burns night are designed to involve all the children and their families. Each child has an 'All About Me' profile, linked to the CRC which sits at the beginning of their Individualised Education Plan. The leadership offers an unwavering determination to ensure that all children access the best possible provision but there is clear recognition that this is achieved through the efforts of the whole team with one senior leader saying how proud she is of the *"Creativity of the staff to ensure that every child can access all their rights."*

The school has developed an 'Active Support' approach to teaching and learning; this is a framework to ensure that all pupils are encouraged to actively participate and fully engage in activities, breaking all activities down so that pupils can be as independent and/or involved as possible in their daily life at school. Detailed individual planning was shared which demonstrates the highly personalised approach taken across the school. In one activity about experiencing washing up, one of the outcomes states, 'The aim is for staff to do this activity 'with' [the child] rather than 'to' or 'for' her.' One of the staff described the individual Learning Journals which *"Started as a nursery practice but was extended through the whole school as it proved to be a really effective way of involving families in their children's learning too."*

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

The School Improvement Plan is based on the views and participation of pupils in as far as this is possible. This happens through rigorous self-evaluation with all staff, parents and partners who all have a strong relationship with the children and can help to advocate for them. It is also strongly linked with rights since actions are based on increasing engagement and participation in learning. Pupils are given as many opportunities as possible to know that their views are taken seriously. In the Beatlie context this is done by staff honouring their choices and attempts to accept and reject certain stimuli, food, activities and the like. A pupil observed absenting himself from a singing session with his peers was described by the staff as being fine because he was expressing his opinion. Since achieving Gold all class teams have completed a self-evaluation exercise about the 7 Golden Rules of Participation (From the children's Commissioner for Scotland) to deepen understanding further. They identified what is currently in place and any next steps to ensure that all children are fully involved, included, valued and supported. One adult emphasised that, *"We really hear their 'voice'. We have to be so tuned in to their body language to read what they are telling us."* All pupils have the opportunity to be involved in class 'jobs' where they are supported to take on particular roles such as turning off the lights, doing the recycling, taking washing to the laundry and the like.



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The school empowers the children to be part of actions which promote the rights of others locally and globally. For example, the video evidence included images of the children involved in litter picking activities linked to 'respect for the environment' and another with them baking with fairly traded ingredients as part of Fairtrade Fortnight. They have also been supported to engage in Unicef UK's Outright campaigns for the last two years. All the video evidence is shared with families and the school's wider partners, thereby raising awareness of promoting commitment to the CRC. The school has created posters about children's rights and the children were involved in displaying these in the local café and on streetlamps near the school. All of this, together with extensive fundraising for a wide range of charities, enables the children, their families and the staff of Beatlie Campus to be rights respecting global citizens.

Gold: Rights Respecting report