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RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

School:	St John's RC Academy
Headteacher:	Audrey May
RRSA coordinator:	Lawrie Stewart
Local authority:	Perth & Kinross
Assessors:	Sandra Martin & Jane Westall
Date:	April 3 rd 2014

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 and pupils 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 form and impact evaluation form. It was clear to the assessors during the visit that everyone places a real importance on developing a rights respecting ethos. We appreciated the opportunity to speak to so many people involved in the life of the school and also the extensive portfolio of evidence detailing all the work that had been undertaken.

It was particularly notable that St John's is sector leading in that it comprises nursery, primary and secondary provision on the one campus. The work that has been undertaken across the school to embed the principles and ethos of children's rights and the evidence that was seen in how this work for all ages and stages of the children's education was of a very high standard and very effective.

Standards A, B, C and D have all met the necessary criteria and exceeded the expectations for a Level 1 Award.



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THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL

The school context

St John's RC Academy is an all through 3-18 Catholic school in Perth with 900 pupils on roll.

An HMIE inspection in April identified the school as good or very good across all criteria.

The school registered to become rights-respecting in December 2011 when they moved onto one campus.

Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	Yes
Attendees at SLT meeting	Headteacher / RRSA coordinator's /2 Deputies Principle Teacher
Number of children and young people interviewed	25 children/pupils/students cross section from all stages in the school
Number of staff interviewed	7 teaching staff 2 parents 6 partners
Evidence provided	Learning walk/tour of school and community area Written evidence Assembly Lessons Displays



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Standard A: Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

Summary **Standard A has been fully met.**

It was very evident throughout the assessment visit that Rights Respecting values and a real sense of pride permeates all aspects of the schools culture, vision and relationships. This was also highlighted in the recent HMIE Inspection where they saw that the key strengths of the school was the pupils and the relationships they have with each other and with the staff. The SLT have a strong commitment to ensuring that RRS is sustainable across all sections of the school and have ensured that there is time for staff to develop this area of work.

The Relationships policy which was highlighted as a key working document across the school is underpinned by all the relevant articles from the Convention and as other policies are developed this will be taken account of also.

Conversations with staff, pupils, parents and partners associated with the school confirmed that Rights Respecting is a natural part of the school and is fully integrated across all aspects of life in school and beyond.

The school is heavily involved in promoting global citizenship and sustainable development guided by the principles of the CRC. This was evidenced by the displays and speaking to pupils who told us about events such as 'Peace One Day', Day for Change and SCIF fundraising events that the whole school were involved in.

The school improvement plan gives significant prominence to RRS developments and it is evident that not only the SLT but all staff and pupils see this as an important aspect of school life. Succession planning is in place because leadership of RRS developments is a responsibility shared among senior staff and all staff demonstrate a high awareness about RRS and the impact that it has had in the school.

As a catholic school the Gospel values underpin the work that they do and they quite clearly see the CRC as sitting perfectly alongside these.

Standard B: The whole school community learns about the CRC

Summary **Standard B has been achieved.**

All of the pupils and the staff that we interviewed had a very good knowledge of the Convention and could describe how their knowledge had impacted on their day to day experience. It was very evident that this began within the nursery setting right through to 6th year pupils. In the nursery the children took us to their charter and explained that they had done the work on it and what it meant to them. They also proudly showed us a book that they had put lots of photographs and art work into and in their own writing had linked articles



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such as their right to play in to the associated photographs. They also had displays up showing their participation in 'Day for Change' and how they had been looking at different cultures across the world.

In the primaries there was evidence across the school of their work on RRS. The pupils on the learning walk explained to us the 'Right of the Fortnight' and how they picked a new right each fortnight from the Convention and linked this to the 'Article of the Week', through class discussions. The children told us that they had been involved in 'Peace One Day' where they had, through discussion highlighted that if a country was at war then it was very difficult to get the necessary aid through to the people who needed it. They campaigned for 'Peace One Day' using the premise that if the hostilities stopped even for one day then the aid would get through.

The pupils showed us the 'Learning Tree' which is in the foyer of the school. They explained to us the meaning of the tree and pointed out that UNCRC runs through everything that the school is doing for pupils and staff – children's rights were the roots of the tree and it showed how this impacted as the tree grew for example travelling up and through the branches.

They also spoke about some of the project work that they had been involved with such as Nelson Mandela, the first and second World Wars, Malala, and the rights abuses that had taken place.

The school is also a community use school and has a number of football pitches that are popular with the local community and wider. The children had designed a 'Football Charter' that was prominently displayed at the entrance to the pitches and linked this charter in quite clearly with the rights of everyone who used the pitches. They said that 'Everyone respects each other's rights, and we felt it was important to ensure that all adults, children and young people in the wider community had an understanding of this and what it actually means.'

Throughout the whole school there was evidence of the Articles of the CRC in all areas both visually through displays and also through planned inclusion in numerous aspects of the curriculum. One classroom display was a number of loaves of bread that the children had brought in – this was to highlight how easy it was for them to go in to a bakery shop and purchase bread, and the teacher was linking this in to how difficult, and in many cases impossible in other parts of the world for children to do so. The children also had talked to parents about this project work and one young girl told us about going to the supermarket with her mum and telling her mum why she needed to buy Fair Trade products.

In the secondary classes they used the mixed tutor groups to discuss and debate global issues linking this to rights. The class charters were clearly displayed and the pupils could explain clearly why they had the charters and the difference these made.

The pupils talked about how they wanted to go out with the school to meet with schools within the cluster and talk about the work that they had been involved in working towards their RRS award. They clearly saw themselves as ambassadors both for the school and for RRS. They talked about an award they had won through the Perth Youth Council for their work undertaken on rights.

The RRS Steering group had worked with the Technical Department in the school and had developed banners that were clearly displayed throughout. They had also developed a 'RRS



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School Badge' which was seen everywhere, from the classroom to the 'community street area'. They also showed us the area in the community library that was specifically for books and leaflets on UNICEF and children's rights. This was made available for anyone to access.

The school website contains information about RRSA and twitter is used to promote events with parents and the wider community. Articles are linked to newsletter stories that also go to parents and the wider community.

Staff have implemented the CRC in their planning and also when they are linking into whole school events such as Fair-trade, SCIAF fundraising etc.

Standard C: The school has a rights-respecting ethos

Summary Standard C has been met.

There was very strong evidence that each class we visited had reflected upon the Articles of the CRC and had used these to inform their decisions about expectations, relationships and behaviours in class. All the pupils we spoke to or who actually spoke to us in classes we visited mentioned to us the Relationships Policy, which they really felt had allowed the school to develop the ethos that it has. The classes all had their charters displayed, and it was clear that the children had actively participated in this process and that they used these as a reference point regularly.

Rights respecting language is embedded among all adults in the school community. Staff told us that they felt using the language of rights gave them the opportunity to engage with pupils in a very positive way and that it was an expectation from both staff and pupils that this was what was done. Pupils told us that by making their charters this gave them a much deeper understanding of their rights and how they respect others rights.

A parent told us that her experience of dealing with an issue with the school regarding her son turned out to be very positive due to tackling the issue from a rights perspective. She said that this allowed her son to see what he could have done differently in the situation and that it also helped her in her support of him.

Throughout the school there was a very calm atmosphere and the pupils we spoke with told us that not only did they feel safe within the school but that they also stressed the good relationships that they have with the staff. They explained that because they have mixed tutor groups in the secondary, from S1 up to S6 this has allowed them to feel much safer because of developing relationships between age groups, and they felt that 'everyone looked after each other'.



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Standard D:

Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

Summary

Standard D has been exceeded.

Pupil voice has a very high profile across the school, and there is an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to engage with their learning and shape the curriculum.

Pupil Learning Councils have been developed to ensure that the views of young people were listened to and taken seriously. Self-evaluation processes for the pupils enable them to give their opinions about both their well-being and their learning. A School Improvement Group has been established to develop learning conversations which are now used effectively to support young people in making decisions about their learning. In primary pupils are asked to provide 'Little Questions' about their topics and what they would like to learn. Pupils told us that this makes them not only more able but also more willing to voice their views and they feel that they contribute to the decisions that are important to them and those that affect the school.

Again the HMIE report highlights the very positive conversations they had with the pupils about their learning and the value that they put on this involvement. This was very evident throughout our visit, in the classrooms, in meetings with pupils and partners and in discussion with the SLT.

Peer mentoring has been developed across the school, with a particular focus in Maths. Pupils told us that this has had a very positive effect on both the peer mentor and those being mentored.

The school supports a wide range of initiatives which improve the lives of children (and adults) both locally and globally. Pupils are always very willing to volunteer their own time to improve the lives of others.

We were shown many examples of the work that had been undertaken from pupils volunteering for Caritas, Pope Francis Award and the Saltire Award, and this enabled them to support others in the local community. Pupils spoke about their trip to Romania to support the work of the Mercy Project. A huge variety of fundraising activities had involved all the pupils across the school and pupils were very proud of the monies that had been raised. We saw displays showing how much it would cost to provide a meal for a child in Africa and how much it would cost to send a child to school. These were throughout the school and pupils highlighted this to us and explained how they raised funds to support these activities and how important this was to them.

It was apparent through discussion with a range of pupils, staff and partners that there is a very strong sense of global citizenship and the school are powerful ambassadors for the UNCRC.

At the end of our visit we attended an assembly for all primary classes. At this assembly awards were made based on the articles of the convention to pupils who had really tried hard over the previous two weeks to ensure that they enabled their peers to enjoy the rights



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that everyone has. The pupils then sang a song which they clearly enjoyed and knew well. This song really summed up how the school has developed their very strong RRS ethos.

The song is:

If you're a child,
Then you should know,
We've all got rights
No matter where we go-oh-oh.
Wherever you live,
Whatever your name,
All the rights that we have are all the sa-a—me

**Everyone else in the world should know it,
Everyone else and you!**

Hey You St John's is the school that we love the best,
Oh where we each have the right to work play and rest,
Where we each know our rights and how to respect.
In a rights, a rights, in a rights respecting school.

You will develop abilities,
Take time for talents and responsibilities,
Choose friends, take time to explore possibilities,
Oh, in a right's, a rights, in a rights respecting school.

If we are hurt, then lend a hand,
If we are sad then we ask you underst-a-and,
Help us to care for land and seas,
Teach us well so that we can live in pe-e-eace.



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**Everyone else in the world should know it,
Everyone else and you!**

Oh education should help you achieve your best,
Give you the time to create play work and rest,
Should help you care for your world and teach you respect,
In a rights, a rights, in a rights respecting school!

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:

- Continue to develop the work with young people as ambassadors of the UNCRC both in school and in the community
- Continue to sustain the work you are currently doing – much of it is at Level 2 already
- Continue to promote the good practice that you have developed