

## Report on Principal's Sabbatical May-July 2013

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This is not a report in the traditional sense of the word. It is more of a description of an interest pursued.

### ***What I proposed for my sabbatical***

Nelson Central School has used the *rights, respect and responsibilities* framework that underpins a human rights approach in education to guide our school's behaviour management programme. We are participants in the *Human Rights in Education Initiative* (HRiE) in New Zealand and we are a *Rights Respecting School*. Teachers base much of their teaching and social programmes on the principles promoted by the Initiative.

The New Zealand Curriculum (2007) places importance on students valuing diversity, equity, social justice, the common good, care for the environment, and human rights specifically. A key aim of education, reflected in both international human rights standards and New Zealand education policy, is the development of effective citizens, an object also sought by our school.

As I reflected on the work we have done in establishing a human rights focus in our school I was pleased with our achievements. However, I was more excited by the opportunities that could lie ahead of us. I planned to use my time on sabbatical to study initiatives that link key concepts such as rights, respect and responsibility with the development of positive student behaviour and the elimination of concerns about school bullying.

My project links to several core aspects of the New Zealand Curriculum with regards to teaching, learning, school tone and student management and it is also relevant to two current national issues: strengthening teacher professionalism based on stronger fulfilment of the human right to education of *every* child, and developing positive student behaviour.

I intended talking to some principals who are currently involved in the New Zealand HRiE initiative and proposed using information about their experiences to guide my studies in Hampshire County (UK) and to determine the kind of support or approaches New Zealand schools may benefit from as they attempt to establish and maintain positive student behaviour<sup>1</sup>.

Schools in Hampshire County have been working at *human rights-based education* (HRBE) for several years and I was interested to learn how they established and, are sustaining, positive student behaviour in the community and in schools. I understood

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<sup>1</sup> See NZ HRiE schools Survey summary May 2013 p7-8

one of their starting points was a concern for student safety so was interested to learn how they tackled anti-bullying issues through a HRBE approach.

Apart from spending time with Hampshire County officials I visited a number of schools to learn how they have put ideals into action. While I am confident in what we are achieving in New Zealand Schools, I was sure there was much we could learn from the Hampshire experience.

As a result of my sabbatical, I expected to contribute to the work of the Human Rights in Education (HRiE) Trust (NZ), especially ideas that will strengthen the network of schools involved in the New Zealand HRiE initiative. I intend stimulating some discussion around a review of standards applicable to education generally and to schools specifically as they think about the bigger pictures in education such as: How can government or government agencies be encouraged to give greater support to schools working on HRBE? To what extent ought schools to lead in terms of developing important concepts about the purpose of schools? To what extent can or should schools be human rights ‘duty-bearers?’ What can human rights-based education contribute to the lives of children and to society generally?

Continuing my work and research in human rights is a natural part of my on-going professional development and my contribution to ideas on school leadership for the benefit of the profession generally. I am a board member of the Human Rights in Education Trust (NZ). In this capacity I co-presented with Ced Simpson, a refereed paper for the New Zealand Education Administration Leadership Society Biennial Conference in 2012. We have since had an article based on that presentation published in the NZEALS Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice (Insert reference to JELPP).

### ***What I did***

Reviewed reports on the Rights, Respect, Responsibility programme in Hampshire schools 2005-2011 (K. Covell, & Howe, R. B., 2007, 2008; K. H. Covell, R. B., 2009, 2011; K. H. Covell, R.B., 2005, 2007)

Carried out a survey of New Zealand HRiE schools – summary attached

Met with Ian Massey, Hampshire Education Authority to discuss current work in Hampshire

Undertook a programme of visits to four Hampshire schools

Visited the Hampshire Education Authority website

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/childrensrights/>

Read: *Education in the best interests of the child: A human rights perspective on closing the achievement gap* (Howe, 2013).

### ***What I saw***

Ian Massey, in an eight page paper (Massey, 2006), makes a solid case for Human Rights Education in the Hampshire District. He observed that current approaches designed to improve citizenship outcomes have a number of problems one of which is that there is “no underlying concepts and principles which can be linked to wider expectations, children’s lives and rights”, a void HRiE can fill in New Zealand..

Based on his observations of work being done in Nova Scotia, Massey demonstrated that more effective learning occurred as a result of individual internal changes that came through exposure to higher order concepts contained within the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**. He noted also that “for a rights based approach to be successful there has to be a **participatory pedagogy**”. That includes democratic teaching, cooperative learning and rights reflection. This is linked to children’s self-interest that propagates a contagion effect, “As children learn they have rights, within the context of a democratic classroom, **the value of rights spreads to support for the rights of others. Children become more responsible and begin to demonstrate more rights respecting behaviours to peers and adults.** One of the most important findings has been that the adult like understanding of rights gained and that responsibilities are inevitable corollaries of rights.

Rights, Respect, Responsibility (RRR) is a phrase that works in schools in Hampshire and serves as an easy nemonic to help children remember what they are learning or practising. It is one simple step away from action.

### **Classrooms in action**

RRR is a choice in terms of schools opting into the programme and the extent to which RRR is implemented. However, research indicates that full implementation is more successful than partial implementation (K. H. Covell, R.B., 2007; Howe, 2013).

I was fortunate to be granted entry to Fairfield’s Primary School, Manorfield Junior School, Cherbourg Primary School and Fryern Junior School where I was able to see programmes I had read about in the reports on the RRR programme in Hampshire schools (K. Covell, & Howe, R. B., 2007, 2008; K. H. Covell, R. B., 2009, 2011; K. H. Covell, R.B., 2005, 2007). While my time at each school was obviously limited it was easy to see the path researchers had walked and how they reached their conclusions.

At a school level I observed clear documentation outlining vision, strategy, policy and practice to guide the learning activities and practices in each school<sup>2 3 4</sup>.

I found several examples of schools RRR programmes in action in the schools I visited e.g., Manorfield School<sup>5</sup> and in Cherbourg Primary School<sup>6</sup>. In all schools there was clear evidence of plans, programmes and lessons linked to the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights (UNCROC)<sup>7</sup>.

There were clear guidelines around how class charters ought to be developed and used<sup>8</sup>,

“Children and adults in a class or tutor group select those rights they agree are the most important in relation to what is done in that classroom. The process of developing a charter is as important as the end product. The process must

<sup>2</sup> See Cherbourg Aims1213.DOC. p8

<sup>3</sup> See Fryern School: School Ethos and Values p10

<sup>4</sup> See Fairfield aims p12

<sup>5</sup> See Manor-field-junior-school-stories-of-change 13

<sup>6</sup> See Cherbourg primaryschool-2 and Cherbourg rrrsubjectactionplan-cherbourgprimary p17

<sup>7</sup> See RRR lesson planning prompts p19

<sup>8</sup> See Classroom charters p21-24

be participatory, inclusive and build on the prior learning about the difference between *wants* and *needs*.”

The importance attached to the notion of explicit teaching leading to embedding of RRR was evident in a paper suggesting questions that teachers could ask of their planning to ensure lessons are RRR friendly. Some of these concerned how to integrate RRR in the lesson planning, questions to ask about lesson content, questions to ask about how the RRR aspects benefit children and questions to ask about teaching and learning styles during the lesson<sup>9</sup>.

Most school documentation is written in ‘child friendly’ language and display labelling in the classroom and school is phrased in ‘rights education’ language.

In all schools there is a clear role for adults and children. This was clearly expressed in many class charters where children and adults signed up to the class charter expectations. Thus, teachers modelled RRR along with students and parents.

In order to ensure sustainability suitable opportunities for professional development were organised for principals and teachers where ongoing conversations about meaning and development could be had.

## **Institutional Support**

UNICEF School Awards Scheme <http://www.unicef.org.uk/rrsa>

Some schools took part in the an awards scheme promoted by UNICEF. It appears to have a motivational effect on schools and their leaders but once the top level has been achieved the questions that go begging are, “What next? How does one sustain purpose and motivation?”

One of the strongest features of the Hampshire RRR programme is the Institutional support available for everyone concerned. That includes:

- Advice and support from the highest levels – district policy, senior personnel and senior advisory support to schools, school governance and school management
- Website support/repository of resources <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/childrensrights/>
- Networks supported by the district office
- Participation in research
- Support for research and development
- UNICEF support
- The Primary curriculum files of the children’s rights section of the Hampshire website contains a range of teaching ideas to enliven work around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). They include themes such as *violence and protection: conflict and peace*, and *different abilities and disabilities*, as well as subject-led topics. This section is continually being updated with materials and ideas.
- District publications

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<sup>9</sup> See RRR lesson planning prompts p19

- A particularly useful resource is one called RADE (Rights and Diversity Education). This comes in the form of a magazine in which administrators and practitioners share their experiences and advice on how they progress certain issues in their schools. The title of the resource suggests the content and target audience; and serves also as an important communication tool for those involved in the RRR programme.

It is clear to me the various forms of institutional support available in Hampshire have been a beacon and a fulcrum around which Hampshire schools' success with RRR has been built. That support has nurtured principals and teachers who have grown initiatives to suit their students, community and contexts.

## **Resources**

I was amazed at the resources I was confronted with on my visits to schools. Many of these had been developed in schools, others had been purchased from a variety of commercial sources while others were available through voluntary organisations. For me, the most useful single resource is a bibliography by Brian Howe and Katherine Covell; writing together, on their own or in conjunction with other people.

## ***Implications for Nelson Central School***

In considering this question, a raft of thoughts cross my mind but my purpose here is to keep things simple and related to my particular school and groups with whom I work. There is scope to upscale these ideas but they need first to be refined at a school level:

- Build HRiE into the school Charter and curriculum plans at all levels of schooling
- Establish with senior managers, responsibilities for implementation of HRiE within their teams/classrooms
- Provide regular HRiE professional development for all staff
- Teach about and through human rights content and processes
- Infuse the curriculum with human rights stories.
- Carry out explicit teaching about rights, don't leave it to chance.
- Develop a human rights lense through which to view all school events and curriculum planning
- Use HRiE as a tool for freedom rather than control.
- Design and build a resource base to support curriculum topics – see examples from Hampshire schools
- Develop an evaluation methodology for HRiE in the school to celebrate achievements, refine practice and identify new areas for development
- Encourage schools' support for the Mana Tika Tangata initiative that already exists in New Zealand (Simpson, 2008). We have a resource that could perform work similar to that of the Hampshire Education Authority if it could be funded properly.

There is evidence that addressing these issues will go a long way towards reducing concerns about bullying and effective citizenship (Howe, 2013). The research also suggests that attention to content contained in key rights documents coupled with participatory pedagogy has a contagion effect (Massey, 2006) that broadens the base

of observance of rights, respect and responsibility and reduces the need for coercion.

### **Thanks**

My thanks go to the Nelson Central School Board of Trustees and the New Zealand Ministry of Education for granting me leave to pursue my interest, the Hampshire Education Authority for allowing me access to schools, to the principals of the schools I visited in Hampshire and especially to Ian Massey for his advice, guidance and insights.

Special thanks go to the principals of the school that were kind enough to open their doors to a grateful visitor - Fairfield's Primary School, Manorfield Junior School, Cherbourg Primary School and Fryern Junior School.

In New Zealand I thank Ced Simpson from Human Rights in Education – Mana Tika Tangata - for his support and encouragement and the principals of New Zealand schools participating in the HRiE initiative.

## Resources

One of the most valuable parts of any investigation is the resources one gathers along the way. I have recorded here a small sample of those that caught my eye and that I believe have immediate applicability to our school and teachers. I gathered many others and in time they will find their way into teachers' practice. I

### Summary of a survey of School Principals on Human Rights in Education (HRiE) in their schools

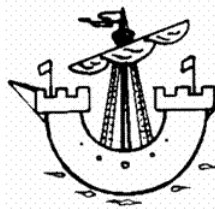
1. All principals surveyed said their schools either had a HRiE programme (50%) or something that approximated one (50%).
2. All respondents believe their HRiE programmes link to the NZ Curriculum through one or more of the Principles (66.7%); Values (83.33%); Key Competencies (66.67%); Key Learning Areas (83.33%) or in some other ways (16.67%).
3. HRiE intentions are stated in a variety of documents within the school; teachers' lesson plans (83.33%); Team/School long term plans (50%); Curriculum plans (33.33%); school policy (33.33%); or other (16.67%).
4. Some of the resources used in school HRiE programmes include; HRiE website (100%), teacher made resources (83.33%), commercial resources (66.7%), You Tube (66.67%), other Human Rights websites (50%), video (33.33%), CD (33.33%) or other (33.33%).
5. Students contribute to or lead HRiE activities in a variety of ways: participation on a class council (83.33%), participation in class lessons (83.33%), extra-curricular activities such as fund raising for a children's cause (66.67%), participation consciousness raising activities (50%), participation on a class council (16.67%), planning the curriculum or lesson (16.67%), or other (16.67%).
6. Schools are especially proud of :
  - a. **Developing the concept of rights with responsibilities, and implementing this is our class based treaties, programme delivery and school ethos that echoes our school values of whanaungatanga pono, respect, trust and personal excellence** (no hierarchical order). **We are part of a PLG relating to HRiE** so have opportunities to explore new learning with Ced Simpson. The emphasis varies with individual teachers and with some themes being more 'related' than others - so we're still learning and growing.
  - b. **Class and team agreements based on rights and responsibilities HRiE underlies our thinking and decision making.** This culture has helped move us as a school into a very positive phase where **citizenship is recognised as a right and a responsibility**
  - c. We are **endeavouring to embed it into the culture of the school.** We do not want it to be a separate part of the curriculum or indeed even say we are a Human Rights school. Our aim is that **it will underpin all that we do and the links will be made in an authentic and meaningful way.** There is more work to do in this area and although it **features in our strategic plan** etc. it **does not really stand out in policy.**
  - d. We have had HR - especially the UDHR / CRoC - as **focus for a school wide production involving every student - 500+**
  - e. **Linking our Positive Behaviour For Learning programme to Human Rights in Education and also linking them both to Restorative Practices.** The **change in language between students and between Staff and**

**students - you could see the power shift from one person dominating another to both having equal rights as people.**

7. Respondents rate awareness of their staff to HRiE teaching and learning as Very aware (60%) or mildly aware (40%). No-one rated their staff as 'highly aware' or 'not aware'.
8. Staff have carried out various professional development activities with: a HRiE presenter (100%); a teaching colleague (33.33%) and other (33.33%).
9. Respondents rated their staff knowledge about human rights in education as: some knowledge (66.67%), very knowledgeable (16.67%) and interested in increasing knowledge (16.67%).
10. Schools' interest in learning more about teaching HRiE was rated: very interested (66.67%) and interested (33.33%).



## CHERBOURG PRIMARY SCHOOL



### Aims

Created by	Governing Body	Monitored by	Governing Body
Date adopted	September 2005	Last reviewed	September 2012
Review cycle	Annual	Next review	Autumn 1
Signed FGB		Signed HT	

Keeping our core values in mind, our aims are:

### Curriculum

- To ensure that the curriculum is delivered in an enthusiastic, challenging and stimulating way to build on children's existing strengths and interests.
- To deliver a broad and balanced curriculum to each and every pupil regardless of ability, age, gender, race and religion to ensure the development of the whole child.

### Assessment

- For assessment to be an integral part of teaching and learning. It needs to have a clear structure and be meaningful to all.

### Behaviour

- To ensure that expectations of behaviour are high and that reinforcement is positive and consistent throughout the school.
- To maintain school's Golden Time behaviour policy.
- To incorporate the UN Rights of the Child in supporting children's behaviour.

### Resources

- To enrich the curriculum by providing enough planned and appropriate resources throughout the school.

### Staff

- To maintain an environment where each individual supports, respects and values the efforts of colleagues.
- To work effectively as a whole school team.

## **Parents**

- To give parents the information they need to have high expectations of their child.
- To feel involved and valued in their children's learning by engaging their expertise and experience to benefit the school as a whole.

## **Governors**

- To enable staff, pupils and parents to be aware of the role of governors and who individual governors are, by developing links with the school improvement plan and working in partnership with staff.

## **Environment**

- For all members of the school community to create a safe, purposeful, stimulating and welcoming environment which promotes learning for all. For this the children should feel pride and respect for their school and, ultimately, for themselves.

## **Community**

- To give the school a higher profile within the local community and where possible to use resources within the community to enhance children's learning.

## Our Vision Statement

***The Fryern Federation*** will be rights respecting, happy, caring, secure and safe schools; where all children achieve the best possible outcomes within a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

Fryern Infant  
Nurture, Challenge and Inspire

Fryern Junior  
High Standards, Happy Children.

### **MISSION**

To:

- provide an exciting and creative curriculum
- achieve high standards
- develop enquiring minds
- develop knowledge of children's rights, foster respect and instil a sense of responsibility
- recognise and celebrate success in everyone
- build strong collaborative partnerships with families and the local community
- encourage and enable the continuing professional development of all staff

### **VALUES**

We:

- are a mutually supportive, motivated community
- take care of, respect and enjoy our environment
- enjoy working as a team
- have high expectations
- encourage through praise and reward
- value everyone and enable everyone to believe in themselves
- value life-long learning
- enjoy finding new ways of thinking and learning
- take responsibility for our own actions
- enjoy sharing our successes
- embrace challenges
- value the support of parents and the wider community

### **OUR SCHOOL AIMS**

We believe that the primary years at school are a vital part of the whole development of each child. In support of that belief we strive to:

- Generate a stable and caring environment which will stimulate them socially, physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually at their own level. Involve the children in a wide range of educational experiences encouraging them to explore, challenge, question, predict and develop their own initiative and independence.
- Ensure that children flourish and achieve their full potential.
- Provide a curriculum that is exciting, interesting and challenging that meets the needs of each individual child and builds on their strengths and interests.
- Encourage a sense of self-worth and self-respect, honesty and integrity as well as respect and tolerance for others and their views.
- Engage the support of parents and community in the process of learning which is life-long.

- Our ultimate aim is to give all our children the confidence and enthusiasm to become life-long learners.

## **Fairfields Primary School**

### ***The Aims of the School***

- To promote high standards of pupil attainment.
- To provide high quality learning opportunities.
- To ensure that all pupils strive to achieve their full potential.
- To provide appropriate support for all pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- To provide a safe and secure working environment which is welcoming and offers inspiration.
- To build good relationships between the school and the community.
- To create an environment where parents and families feel that they can play a valuable part in their child's education.
- To encourage pupils to be open, honest, caring and thoughtful.
- To encourage all members of the school community to respect the rights and feelings of others.
- To broaden the experiences of all pupils in the realms of:
  - language and literacy
  - mathematics
  - knowledge and understanding of the world and other cultures.
- To give every child the opportunity to develop their physical and creative talents.
- To offer opportunities for moral and spiritual development.
- To recognise that education is constantly changing and that this school is prepared to promote change for the better.

## **Manor Field Junior School**

### **Ready, Steady RRR – From Finish to Start**

“Although it may not ‘tick the OfSTED box’ and despite the fact that it is a little ‘unconventional’, how could Community Cohesion be given less than ‘Outstanding’? The values of this school are based on ‘The United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child’. Is there any better way of promoting Community Cohesion? United... Nations... Meaning that you work together to ensure the cohesion, the sense of belonging and identity for every child, despite which nation they belong to. I understand that Community Cohesion at Manor Field Junior School is ‘outstanding’.” OfSTED Feedback, January, 2011, Manor Field Junior School.

When we began our RRR ‘journey’, it was not to complete a tick list, not to gain any certificates or awards, neither was it to adhere to any OfSTED criteria. We began integrating the articles of the UNCRC and exploring the real meaning of Rights Respecting children... teachers... families... people... because it was the right thing to do. If we had needed an authority to do so, article 42 of the UNCRC states: “The Government should make the convention known to parents and children.”

The reason for the success of RRR in our school has been that it has been shared by all, communicated with all and it has become an ethos that has been consistently valued by children, parents, school and all members of the school community.

There have been many different outcomes over the past seven years since we introduced RRR and it is difficult to know which have been the most significant, but I hope that the following will help to reflect the nature of RRR at Manor Field Junior School and the impact that RRR has had on our school community.

“Does Mrs Cushing run the school or does she help the school to run?” A quote from a pupil at the school, aged 9.

Why did we begin our RRR journey? What were we hoping to achieve? What was the motivation? With a topic based curriculum already in place, it was not difficult to integrate the articles from the UNRC into planning, but what else did we do and what else did we hope to achieve? And when we began planning and delivering staff training on ‘democratic classrooms’ and the real meaning of ‘pupil participation’, what did we plan as expected outcomes?

When a nine year old pupil can sum up the true meaning of a rights respecting school in one sentence, what else is left to say? This quote was the result of a discussion with a group of children prior to the arrival at our school of some visitors from Wales, including the Welsh Children’s Commissioner. In recognising that Mrs Cushing, the head teacher, is not solely responsible for ‘running the school’, the child also acknowledged the importance of pupil participation at Manor Field. Through staff consistently modelling rights respecting behaviour, children at Manor Field genuinely recognise that they have a voice and that their voice is genuinely listened to and their opinions genuinely responded to. The days of ‘paying lip-service’ to school council are over and it is our responsibility, as adults working with young people, to continue to empower them to become responsible citizens who can make positive contributions to the wider world.

The need for leadership...

Having recognised the value of pupil participation, there is however a need for strong leadership of RRR if it is going to be successfully integrated. Whilst individual teachers can take responsibility for integrating articles from the UNCRC in their own planning, and promoting a democratic classroom, without the head teacher embracing RRR, giving it time and value, can it ever be embedded in the school?

From our initial county RRR training to this date today, RRR has been driven ‘from the top’. The most significant contributory factor to success at Manor Field has been the strong

leadership: both in terms of having a member of leadership staff to inspire others and 'lead the way' by example, but also having a head teacher who embraced and believed the ethos of RRR making time for it within the constraints of an already very busy and at times over loaded school. Whilst government initiatives continue to be implemented and then change, the fact that the leadership team were not prepared to compromise the ethos of RRR, was paramount to success. The message given by the leadership team is this: RRR at Manor Field is not a choice, it is a pre-requisite.

Whereas you might WANT RRR to be delivered creatively, you NEED RRR to be valued and lead by the leadership team AND the head teacher.

***“Why do we need individual credits? We understand when our teachers and LSAs are pleased with us, so why do we need anything else?”***

*A quote from a child, pre-referendum*

In a school which had historically always had a high percentage of children on the SEN register with SEBD as a primary need, behaviour management had always been a strong focus on our strategic plan. When we began our 'RRR journey', we replaced the idea of stickers with both an individual and a class credit system.

Class credits were rewarded when the whole class, working in cohesion, met a target which they had set for themselves, e.g. All children remembering their reading books because we have a right to an education. An agreed number of class credits meant that the children could choose a class activity that they would like to engage in.

Individual credits however, were to individually recognise and value children for their individual contribution – either academic or social. *“Credit to you,”* became key vocabulary amongst our Learning Support Assistants, teachers and all other staff. When a child had collected a certain number of stickers, (the number was agreed with the class through a democratic classroom), they would be rewarded with a certificate.

In 2009, however, all this changed following a referendum requested and arranged by the school council. The children wanted to explore whether children needed to be 'rewarded' through a credit system. In their own way, they were looking at whether extrinsic or intrinsic motivation should be promoted in the school. Understanding their right to an education, they also showed a deeper understanding of their responsibilities and recognised that they had a responsibility to do their best, to contribute and to participate positively in their education.

The school voted unanimously that individual credits would no longer be awarded but that the class credit system would continue as it promoted positive relationships within the classroom, engaged children in collaboration and team work and encouraged children to work together to make their classroom world ***'a better place.'***



Making the world a better place... Manor Field goes 'Global'  
If children cannot get along with the children who sit on their table, if they cannot communicate well with the children in their classroom or form positive relationships with the other people who live in their direct community, how will they ever develop empathy for children living in other parts of the world? One of our main focus areas over the past few years has been to develop our understanding of global education and to challenge our views of a global citizen. Whilst

other schools might have chosen to make international links with other schools, we have very much focused on developing in the children the idea that we are all equal, no matter which part of the world we come from, our gender, our religion, our economic background...etc. etc. Whilst we don't have formalised international links, we are linked internationally through the very fact that we have the same rights as all other children around the world – be it that they live next door to us, in the next town or on a different continent.



'RRR is Embedded at Manor Field Junior School??'

In July 2009 we were awarded our level 2 Rights Respecting School Award. Unicef recognised that we had worked hard to 'embed' RRR in the school, both through teaching children about the articles from the UNCRC but also through establishing an ethos of RRR. The report recognised that:

- **'Effective leadership has enabled the language and individual Articles of the Convention to permeate into different aspects of the school, including policies, the curriculum, the strategic plan and assemblies.'**
- RRR is integrated throughout the curriculum which has been **'carefully and skilfully planned to incorporate teaching and learning about the Rights of the Child.'**
- Relationships are positive in the school. Children and children, staff and staff, children and staff interact positively. **'Respect for all is evident at the school through the very calm atmosphere and demeanour of all the children and the obvious trust that adults and children have in each other.'**
- Global education features throughout the school curriculum. **'A strong emphasis is placed on children valuing themselves and their place in the community.'**
- The school council actively engages children in making real decisions about the school. All children have a voice and make meaningful contributions. **'There is an effective and flourishing school council which is valued highly by the children. The children have a genuine sense of empowerment and are able to participate in decision making in relation to a very wide range of aspects of the school.'**
- **'An ethos has been created that centres on valuing and respecting the voice of the children in all aspects of the life of the school with the result that pupil voice is very strong and the children are fully involved in all aspects of school life.'**
- **'All members of the school community have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC and the responsibilities that individual Rights of the Child imply for everyone.'**
- **'The language of Rights, Respect and Responsibilities features regularly in conversations between children and adults and is strong contributory factor in the high quality moral thinking and respect for each other.'**
- **'Parents are knowledgeable and supportive.'**

As a school, we were immensely proud of our achievement and the school community celebrated.

So had our RRR journey finished? Had we crossed the finish line?



Since the validation as a level 2 Rights Respecting School in July 2009, we have been continuing to develop links with RRR and to 'embed' RRR in our curriculum and throughout our school. And in July 2011, with new staff on board and to prepare for the new intake of children in September, our RRR journey had begun again...

Whilst we have worked hard as a school community to 'embed' RRR, we recognise that this is not a process which can ever be completed. It was never a check list to tick. It was and is an ethos, a belief system, a set of values. With turbulence in schools, the need to constantly revisit and review is clear. This year our July day closure was dedicated to reviewing current good practice with regards RRR and planning for the autumn term. Although RRR has become embedded deeply within some of us and has become our ethos, our belief system and our set of values, it would be foolish to assume that this can continue unless it remains high priority and unless it is explicit for all. When something is embedded there is a danger that it can become almost hidden from others and so, as one school year draws to an end and another one begins, we cross one finish line and begin a new RRR journey all over again. Just as we 'finish', we 'start' again...

### ***Top tips for the successful integration of RRR:***

- Ensure that the message is coming from the very 'top'. The head teacher of any school wanting to successfully become an RRR school MUST be involved in consistently



embracing the ethos of RRR. Without this, a school cannot truly integrate RRR or 'embed' it

- Consider carefully, as a whole staff, the motivation for wanting to become involved in RRR
- Ensure that there is a shared understanding of why RRR should be incorporated into a school – this is never to tick a box
- NEVER assume that all the 'boxes are ticked'
- Understand that RRR is a process that will never be complete. How will RRR ever be fully integrated when you consider the changing population of a school? Revisit, revisit, revisit!
- Start small but aim big! Embrace idealistic values! Encourage and celebrate the notion that every small step can help to change the world!
- Be creative in finding new ways to engage children in the articles. Take risks with articles that you feel might 'open a can of worms' and ask yourselves – is it a can which needs opening? But ensure that staff are trained with how to 'open cans' with sensitivity, knowing and understanding the children in their classes
- Model consistently rights respecting behaviour and language
- NEVER make assumptions that people will understand why you doing what you are doing, but make the aims and values of RRR explicit through all that you do so that it never becomes 'hidden'
- NEVER assume that people share common values or beliefs – make the vision of the school clear to all so that it can be maintained despite changes, turbulence, new governments....
- Ensure ownership of RRR – regularly review school agreements, school and class charters, school policies which detail RRR. By reviewing and sharing ownership, you are empowering people to continually promote RRR
- Put RRR at 'the heart of the school'. Consider RRR as the driving force. Integrate other subjects within RRR, rather than RRR within other subjects
- Equip yourselves with the idea that RRR is based on a 'never changing set of values'. When new initiatives are brought in by new governments, when policies change, when there is turbulence in schools, know that the values framework remains a constant
- Communicate the vision and values of RRR through all aspects of the school
- Consider the present day by reviewing and building on the past, to help to build a better future
- Look at things in new ways. See things from different points of view. Challenge your own viewpoints and your own perceptions. Be open to change

## Cherbourg Primary School

As with many schools our ethos has always been to encourage respect within our community, but our work with the three Rs of Rights Respect and Responsibility has enabled us to place our values within a clear and universal framework.

Perhaps one of the biggest changes for us as we develop as a rights-respecting school has been to explicitly use the articles of the Convention as a stimulus for diverse subject teaching and learning. For example, Year 1 were prompted to think about “*the right to a standard of living good enough to meet their physical and mental needs*” (Article 27), as a springboard to exploring their ideas of Space within their science topic. What they thought life on a new planet should be like was challenged by questions such as: What will you need on the new planet? What would you like to have in your new home? Would it be necessary to have all these things? Do all children on earth have these things? Is this fair? How will you make sure that all children will be able to live like this on your new planet?



In Year 3 Literacy, the children used Articles 13 and 30, relating to freedom of expression and the right of children of minorities to enjoy and practice the culture and religion of their people, to write their own prayers and thoughts. Even though the pupils knew they were writing for a display, children wrote honestly and thoughtfully; “*Dear God, please help me to talk to somebody because I can't*”, “*Please God, I want to be good to myself by being friends to others*”.



school and  
into our Core  
vocabulary of

- to teach about the Convention and the corresponding responsibilities
- to educate parents about our approach through family learning
- to use the articles of the Convention as a stimulus for our teaching across the curriculum.

What difference has this made to the children?

- The lessons have become more creative and relevant to the children.
- The children find it easier to express their ideas and demonstrate empathy.
- There are key connections between diverse subjects, making it easier to embed the learning.
- The pupils have more opportunities to refer to the framework of the Convention from a variety of contexts.
- And lastly, the staff are more confident of using the Convention to support learning across the curriculum.

## RRR lesson planning prompts

### Suggested questions to ask about integrating RRR in the lesson plan

How might RRR feature naturally in the lesson?

(There are often plenty of opportunities in traditional stories, history, science, geography, etc.)

Could it be incorporated into the lesson objective?

Are there opportunities to incorporate the terms *rights, respect and responsibilities* and so contribute to understanding?

Is there a way of manageably assessing the added value of including RRR?

### Suggested planning questions to ask about lesson content

- What rights in the UN Convention are being denied or supported?
- Who is or is not taking responsibility for this?
- Does the situation need to be changed in any way? If so, can children suggest how?

### Suggested planning questions to ask about how the RRR aspects benefit children

- How does the situation connect to children's own experiences and perceptions?
- Are there comparable situations of which they are aware? (In their own lives, at school, in the playground, in stories they have read, in other lesson content, in the news.)
- Is positive change possible and appropriate in those situations?

### But, rights are not always so clear cut!

Rights sometimes appear to conflict with each other. This may be the case in many moral dilemmas in science, geography, RE and history. (See *The right to light?* material for a worked example at: [www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/childrensrights/rrr-materialforteachers/rrr-therighttolight](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/childrensrights/rrr-materialforteachers/rrr-therighttolight) .)

- Can this be resolved? How can children assess the quality of the evidence?
- Can the arguments be explored through dialogue?
- Does one particular right have to take precedence over another?
- Does everyone necessarily agree on these judgements?

**RRR: it is as much about *how* we teach and learn as *what* we teach and learn.**

### Suggested questions to ask about teaching and learning styles during the lesson

- Can your teaching style exemplify an RRR approach, erg: participatory, democratic?
- Are there opportunities for group work and purposeful talk?
- At some point can children take the initiative and direct their own learning?
- Can you model rights-respecting behaviours with the children and other adults?

Planning a particular rights-related lesson is a valuable step in developing the RRR perspectives across curriculum plans, through teaching styles, behaviour modelling and school ethos.

## **Classroom charters – are we getting it right?**

### ***Building the shared values of a Rights Respecting classroom***

#### **Introduction**

Classroom charters are very popular. The collaboration between children and adults in age and ability-appropriate ways to agree a charter for a Rights Respecting classroom has proved to be a very valuable part of the process of making the UNCRC a real and meaningful guide to action at a day-to-day level.

We have been reviewing their development and use with a range of practitioners and offer some reflections here.

#### **What is a class charter?**

Children and adults in a class or tutor group select those rights they agree are the most important in relation to what is done in that classroom. The process of developing a charter is as important as the end product. The process must be participatory, inclusive and build on the prior learning about the difference between *wants* and *needs*. How this might be done is explained on the following pages in greater detail.

For very young children rights may need to be reworded. As children move beyond their early years, they will learn that their rights under the UNCRC are based on their needs to thrive as human beings. These rights are to do with:

- their health and safety (survival)
- their protection from harm and abuse
- the development of their potential
- their inclusion and participation in the life of the society around them (immediately, locally and globally).

In learning that these rights are universal, children understand that this means that their rights are bound up in respecting the rights of others. Some like to refer to this reciprocity as *rights and responsibilities*. There is a danger, however, in that by just looking at this reciprocity the responsibilities of adults are left out.

Children also learn that adults, especially their parents/carers and policy makers, have the responsibility to ensure that these rights are known about, promoted and respected by all. So the charter for a Rights Respecting classroom is for all, including adults.

The end product itself is always subject to review by the class from time to time in order to reinforce/refresh commitment. It helps if the charter is therefore dated.

What is agreed is then set out in a way that can be easily seen around the room and signed-up to by all those participating.

#### **What is the aim of a class charter?**

A class charter is a way of making the rights of the child real and meaningful to pupils, based on their own situation and experiences. The process of developing the class charter can serve to unite the class. It develops a sense of ownership of the classroom and learning. Once developed, the charter becomes a point of reference for the class and once signed by the teacher, assistants and the pupils it signifies a shared enterprise and acts as the *social*

*glue* which binds everyone together. We would recommend that children also have a say in how it is displayed.

### **In what way is it different from *golden rules* or *codes of behaviour*?**

The class charter is not a direct behaviour management tool. It is indicating that a significant part of the role of the school and the teacher is to help realise the rights of the child. Rules are something which are often externally imposed, whereas charters are democratically negotiated using an internationally agreed values framework. It should begin a process of replacing rules.

*"We used to have rules that you made and we often broke. Now we've got responsibility and we have to choose, there's no-one else to blame but me. It's my responsibility to make the right choice!"*  
(Year 4 child)

### **How do you approach the linking of rights with responsibilities?**

The main point to remember is that *the rights of the child are not conditional on responsibilities. Rights do imply, but are independent of responsibilities.*

A right cannot be withdrawn as a punishment but what can be withdrawn is the opportunity to infringe other people's rights.

Adults working with children need to model Rights Respecting behaviour and use Rights Respecting language in order to reinforce the benefits of this values system.

A child needs to see and hear how rights abusing/denying behaviour is identified by an adult and how the adult uses the language of rights to help a child understand how they have failed to respect the rights of others and how this choice has negative consequences. This will help the children themselves become empowered by the language and concepts they acquire from this Rights Respecting culture. This reasoning may still lead to a child being removed from their classroom to have their right to education experienced alone or in a different setting, but the rationale is clearly rooted in the Rights Respecting framework. Pupils who may end up excluded from school still have the same right to education as children in school. Under the Convention it is up to the state to organise this.

### **Do *actions* speak louder than *responsibilities*?**

As children grow the charter should be rooted more in the Convention with pupils selecting the Articles that they consider are most appropriate to them. A common way is to have columns of rights and responsibilities.

In arriving at responsibilities it is not unusual for pupils to be unable to agree on one responsibility and where that is the case it is okay to have more than one responsibility allied to an agreed right.

An alternative is to set out the charter with rights but instead of using the term *responsibilities*, insert the phrase *"actions (by children/adults) to ensure these rights are enjoyed by all"*. It is still a charter for a Rights Respecting classroom.

## Why do teachers and assistants sign the charter?

This is more than a symbolic gesture. It is about indicating to children that the whole experience of teaching and learning is a shared enterprise and will work best if we all keep to the class charter. It strengthens the relationship between children and adults.

## Do charters vary with the age of children?

Yes, initially with very young children they may be very simple and use images instead of words or as well as. As children move into upper Key Stage 2 it would be more common for children to make more references to the Articles in the Convention.

In secondary schools, tutor groups/year groups can generate charters at the outset, depending on the extent of support from teachers and assistants. Due to the way most secondary schools are structured, however, they should look at ways of securing agreement to a charter to which all children, perhaps through their tutor groups, have been able to contribute and to which everyone agrees to sign. This can then be the point of reference for the whole school.

## What is the best way to develop a class charter with pupils?

Sam Francis, Advanced Skills Teacher for Citizenship at Portway Junior School, outlines her approach:

- recap on the UNCRC
- consolidate why the Convention was agreed upon and why it exists, and the importance of children under 18 having rights. Extend to include the Human Declaration of Rights for adults and the similarities and differences
- pick the Articles, from the UNCRC, that specifically relate to the children's lives in school (e.g.: Articles 3, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 37, 39) then get them to discuss how and why these relate to life in school
- *diamond nine* the children's choices making sure they can justify their reasons. These have differed in each class depending on the cohort, ethnic backgrounds, etc.
- the next task is to use the six most popular and reasoned Articles for the class charter, then the children need to identify the responsibilities that link with the six most popular Articles
- the next process is the agreement of wording and ownership by the class/ tutor group or school of the charter. Voting democratically about its design, placement within the school/class, signing of the charter and what role the teacher plays on the charter (responsibilities/rights/ signature, etc.). Talk about any issues that the children have, e.g.: not signing, wording, what happens if new people arrive
- the wording on the charter should make a link to the UNCRC and each Article should have one main responsibility
- the next stage is to link the charter to rewards and sanctions, discussing and agreeing as a class how these link into the classroom
- it is important to revisit and tweak the charter as a class; which is a good exercise if new people join the class, good for circle time, and also helps with children settling into a new class/school.

## In addition

- Teachers could also use the SEAL materials for support if needed.
- The children link *Every child matters* into their chosen Articles, discuss the importance and any specific links. (This can also be linked to any of the schools initiatives – Healthy Schools, Sustainable Environment, etc.)
- Link to the citizenship objectives:



- research and debating issues/ events
- know why/how rules/laws are made
- discuss anti-social behaviour
- take part in making/changing rules
- different types of responsibilities
- resolving differences
- explaining choice.

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