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child rights  
is wrong.  
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## RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

<b>School:</b>	GOSBERTON HOUSE SCHOOL.
<b>Headteacher:</b>	LOUISE STANTON.
<b>RRSA coordinator:</b>	LEE GREGORY.
<b>Local authority:</b>	LINCOLNSHIRE.
<b>Assessor:</b>	ELIZABETH NEAL.
<b>Date:</b>	25 <sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2013.

### Summary:

I would like to thank Gosberton House School for the very warm welcome I received. I saw the full life of the school and met a comprehensive range of pupils and adults – all talked so very enthusiastically about the rights of the child and what this means to them and their school. It was clear that everyone places a vital importance on developing a rights respecting ethos.

Gosberton House is an outstanding school ensuring the best interests of the child are paramount in all policies, planning and actions. All the staff I met are totally committed to placing the values sitting within the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child at the heart of their vision for the school and their day to day practices. I was very impressed with how the nature of the Convention permeated both children's and adults' approaches not only to each other, but also, to their understanding of global citizenship. This is indeed a rights respecting school where the pupil voice is strong, thoroughly listened to and where the language of rights is used by all to negotiate ways forward in relation to all aspects of the school and especially: teaching, learning and behaviour. It soon became clear that the children and staff have absorbed the Convention's values as a way of life.

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

## THE ASSESSMENT IN DETAIL



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### The school context:

This is an average sized Special School in the village of Gosberton in Lincolnshire. With 90 on roll the school mainly serves pupils with autistic spectrum conditions and social, communication and language difficulties. The school has been awarded "Autism Accreditation" from the National Autistic Society. Most pupils however, have additional needs either moderate or severe learning difficulties including medical needs. The school has more boys than girls on roll: the proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is high.

It is important to note also that the school's outreach role helps over 60 schools with advice about pupils with autistic spectrum and social, communication and language difficulties.

### Assessment information

Self-evaluation form received	Yes
Impact evaluation form received	No
Attendees at SLT meeting	<b>2: the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher.</b>
Number of children and young people interviewed	10
Number of staff interviewed	8 including a Governor and a Parent.
Evidence provided	Meeting with the Headteacher, meeting with the R.R.S.A. Coordinator (Deputy Headteacher) – together forming the Steering Group, Learning Walk accompanied by 2 children, meeting with a parent, meeting with a Governor, group discussion with 8 children, meetings with 2 Teaching Assistants, meetings with 2 Teachers, scrutiny of the provided Portfolio of Evidence, the submission of the R.R.S.A. Level1 Action Plan, the R.R.S.A. Level 1 Self Evaluation Process and attendance in numerous lessons.



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## Standard A: Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

### Summary:

#### Standard A has been met.

There is no doubt the Convention's values are embedded in the school's total philosophy. This was evidenced in my discussions with staff, pupils and also through my learning walk including access to numerous lessons. The Senior Leadership Team, and indeed all the staff I met, including a Governor and Parent stated that a vital benefit of becoming a Rights Respecting school is the values framework providing an overarching coherence to the school improvement strategies and how these shared values facilitate further school community cohesion. These values are made explicit in the school's strategic planning, policies, schemes of work, development plan (a working document on display in the staffroom) and practices including assemblies and the linking of existing displays to the relevant articles.

Integral to the school's curriculum are opportunities to explore and celebrate different cultures including different cultural festivals of dual language families. The children are encouraged to see themselves as global citizens: to this end the school is to participate in the International Schools Award and to twin/support a school in Bihar, India. As the Bihar school has very little access to the internet Gosberton House is liaising through a member of staff's family. Children are helped to recognise the similarities and differences between their school and the one in India including the promotion of the Indian culture and life style.

I witnessed all employed personnel modelling rights respecting behaviour: both language and actions. Indeed the school requires the modelling to prevail so consistently for its young people that the Leadership Team has provided I.N.S.E.T. on the values within the Rights Respecting School Award to the 25 – 30 drivers who transport the pupils to and from school. The pupils are now sitting down with their drivers and composing taxi charters. Some of the pupils travel considerable distances to access the school. The Leadership Team is keen to promote the values beyond the school gates. This is further sustained with information provided to families through newsletters and the school's website. All parents have received a leaflet itemising the articles of the Convention and the newsletter highlights an article of the term with accompanying pictures of children discussing the article and linking it to their classroom charter. A further photograph illustrates the children discussing the difference between a want and a need using the wants and needs cards. In discussion with a parent she made it clear how her child understood how his rights may well affect the rights of his brother's and the need sometimes for some negotiation. The mum said: "I wish all schools could be like this one. Oh yes this is definitely a rights respecting school."

The school's R.R.S.A. Self Evaluation cites its work on the promotion of the R.R.S.A. "to other schools. This work will be undertaken during in house outreach training days."



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## Standard B:

### The whole school community learns about the CRC

#### Summary:

#### Standard B has been met.

All the young people and staff I met were consistently aware of how the articles of the Convention link with global citizenship. The pupils I met were very aware of how the articles applied to all young people but that some children despite being entitled did not receive them. Both the adults and the children described how the Convention had become important to them as a guide for living. The school reports more positive attitudes towards diversity in society with pupils' development as global citizens. The inclusion of the nature of the Convention the school reports, has helped improve relationships further. The school, including the Governors, reports an increased readiness of the young people to take responsibility for their choices, including looking out for each other even more, with a promotion in language development through negotiation using the language of rights. All the staff reported how working with the young people has provided, and continues to do so, enhanced job satisfaction as the pupils have grown to expect a say in their own learning. Pupils are keen to be involved with the R.R.S.A. process and indeed are very persuasive advocates for the Convention's values. As some of the pupils reported to me about the wants and needs exercise: "We wanted lots of things but had to think hard if we really needed it. We worked in two groups. We worked on our own and shared information ... we did good listening." I saw some lovely photographs of the pupils enacting the articles required for survival: a child providing medical care as a Doctor; the nature of a safe place (in discussions with the children this article was of particular importance to them.) They were resounding in their affirmation of how they felt very safe in this school.

All the pupils told me they are very pleased to contribute to Christian Aid, Children in Need, Water Aid, The Shoe Box Appeal, Day for Change, collecting glasses for blind people in the developing world, Phil the Bag with old clothes, again for the developing world, and the tinned foods donated for the Harvest Festival are given to Centre Point in Boston, Lincolnshire. Some of the pupils were on the eco school council (the school has the Eco – school Green Flag's status.) These young people were very aware of initiatives to help others. They told me how they will keep trying to help others including contributing to "Enough Food for Everyone."

As numerous pupils have communication and language difficulties: in our discussions we were aided by the school's use of Communicating In Print providing the children with visual clues. Our discussion was lively, thought provoking and profound some times. The Teaching Assistants reported to me "it was lovely to see how the children have picked it (the Convention and its language) up."

I was impressed with the school's commitment to promoting the R.R.S.A.'s values to all visiting agency professionals and work placement students. These training workshops are also offered to parents to extend their knowledge of the Award. The aim being to promote the transfer of pupils' use of rights respecting values and language to the home setting. The school is also developing a new scheme "linked to Autism friendly social skills records to



include references to rights and respect." Ofsted reports in March, 2012 on "the excellent use of symbols and other communicative devices ... parents and carers are particularly appreciative of the progress pupils make in managing their behaviour and in becoming more sociable. This is because respect for each others' views is so well modelled and responded to by staff ...visits, visitors and a host of practical and sensory experiences enrich the curriculum. These underpin pupils' learning very well and help them to build up tolerance of different experiences and settings, and of working with different people."

## **Standard C:** The school has a rights-respecting ethos

### **Summary:**

#### **Standard C has been met.**

The pupils have enjoyed creating their classroom charters based on the Convention and indeed are finding the use of charters important beyond the classroom, for instance the taxi charters. Pupils were very enthusiastic about the process of their creation. I saw photographs of pupils discussing the contents of their charters. The pupils reported how they "worked in pairs sharing and listening to each others' views." Class 3's charter: "All children in this class have a right to a classroom where – the children listen to their teacher and the teacher listens to the children. Everyone thinks and makes helpful choices. We are all honest, everyone can work hard, they are looked after especially if they are hurt, everyone can do their best, everyone can play and be friends together, the children help each other, we are kind with our words and actions – not to hurt people's feelings." Classes 4 and 5 are similar with the following additions: Class 4 – "Everyone is to keep safe when playing in all play areas." Class 5 "To have time to play." In the process of constructing their charters the pupils drew pictures to make explicit their understanding of the articles. The pupils reported to me how they had signed their charter and the positive impact of the charters: how these complement the existing school ethos. The T. A.s I met reported how the charters are "vital working documents" on how to "work and learn together" and are used as an integral part of the day to day working routines. The pupils reported how very safe they were in school: "it is a good school – there isn't any bullying or fighting." They reported that if they made an "unhelpful choice" the consequence was fair and involved missing some minutes of playtime – the number of minutes determined by the nature of the choice. Pupils understood that a helpful choice promoted the rights of young people.

The school regularly audits the pupils' views using the outcomes to inform future planning – most recently in relation to school meals. I was impressed with how the language of rights promotes in the school, pupil self, and group reflection, to support conflict resolution. In March 2012 O.f.S.T.E.D reported that "pupils make significant strides ... in the ways in which they are more aware of and take account of others' needs ... and (the school is successful) also in developing pupils' understanding of the consequences of their actions." When asked the children definitely stated this is a rights respecting school.

## **Standard D:** Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners



**Summary:  
Standard D has been fully met.**

The children said to me "that all new children would be happy and they would help a new child by showing them how the class and school works." The children "love" their school. They talked about how the school council is a vehicle for them to help make the school an even better place and how this is a totally inclusive process. They also told me how they have every chance to talk to teachers about their learning and how everyone gets a fair chance to do their best including helping others with their work. They know how to get help including the use of "Got a Problem Notices."

The children in this school are thriving and their developing confidence in this safe and nurturing environment is empowering. Pupils are enabled to think and consider for themselves.

This school represents exemplary rights respecting practice. It was a pleasure to meet everyone.

**The future:**

**The school has almost reached the Level 2 standard. To achieve Level 2 the school would need to:**

**Continue actively promoting global citizenship;**

**Continue embedding the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child within their systems and structures;**

**Continue, and expand on, the school being an ambassador for rights and the language of rights when talking to others.**