

## **Foyle View**

(SINGING)

*Hello, Owen*

*It's good to see you*

*Hello, Owen*

*It's good to see you*

*I must say*

*You make my day*

*Hello, hello, hello*

NARRATOR: In 2009, Foyle View School became the first special school in Northern Ireland to achieve the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award Level Two.

### **Dr Michael Dobbins, Principal**

MICHAEL DOBBINS: Welcome to Foyle View. We're delighted to be known as a Rights Respecting School, and we'd like to show you a little of how what we do at the school reflects the values behind the Rights Respecting School Award. A Rights Respecting School is just that, a school that puts the rights of every individual at the heart of its ethos. From the youngest child in the nursery to the eldest in the leavers' class. From the most able of our youngsters to those with the greatest, complex and multiple difficulties.

NARRATOR: What the Rights Respecting School Award recognizes is how, all through the school, Foyle View applies the five major areas covered in the U.N. Convention on the rights of the child.

The right to a childhood, the right to be healthy, the right to an education, the right to be treated fairly, and the right to be heard. The right to a childhood includes the right to relax, play, and take part in cultural, artistic, and other recreational activities.

STUDENT: I have the right to friends, and I have the right to be in a band called Rockview with all my friends.

NARRATOR: The right to be healthy means that children should have a clean, safe environment and the best care possible to develop healthily. The right to an education means developing every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full, encouraging each one of them to fulfil their potential.

STUDENT: I have a right to education. We do maths, music, ICT, cookery, work experience, PE and PSE.

NARRATOR: Children also have the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination, whatever their background or abilities.

TEACHER: Which one would you like? Tell me which one.

ALEX: Hot pot.

TEACHER: Please.

DIANE: Hot pot.

TEACHER: Okay, you give that to Diane, you'll get your hot pot. Good boy, well done.

DIANE: Good man, Alex, thank you.

TEACHER: Hot pot for Alex. Take your plate.

NARRATOR: And they have the right to be heard. To say what they think should happen, and have their opinions taken into account. For example, as well as their staff council, Foyle View have created a school council. The learners have the opportunity to elect their own council members.

### **Denise White, Class Teacher**

DENISE WHITE: So over the past few weeks here in Foyle View we have been working very, very hard towards our school elections. As you can see from the hall here today, it's absolutely packed with people here going to vote. Forty students from both primary and secondary departments have put themselves forward to be a great asset to Foyle View School Council, and they have reflected over the past couple of days on their skills and talents and really believe that they could make better changes for the school. You can see that there's lots of posters up, lots of talents listed, what these students can provide.

NARRATOR: The school council meet regularly, giving the pupils opportunities to communicate their views. One recent topic of discussion has been to decide how best to celebrate the success of the school choir.

STUDENT: We could play bowls.

DENISE WHITE: Maybe going to have a game of bowls. Yes?

KELLY: Martha's Vineyard.

DENISE WHITE: Martha's Vineyard. You know, where is Martha's Vineyard, Kelly?

KELLY: Down the bowling alley.

DENISE WHITE: In the bowling alley.

NARRATOR: Minutes of the council meetings are also kept as a record of their decisions. This focus on becoming enablers of the children's rights, and empowering them to express their views at their level is at work in every part of the pupils' learning and personal care routines. It's always tailored to their individual needs, from how they can best learn, to choices about what to eat.

TEACHER: What is that? Toast?

TYRONE: Cheese.

TEACHER: Cheese? Have we got any cheese, Jane? We have a bit of cheese and that was such good speaking, I think you can have some cheese. Well done, Tyrone, good boy.

MICHAEL DOBBINS: For every learner inside and outside the classroom, we're very aware that respecting rights needs to be integral to all our relationships, including the one to one interaction between adults and children, and ultimately between one child and another.

NARRATOR: And it isn't only staff and children whose rights are respected. Parents, too, have the right to have their say. In one recent project, a group of parents worked together to produce a book of encouragement and information for other parents called "*Time For Me*". This gave them opportunities to share their experiences, learn from and support each other.

A rights respecting ethos also involves links with the wider community. The school is part of the Foyle Learning Community, and has connections with a number of local schools. Young people from the school take catering courses at the local regional college, and students from the college visit and help out in the classrooms at Foyle View, too.

TEACHER: Brilliant.

STUDENT: I couldn't get a white marker.

MICHAEL DOBBINS: We've also set up an award-winning and innovative inclusive play trail in the school grounds that's open for everyone in the local area and beyond. It can benefit pupils and staff from other schools and ours when they're able to spend time together. Being together, enjoying their own right to play, can help them begin to understand that others have the same rights too.

NARRATOR: Beyond the community, the staff at Foyle View introduce the children to broader ideas of human rights and global citizenship.

#### **Helena Downey, RRS Co-ordinator**

HELENA DOWNEY: In Foyle View, we believe that all children have rights, and with this in mind, we have been involved in a number of fund-raising events for Kifuruta Primary School in Uganda. It's one of the ways that we've tried to highlight the difficulties that children in other parts of the world can face. We have also set up a regular video link with a school in Pittsburgh. This is a great opportunity for our pupils to connect with others, and to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

MICHAEL DOBBINS: For us, UNICEF's Rights Respecting School Initiative has given us a values framework that's central to our school development. We are committed to being a Rights Respecting School, a community that both teaches the children about their own rights and the rights of others, but also models rights and respect in all that we do, enabling them to develop positive attitudes towards others and have a voice that's listened to.

(STUDENTS SINGING)

**CCEA would like to thank The Pupils & Teachers of Foyle View School**