

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

School:	St. Joseph's Primary School
Headteacher:	Mandy Whorlow
RRSA coordinator:	Natalie Lisi
Local authority:	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Number of pupils on roll:	31
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher and RRSA lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	15
Adults spoken with:	2 teachers, 1 support assistant, 4 parents
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: Oct 2021 Bronze achieved: March 2024
Assessor:	George Webb
Date of visit:	17 th June 2024

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Outcomes for Strands A, B and C have all been achieved.

St. Joseph's Primary School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

EVIDENCE FROM THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

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 living.

- Children were able to talk about their rights and give a variety of examples of rights they have been learning about. One child shared, *“We learn about our rights in class, we have the articles on all our displays and posters and talk about them all the time.”* Staff commented that *“it is just part of who we are, our ethos and approach to rights is embedded in everything we do.”* The children know rights are universal and unconditional, and that the CRC applies to all children and young people everywhere, all the time. A child summarised this by saying, *“Everyone has rights and they can’t be taken away.”*
- Children learn rights through weekly assemblies, class lessons and their charters with some children saying, *“We all got to decide on our class charter and what articles to include,”* and, *“Our assemblies help us learn more about our rights”.* Through topic planning and making the connections between learning and teaching, and rights being very visible, the children can demonstrate an awareness of where and why some children may not be able to access their rights. A child said, *“When we start a new topic, we start by working out what rights it covers.”* The RRSA lead added, *“Throughout our planning we always make sure we link it to children’s rights”* and that *“We have always been a school where we involve the children in their own learning and value their input.”* The headteacher added that *“It’s empowerment for the children,”* and that *“You can see this in our school values, and within all of our practices.”*
- Parents are informed about children’s rights through regular updates, newsletters and blogs. A parent shared *“My daughter is always talking to me about what she has been learning and equates to rights at home or in the community.”* A teacher added, *“The children are more confident and aware of their rights, they take the lead and are at the centre of what we do.”*

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the CRC, its origins, values and principles, consider adding a “Right of the month” approach or a cluster of rights that can link in with school events and campaign to develop deeper children’s understanding of rights. Consider linking this to current pupil groups and further develop campaigning based on a selected number of main events.
- Ensure that staff and children have an understanding that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional, using language appropriate to children and young people’s age and ability. The [ABCDE of Rights](#) will support this.
- Continue to support children to develop their understanding of sustainable development. Consider exploring the UN Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals) through [The World’s Largest Lesson](#) and how they impact on children’s rights and the wellbeing of the planet.

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.

- Children were able to explain their rights and how the school has helped them learn about and enjoy their rights. A child said, *“We learn about rights and what things we can do to make a difference. If we didn’t know about our rights, then we wouldn’t know that some children need adults to help them with their rights.”* Staff shared, *“We have a very much rights respecting ethos in our school and have the needs of the children at the heart of what we do and try our best to give them opportunities to learn and grow.”*
- Children and staff commented on the positive relationships within the school. The RRSA lead said, *“Even though we are a small school, we have created a hugely positive culture, where the children are respected and given the opportunity to shine.”* A child echoed this saying, *“We are a passionate school even though we are small, we are respectful and care about each other.”* Another child said that, *“The teachers are always there for us, when we have a problem or upset, they will help us.”*
- Children agreed that they feel safe, included in school and that their wellbeing is nurtured. Some children shared that *“We have been learning through Operation Safety, about alcohol, drugs and addiction, internet safety and vandalism”* and, *“We learn to be safe through the fire drills and safer inside drills, all the adults in the school wear badges, even visitors.”* Staff added, *“The children know that all the adults are duty bearers and are here to help them and keep them safe.”*
- The children value education and are involved in making decisions about their learning. Another added that *“We get to pick the topics we are learning in our class.”* The headteacher said that *“When we were revisiting our vision, values and aims and making the links to rights very clear, the children were fully involved. It is a holistic approach and part of our ethos.”*

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Explore with staff and children, the concepts of fairness, equity, and dignity – what they mean and how they underpin policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school.
- Re-visit and embed the UNICEF RRSA [Charter Guidance](#) and focus on the language of 'respect for rights' so that relationships are seen as mutually respectful. When charters are next reviewed, include actions for duty bearers as well as for children.
- Continue to support children and young people to feel confident in using the language of rights to resolve disagreements and address complex situations.

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.

- Children across both classes in the school have opportunities to share their views through a range of pupil groups such as school captains, Pupil Council, Eco Committee, Enterprise and Digital Leaders. Children can describe what all the groups do and how they link to their rights. The headteacher commented that, *“We have a history of involving children in groups, but it is now more structured, and everyone has been given opportunities to get involved.”* The RRSA lead added that *“Our children are given the opportunity to use their rights, to put them into practice, but they now also understand why rights are important.”* Staff shared that *“Through pupil voice we decide on which charities and events to support and then campaign for...our enterprise group raises funds for the school to help reduce the cost of the school day and we also relate these events back to children’s rights.”*
- The children can easily describe all the campaigning and charity activities that they have been involved in that promote children’s rights both locally and globally. A parent commented that, *“We do a lot of fundraising not just for the school or the local community but charities across the world. The children recently helped with a local event raising money for charity and the school. The children could then see where the money was going and who it would help.”* A child added, *“When we do fundraising, we get to decide on the charity, what we will do and learn how they money will be used to help.”* Another child shared, *“We get to plan events like the school fete and crazy hair day which are fun, but it also raises money to help children in other countries.”* A teacher added that *“Our children have been involved in events through SCIAF and Aid to the Church in Need Aid (ACN) looking at rights globally to local events such as foodbanks and blood banks.”*

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to provide opportunities for children to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school. Continue to include involvement in school improvement planning, policy review processes, the evaluation of learning and teaching (HGIOS).
- Continue to develop children’s understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen. Support them to be informed about the world so that they are critical thinkers and challenge discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.
- Continue to provide opportunities for more children to be involved in pupil led groups. Ensure they understand how this links to Article 12 and participation and can articulate the positive impact they have on school improvement and the school community.
- Support children to engage in a range of advocacy, campaigning and fundraising activities that promote children’s rights locally and globally perhaps linking with UNICEF UK’s [OutRight](#) Campaign and using UNICEF’s [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).