

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE.

School:	James Hamilton Primary and Sgoil na Ciolle Nuaidh
Headteacher:	Lorraine Dougan
RRSA coordinator:	Laura Macdonald and Lesley Stewart
Local authority:	East Ayrshire
Number of pupils on roll:	393
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, 2 x RRSA Coordinators
Number of children and young people spoken with:	11 learners
Adults spoken with:	3 teachers, 2 parents, Home Link Worker
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: 03 January 2019 Bronze achieved: 05 February 2019
Assessor(s):	Steven Kidd
Date of visit:	07 December 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

James Hamilton Primary and Sgoil na Ciolle Nuaidh have 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.

- Pupils were confident in sharing a good selection of articles such as education and play and were able to link these to their learning, noting how rights feature in assemblies and in class: *"It comes up in a lot of lessons"*. This was supported by evidence which demonstrated how rights are woven through learning as well as through discrete activities such as a Right of the Week initiative.
- *"Rights are visible all over the school, in English and Gaelic,"* noted a teacher, discussing the ever-present nature of rights in the environment and in learning. Staff spoke positively about the support they received to make rights a part of their everyday teaching, highlighting the value of regular sharing of resources and guidance through the dedicated RRS channel on Teams.
- Parental engagement seemed strong. Parents confirmed that rights are featured in many of the school's communications and most had discussed at home with their children: *"It comes through from the kids and all the things that come from the school... they're very aware of rights."* They were pleased with the impact: *"They know why they're doing it... you're creating well-rounded young adults who know their rights and the rights of those around them."*

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

- Continue to widen the range of articles that the whole school community is familiar with, appropriate to age and ability.
- 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
- Strengthen early years engagement with the RRSA journey, embedding rights-based language and considering staff CPD.

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.

- *“This is not just about getting the status,” explained the headteacher, “We wanted it to really be part of the ethos, a way of being rather than a bolt on.”* That commitment to rights could be seen across policy and practice and was picked up on by adults throughout the visit. An RRSA lead reflected on how that was affecting children’s experience, *“They can see that adults have their best interests at heart, as the duty bearers.”*
- The influence of rights on policy and practice could be seen in several areas, but the impact on relationships was noted as a specific example by the headteacher, *“It’s really had an impact on young people’s behaviour... they have more empathy for others.”* Staff agreed: *“There’s definitely been a reduction in escalated behaviour. The young people understand the language and are able to repair...we’re building an ethos of respect. There’s harmony, there’s happiness.”* Children believed their dignity was respected, even when incidents arise; a staff member explained, *“We’re a school that celebrates and supports restorative practice... we’re focused on how we can repair.”*
- Pupils were clear that they felt safe and offered several examples of ways in which school helps protect that right, not least in the actions of trusted adults. They were similarly eager to share examples of support for their health, both physical and mental.
- Wellbeing is clearly an important consideration for all, underpinned by a strong appreciation of equity. This is particularly evident in the wide range of targeted support provided, from counselling to work with Barnardo's and Children First, whilst 'The Haven' is a part time provision for pupils with a range of additional support needs. The headteacher summed up their equity-inspired approach: *“You don’t always get what you want, but you get what you need.”*

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

- Ensure that children are clear about how adults, as duty bearers in school, should uphold their rights and help facilitate their access to rights.
- Build on your culture of inclusion by help children learn about the diverse lived experiences of children at home and abroad. Support them to challenging discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.

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.

- Focus group participants were certain that they were listened to, confidently explaining that they would happily take suggestions straight to the headteacher. Alongside the direct access route, they recognised the opportunities for leadership offered through participation in groups such as Digital Leaders, Rights Respecting Schools and the Pupil Council.
- Pupils are involved in decision-making in areas of real significance, including learning and teaching and school improvement; *"We have pupil focus groups, including children of younger ages.... There are questionnaires, termly 'What Works Well' and what needs to improve... and we let them know 'You Said, We Did',"* explained the headteacher. Examples were shared of pupils influencing the school environment and securing additional music learning, with participatory budgeting also used to influence the PEF spend.
- Learners were aware of barriers some children faced in accessing rights, at home and abroad, but were confident that they could make a difference. They spoke of charitable fundraising and donation, but also turned to their environmental efforts, too: *"You can use less plastic, stop littering, use less electricity... we do litter picks to try and keep the environment clean. Even if you do small things it helps."*
- *"What you're creating are well-rounded young adults,"* shared a parent, *"They know their rights and the rights of those around them... they're values that you're helping to instil."*

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

- Continue to provide opportunities for children and young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school. Ensure they understand how this links to Article 12 and can articulate the positive impact their participation has on school improvement and the school community.
- Support children to engage in a range of advocacy and campaigning activities that promote children's rights locally and globally perhaps linking with UNICEF UK's [OutRight](#) Campaign and using UNICEF's [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).