

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

School:	Balmalloch Primary School
Headteacher:	Ruth McCarthy
RRSA coordinator:	Holly McDonnell and Ashley Wright
Local authority:	North Lanarkshire
Number of pupils on roll:	347 and 64 in Nursery
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher and RRSA Leads
Number of children and young people spoken with:	11
Adults spoken with:	3 teachers and 1 parent
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: 20 August 2013
Assessor:	Alwyn Bathan
Date of visit:	9 th May 2024

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Balmalloch 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.

- Pupils at Balmalloch Primary named several rights, including to play, to clean water, to learn and to be safe. They were confident that *“all children have rights, that they can’t be taken away and don’t have to be earned.”* Pupils explained that their rights-based knowledge was learned through pupil and adult-led assemblies, in lessons and through classroom charters. Whilst appreciating that all children have these rights, circumstances were highlighted through which rights may be denied, *“For example, you can’t be safe, or have shelter if your house is wrecked through war”*, and that the children of Scottish families experiencing poverty, *“might not get nutritious food.”*
- Shared ownership of the school’s rights respecting journey across the SLT and the wider staff team ensures the programme remains fresh and continues to develop. Linkage has already been made between rights and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *“The children are passionate about making a difference. They are immersed in the Global Goals and want to take ownership,”* (Headteacher). The RR Lead said, *“We’ve looked at 2030 and what sort of world the children want to live in, thinking about issues like equality and clean water.”*
- Information about rights respecting work is shared effectively with parents through newsletters, the school’s website and their social media platforms. A parent explained that their own children talked about rights at home. *“At a basic level, the youngest (P2) understands their right to privacy at the toilet and with their own body,”* while their sibling explained *“their right to be safe expressed through the school’s work about online safety.”*
- Rights are woven through assemblies and the curriculum, with topics such as the Victorians *“helping the children understand how it was to be a child back then, and the lack of any rights,”* (Class Teacher).

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 are familiar with, appropriate to children’s age and ability. Consider using the Article of the Week learning activities.
- Ensure the school community have a clear understanding of the concepts of rights holders and duty bearers.
- Encourage teachers to make explicit reference to rights in their planning of a range of subjects/topics and in their daily interactions with children and young people.
- Consider developing the school’s strategic documentation to link to and reflect the values and articles of the CRC so that school improvement priorities and relevant policies include reference to children’s access to specific rights. You might find [Articles in Action](#) a helpful resource.

Silver: Rights Aware report

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.

- Pupils explained how staff ensured their rights were met at Balmalloch Primary, by providing “*good learning*”, “*supervision outside at playtime*”, and, “*first aid if needed*.” They unanimously felt safe in school and shared that they were also taught how to keep themselves healthy and free from worry.
- There is an ethos of mutual respect at Balmalloch Primary. Staff have successfully linked their values as a School of Character, to rights. The headteacher said, “*Children are developing their own understanding of rights, using words like ‘discrimination’ in their language, and that’s impacting on their behaviour. It helps them understand their own behaviour more.*”
- Rights featuring in class charters are agreed and individual class formats designed at the start of each new school year. The Rights Respecting Committee has worked on the creation of a playground charter, where pupils “*came to realise how diverse lots of children are, have different needs, whether that’s an allergy, ASD or a problem with noise. They’ve tried to accommodate everyone,*” (RRSA Lead).
- Pupils agreed that knowledge of rights helped them navigate tricky issues between one another. Staff support with further restorative conversations. A Reflection Sheet documents individual rights impacted and forms a basis for this conversation.

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

- Continue to ensure that children are clear about how adults, as duty bearers in school, should uphold their rights and help facilitate their access to rights.
- Continue to 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.
- Ensure that children and adults know how the school supports their right to physical and mental health and wellbeing, that information is available and accessible to all and that they understand how this provision relates to rights.
- Continue to promote an ethos of inclusion, where all feel supported and valued, relating this explicitly to non-discrimination.

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.

- Pupil voice is well-developed at Balmalloch Primary and a number of groups exist to enable children's influence of the school improvement agenda. Digital Leaders, ECO-Fair Trade group, Social Enterprise group, Health and Wellbeing Committee and others, all support the Rights Respecting group to express views and influence change. Each committee has its own agenda, decided by the children. For example, older pupils, returning to school post-pandemic, requested a change in PE uniform policy. This now allows pupils to travel to school ready for PE, with no requirement to change on school premises. Pupils felt this supported their right to privacy and welcomed the improvement.
- Pupils understand that their participation in fund-raising and awareness-raising activities such as collecting food bank donations, wearing yellow for Strathcarron Hospice, and donating surplus clothes, all improves the rights of others.
- Children are developing their ability to bring change for others as well as themselves. When the local council threatened closure of a nearby swimming pool, pupils wrote persuasive letters to councillors making a case for the pool's continued use. The pool remains open.
- A link with a school in Spain enables children to share, audit and compare rights at home and abroad. *"It's made us all focus on rights and the differences just being down to where you are born- and that's wrong,"* the headteacher said.

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. This could include explicit involvement in school improvement planning, policy review processes, the evaluation of learning and teaching etc. We discussed the possible development of a children's School Improvement Plan with each group creating their own actions, monitored by their peers.
- Develop campaigning and fundraising activities from the perspective of rights, justice and equity so all children are seen as rights holders rather than recipients of charity.
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by encouraging children and staff to promote knowledge of the CRC and the Rights Respecting Schools Award with other schools and in the wider community, particularly with your receiving secondary schools.
- Continue to develop children and young people'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.