

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	Wallacetown Early Years Centre
Headteacher:	Diane Hodge
RRSA coordinator:	Gillian Smith
Local authority:	South Ayrshire
School context:	Wallacetown Early Years Centre is a standalone learning establishment for 2-5 year olds, with a roll of 92. 100% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, whilst 35 receive support for additional needs; 9 pupils speak English as an Additional Language
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, RRSA Coordinator, 4 seniors
Number of children and young people spoken with:	15 children
Adults spoken with:	4 early years practitioners, 3 parents
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 13 February 2020 Bronze achieved: 23 June 2020 Silver achieved: 22 March 2023
Assessor:	Steven Kidd
Date:	22 April 2024

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Wallacetown Early Years Centre has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form and provided a good collection of digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- Children who confidently discussed a range of rights and why they are important and relevant to their lives.
- Rights are visible across the school, from displays to the planning of learning and teaching. Connections are shared with parents and families.
- The strategic approach from senior leaders and the RRSA lead which has embedded rights throughout policy and practice, underpinning all that that happens at Wallacetown EYC.
- Children see themselves as active citizens, able to influence the world around them. They are heavily involved in activities within the community and engaged in sharing their views more widely.

Our experience has shown that there are actions that have proven useful in other RRSA schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Gold level. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Continue the work that has begun on ensuring positive representation of our diverse society and support learners to understand the differing lived experiences of children at home and abroad.
- Consider ways to engage children in shaping the most significant aspects of nursery life, appropriate to age and ability. Help them to understand how their participation can impact on areas such as learning and teaching and the learning environment.
- As a Gold Rights Respecting establishment, develop your ambassadorial role, promoting the CRC and the benefits of embedding children's rights in policy and practice.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

STRAND A	Highlights and comments
<p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere.</p>	<p>Knowledge of rights was exceptional considering the tender age of the children involved in the focus group; they shared several examples of rights and could connect that to real life examples, e.g., having brought up the right to privacy, a child then spoke of not looking over or under toilet doors as a way of respecting this. The RRSA lead explained their approach: <i>"We started with five rights (safe, healthy, to learn, meet friends, play) and then added more as we've gone along."</i> Learners knew that rights were for all children, all over the world, and that it was the responsibility of adults to make sure they had access to their rights. They confidently answered every question asked and it was clear from their responses that rights were a constant feature of their nursery experience. Rights were a visible part of the colourful and engaging environment, from the individual articles highlighted in relevant places around the centre to the charters in each of the rooms, displayed at a low height to ensure they are accessible to learners. Also displayed in the rooms were the 'Article of the Month' handouts shared by the RRSA lead, with helpful activity suggestions on the rear, one example of the support and guidance which had been so valued by staff. The journey has been shared with families, too, with parents confirming rights as a feature of centre communications, including a 'Right Wee Chin Wag' group; a staff member also spoke of the practical value of rights language in supporting parents, giving an example of a family grappling with bedtime routines: <i>"We link it to what parents are struggling with... we start with their problem and use rights to help solve it."</i></p>
STRAND B	Highlights and comments
<p>2. In school children enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>	<p><i>"We've always done rights, it's how we do things, but this journey has helped us to enhance that,"</i> reported the headteacher, <i>"We're embedding throughout the service now."</i> Rights feature explicitly in the School Improvement Plan and are influencing across policy and practice. Staff spoke of rights not being <i>"an add on"</i>, but instead providing an explanation and framework for much of their existing activity. The RRSA lead picked up that theme, <i>"When we first started, I was leading it, but there's less and less now for me to lead. I'm more of a sounding board now, it's so embedded."</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights.</p>	<p>Children are involved in creating charters at the beginning of each session and these are then displayed at children's eye level, with some even containing tactile elements to encourage the children to interact. The warmth of relationships was apparent throughout, from the moment children, parents and visitors are greeted at the gate, as happens every day. This is reflective of an approach based on nurture principles and restorative practice. The RRSA credited their increased awareness of rights for strengthening children's relationships: <i>"It's made them more aware of each other and how to support each other."</i></p>
<p>4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.</p>	<p>Safety is one of the core rights children learn about and there was an awareness amongst children of that right; they understood the important role that adults play in ensuring that they are protected from harm and were positive about the help they received. Staff have undertaken restorative practice CPD and this is the approach used to help children reflect on harmful or hurtful behaviour. Children have enhanced their learning about safety through carrying out their own risk assessments during outdoor learning activities.</p>

5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	Pre-visit evidence provided an extensive list of provision for the holistic needs of children, a list only extended through discussion and apparent during the brief tour. Welcoming and stimulating playrooms with ready access to equally playful outdoor spaces could be seen to provide exciting opportunities for activities shaped by the children's wishes. From music sessions to Twigg groups, Colour Monsters to language groups, there is much on offer to support children's development. Some provision is universal, whilst some is targeted based on identified need.
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	Parents spoke positively about the support their children receive at school, praising the relationships with key workers and the willingness to treat every child as an individual. <i>"It goes on her needs and what she wants to do,"</i> said one parent, speaking of her daughter, <i>"This is the only place she will come to without her parents, even her grandparents' house."</i> There is a big focus on supporting families, with things like PEEP sessions, cooking and Barnardo's family support on offer. Staff discussed the importance of equity, noting how this informs their approach, listing examples of this translating into practice, e.g., <i>"If parents are struggling, we've made wee books for them... helping everyone to express emotions."</i> The recent 'Elmer's Day' had encouraged children to celebrate their individuality, whilst a well-handled, rights-focused approach to sponsoring the education of a child in Malawi had supported learning about different lived experiences.
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	The right to learn is one of the core rights explored by the children and evidence demonstrated examples. As an early years setting, learning is centred around play and the views of the children, as one staff member explained: <i>"We're very responsive in our learning. How can we integrate, let them discover things. How we redirect."</i> Children are involved in setting learning targets, alongside parents/carers and staff. Progress is then recorded in learning journals, including links to rights, which are shared with families
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	There are several opportunities for children to be involved in groups which are contributing to nursery life, such as the rights steering group or the 'Safety Officers'. It is part of a wider approach to hearing the voices of children which has also seen children involved in a learning walk around the centre to feed back their views of what is working well and what could be better. <i>"When children are involved, they come up with some great ideas,"</i> noted the RRSA lead.
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	<i>"There's got to be an element of doing things differently... how they're leading in here and in the community is a perfect example,"</i> explained the headteacher, discussing the children's engagement in their 'Prevention First' groups, working alongside peers from two local schools, <i>"It makes them feel valued. It's empowering them."</i> Evidence and discussions revealed countless examples of how the children are playing an active part in their community. They have been hearing from experts in areas such as waste management and community arts, leading to them making contributions of their own, from dispensers for dog poo bags to campaigning for a new bin to be placed in the area. Much of this work has been linked to the environment, exploration of the Sustainable Development Goals and to their Eco flag journey, too. Children have also fed into the Children's Commissioner's future plans, sharing what they think is needed to grow up well in Scotland. Despite the extent of their involvement, adults spoke about a desire to support the children to have even greater influence on the wider world, particularly to <i>"spread it out more globally."</i>