

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

School:	R A Butler Junior Academy
Headteacher:	Emma Vincent
RRSA coordinator:	Katie Brown
Local authority:	Essex
School context:	R A Butler Junior Academy has 365 pupils aged 7-11 on roll. 15% of pupils are entitled to Pupil Premium funding, 3% of pupils have an EHCP and 14% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is on the same site as R A Butler Infant School which has just achieved its Silver Award.
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, Deputy headteacher and two RRSA leads
Number of children and young people spoken with:	19 children from the Pupil Voice groups and 5 children randomly chosen.
Adults spoken with:	8 adults including teachers, parents, Chair of Governors, TAs and non-teaching staff
Key RRSA accreditations:	Registered for RRSA: 9 th October 2015 Bronze achieved: 7 th December 2018 Silver achieved: 14 th October 2020
Assessor:	Helen Trivers
Date:	25 th November 2022

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

R A Butler Junior School 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:

- Articulate children who talked confidently about rights and demonstrated the school's focus on oracy which they link to CRC articles 12 and 13.
- The extent to which rights respecting language is embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. The principles of dignity and equity are understood by all. All staff see themselves as duty bearers and take this role seriously in ensuring that the rights of children are met.
- A strategic approach of senior leaders and the RRSA lead to embed a rights-based approach, putting it at the core of the school's ethos. The schools 6Rs values feed through everything school does, and the school community is clear about how they link to rights.
- A nurturing, inclusive atmosphere and strong relationships with parents/carers who also value the school's rights respecting work.
- The excellent use of charters across the school. Class charters are developed each year with pupils, and regularly revisited and a playground charter is also actively used daily to support the respect for children's rights during break and lunchtimes.
- Strong pupil participation. There are several different mechanisms for children to feed into decision making and leadership in different areas of school life. Children felt listened to, that their views matter and that they could make a positive difference.

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 to ensure that rights are explicitly linked to the curriculum, activities and events throughout the school year. Mapping rights learning across the curriculum and ensure there is progression in understanding. Link articles to curriculum information which is sent to parents.
- Seek ways of making the Convention and your commitment to RRSA more explicit on the school's website, in other communications and in strategic documentation.
- Continue the work that has begun on ensuring positive representation of our diverse society throughout the curriculum and continue to celebrate diversity in all its forms. Consider working alongside another Gold school in a contrasting area of the UK to facilitate this.
- Further develop opportunities for children and young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, recognising the role of children in helping adults understand problems and develop achievable solutions.
- Continue to develop strategies to empower children to challenge injustice and create further opportunities for all year groups to be involved in campaigning and advocacy work on children's rights. It can be powerful to use the UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development as a framework for this and the [UNICEF UK Youth Advocacy Toolkit](https://www.unicef.org/uk/youth-advocacy-toolkit) may support this work.

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>Children talked about a wide range of rights from the CRC, which they learn about through lessons and assemblies, linked to both rights and UN Global Goals. They learn actions to help them remember the principles that underpin rights, and could explain what these principles mean, <i>"You can't lose your rights if you don't do the right thing because you don't need to earn them; you have them no matter what,"</i> and, <i>"They belong to everyone across the world."</i> The concepts of dignity and equity are understood by all, having been a focus during this academic year. The school's shared values, the 6Rs, are embedded throughout the school, and children could link these to rights, one child explaining, <i>"The 6Rs are what is expected of us at school whereas the CRC articles are what each child deserves to have."</i> Children explore local and global issues through assemblies and curriculum topics and said they watch Newsround regularly.</p> <p>School leaders are committed to a child rights-based approach and talked of the benefits of this, the headteacher saying, <i>"Rights are universal and remind us we are part of a bigger picture; they show children they are citizens of the world,"</i> the RRSA lead adding, <i>"Rights help us to have conversations about difficult issues,"</i> and, <i>"Children are now looking outwards...they want to help other children."</i> Staff were positive about the impact of their RRSA work, <i>"It's changed the way we talk to children... we hear them using the language too."</i> The deputy headteacher said, <i>"All members of staff understand their duty bearer role."</i> Governors were equally positive with one saying, <i>"The School Development Plan is linked to rights. Rights support us to drive our work forward."</i> Parents said, <i>"Children have more awareness of what people need. Rights gives them the words to explain what is happening,"</i> and praised the Rights Respecting ethos and culture of the school, and how the school supports each individual child, <i>"The school is really inclusive. Children are encouraged to express themselves,"</i> and, <i>"My child has found her voice here."</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>A no hands up policy throughout the school supports each child to actively engage with their learning. Children develop their talents through a wide range of clubs and there is a focus on equity, making sure that each child is supported in the way that they need. One child said, <i>"We have the equity picture in every class and we talk about what it means."</i> The RRSA lead said, <i>"We have a real mix of children, there is lots of need and dignity comes through and enriches everything."</i> Young carers are supported by a designated lead and meet regularly as a group which the Learning Mentor said, <i>"...has given them more of a voice."</i></p>
<p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p>	<p>One of the school's values is Respectful Relationships and the headteacher said, <i>"The articles help us to unpick why respectful relationships are important."</i> Class charters make the links to rights explicit and outline children's understanding of equity and dignity. The behaviour policy is based on Trauma Perceptive Practice and restorative conversations are held when needed. After feedback from children, a new playground charter was created to improve experiences at break and lunchtime, one child explaining, <i>"We can sort out our own problems without having to involve an adult and it escalating."</i> Peer mediators are trained to support others and there is a focus on making playtime positive for all children through the provision of activities and resources.</p>

4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support.	<i>"We have worry boxes in our class and we have our 'helping hands' so we know who to talk to if we feel unsafe."</i> Children spoken with agreed that they feel safe, and this is backed up by the school's questionnaire results, with children knowing they can talk to any of the adults. Road safety was identified as a big issue for children through pupil voice mechanisms and so this is a focus for the school council going forward. The evidence stated that, 'Nothing is too small or irrelevant to report,' in relation to safeguarding and this was echoed by staff during the visit.
5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles.	There is a school counsellor who works with students and a learning mentor who offers therapy sessions and interventions, working on developing self-esteem and assertiveness. Every year group now has a trained learning mentor. One learning mentor said, <i>"There are safe spaces for children, and they know they are there."</i> Physical health is also a priority. <i>"Lunches are as nutritious as possible,"</i> said one child, <i>"We have Power Hour at lunchtime where we do activities like catch and benchball, and we have awards for Active Heroes."</i>
6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals.	<i>"We accept everyone,"</i> said children when asked about diversity in the school. Children with SEND were specifically invited to participate in the Steering Group to ensure their voices are heard. Parents from a range of backgrounds are creating a tolerance statement, following an incident of racism, <i>"The families now feel their voices are being heard."</i> Teachers have been trained on Unconscious Bias and the headteacher said, <i>"We are currently diversifying our curriculum."</i>
7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education.	Kagan structures are used to embed an active learning pedagogy and subject leaders regularly interview children to find out what is helping/hindering their learning. For example, children told the English lead that they found drama helpful and so staff received further training on how to embed this into lessons. If children don't understand something, they can ask for help and take part in Masterclasses. Children also self-assess their work and use their Feedback 5 approach to tell teachers how well they've understood the learning.
STRAND C	Highlights and comments
8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously.	The school's focus on oracy is strongly linked to Articles 12 and 13 and was evident walking around the school and talking to children. <i>"Children are telling us when they feel uncomfortable. They are open and confident,"</i> said the headteacher. Every child can feed into regular whole-school discussions, with each class editing a Padlet document to ensure that voices across the school are captured. Various pupil voice groups work on different areas of school life, with a large project currently taking place around road safety, after a number of children brought this up as an area of concern through a pupil survey. The RRSA lead said, <i>"There's a mix of children involved, including our quieter children."</i> Steering Group members said, <i>"We help to make school a better place. There were problems in the playground, but we now have the playground charter and peer mediators who go around and check people are ok linked to our right to be safe."</i>
9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally.	Children are encouraged to think about how their own actions link to Global Goals, adding individual actions to a large and prominent display in the hall. A teacher said, <i>"Eco-monitors tell us off if we don't switch things off,"</i> another adding, <i>"They learn about global issues through the curriculum, and we build in actions like writing to our local MP."</i> Children said they create Christmas shoeboxes to send to other children, <i>"We put in toys, scarves, gloves; they have a right to their needs being met."</i> Children also donate food for their local foodbank and raise money for charities through events such as Odd Socks Day and many children choose to fundraise independently for issues they are passionate about.