

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

School:	RA Butler Infant School
Headteacher:	Emma Vincent
RRSA coordinator:	Katie Brown and Megan Butt
Local authority:	Essex
Number of pupils on roll:	271
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, Deputy headteacher, two RRSA leads
Number of children and young people spoken with:	6 children
Adults spoken with:	9 adults including teachers, support assistants, parents and governors
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: 9 th October 2015 Bronze achieved: 7 th December 2018
Assessor:	Helen Trivers
Date of visit:	16 th November 2022

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

RA Butler Infant 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 a range of CRC rights including the right to a safe place to live, to be healthy, to relax and play and to share their opinions. Children demonstrated a good understanding of the principles that underpin rights which they recited along with the actions they have learned, *"Rights are for all children. You have them from birth. They cannot be taken away from you and don't need to be earned. They are all equally important."* Children also knew that although every child has rights, they are not always respected, *"There's a war in Ukraine and lots of those rights haven't been able to be shown, because they've not got good food, safe shelter and clean water."*
- Children learn about the CRC through assemblies and classes explore articles further through stories, the RRSA lead reflecting, *"Looking at issues through the eyes of a character has been powerful. It's been an exciting journey linking the books to rights."* The headteacher said they focus on the development of oracy skills, *"The language of the articles has absolutely supported this,"* adding, *"When we started on the journey, it felt piecemeal, but it feels like everything is now connected: oracy, 6Rs, values, trauma informed practice, it all fits together with the CRC."*
- Teachers were positive about the impact of rights and said they refer to rights during daily classroom conversations, linking rights to the school's ethos and values. One teacher said, *"It's very powerful. You give the children the language and they pick it up very easily. Young children are passionate about their rights."* The Chair of Governors said, *"Rights are at the heart of our work. It runs through everything, and on our visits, the children link to specific articles and rights."*
- The parent community is informed about rights through the newsletter and are further involved through homework activities linked to rights, such as the recent playground poster competition. Parents were positive about the school's child rights-based approach, *"The rights are embedded. There is mutual respect amongst everyone, and the level of support is incredible,"* and another adding, *"It's such a good thing for children to use in their daily lives, to know that they respect others. The language helps them to navigate different situations."*

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.
- Continue to support children to develop their understanding of sustainable development, including their understanding of the UN Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals) and how they link with the realisation of children's rights and the wellbeing of the planet.
- Encourage teachers to make explicit reference to rights in their planning of a range of topics and subjects.

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.

- 'Respectful Relationships' is one of the school's six core values and a priority area within the current School Development Plan (SDP). Class charters are created each year as part of transition work and are regularly refreshed. Respectful relationships are supported during break and lunch time with junior school children being trained as peer mediators and play leaders, modelling respectful relationships. Midday assistants have also received training and carry cards with useful phrases to support restorative conversations which came about as a result of children's feedback about their experiences during playtime. The RRSA lead said, *"The main thing we needed to do was to give them the language to use."*
- A recent safeguarding audit showed that a safeguarding culture is embedded across the school. The headteacher said, *"There is a network of support for children. We make sure that everyone can say five people who they can talk to if they need help – they mostly mention adults, but they also bring up the buddies and peer mentors."* Staff agreed that, *"No concerns are too small to flag,"* as this helps to build a picture around a child and identify where action needs to be taken.
- Social and Emotional wellbeing is another area of focus on the SDP and staff have recently been trained in trauma perceptive practice, leading to changes in the behaviour policy. The headteacher said, *"We have trained more learning mentors in mental health. Children are able to access someone who can support them,"* and the deputy headteacher added, *"We also have a school therapist – getting in early with families has been really successful."* Zones of regulation are used to support children to identify and manage their feelings, *"If we feel sad, excited or something we have a zone so you can use the check in,"* and worry boxes and worry monsters enable children to share any concerns, children saying, *"You can write down your worries, so the rest of the class can't hear you."* Children said, *"We do PSHE, and we talk about how to keep safe and our feelings."*
- Oracy and active learning principles are embedded into pedagogy, and these enable children to make decisions as part of their learning, the RRSA lead saying, *"They take control of their learning, they explain what they do and don't understand."* Pupil book studies support children to share their views with subject leaders which has led to changes, such as the increased use of drama in literacy. The RRSA lead said, *"There is such a range of needs in our classrooms: children might not use the word equity, but they know that everyone gets what they need and this might not be the same as others."*

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

- Ensure that children and young people are clear about how adults, as duty bearers in school, should uphold their rights and help facilitate their access to rights.
- Create opportunities to explore the concepts of fairness and equity and ensure children and young people can describe how school promotes these concepts.

- Explore the concept of dignity with staff and children – what it means and how it underpins policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school.

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.

- Listening to children is embedded in the school culture and children agreed that adults listen to them, *"You can share ideas with your teacher. Anyone can share their idea."* The headteacher said, *"Road safety came up as an issue and the steering group are doing a project on this,"* children saying, *"We are thinking about getting more zebra crossings and changing the gates around so people don't have to go onto the road."* The headteacher added, *"Playtime is also important – they said there wasn't enough to do so they now have more activities."* The deputy headteacher added that they capture pupil voice in a variety of ways, *"The whole class council has been really successful; we use padlets and classes contribute to a whole school board to show what pupils think."*
- Children are supported to promote and uphold the rights of others with the RRSA lead saying, *"We want to foster British Values but also to develop this with a more global perspective."* Children said, *"We can help people in need – we have days in our school where we raise money to send to people who need things they don't have."* The RRSA lead said, *"We've been working towards a shoebox collection which is good for our Infant children as it is very practical."* Children are also advocates for rights, *"We ran a poster competition, and the school made the posters - to remind people about the rights on the playground."*

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.
- Ensure children have regular access to local and global news (appropriate to their age and ability) such as Newsround or Picture News and build in time for sensitive reflection and discussion within the context of rights. This may provide stimulus for child led campaigning or other action.
- Explore resources and training for global learning through the British Council's Connecting Classrooms programme to develop meaningful global links.
- Support children and young people to engage in a range of advocacy, campaigning and fundraising activities that promote children's rights locally and globally perhaps using UNICEF UK's [Outright Campaign](#) and using UNICEF's [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).