



RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

This has been a virtual accreditation.

School	Ash Grove Academy
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Number of pupils on roll	249
Acting Principal	Judith Ceuppens
RRSA Coordinator	Nicola Lucas
RRSA Assessor	Martin Russell
Date of visit	15th March 2022
Attendees at SLT meeting	Acting Principal, Vice Principal and RRSA Lead
Number of pupils interviewed	15 children in two focus groups
Number of adults interviewed	3 teachers
Evidence provided	Detailed range of evidence provided in PowerPoint format
Date registered for RRSA	April 2019
Bronze achieved	March 2020

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Ash Grove Academy
has met the standard for UNICEF UK's
Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

Silver: Rights Aware report

Rights Respecting Schools Award | UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK)

unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools



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 and adults know a wide range of articles and the children understand how they apply to their own lives. The pupils fully understand that rights are universal and are clear about the unconditional nature of rights, *"They are for every child...you get your rights from birth and you don't have to earn them."* Asked about whether their families know about rights, one child explained, *"We discuss them at home because the Article of the Week is often set for homework."*
- The children demonstrated good global awareness and discussed how, for some children, their rights may not always be easy to access, *"Lots of children are not even taught that they have rights."* They went on to discuss access to education, *"Some children don't get a proper education and in some places parents have to pay for it."* They also spoke about the impact of war on a variety of rights and how, *"...if there is discrimination..."* or, *"...some countries don't have enough money..."* the rights of many children can be impacted.
- Both children and adults were very confident in pointing out how learning about rights is integral to the curriculum referring, for example, to a science topic on the water cycle and to work in history about children working in mills. Staff explained that knowledge of the Convention has also been promoted through assemblies, displays and special days, *"It provides a backdrop for everything we do."* Staff have received training and are reminded to make links and use rights respecting language in a range of ways. One adult explained *"This has really made me reflect on my role, not just as a teacher but as a parent; as a citizen."*
- The senior leaders were very clear that becoming rights respecting has had a beneficial impact on the school, building on a long-term commitment to promote positive attitudes to diversity and inclusion and to promote global citizenship. *"It is really a framework on which we can hang our culture and values as a community....It helps our children see that they have something in common with every child around the world."* The staff team and governors are wholeheartedly committed to a rights-based approach and parents are kept well informed through newsletters and the regular sharing of 'Article of the Week'.

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 and its place within the wider framework of Human Rights. Ensure an understanding that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional, using language appropriate to children's age and ability. Explore the UNICEF resource to support this - [ABCDE of Rights](#).
- Consider articulating your school's commitment to children's rights whenever you speak about the school to external audiences, including on your website.
- Ensure the school community has a clear understanding of the concepts of 'rights holders' and 'duty bearers'.

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- 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.

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.

- All children spoken with recognised that it was the job of all the adults at their school, to enable them to access and enjoy their rights. Many strands of school life are informed by or linked to the Convention. Adults explained how becoming Rights Aware had further strengthened the school's culture of respect for all; one person observed, *"It is a real surprise to some of our children that they actually have all these rights!"* Another added, *"Having the language of rights is really empowering for the children, and, actually, for us as adults too."* Pupils were keen to explain why learning about their rights matters to them with comments such as, *"We need to know our rights so that we make sure we use them...we can stand up for rights."*
- Strong and mutually respectful relationships are a significant feature of the school, and the language of rights and respect has further underpinned this; *"It really helps with relationships when you can remind children that something they said or did was not very respectful of somebody else's rights."* The pupils spoke about their rights-based class charters and how they had been involved in agreeing which rights to include. One pupil explained, *"We also have a football charter to make sure it's always fair for everyone."*
- Extensive evidence was shared regarding the school's commitment to the safety, health and wellbeing of the children; pupils explained, *"Being protected from all kinds of harm is a right."*; *"We always feel safe in our school; you can always go to a teacher if something is not right."* Many examples were shared by the pupils to describe the school's support for mental and emotional health; nurture time and Lego Therapy were mentioned alongside the importance of sleep, mindfulness, exercise and healthy food.
- There is a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Staff commented on how the children *"...are showing much more respect for each other's opinions."* The children understood the importance of 'non-discrimination' as a right and were confident in asserting that their school values freedom of thought, religion and belief.

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

- Continue to revisit and further embed the Unicef RRSA [Charter Guidance](#). When charters are next reviewed, include actions for 'duty bearers' as well as for children.
- Explore with the school community the links between improved outcomes for children and the implementation of a rights-based approach across the school.
- Create opportunities to discuss the meaning of fairness and equity and ensure children can describe how school promotes these concepts.

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- Explore with staff and children the concept of 'dignity' – 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.

- The voice of the children is given high status in the school because it is their right to have a say in all matters that affect them. The children explained that “*School Councillors think of ideas for events and then we help to organise them.*” They shared examples of ideas presented by pupils being brought to fruition, these included changes to school lunches following consultation with the providers and changes to their learning timetable which arose from a project to devise a ‘dream timetable’. The RRSA Steering Committee led the school in the process of agreeing new school values. Children are regularly surveyed about their learning and whether they are progressing, and this is fed back to their teachers. The children can take on a range of leadership roles such as Kindness Ambassadors and Playground Leaders.
- There is a growing commitment to international awareness and global citizenship, and the children understand that their actions can make a difference in the world and can help to support the rights of others locally and globally. Y2 children have written to local Councillors outlining their ideas for improving their local park; the Councillors came into school and thanked the children for their letters, making commitments to future improvements. In the run up to COP 26, the children were involved in discussion and were able to send their views by participating in the Votes for School project. There is regular charity fundraising for a range of national and international causes including for Comic Relief, Children in Need and the British Heart Foundation.

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.
- Support children to engage in a wider range of advocacy, campaigning and fundraising activities that promote children’s rights locally and globally perhaps linking with Unicef UK’s [Outright](#) Campaign and using UNICEF’s [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).
- 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.

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