

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

School:	Castleside Primary School
Headteacher:	Alison Spence
RRSA coordinator:	Hayley Draper
Local authority:	Durham
Number of pupils on roll:	103
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher and RRSA Coordinator
Number of children and young people spoken with:	9
Adults spoken with:	2 x teachers
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: May 2018 Bronze achieved: October 2018
Assessor:	Kathy Allan
Date of visit:	7 July 2022

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Castleside 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.

- Children at Castleside have a good understanding of articles and are confident in talking about how rights relate to themselves and others, specifically how their actions can impact on the rights of others. Displays, assemblies and PSHE are embedded with explicit opportunities to learn about rights while opportunities also arise throughout the day and while watching Newsround.
- Staff report that since returning to school after the pandemic children are more aware of children who may be unable to access their rights particularly linked to education and safety. *"Everyone should have rights but not everyone gets them"* explained a pupil, another adding *"in Africa some children don't have clean water."* Others shared challenges around conflict and being separated from family.
- The headteacher described how RRSA is part of the school DNA and has brought together the school's good practice while helping children to think outside their local area and become more globally aware. Children are also taking their rights knowledge into the community: *"We are taught them in school so we teach them (to our parents)."*

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 and, for older pupils, its place within the wider framework of Human Rights.
- Ensure staff and children have an understanding that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional, using language appropriate to children's age and ability. Consider using the RRSA resource [ABCDE of Rights](#).
- Encourage teachers to make explicit reference to rights in their planning of a range of subjects/topics. Particularly strengthen early years engagement with the RRSA journey, embedding rights-based language and consider staff CPD.
- Consider further CPD on global citizenship and sustainable development perhaps through engagement with the Sustainable Development Goals and [The World's Largest Lesson](#) to help develop an understanding of global issues and how they impact on children's rights and the wellbeing of the planet.
- Continue to support families and the wider community to learn about and understand the CRC and engage with the school's rights respecting journey. This could include home school learning activities, links through social media and activities when families come into school.

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.

- At Castleside everyone is equal, respected and valued with children sharing examples and able to discuss Article 2: *“we have the right to no discrimination – this means if you have a different colour skin you shouldn’t be treated differently.”* They described how football is only played on certain days so that everyone can play what they like and that everyone has the option to join clubs.
- Children are confident that adults respect their privacy while dealing with any concerns efficiently. A member of staff explained how rights respecting language is *“supporting children to make good choices”* another explaining how school is now a calmer place where children listen and respectfully challenge.
- Rights language plays a prominent role in the classroom and through behaviour management systems. As outlined on the school website staff believe that ‘happy children learn best’ and the clear focus on wellbeing supports this. Children are supported to develop healthy relationships, keep themselves safe and discuss their feelings through zones of regulation. They are also aware of strategies to keep themselves safe on the internet.

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

- Ensure that children 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, equity and dignity: what they mean and how they underpin policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school.
- Continue to embed the UNICEF RRSAs [Charter Guidance](#) and focus on the language of ‘respect for rights’ uncoupling responsibilities and rules from rights. When charters are next reviewed, include actions for duty bearers as well as for children, as rights holders.
- Explore with the school community the links between improved outcomes for children and the implementation of a rights-based approach across the school.
- Consider how children are involved in developing systems and policies to ensure they feel safe in school. For example, they could create their own policies.

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.

- Pupils spoken with have confidence in the 'Rights Respecting Reps' as the voice of the whole school saying that they can share ideas with them and, *"they are the people who decide what's happening."* Children understand their right to a voice and to express themselves.
- The idea of creating a Wellbeing Garden came from pupils and it has been designed and created by pupils from across the school. A pupil explained how *"we will have a memory tree to remember people or pets we've lost, and it will be a calm relaxing space for us."*
- Children are becoming more aware of injustice and are using rights to shape their learning to reflect this. In a lesson about the Victorian Children's Act staff described how children directed exploration of issues from a rights perspective and another class were moved by the injustice when learning about Malala's battle for her right to an education.
- Children re active fundraisers and at the outset of the Ukraine conflict children identified that they wanted to take action. They led a campaign to raise awareness through selling packets of sunflowers seeds, 'Seeds of Hope,' linked to Article 38. Children also wrote messages of hope on flags that were then displayed at Durham Cathedral.

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

- Continue to provide opportunities for more children to be involved in pupil led groups. Ensure they understand how this links to Article 12 and participation and can articulate the positive impact they have on school improvement and the school community.
- Develop these opportunities to include children 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.
- Continue to develop children'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.
- Support children to engage in a range of advocacy and campaigning activities that promote children's rights locally and globally perhaps linking with UNICEF UK's [OutRight](#) Campaign and using UNICEF's [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#).