



RRSA RE-ACCREDITATION REPORT SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

This has been a virtual accreditation.

School	Midmar
Local Authority	Aberdeenshire Council
Number of pupils on roll	31
Headteacher	Elizabeth Shepherd
RRSA Coordinator	Elizabeth Shepherd
RRSA Assessor	Christine McLennan
Date of visit	27.4.22
Attendees at SLT meeting	Elizabeth Shepherd
Number of pupils interviewed	13
Number of adults interviewed	6
Evidence provided	School Evaluation: Silver, Evidence in folders on day
Date registered for RRSA	8.8.11
Bronze achieved	Gold achieved 28.3.16

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

Midmar School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

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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.

- All children were familiar with a wide range of articles and they knew that rights were unconditional and universal. One P7 pupil stated when asked about children's rights *"Rights are for all of us as children until we are 18 as we need extra protection as we are young"*. They were able to demonstrate an awareness of where and why some children may not be able to access their rights. One pupil said, *"In Ukraine the children aren't safe and aren't able to access education because there is a war. We have also been learning about refugees from other countries such as Syria."*
- Much work has been undertaken since the last accreditation visit to ensure staff have developed more knowledge about the UNCRC through training in June and August 2021, in-service time and development days. All adults in school are committed to the UNCRC and the language of rights is now part of the ethos of the school. A new member of staff stated that she was now more confident in discussing Children's Rights with her pupils as a result of the training and support she has had in the school. Teachers take opportunities to plan for and include the language of rights in any lessons where it is relevant. One teacher stated, *"Rights are now part of the language we use. I now don't see this as a discrete subject."*
- The school Health programme has a focus monthly right to support teaching, learning and assessment. Assemblies are delivered using Articles of the Week and Outright campaigns have helped children learn about and understand Rights. The headteacher stated, *"Discussions on rights in assemblies and class have allowed us to be more responsive to world events and set them within a rights context."* UNCRC is explicitly referencing in the School Improvement Plan and is included in any policy review. The School Policy on Climate for Learning has a focus on rights and was created with staff, pupils and parents.
- The school have managed to engage with parents on their rights journey and throughout all aspects of learning during Covid 19 through virtual assemblies, weekly Headteacher newsletters, community newsletters and communication through pupil weekly planners. A parent stated, *"We have really missed being able to be in school but the weekly planner is treated like a bible in my house. It has kept us connected."*

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

- The school have already identified the need to engage more with parents and the wider community through homework activities and using sessions at the local Community Café. There should also be an opportunity to include parents in your Pupil Council which is your steering group for children's rights.
- Embed a clear understanding of "Rights Holders and Duty Bearers" within your school community.
- Embed a focus on the planned learning about children's rights through most aspects of the curriculum.

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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.

- The UNCRC is embedded in the school's vision, values and aims and parents, staff and pupils were all consulted in their creation. Class charters and the School Charter have been created by pupils and teachers. They link with the school vision and values and are referred to in daily practice. The school values have been translated by the children into superheroes such as Trustful Toby to enable all children to take ownership of them.
- Positive relationships are encouraged and supported across the school. Rights are used in restorative conversations when things 'go wrong'. Emotion check-in has been introduced as part of staff CLPL Nurture Training allowing staff to monitor how children are feeling and act where required.
- 'The Decider Skills' – based on cognitive behaviour therapy have been introduced across the school and for parents. These skills help children and adults understand their emotions and the thoughts and feelings that accompany them. One parent stated, *"I now use the language of decider skills to support my children when they find things difficult. It is really good both school and home can be consistent in messages."*
- All children said they feel safe at school and can describe how their actions and those of others contribute to this. There is a school 'worry monster' who they can write to if they feel they cannot tell someone but one child said, *"We don't need to write to him much because we help each other with our worries."* Work on bullying and on playing together has helped children's interactions when they returned to school after periods of lockdown. One pupil said, *"Everyone around you makes you feel safe in our school so we missed each other when we couldn't be in school."*
- The school supports children with their health, social and emotional needs in many ways from the 'Decider Skills', a comprehensive PE and Active schools programme to support physical health and having senior pupils as Play Leaders and having a Buddy system across the school. Children have opportunities to set up and run clubs. A parent said, *"My son asked to set up a touch rugby club and running it has been great for his confidence."*
- Children and young people value education and are involved in decision making about their education in many ways such as involvement in planning what they want to learn, target setting, peer and self-evaluation of learning and teaching and they identify work they are proud of for the achievement wall. A child said, *"This wall is to show things we have done we are proud of, in school and at home."*

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, should uphold their rights and help facilitate their access to rights.
- Continue to make evidence of pupil's decision making about their education explicit within the school eg targets, pupil choice and peer and self-assessment.
- Continue to embed articles and the principles of the CRC in school policies to demonstrate that the CRC fully underpins every aspect of school life.

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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.

- An area of strength is how the school provides opportunities for young people to express their opinions and to be involved in decisions about their life in school. Children have a voice in class and across the school community (including school groups). Each School Group has a focus which impacts on school improvement: Pupil Council – RRSA and Fair Trade, Eco Group and Technology and Sport. Children participate in discussions at assemblies which effect the school community. Pupils decide what charities are supported in fundraising, which games are played outside and have a “we said you did” board for suggestions. They identify their own best work or achievements for the achievement wall. A P5 child said, “*Our school feels like our school because we get to have a say in what happens.*”
- All children and young people have been involved in a range of activities to promote children and young people’s rights on a local and global scale. This has included reflective discussions on rights after watching Newsround in school and identifying charities the school would support. The school is a toilet twinned school. Children have learned how many others across the world do not get their basic right of clean water and sanitation. This has also linked to the Sustainable Development Goals. Work on collecting for a local foodbank has also reinforced to the children that they can promote children’s rights locally. The headteacher stated, “*Linking this to rights lets children see that local families need support to get their rights.*” In class activity has also included a novel – “The Boy at the Back of the Class” about a refugee which led to discussion about the Rights he had in Syria and how this changed when he came to England.

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

- Restart Community Cafés as a means to promote children’s rights in the community and highlight any activity within school.
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by encouraging children and staff to promote knowledge of the CRC and the Rights Respecting Schools Award with other schools in the cluster and in the wider community.
- Explore ways of linking pupil participation to an understanding of democracy.
- Consider pupil involvement in aspects of strategic review and development, policy review processes and improvement planning.

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