



# RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD

SHOWING EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

SCHOOLS' GUIDE TO THE RRSA EVALUATION

## ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Unicef UK needs to evaluate its work to help ensure that we are having a positive impact on the lives of children. This guide explains to schools how we are evaluating the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools Award and what support we need from schools to do this.

**Please be aware, that we are currently trialling our new evaluation processes. We currently only require the new evaluation data to be submitted by new schools applying for Recognition of Commitment. From September 2017, we will ask all schools to complete this when applying for ROC, Level 1 or Level 2.**

**The new data collection forms are available now on our website, and any schools who would like to use them as part of showing their own progress are welcome to do so. Please contact your Professional Advisor with any queries.**

This document will be most useful for the RRSA lead, head teacher and any other identified co-ordinator within the school who is responsible for supporting progress through the Awards.

In addition to this document, there are accompanying Excel spreadsheets to support your data submission. These are available from the Unicef UK team.

If you have any questions or queries about the contents of this document or what is required from you, please contact the Research, Evaluation and Participation Manager at Unicef UK – Sarah Hamilton, [Sarahh@unicef.org.uk](mailto:Sarahh@unicef.org.uk); 020 7375 6172.

## WHAT IMPACT CAN A RIGHTS RESPECTING APPROACH HAVE?

Rights Respecting (RR) Schools take a whole school approach to embedding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child at the centre of the school ethos and teaching and learning approaches. Through a range of activities, RR Schools put in place policies and practice that support children's rights in education and in their wider lives.

RR schools teach children not only about the rights that they have, but also about the key principles inherent in upholding children's rights: dignity; life, survival and development, transparency and accountability; the best interests of the child; participation; non-discrimination; interdependency and indivisibility. These principles are at the heart of developing an understanding of what it means to have rights and their relevance in children's own lives. Placing the principles of dignity, development and best interests of the child at their centre means that schools ensure a balanced commitment to children's wellbeing and individual dignity, as well as a commitment to attainment and achievement. The principle of non-discrimination requires that schools work to achieve outcomes for *all* children. The principles of participation, dignity and accountability require schools to provide opportunities for pupils to make active contributions to the life and community of the school. As much as the specific outputs shown in the diagram, these principles are key to improving the lives of children.

RR schools ensure that their policies, guidance and structures apply a rights-based approach to all decisions and activities across the school, not just in the classroom. RR schools' commitment to this approach requires them to monitor and review activities in the school to ensure that children's rights are being protected. A whole school approach encourages schools to use the UNCRC as a framework for all aspects of their work and make explicit how everything they do promotes and protects children's rights. It also means that a rights-based approach is applied across all school relationships, including teachers, parents and governors, as well as children, and to the wider local and global community.

### **The impact of RRSA on children, teachers and the wider school community**

RR schools ensure that children enjoy all their rights in school, respect the rights of others and build positive relationships with adults and peers across the school. Through including the UNCRC in the curriculum, children, teachers and the wider school community have a better knowledge of children's rights and how these apply to their lives. This knowledge enables children to recognise and enjoy mutual respect for rights and to know when their rights are being breached. Alongside strong policies and procedures, this empowers **children to disclose concerns to appropriate adults in the school, and to expect action to be taken to support them. As a result, children should always feel safe at school and in their wider community.**

As well as strengthening children's capacity as rights holders, evidence suggests that informing children about rights encourages them to respect the rights of others, and that this is reflected in their behaviour.<sup>1,2,3</sup> Non-rights respecting behaviours are reduced, including incidents of bullying or discrimination. Children's rights **provide a values framework that emphasises social justice and inclusion** which may have lasting effects on young people's attitudes and behaviour towards others. There is evidence, for example, that teaching children about their rights encourages children to respect the rights of others to hold and express differing views which is identified as a protective factor against extremism.<sup>4</sup>

**Improved relationships among children and adults in the school are a key impact of RRSA.** Positive relationships are supported by procedures, policies and guidance that establish interactions based on children's rights. Attitudes and actions that respect the rights of others, and teaching approaches that place individual dignity, participation, the best interests of the child and non-discrimination at their heart, also support good relationships which are viewed more positively by children and ensure that disagreements are managed effectively.<sup>3</sup>

**Good relationships between teachers and pupils, and positive school climate contribute to high levels of pupil wellbeing and engagement in their learning.**<sup>1</sup>

Emotional wellbeing has been identified as a growing concern in the UK<sup>5,6</sup> and is a key responsibility of teachers.<sup>7</sup> Where relationships are perceived as positive, children are more likely to enjoy school and to feel valued and respected as an individual, and children's health and wellbeing is improved.<sup>8,9</sup> Resilience – the capacity to cope with everyday challenges – is argued to be at the heart of improved wellbeing for children and has been associated with

primary schools that have shared decision-making, participation, a supportive social environment and good community relationships.<sup>10</sup>

A study of children's wellbeing in Spain showed that children who had been told about children's rights, or who had heard of the UNCRC, reported significantly higher subjective wellbeing compared to those who had not.<sup>11</sup> The same study found that children reporting higher levels of participation and being heard, also had higher levels of subjective wellbeing.<sup>11</sup> This finding is reinforced by other studies in Northern Ireland and Australia which found a positive correlation between subjective wellbeing and perceptions that their participation rights are respected in school and the community.<sup>12,13</sup> Finally, feeling safe at home, in school and in the local community was also associated with higher levels of wellbeing.<sup>11</sup>

Student engagement may be reflected in attendance levels and in pupils' attitudes towards their learning and school. Child Rights Education is linked to improved engagement and lower absenteeism, particularly in more disadvantaged schools.<sup>1</sup> Improved relationships also impact on teacher wellbeing. One study found that over time, schools that fully implemented a child rights approach had lower levels of teacher burnout.<sup>14</sup>

**High levels of wellbeing and engagement lead to improved attainment.**<sup>15</sup> Whole school approaches to influencing pupils' behaviour and social and emotional learning have a positive impact on attainment.<sup>16</sup> Child Rights Education has been shown to reduce the attainment gap between the most and least deprived children<sup>1,17</sup> and has been suggested as a factor in schools that have higher than expected attainment levels.<sup>18</sup>

**Opportunities for young people to participate in decisions that affect them and the school community can improve the school environment and have a positive impact of pupils' wellbeing.**<sup>19</sup> Through the process of involvement, and through seeing the effects of their influence, young people feel valued and included which is supportive of pupils' wellbeing, engagement and attainment.<sup>20</sup> It also provides opportunities to develop valuable skills such as listening and negotiation, and confidence to participate in wider community and political issues.<sup>21,22</sup> Research has shown that schools which listen to the concerns of children and involve them in decision making are more likely to address bullying and violence than other schools.<sup>23</sup>

An understanding of children's rights helps pupils to see their lives in a wider context and relate to social justice issues in their local and global communities. It also provides a context for understanding and engaging with the sustainable development of communities as outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals. This may include being better informed about important issues and understanding how to participate in constructive debate and democratic processes. As with participation opportunities, this experience can encourage children to remain interested in these processes in future, and to **become 'active' and politically engaged citizens.**<sup>14</sup>

# OUTPUTS

# INTERIM OUTCOMES

# IMPACT

School commitment to child rights

- Information about the UNCRC is included in the curricula/teaching plans for all children
- Schools make an explicit commitment to child rights and supporting child wellbeing, and communicate this internally and externally<sup>2</sup>
- School policies, guidance and structures apply a child rights based approach and link this to other initiatives<sup>3</sup>
- Schools monitor and respond to non-rights respecting practice and behaviours in the school<sup>4</sup>
- Teaching approaches respect the rights of both educators and learners<sup>1</sup>
- Opportunities and mechanisms are available for pupils to participate in making decisions that affect them.
- Campaigns or other activities aimed at promoting or upholding the rights of others, locally and globally.

- All children know about the UNCRC and can describe how it impacts on them and children everywhere
- All relationships are founded on rights; interactions are based on dignity, mutual respect and inclusion
- Children are empowered to disclose behaviours that breach their rights
- Children feel involved in and take ownership of their learning
- Teachers enjoy teaching and feel more valued
- More children get involved in opportunities to influence decisions in the school

- Children perceive their relationships with peers and staff more positively
- Children are committed to supporting the rights of others and believe they have a role to play in this.

- Knowledge about the UNCRC and children's rights increases among the wider school community, including teachers, parents and governors
- There is a reduction in bullying and discriminatory behaviour among children
- In school, children enjoy all the rights enshrined in the UNCRC
- Children enjoy being at school and learning
- All children know that their views are taken seriously

- Children develop a long-term commitment to values such as social justice and inclusion
- Children feel safe at school
- Children feel included and valued as individuals
- There is an improvement in pupils' wellbeing and emotional resilience
- There is an improvement in pupils' engagement
- There is an improvement in pupils' attainment and the attainment gap is narrowed
- There is an increase in pupils' local and global community participation and 'active citizenship'

## MEASURING THE IMPACT OF RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

Schools are awarded Rights Respecting status on the basis of assessors' observations and the school's own evidence. In addition, we believe it is important to show how the lives of children are impacted as result of this work. While this does not form part of the assessment, it does help us to show the value of this work to others.

To help us show the impact, we ask participating schools to support us in gathering information about the impact of RRSA. We ask you to do this when you embark on the Rights Respecting journey and again before each accreditation. This information is analysed by Unicef UK's evaluation team to allow us to report on the overall impact of our work. There is a range of data we draw on to show impact:

- Questionnaires with pupils
- Questionnaires with teachers and other adults in the school
- Head teacher observations about impact in the school
- Data routinely collected by the school, e.g. exclusions and attendance
- Publicly available school data on attainment
- Specific observations gathered during the assessment process

We describe what is involved in each of these in the sections below.

### **What the evaluation is (and isn't)**

The evaluation is to find out what difference RRSA makes to children and schools. We look at this difference across all the schools we work with. This allows us to talk about the effect of RRSA overall, to help Unicef UK to support schools better and show what works to others.

The evaluation is *not* intended to make judgements about the work going on in your school. We know that all schools are different, with different challenges and opportunities. We do not expect RRSA to have exactly the same impact in all schools. We also know that RRSA is not the only thing going on in your school to improve the lives of children.

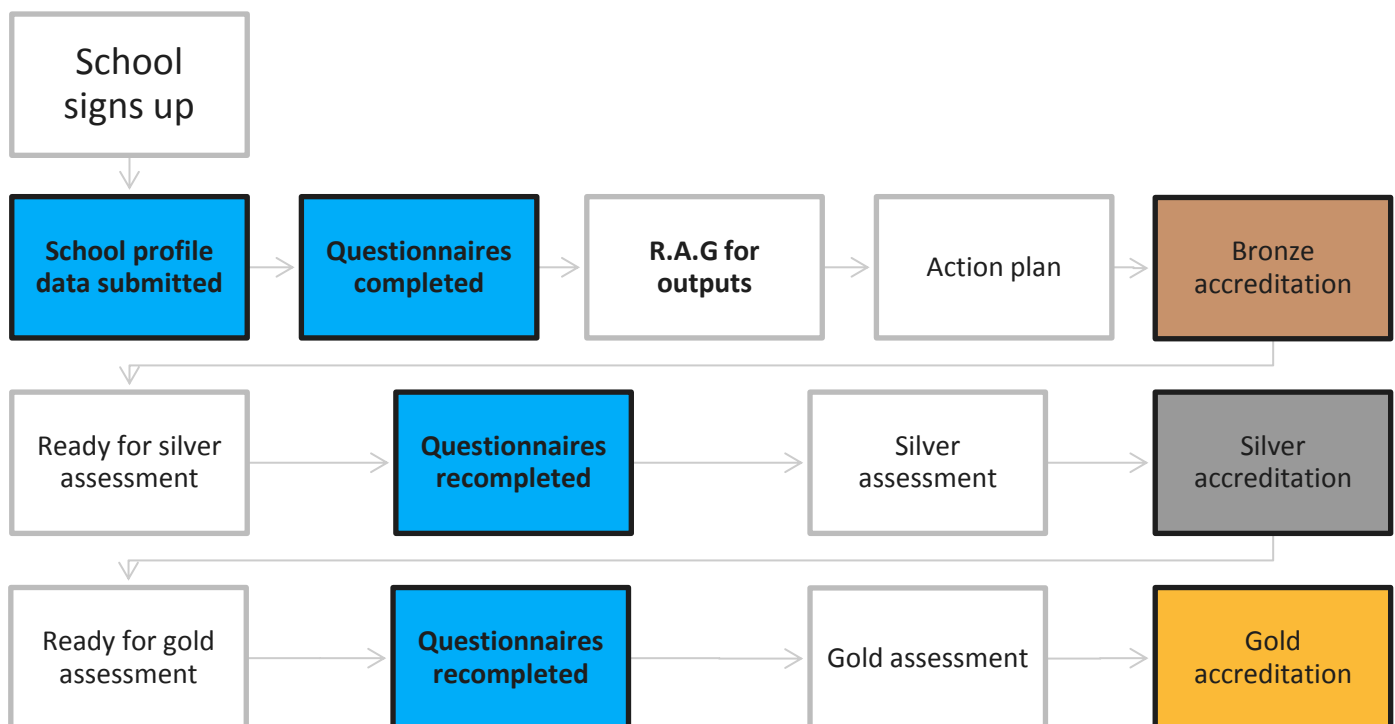
The criteria for achieving each level of accreditation are clearly laid out for schools. The impact data for the evaluation does not form part of this assessment. However, some of the observations made by assessors will feed in to our overall evaluation of the programme.

That said, you might find the responses to the questionnaires helpful within your school to think about the action plan, and to talk about what you've achieved. You are welcome to use the responses to do this, and we will include them in the report following an accreditation.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR SCHOOLS?

We are asking you to gather some data within your school. We have kept this as simple and brief as possible. The diagram below shows the process for schools as they move through the awards. The points where we ask you to gather data are highlighted in blue.

Please make sure that one person in your school takes the lead on gathering data and sending it to the RRSa team. Unicef UK will require the information to be submitted before an assessment for accreditation can go ahead.



### Questionnaires with pupils and adults

The best way to find out what has changed for the people in your school community is to ask them. We have developed four pupil questionnaires; one for infant pupils, one for junior pupils; one for senior pupils; and one for special schools. The questionnaires have slightly different wording and appearance to make them as easy as possible for each age group.

**Please use whichever version you think will work best in your classes.** The pupil questionnaires are between 9 and 14 questions long (and we would expect it to take no more than 15 minutes to complete in most cases).

There is also a questionnaire for adults working in the school. The adult questionnaire is 7 questions long and we would expect it to take about 5 minutes to complete. Copies of the questionnaires are available on the RRSa website.

*Who should complete the questionnaires?*

**The pupil questionnaire should be completed by approximately 50-100 pupils, depending on the size of your school.** We suggest choosing 2-4 classes to complete the questionnaire.

**The pupil questionnaire can be completed in paper form or online (via survey monkey).** If you would like to use the online version of the pupil questionnaire, please contact Unicef UK for a link.

**The adult questionnaire is for all adults working in the school, particularly those who have regular contact with the children.** Please encourage as many adults as possible to complete the questionnaire. It should be completed by at least 10 adults. If you think it will be difficult to get completed questionnaires from at least 10 adults in the school, please contact the Unicef team to discuss this with them.

We strongly suggest that the teacher questionnaire is completed on-line as this saves work for the person co-ordinating this in the school.

**We do not ask for names on the questionnaires, but we do ask for job titles (from teachers) and the year group (from pupils).**

*How to submit the data*

We recommend that adults complete their questionnaires via survey monkey. This will allow us to download the results directly and means that no further work is required by the school co-ordinator. If pupils complete the survey via Survey Monkey, the same thing applies.

If questionnaires are completed on paper, you need to transfer the findings on to the Excel file provided. This is available on the website or from the Unicef team. If you have any difficulties completing the Excel file, please contact the RRSA team for help. Please send the completed Excel file to your Professional Advisor with your paperwork prior to assessment.

*What if issues arise?*

If you have any difficulties getting the questionnaires completed, please let the RRSA team know as soon as possible so that this does not delay your assessment visit.

If any concerns are raised in the questionnaires, by either pupils or teachers, these should be handled by the school, as the RRSA team will not have personal details. If information is given via Survey Monkey that raises safeguarding concerns, these will be referred back to the school in line with Unicef UK's safeguarding policies.

### **Head teacher observations about impact**

We ask the Head teacher to complete a short questionnaire about the impact they perceive in the school. This has 8 questions, each one asking for a brief comment or description. These observations help us to put the questionnaires and other data into a more rounded context. We encourage Head Teachers to give specific examples or evidence to support their answers wherever possible. These should be sent to your Professional Advisor with your other paperwork prior to assessment.



## School data

We ask that you provide us with some data about the school context and outcomes. This should all be data that is routinely collected as part of national requirements, but if you have any difficulty collecting this, please contact the RRSA team.

The data we ask you to provide covers the following. In each case, the data should be given for the last full academic year (i.e. if data is being submitted in March 2017, it should relate to the academic year September 2015 to August 2016):

### *In all schools*

- The % of pupils with an SEN statement or EHC plan in your school
- The % of pupils with English as an additional language
- The % of pupils eligible for a Pupil Premium (PP)
- The number of temporary or permanent exclusions
- The % of mornings or afternoons recorded as non-attendances
- The number of recorded incidents of bullying or discrimination
- Last school inspection date and rating

### *In Scotland only*

- The % of pupils achieving CfE in reading at P1, 4 & 7 combined (primary only) and S3 (secondary only)
- The % of pupils achieving CfE in writing at P1, 4 & 7 combined (primary only) and S3 (secondary only)
- The % of pupils achieving CfE in numeracy at P1, 4 & 7 combined (primary only) and S3 (secondary only)

### *In England and Wales only*

- The % of pupils meeting expected standards in reading, writing & maths (primary only)
- The % of pupils eligible for PP meeting expected standards in reading, writing and maths (primary only)
- The % of pupils not eligible for PP meeting expected standards in reading, writing and maths (primary only)
- Attainment 8 score for all pupils (secondary only)
- Attainment 8 score for pupils eligible for PP (secondary only)
- Attainment 8 score for pupils not eligible for PP (secondary only)
- % pupils achieving 5+ A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent (secondary only)
- % pupils eligible for PP achieving 5+ A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent (secondary only)
- % pupils not eligible for PP achieving 5+ A\*-C at GCSE or equivalent (secondary only)

A form is provided for you to enter the relevant data. Please return this to your Professional Advisor with your other paperwork. If you have any difficulties completing the form, please contact the RRSA team as soon as possible to avoid delays to the assessment visit.

## Assessment observations

The observations carried out by assessors when they visit the school provides valuable information about the activities in the school and the direct impacts on the school community. Some of these observations will be drawn on to show evidence of the impact of RRSA as well as being part of the report submitted to the school.

## TALLY SHEET FOR PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRES

You may find this sheet useful to tally up the numbers of responses for each question. These can then be typed directly into the Excel file.

1. How many rights can you name?			
None:	1:	2:	3:
4:	5:	6:	7:
8 or more:			

	Yes, always	Yes, mostly	No, mostly not	No, never	I'm not sure
2. I enjoy being at school					
3. I feel safe at school					
4. Adults in the school treat me with respect					
5. Other pupils in my class are kind and helpful					
6. If I felt unsafe, I could tell an adult at school					
7. My teachers listen to me					
8. I can influence decisions about my school					
9. I know what I need to do to make progress in class					
10. In general, I like the way I am					
11. I have a useful role to play in my local community					
12. I have a useful role to play in the global community					

13. Have you talked about children's rights with any of the following people in the last three months?	Yes	No	Not sure
Your parents			
Your wider family			
Other adults outside the school			
Other children outside the school			
14. Have you shared or posted a story about children's rights on social media in the last three months?			
If you said yes, how many times, roughly?			

## CRIB SHEET FOR PUPIL QUESTIONNAIRE

*You will know what works best for your class, but below are some suggestions for how to describe this questionnaire to your pupils.*

- **We are asking every child in your class to answer some questions about how you feel about the school**
- **These questions are to help us see what you think the school is like. It is part of our work to become a rights respecting school.**

*We want children to answer as many of the questions as possible and have tried to keep it short and simple. However, some children might feel a bit uncomfortable with some questions and they can choose not to answer them.*

*Although we don't expect these questions to raise any issues for children that you would not already be aware of, you may want to give children a chance to talk to you privately after they complete this in case it has brought up something they want to discuss.*

- **There are no right or wrong answers. It is all about how you feel.**
- **If you don't understand one of the questions, you can ask the teacher to help explain it.**
- **For most of the questions, you are asked to say whether the sentence is true for you – for example 'I enjoy being at school'. If it is true for you all of the time, or nearly all of the time, you can tick the first box. If it is true for you most of the time (e.g. you enjoy school more often than you don't enjoy it), you can tick the second box. If it is not true for you most of the time (e.g. you don't enjoy school more often than you do enjoy it), you can tick the third box. If it is never, or almost never true for you (e.g. you almost never enjoy school), you can tick the fourth box. If you're really not sure, you can tick the last box.**
- **We would like you to answer as many of the questions as possible, but if you really don't want to answer one, put a line through all the boxes.**
- **If anyone is not sure about the questions or wants to talk to me about them, I'm available after this class...**

*It is important that children feel comfortable telling the truth on the questionnaire, so when you collect them in, please try not to look at individual pupils' answers. We do not ask them to put their names on.*

- **When you've finished, turn it upside down on the table and the teacher will collect them all in at the end.**

**Thank you for helping collect this data. It will help us to see the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools Award which your school is undertaking. Please return the completed questionnaires to the co-ordinator in your school.**

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