



UNICEF UK & SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD UPDATE MAY 2023

In May 2022, the Scottish Government entered into a partnership with UNICEF UK, with the aim of offering the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) initiative to every local authority school across Scotland.

Through this partnership, the Scottish Government is covering the costs of RRSA registration for all local authority schools in Scotland. The government is also providing schools with access to all the training, support and accreditations they need through the RRSA scheme, until March 2025.

We are working closely with Local Authorities and other local stakeholders to support this programme. In the last few months, we have [developed a new Local Authority Partnership Agreement](#), ensuring that UNICEF UK can bring the RRSA to even more schools across Scotland.

One year since the start of our partnership, we have made some significant achievements, including:

- [321 new schools have registered](#) for the Rights Respecting Schools Award.
- [347 schools have achieved Bronze accreditation](#), while 145 have reached Silver and 61 schools have received Gold accreditation.
- We have developed strong working relationships [with 28 out of Scotland's 32 local authorities](#), up from 20 authorities before the partnership was launched.

IMPACTS OF THE RRSA

This partnership with the Scottish Government has helped to remove financial barriers for local authority schools that wish to enrol in the RRSA, making the Award accessible to hundreds of new schools for the first time.

The RRSA aims to bring about transformative change within the school environment, by enshrining the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as a key guiding principle.

Our research shows that putting the rights of the child at the heart of school life leads to [greater wellbeing, engagement and attainment](#).

The RRSA helps to [create a culture of respect](#) within schools. When children learn about their own rights and the rights of others, they feel more protected, valued and respected, and they feel that their voices are heard and valued by teachers and other students.

The scheme helps to create a [sense of community and belonging](#), and encourages each child to believe they can be a global citizen with the power to change the world.

Finally, the RRSA contributes to the Scottish Government's National Outcomes, by improving educational outcomes, improving children's welfare, and helping young people to reach their full potential.

RESULTS TO DATE

Since our last report in November 2022, we have enrolled an additional 100 schools within the RRSA. In total, **1,726 schools are enrolled in RRSA across Scotland**, making up 72 per cent of all eligible schools. This includes **1,413 primary schools (71% of total)** and **305 secondary schools (77% of total)**.

Overall, more than **540,000 students are currently engaged in RRSA activities** across Scotland.

Since May 2022, we have **registered 321 new schools**, while 347 schools have attained Bronze accreditation, 145 have reached Silver, and 61 have reached Gold accreditation. In total, 1,146 schools have Bronze accreditation, 555 have reached Silver and 237 have reached Gold.

A full breakdown of the results by authority area, as of May 2023, is listed below:

Local Authority	Number of Schools Enrolled	Proportion of Schools Enrolled
Aberdeen City Council	46	62%
Aberdeenshire Council	108	64%
Angus Council	55	95%
Argyll and Bute Council	54	59%
City of Edinburgh Council	116	79%
Clackmannanshire Council	10	37%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	22	88%
Dumfries and Galloway Council	91	79%
Dundee City Council	32	71%
East Ayrshire Council	55	82%
East Dunbartonshire Council	37	76%
East Lothian Council	36	88%
East Renfrewshire Council	30	98%
Falkirk Council	49	78%
Fife Council	97	58%
Glasgow City Council	138	63%
Inverclyde Council	36	95%
Midlothian Council	28	67%
North Ayrshire Council	61	94%
North Lanarkshire Council	130	85%
Orkney Islands Council	13	65%
Perth and Kinross Council	75	82%
Renfrewshire Council	46	68%
Scottish Borders Council	46	61%
Shetland Islands Council	12	41%
South Ayrshire Council	52	100%
South Lanarkshire Council	64	43%
Stirling Council	17	31%
The Highland Council	142	69%
The Moray Council	44	85%
West Dunbartonshire Council	17	39%
West Lothian Council	81	96%

CASE STUDY: FALKIRK

Schools in Falkirk have been involved in the RRSA for over a decade, and there is a high level of expertise and institutional memory amongst schools and teachers within the authority.

Our partnership with the Scottish Government, and the associated new funding, is helping the Council to utilise this experience to support and encourage new schools to get involved in the RRSA.

Falkirk Council ran an outreach campaign, asking schools about their progress on the RRSA journey. This encouraged schools to re-engage with the Award, and inspired new schools to come on board with the initiative.

They then reached out to teachers in Gold-accredited schools, encouraging them to become Strategic Leads and Assessors for the scheme. This offers a crucial leadership opportunity for teachers, and also helps to get new schools involved and assessed.

Finally, the Council is offering targeted support sessions to schools based on their RRSA level, tailoring their support to ensure that more schools can make the most of the Award.

This is just one example of how the RRSA has become sustainable in one Local Authority, and can operate with minimal support.

CHALLENGES FACED

Limited teacher capacity was one of the key challenges we faced over the course of the year, as it could reduce uptake of the Award.

To make the best use of teacher capacity, we worked to [upskill Strategic Leads](#), highlighting how the RRSA can support their existing role, and lead to greater student wellbeing and improved educational outcomes. We also worked to increase schools' knowledge of the RRSA and its benefits.

We also faced a challenge in engaging new Local Authorities which we had no previous relationship with. Without these relationships, it is harder to encourage participation in schools within each area.

In response, we [utilised our new Local Authority agreement](#), which provides Authorities with greater information on the programme, roles, expectations and case studies. We are planning to send this agreement out to key contacts at remaining Authorities to achieve senior buy-in and develop strong relationships.

TESTIMONIALS

"Young people have a right to express their opinion, to hold these values and the LGBTQI members of our community need to have their rights upheld. [The RRSA] gave young people who wanted advocacy a language."

Rights-Respecting Coordinator
at a Gold-accredited school in Edinburgh

"The children's commitment to rights in our school is our proudest achievement. Our pupils are empowered, and they lead learning and contribute to improvement."

Headteacher and RRSA Lead
at an accredited school in Troon

"The Award has given a balance; children feel empowered but also have an inclusive ethos where they respect the rights of others as well as understand their own."

"As teachers we hope these children will go on to be the people to advocate for the rights of people who are unable to access them."

RRSA Coordinator
at a Gold-accredited school in Edinburgh

LOOKING AHEAD

Going forward, we will continue to strengthen our strategic partnerships with Local Authorities across Scotland.

We will continue working closely with Local Authorities, [building their capacity to support RRSA-accredited schools](#), carry out accreditations, and get new schools involved in the initiative.

In more Local Authorities, [Strategic Leads will be taking day-to-day responsibility](#) of running the Award in schools within the authority, making the RRSA more sustainable in the long term.

We are working to ensure the RRSA is [included within strategic planning](#) in Local Authorities. This will highlight the benefits of a child rights approach, and will help to ensure that each Authority secures the resources they need to deliver the RRSA.

Alongside local stakeholders, we will continue to work towards our goal of engaging each local authority school in Scotland with the RRSA.