



UNICEF UK & SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD DECEMBER 2023 UPDATE

Since May 2022, the partnership between the Scottish Government and UNICEF UK has helped us to expand the reach and impact of our Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA) to schools across Scotland.

The generous grant from the Scottish Government has enabled us to open RRSA registration to all state primary and secondary schools, at no cost to the school.

The grant also gives schools access to training, support and related accreditations until March 2025.

Over the past eighteen months, our partnership has had a huge impact, and has continued to far surpass our initial targets. For example:

- **421 new schools** have registered for the Rights Respecting Schools Award since May 2022.
- School engagement with the RRSA in Scotland has increased from **54 per cent to 77 per cent**.
- A total of **748 schools** have now achieved either Silver or Gold accreditation.
- We have developed strong working relationships with **30 out of the 32 local authorities** in Scotland, up from 20 before the partnership.

Going forward, we will continue to register new schools, increase engagement with teachers and school staff, and collaborate with Strategic Leads to ensure the programme will have a sustainable impact in the long term.

IMPACTS OF THE RRSA

The principal objective of our partnership is to offer the RRSA programme to all state primary and secondary schools across Scotland, by increasing engagement with the schools not currently enrolled in the programme.

By removing this financial barrier, and by increasing our engagement with schools and local authorities, we have **substantially increased the number of schools participating in the RRSA initiative** since the start of our partnership.

This is making a tangible difference for learners, teachers, and communities. The expanded reach of the RRSA is helping to **increase children's awareness of their rights**, as well as helping to increase awareness within their school communities. Alongside this, RRSA is helping to bring about whole-school change, by providing a framework to embed children's rights within the school environment.

The programme's Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditation process acts as a powerful incentive and a benchmark for schools to drive progress and highlight key impacts and successes.

As a result, through RRSA's holistic approach, we are helping to **place children's rights at the heart of the school environment**, creating safe, inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured, and they are able to thrive.

RESULTS TO DATE

As of November 2023, 1,826 schools across Scotland have enrolled with the RRSA – an increase of 100 since our last report in June. As a result, we have already surpassed our target of enrolling 1,800 schools by March 2024.

Since the start of our partnership in May 2022, we have **registered 421 new schools**. In total, **580,000 children and young people** are now engaged in RRSA activities across the country.

In total, **748 schools have gained either Silver or Gold accreditation**, surpassing our target for 700 schools to achieve Silver accreditation by March 2024. Across Scotland, 772 schools have reached Bronze accreditation, 511 have attained Silver, and 237 have reached Gold.

These are a full breakdown of the results by each local authority area, as of November 2023:

Local Authority	Number of Schools Enrolled	Proportion of Schools Enrolled
Aberdeen City Council	47	63%
Aberdeenshire Council	121	70%
Angus Council	55	95%
Argyll and Bute Council	56	62%
City of Edinburgh Council	124	83%
Clackmannanshire Council	11	41%
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	22	88%
Dumfries and Galloway Council	94	80%
Dundee City Council	33	73%
East Ayrshire Council	57	83%
East Dunbartonshire Council	39	80%
East Lothian Council	35	85%
East Renfrewshire Council	29	97%
Falkirk Council	51	81%
Fife Council	112	67%
Glasgow City Council	147	67%
Inverclyde Council	36	95%
Midlothian Council	31	74%
North Ayrshire Council	64	97%
North Lanarkshire Council	134	87%
Orkney Islands Council	16	76%
Perth and Kinross Council	78	85%
Renfrewshire Council	49	71%
Scottish Borders Council	49	65%
Shetland Islands Council	13	45%
South Ayrshire Council	49	100%
South Lanarkshire Council	77	51%
Stirling Council	22	39%
The Highland Council	154	75%
The Moray Council	45	87%
West Dunbartonshire Council	26	59%
West Lothian Council	81	96%

ENGAGING THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A key element of our partnership is to engage teachers and the wider school community, raising awareness of the impacts and importance of the programme, and supporting teachers as they embed the UNCRC throughout the school environment.

We have **scaled up our specialist, world-class child rights training** for staff from RRSA schools to meet rising demand. Over the course of the programme, staff training dates have quickly reached their sign up limits, leading to long waiting lists for training.

As a result, we have expanded our training provision, **providing five additional course dates** during the reporting period, and increasing the capacity on each training course from 40 to 60.

This high level of demand for training reflects the strong appetite for this work amongst educators across Scotland.

Alongside this, we have **distributed termly newsletters** to keep schools informed about the programme. We have also continued to maintain an RRSA Scotland page on the UNICEF UK website, to detail the benefits and impacts of the grant.

To promote RRSA further, we continue to have a **presence at various high-profile events** across Scotland's education sector. We have led a seminar at the University of Strathclyde, conducted a presentation at a meeting of East Lothian Head Teachers, and attended Education Scotland's quarterly meetings on Child Rights & Participation. We have also provided updates on the impact of the grant at the June 2023 ADES meeting.

Finally, in September 2023, we **sent a letter to every Director of Education in Scotland**, highlighting the progress being made in local authorities, and showcasing the crucial role of the Scottish Government's grant in achieving that progress.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

In addition to the hundreds of new schools registering for RRSA, Local Authority Strategic Leads have been engaging with the programme and building their skills.

Working with these Strategic Leads, we are able to identify schools that need additional support. Meanwhile, by training Strategic Leads and embedding skills at the local level, we aim to **ensure the sustainability of the programme beyond the period of the grant.**

Thanks to the Scottish Government, we have delivered **training and guidance that enabled eleven Strategic Leads to organise and complete Silver assessment visits.**

In addition, we have been building local capacity by conducting termly meetings with Strategic Leads, and by offering three RRSA Assessor training sessions to Strategic Leads. We also **developed a new monthly CPD resources for staff, "Spotlight on RRSA,"** which launched in August 2023.

Finally, we are **illustrating to Directors the cost savings for each Local Authority** through this programme. We are calculating bespoke costings to help them plan a transition to a Service Level Agreement with UNICEF UK from spring 2025. This discount will be maximised where local level accreditation is established.

CASE STUDY: WEST LoTHIAN

At Boghall Primary School in West Lothian, the RRSA initiative is helping the whole school community to come together in support of children's rights.

Children's rights are embedded right at the heart of the school community. The school employs a **Family Link Worker**, who responds to the needs of families within the school, and engages with the wider community to promote children's rights.

Recently, the school ran a **family learning session**, with a focus on health, wellbeing and rights, giving young learners the chance to teach their parents and carers about children's rights.

Alongside this, inspired by the UNCRC, the school has established a **"Friendship Café,"** where young learners can meet and chat with members of the local church, gaining new opportunities, insights and life skills.

And the school is dedicated to promoting children's **dignity and right to health**, by providing toiletries, sanitary items and pre-loved clothing to any families who need them, free of charge.

Boghall School is an incredible example of how embedding children's rights can create a safe, inclusive and inspirational environment, for children, their families and the whole community.