

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

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| School: | Echt School |
| Headteacher: | Margaret Cochrane |
| RRSA coordinator: | Margaret Cochrane |
| Local authority: | Aberdeenshire Council |
| School context: | A small rural school with 49 pupils on the current school roll. 8% are eligible for Pupil Equity Funding, 4% have an IEP, and 8% speak English as an additional language (with 4 different languages spoken). |
| Attendees at SLT meeting: | Headteacher |
| Number of children and young people spoken with: | 15 plus one S1 (ex-pupil) |
| Adults spoken with: | 2 teachers, 1 support assistant, 1 nursery staff, 1 parent |
| Key RRSA accreditations: | Registered for RRSA: August 2011 Bronze achieved: February 2016 Silver achieved: June 2017 Silver reaccreditation: May 2021 |
| Assessor: | Jenny Price |
| Date: | 21 February 2023 |

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Echt School has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is based on an in-person accreditation visit. The assessor would like to thank the children, the Senior Leadership Team, and staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed evidence provided to support the process. Prior to the accreditation visit, the school completed a comprehensive School Evaluation: Gold form and provided a good collection of digital evidence.

It was evident that children's rights are embedded across the school and underpin every facet of school life.

Strengths of the school include:

- The strategic approach of senior leaders and the RRSA lead to embed a rights-based approach in a sustainable way, putting it at the core of the school's ethos, policies and curriculum.
- An ethos that places positive relationships based on mutual respect and trust at the heart of school life.
- Strong pupil participation. There are several different mechanisms for children to feed into decision making and leadership in different areas of school life. Children feel listened to, that their views matter and that they can make a positive difference.
- Children have a good awareness of how global matters affect children's rights and feel empowered to take action, linked to fundraising and campaigning.

Our experience has shown that there are actions that have proven useful in other RRSA schools and settings in helping them to maintain and build on their practice at Gold level. Here are our recommendations for your school:

- Continue to widen the range of articles that the whole school community are familiar with, appropriate to children's age and ability, ensuring that they understand the origins and wider context of children's rights.
- Continue to explore with children and staff the meaning of key concepts underpinning a child rights-based approach, for example dignity and equity and how these are enacted in school practice.
- Continue the work that has begun on ensuring positive representation of our diverse society throughout the curriculum and continue to develop understanding and celebration of diversity in all its forms.
- Further develop children and young people's understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen, thinking particularly of challenging stereotypes and discrimination and living sustainably. Support them to be informed about the world and current affairs so that they are critical thinkers and challenge discrimination and stereotypical attitudes.

2. VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

| STRAND A | Highlights and comments |
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| <p>1. Children, young people and the wider school community know about and understand the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and can describe how it impacts on their lives and on the lives of children everywhere</p> | <p>Children shared good knowledge of their rights, referencing articles from the CRC. They understand that rights are unconditional, universal, inherent, inalienable and indivisible saying, <i>"We have them from birth until we are eighteen... All rights are equally important, and no one can take them away... For all children in the world."</i> Children shared awareness of how children's rights are affected globally, saying, <i>"With the Syrian and Turkish earthquakes, houses are affected... and their rights to education,"</i> and, <i>"Climate change can affect people's lives and cause natural disasters, like acid rain. This affects children's rights, human rights in fact."</i> Staff are passionate about embedding a rights-based approach through, <i>"... stand-alone lessons on rights,"</i> and incorporating them into the curriculum. A pupil explained, <i>"Everything we do is rooted in rights. Our values are connected to rights... and all of our learning links to the Global Goals."</i> The headteacher added, <i>"Our whole curriculum is based on sustainability, with rights, the global goals and diversity built into a three-year rolling programme, but we adapt according to what is going in the world."</i> Children also learn about rights through assemblies, charters, events and Newsround with one child sharing, <i>"Rights are usually linked to the news."</i> The headteacher said, <i>"RRSA has 100% added value. People who visit the school notice the respectful atmosphere and the positive way children talk to each other."</i> Parents are informed through newsletters, assemblies, and home learning.</p> |
| STRAND B | Highlights and comments |
| <p>2. In school children and young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> | <p>Children agreed they can enjoy all their rights in school, understanding staff's role, saying, <i>"Duty bearers are teachers or any grownups in school, making sure we have a good life."</i> They understand the concepts of fairness and equity, relating to global issues, saying, <i>"Some governments are not nice and don't support gender equality. Some women have to ask just to go outside which is not fair."</i> Others reflected on school life saying, <i>"Everyone is treated fairly here."</i> Children also agreed that teachers are fair in the event of any disagreements, saying, <i>"They always try to listen to both points of view. We fill out a reflection form."</i> The nursery staff referred to their children as, <i>"... more independent since learning about rights... Their voice is included in the wall displays, recorded voice messages, choosing snacks, and self-registration."</i></p> |
| <p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a mutual respect for rights</p> | <p>Relationships were described by adults and children as positive and respectful. Children agreed that class charters help to remind everyone about their rights in school and it was clear that children, the parent council and all staff have been involved in creating them. Staff explained, <i>"They are an agreement that's linked to rights, chosen by the children based on what is relevant to them."</i> Children talked about peer mentors saying, <i>"They help if we fall or feel sad. We can speak to them, they comfort us, and we can use question prompt cards."</i> Others shared, <i>"We have more knowledge about bullying, and we're more aware of how it is wrong."</i> A child pointed out the 'Dignity Maps' throughout the school saying, <i>"We make sure that dignity happens in each area of the school and that dignity is respected."</i> The headteacher explained, <i>"Children are involved in developing the positive relationships policy and we are trying to incorporate dignity in a meaningful way."</i> A child added, <i>"Dignity means that everyone has their basic human rights."</i></p> |

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| 4. Children and young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support. | Children understand that they have a right to be safe in various ways, reflecting on global issues, saying, <i>"Because of the war children are not getting their rights to safety met, or shelter, a good life and have to leave their country."</i> Children agreed that they feel safe and protected in school, saying <i>"Adults are responsible for keeping us safe."</i> Some talked about trusted adults saying, <i>"We can talk to a teacher if we need help with anything if we don't feel safe... they listen to you, respect your views and your privacy."</i> |
| 5. Children's social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles. | Wellbeing is a priority for the school. Children learn to make healthy choices in terms of eating and exercise, saying, <i>"They help us to exercise every day, eat healthy every day and spend time outside."</i> Others talked about the 'nurture tent' and others mentioned Brea the dog 'therapet' to help specific children, saying, <i>"It's fair because it's about what we need rather than what we want."</i> Having a mental health teacher for certain children was described by one child as, <i>"... equitable, based on temper, stress and needs."</i> The headteacher also explained, <i>"Children are taught about self-regulation and trusted relationships to help them problem solve with each other and to build positive relationships."</i> |
| 6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals. | Children feel valued in their school, with some sharing their Diversity Tree saying, <i>"Everyone looks different, but we are not treated differently because of who we are... although some people are treated differently because of equity... for example, pupils using wheelchair ramps and others who get extra support."</i> Staff said, <i>"Knowing about their rights helps the children to feel more accepting with each other and respectful."</i> Children talked about non-discrimination saying, <i>"No one should be made fun of if you have different hair colour or skin colour, it just shouldn't be a thing."</i> A child added, <i>"To give dignity, you respect the right to non-discrimination."</i> Children (including nursery) have learned about vegan and farming lifestyles, the Black Lives Matter movement and Martin Luther King. |
| 7. Children and young people value education and are involved in making decisions about their education. | The headteacher acknowledged children as 'Leaders of Learning' who are involved in the 'Wee HGIOS' school evaluation process, explaining, <i>"Children understand what makes an excellent learner, an excellent lesson and an excellent teacher."</i> Using two stars and a wish, children share feedback to their teachers saying, <i>"We've noticed that teachers sometimes look back at the excellent lesson list to guide them."</i> Nursery staff said, <i>"Learning is more child centred now, everything is coming from the children and so they want to learn more."</i> |
| STRAND C | Highlights and comments |
| 8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously. | A range of pupil voice groups such as Eco Warriors, Pupil Voice, Play Leaders, Health group and Fairtrade provide ample opportunity to share views. A pupil explained, <i>"Every child in the school is part of a group."</i> Children described their Your Voice Matters display, <i>"We share our opinions... and they listen to our voice."</i> Children added, <i>"Our aim is to help with school improvement,"</i> sharing examples such as nurture tents with sensory toys, the friendship bench, mirrors in the toilets, lunch and after school clubs. Others shared, <i>"We work with the headteacher, PSAs, and parents to support charities by fundraising."</i> |
| 9. All children and young people have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally. | Children have learned what it means to be an activist. A child explained, <i>"The OutRight campaign is about health around the world."</i> Children understand that fundraising is a form of campaigning, explaining the purpose of raising money for Water Aid saying, <i>"In some countries it's hard to get clean water and good health care, which affects their education when they have to walk miles and miles."</i> Children have also taken part in community litter picks, Fairtrade pop up shops, community cafes and one child explained, <i>"All our fundraising and charities links to children's rights such as Abernecessities."</i> |