

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

GOLD: RIGHTS RESPECTING

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| School: | The Basildon Academies |
| Executive Headteacher: | Gary Smith |
| RRSA coordinator: | Stuart Knowles |
| Local authority: | Essex County Council |
| School context: | The school has 1604 students on roll and is located on different sites in the town. 45% of students are supported through the Pupil Premium and 23% speak English as an additional language. 1.9% have an EHCP. |
| Attendees at SLT meeting: | The executive headteacher, and the RRSA coordinator who is an assistant headteacher. |
| Number of children and young people spoken with: | LOWER ACADEMY 16 steering group members (Y7 & 8) and 13 in a mixed group of Y7 and 8 UPPER ACADEMY 8 steering group members (Y9,10 &11) and 15 in a mixed group of Y9, 10 & 12 |
| Adults spoken with: | Eight teachers, a member of SLT responsible for safeguarding ten administrative support staff (one of whom is a parent), ten pastoral support staff. |
| Key RRSA accreditations: | UPPER ACADEMY Registered for RRSA: September 2015 Bronze achieved: Upper – July 2016 Silver achieved: March 2018 and July 2021 LOWER ACADEMY Registered for RRSA: February 2018 Bronze achieved: January 2020 Silver achieved: July 2021 |
| Assessor(s): | Helen Trivers and Martin Russell |
| Date: | 11 TH July 2022 |

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

The Basildon Academies have met the standard for UNICEF UK’s Rights Respecting Schools Award at Gold: Rights Respecting.

1. STRENGTHS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessors would like to thank the young people, the Senior Leadership Team and the staff for their warm welcome to the school, for the opportunity to speak with adults and children during the assessment and for the detailed and thorough 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:

- Students who confidently discussed a range of rights and why they are important and relevant to their lives.
- Highly effective leadership of the rights related work at all levels, including from young people.
- Planned links to relevant articles are embedded across the curriculum in a way that enriches the learning for all students.
- A passionate commitment to children's rights from all duty bearers ensures the Convention is evident in all aspects of school life.
- An ethos that successfully promotes a highly inclusive culture with positive relationships, based on mutual respect and trust, at the heart of school life.
- The effective pastoral care system and support for wellbeing through which students feel very well nurtured, supported and enabled to learn.

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 revisit RRSA guidance around language, wording and vocabulary of rights; particularly in the lower academy, UNICEF UK's [ABCDE of Rights](#) resource will support with this.
- Further develop opportunities for young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school, recognising the role of students in helping adults understand problems and develop achievable solutions.
- Continue to deepen your focus on children's awareness of global issues by exploring the UN Sustainable Development Goals, using the [World's Largest Lesson resources](#) to support this.
- Continue to support students to engage, as appropriate, in campaigning from a rights perspective; seek to make this systemic across the school and encourage a focus on more issues beyond academy life. Consider participation in UNICEF UK's annual [OutRight campaign](#).
- As a Gold Rights Respecting School, develop your ambassadorial role, promoting the CRC and the benefits of a child rights-based approach, particularly with your partner primary schools.

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>All students and adults spoken with demonstrated a good understanding of children’s rights and are clear about the key characteristics underpinning rights such as universality and indivisibility. They explained that rights can’t be taken away and you don’t have to earn them, <i>“Knowing your rights means that if any of your rights are violated, you are in a position to do something about it.”</i> explained one student. Another said, <i>“Years ago children didn’t really have a voice but the rights and article 12 have completely changed all that.”</i> All subject areas include relevant articles in their planning and the Academy scheme of work template includes a space to link learning to the CRC. Young people mentioned their learning being linked to rights, for example, <i>“In geography we compare access to rights across the world.”</i> A staff member pointed out that, in English, linking texts to the CRC has improved the students’ capacity to empathise. Articles are a central component of ‘drop down’ days and assemblies and they appear on displays around the school site. Every Monday the weekly student briefing has content based on UNICEF UK’s Article of the Week. Students spoke knowledgeably about why some children are unable to access their rights, mentioning challenges resulting from climate change, the impact of war and the consequences of fast fashion. <i>“Some governments don’t allow every child to access free education ...or lots of their other rights too.”</i> mentioned one student.</p> <p>Staff understand and are committed to a child rights-based approach; one adult commented, <i>“It’s not ‘shoe-horned’ in, the rights flow naturally in all that we do.”</i> Parents, carers and governors are kept well informed of the school’s rights respecting work in a variety of ways including a student led podcast series which links the school values with human rights. The leadership’s strong commitment to the CRC is clear. The principal spoke of their desire to <i>“...remove barriers so that our students can better access their right to an education.... They are now seeing their rights all the time...We want this approach to challenge our thinking, as leaders.”</i> It was explained that the strong emphasis on student voice and the empowerment the young people have enjoyed through knowledge of their rights had boosted self-esteem and confidence and has increased their engagement in learning and school life.</p> |
| STRAND B | Highlights and comments |
| <p>2. In school young people enjoy the rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> | <p>A student explained <i>“Duty bearers have the responsibility to teach us about our rights ... for example if we are being discriminated against...it ensures our safety as we know we have the right not to be harassed.”</i> They expressed a high level of trust in all their staff, <i>“...if you go to a person you trust, you know they will help. They might need to let safeguarding know.”</i> A staff member explained, <i>“Students are coming forward more...they have greater awareness when things are not fair.”</i> Students explained, <i>“Everyone should get the help they need to succeed.”</i></p> |
| <p>3. Relationships are positive and founded on dignity and a</p> | <p>Strong, supportive, and mutually respectful relationships were evident throughout the visit and young people said that the increased emphasis on rights, respect and dignity has added to this, <i>“If you respect people’s rights, you respect them as a person.”</i> Staff spoke powerfully about the importance of them acknowledging to students when they themselves have got</p> |

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| mutual respect for rights | something wrong, <i>“It is empowering for them to hear this.”</i> The school’s restorative model is valued, <i>“You still get to express your opinion...and teachers take in what was said...there is a contract you agree to.”</i> Staff spoke very positively about training they have received, as duty bearers, which has resulted in more proactive and positive relationships with the students. |
| 4. Young people are safe and protected and know what to do if they need support. | Young people spoke in an informed way about many facets of their right to be safe and protected including online safety, and mentioned exploitation and County Lines, referring to rights. One of the older students stated, <i>“Our school is a safe place. There’s a dedicated safeguarding team – we know who to go to. Things are sorted out because all staff listen to us.”</i> An adult observed, <i>“Knowing their rights has been so helpful for the children in terms of their safeguarding.”</i> Students lead on the promoting of anti-bullying strategies. |
| 5. Children’s social and emotional wellbeing is a priority. They learn to develop healthy lifestyles. | Wellbeing is prioritised for everyone in the school. As well as extensive curriculum content, the leadership have funded Wellbeing Centres on both sites. This support was spoken of very positively by students. Some have timetabled access but <i>“There are break and lunchtime drop ins... anyone can go for help with any problem...it’s very accessible.”</i> one explained. An adult explained a range of provision such as free breakfast for any students who needs it and noted that families have a growing awareness of their children’s rights to access nutrition and health care to ensure positive wellbeing. |
| 6. Children and young people are included and are valued as individuals. | Diversity and inclusion are actively promoted, staff recognise their duty to help students to value and appreciate difference. The school’s values, voted on by the students, and displays such as one depicting LGBTQI+ musicians reflect and reinforce this. Pupil comments included, <i>“We have PSHE lessons on this and during Ramadan we were provided with a prayer room to use.”</i> |
| 7. Young people value education and are involved in decisions about their education. | Young people show agency in accessing their right to learn. They discussed that teachers involve them in their learning in a range of ways and that peer support is important to their learning. One group described a structured system for seeking help: Book – Board – Friend – Teacher. Staff spoken with valued pupil feedback which they said influenced future planning as part of the Academies’ quality assurance and academy improvement systems. |
| STRAND C | Highlights and comments |
| 8. Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously. | The young people’s right to have their views taken seriously is strongly promoted. Students explained, <i>“Each class elects a council member...ideas are taken to their meetings and then they feed back.”</i> Most students believe that their ideas are acted upon with a long list of changes having happened including, pen pots and stationery in classrooms, girls’ self-defence classes, a Student of the Week award voted for by teachers, House links to charities, fun House events and provision of re-useable bottles for all students. Most recently, and mentioned by many, <i>“They [SLT] changed the policy on footwear. They were thinking about dignity – they respect our opinions, and the decision is respectful to families who can’t afford to buy different pairs of shoes.”</i> |
| 9. All students have taken action to uphold their rights and the rights of others, locally and globally. | In addition to strong internal advocacy, students take action locally and globally. Charities such as Children in Need, the Basildon Hospital NICU and the local hospice, are among the beneficiaries of the Academies’ charitable fundraising. Applying their campaigning skills in new ways, students, after discussion about the focus, have started a staged approach to period poverty: raising awareness among their peers, raising funds for Period Poverty UK and raising awareness of the related issues with their local Council. |