

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE.

School:	The Portsmouth Academy
Headteacher:	Ms Natalie Sheppard / Mrs Rachel Grey
RRSA coordinator:	Mr Ryan Lock
Local authority:	Portsmouth
Number of pupils on roll:	1250
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, RRSA Lead
Number of children and young people spoken with:	10
Adults spoken with:	3 adults including teachers and curriculum leads for PE and PSHE
RRSA key accreditations:	Bronze: 11 th February 2022
Assessor:	Helen Trivers
Date of visit:	17 th January 2024

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

The Portsmouth Academy has met the standard for UNICEF UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at Silver: Rights Aware.

EVIDENCE FROM THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

STRAND A: TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT RIGHTS

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is made known to children, young people and adults, who use this shared understanding to work for improved child wellbeing, school improvement, global justice and sustainable living.

- Young people spoken with talked about a range of articles from the CRC and why they are important, one saying, *"We know what rights we have as young people,"* another adding, *"When I learn about my rights, I know how I should and shouldn't be treated."* Pupils discuss rights weekly within tutor time where they also take part in Votes for Schools debates and activities. Assembly topics are also linked with CRC articles. Pupils knew that rights belong to, *"...everyone,"* that people are, *"...born with the rights,"* and that rights don't need to be earned.
- A number of teachers are members of the RRSA Drive Team and support the development of RRSA across the school, particularly on ensuring that links to rights are made explicit across the curriculum. The PE Lead said, *"We've embedded it in our lesson PowerPoints and on our display boards,"* adding, *"It's a golden thread in lessons; it is part of our curriculum intent and we use the vocabulary as staff."* One teacher reflected, *"It's been interesting to hear the conversations between the pupils."*
- One of the Co-Principals explained that the school's work on children's rights fits well with the school's values of *'aspire, achieve and respect,'* and the school's vision. She explained, *"We want to prepare our children to meet the world."* The school endeavours to expand pupils' horizons and ensure they have a range of experiences to develop their talents and be the best they can be, and to see themselves as members of the global community, *"Cultural capital is important... this opens their eyes to the world."* The RRSA lead said, *"The common language of rights is very important. We link things back to rights. We are a diverse school, which is a strength, but means there are different ideologies about what is right and wrong, and the rights help to create a common understanding."*

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to develop knowledge and understanding of the CRC, its origins, values and principles, increasing accuracy in the way people use rights language. Consider using the [Spotlight on Rights Respecting Language](#) as part of staff development.
- Ensure staff and young people have an understanding that rights are inherent, inalienable, indivisible, universal and unconditional, using language appropriate to children and young people's age and ability. Consider using the RRSA resource [ABCDE of Rights](#).
- Consider developing the school's strategic documentation to link to and reflect the values and articles of the CRC so that school improvement priorities and relevant policies include reference to children's access to specific rights. You might find [Articles in Action](#) a helpful resource.
- Look for ways to incorporate an explicit commitment to rights and education for global citizenship into the heart of the school's mission and purpose.

- Support parents/governors/families/the wider community to learn about and understand the CRC and engage with the school's rights respecting journey. This could include support and information on the website/ school newsletter and through any school events.

STRAND B: TEACHING AND LEARNING THROUGH RIGHTS – ETHOS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Actions and decisions affecting children are rooted in, reviewed and resolved through rights. Children, young people and adults collaborate to develop and maintain a school community based on equality, dignity, respect, non-discrimination and participation; this includes learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of both educators and learners and promotes wellbeing.

- The language of rights is increasingly being used in daily school life, one teacher sharing, *"This is 100% developing respectful relationships."* Pupils referred to the new behaviour policy and said, *"The articles have helped. As a school community, people are respectful to each other."* A teacher shared, *"They know they have the right to an opinion, but they are starting to understand that this means that other people do too. We have embedded this into The Portsmouth Academy Way – they think about the way they talk to each other."*
- It was felt by many that knowledge of rights was helping to improve safeguarding. The Co-Principal said, *"It alerts children to their right to be safe and maybe they report things they wouldn't. I do believe that because children understand their rights, they are able to flag when they need further support."* The RRSA lead added that the rights language used across the school helps pupils to articulate their needs. A member of staff said that from their perspective as a form teacher, *"...they know how to report things and they know their voice will be listened to and it will be sorted."* Pupils talked about the school's Report It button on the website which helps them to raise any issues, and they felt confident that staff would support them to resolve problems, *"It is taken seriously. You can talk to any teacher, and they will help you."*
- *"There are lots of events, like LGBTQ+ month and We are One events, where we learn about why inclusion is important,"* shared one student, another adding, *"Teachers pull pupils up if they use discriminatory words."* One teacher shared, *"We have done lots of work on diversifying the texts that they read,"* and the Co-Principal agreed that the school's rights respecting approach has had a positive impact on their work around wellbeing and on equality, diversity and inclusion.
- *"There are lots of clubs that people can join,"* shared one pupil, teachers reporting a 400% increase in the uptake of the enrichment programme which means that pupils are benefitting from a wide range of experiences. A member of staff said, *"They have a right to participate in these clubs. It is part of their right to education. There is a hardship fund for children eligible for pupil premium,"* which removes barriers to participating in activities for children.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Ensure that young people are clear about how adults, as duty bearers in school, should uphold their rights and help facilitate their access to rights.

- Consider creating a rights-based school charter using the RRSA [Charter Guidance](#) to focus on the language of 'respect for rights' so that relationships are seen as mutually respectful. Include actions for duty bearers as well as for children.
- Create opportunities to explore the concepts of fairness and equity and ensure children and young people can describe how school promotes these concepts.
- Explore with staff, children and young people the concept of dignity – what it means and how it underpins policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school.

STRAND C: TEACHING AND LEARNING FOR RIGHTS – PARTICIPATION, EMPOWERMENT AND ACTION

Children are empowered to enjoy and exercise their rights and to promote the rights of others locally and globally. Duty bearers are accountable for ensuring that children experience their rights.

- Pupils spoken with felt that they are listened to at school. They reported that there are regular surveys for pupils and the Senior Student Leadership Team are involved in school improvement, one member saying, "*Students tell us their problems and we take them on board and discuss them and try to come up with solutions.*" The Student Leadership Team also take part in trust-wide meetings to share their ideas. The Co-Principal said, "*We want to make sure that everyone knows how the children have influenced things and how we feed back to the children.*"
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their global awareness and citizenship skills. All students take part in Votes for Schools weekly, and this also feeds into the school's termly We Are One events, the RRSA lead explaining, "*There are six events throughout the year. We've explored Black History Month, World Book Day, Earth Day,*" with classroom activities linking to the theme. A teacher shared, "*We've embedded rights within these days.*" Pupils raise money for charities and they also talked about campaigns they have been involved in.

The following recommendations were discussed during the visit to help the school to progress to Gold.

- Continue to provide opportunities for young people to be at the heart of decision-making, influencing and shaping the life and work of the school. This could include explicit involvement in school improvement planning, policy review processes, the evaluation of learning and teaching etc.
- Support young people to engage in a range of advocacy, campaigning and fundraising activities that promote children's rights locally and globally perhaps linking with [UNICEF UK's OutRight Campaign](#) and using [UNICEF's Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#). For fundraising, consider involvement with the [Soccer Aid Schools Challenge](#).
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by encouraging young people and staff to promote knowledge of the CRC and the Rights Respecting Schools Award with other schools, particularly within your trust and also in your local community.