

RRSA ACCREDITATION REPORT

SILVER: RIGHTS AWARE

School:	Arena Academy
Headteacher:	Raj Mann
RRSA coordinator:	Shabnam Nahar
Local authority:	Birmingham City Council
Number of pupils on roll:	1050
Attendees at SLT meeting:	Headteacher, RRSA Coordinator
Number of children and young people spoken with:	10 pupils, some with leadership roles
Adults spoken with:	3 Teachers with 1 also a staff governor, 1 parent governor
RRSA key accreditations:	Date registered: 14 th April 2021 Bronze achieved: 11 th February 2022
Assessor:	Hilary Alcock
Date of visit:	17 th January 2023

ACCREDITATION OUTCOME

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

Arena 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.

- All pupils spoken with knew a wide range of rights from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). They confidently described why rights are important to them. They knew that rights are universal, unconditional and inherent. One pupil said, *"Rights are for all children under 18 around the world."* Another commented, *"Your right to your name, nationality and identity is what makes you an individual and different, but it's also what makes us all the same, because all children have these rights and they should all have them respected."*
- Pupils explained why some children are being denied their rights and the impact this can have e.g. *"Not having the basic necessities of food, water and health care or made to take part in war which means that they can't go to school, have their dreams taken away and they are not safe."*
- Rights Respecting Ambassadors described how they lead assemblies and share the Article of the Week resource with each form. Staff now incorporate rights into teaching a range of curriculum subjects. They also said that rights have a visible profile around the school.
- The headteacher described how a child rights base approach is having a significant impact on the school's development priorities commenting, *"Children are now at the centre of what we do...one of our values is respect and this is driving our school forward."*
- Parents are kept well informed about the school's rights respecting journey through regular newsletters, open evenings, displays and comprehensive information on the school's website.

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

- Further develop staff and young people's 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](#).
- Continue to widen the range of articles that the whole school community are familiar with, appropriate to children and young people's age and ability.
- Consider developing the school's strategic documentation to link to and reflect the values and articles of the CRC so that school development priorities and relevant policies include reference to children's access to specific rights. You might find [Articles in Action](#) a helpful resource.
- Continue to support parents/governors/families/the wider community to engage with the school's rights respecting journey.

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.

- Pupils were confident that adults in school as duty bearers are upholding their rights. One commented, *"We all have the right to be treated fairly and in this school we are."* There was consistent messaging from senior leaders, staff and children that since the school started its rights respecting journey and the language of rights was introduced that relationships at all levels have improved. One pupil said, *"We can speak more about our emotions now and we know that everyone should feel comfortable and protected from unnecessary disagreements."* A parent said that it was noticeable how older pupils interact with younger students creating a caring and inclusive environment.
- Students feel safe in school. The pupil Bullying Integration Ambassador group (BIG) are approachable and help to provide advise and resolve issues. All adults commented on how they now hear rights respecting language being used around the school and that using this alongside introducing a restorative and reflective approach to supporting behaviour expectations and sanctions was having a significant impact with far fewer negative incidents occurring e.g. in relation to bullying, homophobia and sexism.
- Staff consider that pupils are more respectful of each other's right to learn and the headteacher noted how rewards for positive attitudes and behaviours have increased significantly.

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

- Create opportunities to explore the concepts of fairness and equity and ensure children and young people can describe how school promotes these concepts. (Outcome 2)
- Consider how the use of charters could enhance the language of 'respect for rights' so that relationships are seen as mutually respectful. Unicef's [Charter Guidance](#) can support this approach. (Outcome 3)
- Explore with staff and students the concept of 'dignity' – what it means and how it underpins policies, actions and interactions between everyone at school. (Outcome 3)
- Ensure that young people and adults know how the school supports their right to physical and mental health and wellbeing, that information is available and accessible to all and that they understand how this provision relates to rights. (Outcome 5)
- Develop the role children and young people have in engaging with their right to learn. Consider, with them, how they can be more active participants in deciding what and how they learn and what they need to do to progress. (Outcome 7)

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 in the focus group consider that student voice generally throughout the school has been elevated. They consider that they are listened to more and their ideas and views taken seriously. The school has developed a range of pupil voice roles and groups. One pupil with a leadership role described how, *"We have regular meetings with staff and can speak with them and share this with other students. Freedom of speech is important in this school."*
- The headteacher considers that because of the school's rights based approach, *"It feels as if pupils have more of a voice."*
- Pupils have written to their local MP as part of Unicef's OutRight campaign to raise suggests ways to improve access to local health care provision. They have also raised funds to support children affected by floods in Bangladesh and held a Clarks ShoeShare event.
- To celebrate World Children's Day students chose an article from the Convention that is important to them and chose which medium to use to represent and shares these with the school community.
- The Eco Committee have undertaken litter picks as part of their sustainability focus.

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 involved in pupil led groups. Ensure they understand how this links to Article 12 and participation and can articulate the positive impact they have on school improvement and the school community. A 'You said, We did' approach can help with this. Involve students with ways to share their actions and impact to the school and wider community e.g. through your newsletter, website and social media (Outcome 8)
- Continue to develop pupils' understanding of what it means to be a rights respecting global citizen. Support them to be informed about the world so that they are critical thinkers and challenge discrimination and stereotypical attitudes. (Outcome 9)
- 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' [Youth Advocacy Toolkit](#). For fundraising, consider involvement with the [Soccer Aid for Unicef Playground Challenge](#) (Outcome 9)
- Develop campaigning and fundraising activities from the perspective of rights, justice and equity so all children are seen as rights holders rather than just recipients of charity. (Outcome 9)
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by encouraging pupils and staff to promote knowledge of the CRC and the Rights Respecting Schools Award with other schools and in the wider community. (Outcome 9)

