

UNICEF UK & SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Rights Respecting Schools Award in Scotland **June 2024 Update**

Over the last two years, since May 2022, the Scottish Government and UNICEF UK have come together to promote and safeguard children's rights in Scotland through the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).

Thanks to a grant from the Scottish Government, UNICEF UK is able to open RRSA registration to all state primary and secondary schools in Scotland – for no registration cost.

The grant also provides participating schools with access to training, support and accreditations until the end of March 2025.

The removal of this financial barrier, combined with a targeted approach with specific Local Authorities (LAs), has substantially increased RRSA participation rates in Scotland. Since May 2022:

- **1,854 schools have registered with the RRSA**, surpassing our target of 1,800 schools
- **78 per cent of eligible schools are enrolled in the RRSA**, up from 54 per cent before our partnership began
- **787 schools have reached Gold or Silver accreditation**, exceeding our target of 700

Our partnership has seen significant success for children across Scotland. We are now working to maximise the long-term sustainability of the project and its rights-based approach for children.

Impacts of the RRSA

The primary objective of our partnership is to offer RRSA registration to all state primary and secondary schools in Scotland, by increasing the engagement of schools not currently registered.

Through bringing the RRSA to new schools, we open up a new range of opportunities for children and young people.

By raising awareness and understanding of the UNCRC, the RRSA helps to create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are empowered to meet their full potential.

By providing a framework to embed the UNCRC within the school environment, we help to create a culture of respect, where children's voices are heard and valued.

And the RRSA also creates a shared sense of community and belonging, where children understand that they are part of a global community of equals.

Children learn to believe that they can change the world for the better, by becoming active citizens in their local and global communities, and they are encouraged and empowered to make change within their local community.

Results to Date

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we registered 204 new schools for the RRSA across Scotland. As a result, 1,854 schools across Scotland are currently enrolled with the RRSA.

This amounts to **78 per cent of all eligible schools**, and exceeds our target of 1,800 schools by March 2024.

In total, more than **600,000 students in Scotland** are currently engaged in RRSA activities.

Throughout the country, **787 schools have reached Gold or Silver accreditation**, exceeding our target of 700 schools by March 2024.



The RRSA ensures that children's rights are placed right at the heart of the school environment.

Pupils Campaigning for Change in **Duncow**

Campaigning is a vital part of the RRSA journey at Duncow Primary School, a rural school in Dumfries. The RRSA helps pupils to learn about their rights and inspires them to make a difference in their local community.

For the last six years, pupils have been campaigning for safer roads outside their rural school. The idea began as a concern raised by the school's Junior Road Safety Officers, and quickly grew into a wider campaign as a team of seven pupils reported the issue to the parent council and the school's headteacher.

From there, these young campaigners went from strength to strength. Students wrote to local councillors, wrote articles for the community magazine, and asked the community police officer to come and speak to pupils.

The campaign culminated in a meeting between pupils, local councillors and the parent council.

Engaging Local Authorities

Since the start of the grant in March 2022, we have strengthened our relationships with nine local authorities (LAs) across Scotland. As a result, we are now working closely with 30 out of Scotland's 32 LAs.

A key element of these relationships is supporting Local Authority Strategic Leads, who play a key role in implementing the RRSA within local schools. We support Strategic Leads through regular communications and quarterly meetings, where Leads can come together to share results, learnings and best practices.

We also continue to provide Assessor Training to Strategic Leads. Now, for the first time, there are a number of Silver Level assessors in Scotland, with more Leads signed up for future trainings.

We are also working to produce bespoke reporting for each Local Authority. These upcoming reports will show the savings made through the partnership and will provide information on future arrangements once the funding period ends in 2025.

Finally, we are continuing to meet monthly with the Scottish Government Children's Rights Team, to identify ways to support the programme beyond the end of the grant in 2025.



Pupils at Duncow Primary School discuss plans to make the roads around their school safer.

Thanks to the pupils' tireless campaigning, the council agreed to reduce the speed limit outside the school from 60mph to 20, while also bringing in flashing lights and improving road signage.

None of these amazing achievements would have been possible without these inspiring young campaigners – or the RRSA, which inspired children to raise up their voices and created an environment where their voices could be heard and valued.