

# RRSA

# IMPACT 2024

## An update on evidence

**UNICEF.ORG.UK**

United Kingdom Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK),  
Registered Charity No. 1072612 (England & Wales), SC043677  
(Scotland). 1 Westfield Ave, London E20 1HZ.



**Rights  
Respecting  
Schools**

UNITED KINGDOM

**unicef** 

# RRSA IMPACT:

## AN UPDATE ON EVIDENCE

This report provides an update on the impact of the Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) on children and their school communities from September 2022 to the end of June 2024. It aims to provide a snapshot of the most recent data from our schools. For a more comprehensive analysis of our impact, see our [RRSA Impact: The Evidence](#)<sup>1</sup> and for a brief literature review supporting the impact of RRSA, see our [Theory of Change booklet](#).

### Box 1: An overview of RRSA

#### RRSA: An overview

Rights Respecting Schools take a whole-school approach to embedding children's rights at the centre of ethos, learning, relationships, decision making and policies. In total, more than 5,000 schools are currently on their RRSA journey. Of these, during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years:

- 1473 new schools registered
- 1180 schools achieved Bronze: Rights Committed
- 736 schools achieved Silver: Rights Aware
- 538 schools achieved Gold: Rights Respecting

This report is based on data gathered through the School Evaluation forms completed by school leaders, predominantly headteachers, prior to the Silver and Gold accreditations in this period<sup>2</sup>. It also draws on external school inspection reports and RRSA school accreditation reports.

<sup>1</sup> UNICEF UK (2020). RRSA Impact: The Evidence. This report is based on data gathered in RRSA schools over three years (2017-2019) including surveys over 190,000 pupils and 20,000 staff, self-assessments by over 600 headteachers, school inspection reports and other information gathered through accreditation visits.

<sup>2</sup> This report is based on data gathered in 420 Gold and 577 Silver schools with available School Evaluation Forms.

## Children Engage with School and Learning

School leaders report high levels of children's engagement in their learning and school enjoyment at both Silver and Gold schools.

- 92% of headteachers in Gold schools report some noticeable or significant impact on children and young people being **more engaged in their learning** compared to 83% of headteachers in Silver schools.
- 84% of headteachers in Gold schools report some noticeable or significant impact on **pupils liking school** compared to 75% of headteachers in Silver schools. Whilst this reflects the headteachers' perceptions of children's views, previous pupil surveys have also consistently shown children enjoying school more (see Box 2 on page 7).

*"Learning is child led [...] we want children to see how they have choices in their learning. In the wee class, children choose activities and topics based on their interests"* [RRSA school accreditation report, Staff, Primary school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*"My son feels like he belongs. He loves school."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Parent, Special school, Gold RRS, England, 2023]

*"Throughout the school, pupils show positive attitudes towards their learning. They take great pride in the quality of their work."* [Ofsted report, Primary school, Gold RRS, England, 2024]

*"Pupils feel valued and listened to. The student leadership team members contribute positively to school decisions and develop valuable leadership skills in this role. Pupils attend school regularly, enjoy learning and are successful in their academic studies."* [Ofsted report, Secondary school, Gold RRS, England, 2024]



## Children Develop Positive Relationships

School leaders report high levels of respectful relationships developing between children and young people at both Silver and Gold schools.

- 97% of headteachers in Gold schools report some noticeable or significant impact on children and young people developing positive relationships compared to 93% of headteachers in Silver schools.
- 98% of headteachers in Gold schools, and 93% of headteachers in Silver schools report some noticeable or significant impact on pupils having improved respect for themselves and for others.

*"You get a strong sense of belonging as soon as you walk in here... you get respected."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Pupil, Secondary school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*"They [pupils] are much more confident in telling you what they need. It's a partnership. They know that it counts."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Staff, Special school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*"Relationships at all levels are respectful. This is built on the school's emphasis on respecting each other's rights. Pupils articulate confidently that they have the right to learn and play. They are confident they can share with staff any concerns they may have."* [Ofsted report, Primary school, Gold RRS, England, 2023]

*"Children relate really well to each other, and they have that mutual respect. They are interested in each other's identities."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Staff, Primary school, Reaccredited Gold RRS, England, 2024].

*"They [pupils] are proud to stand up for the school's values of justice, equality and human rights. They behave respectfully towards all members of the school community. As a result, bullying is extremely rare. Pupils trust adults to sort out problems and concerns. Teachers listen to pupils, who are given a voice in the school."* [Ofsted report, Secondary school, Gold RRS, England, 2022]

## Children Respect and Uphold the Rights of Others

School leaders report high levels of children’s respect for the rights of others and children upholding their rights. 98% of headteachers in Gold schools, and 92% of headteachers in Silver schools report some noticeable or significant impact on pupils **feeling empowered to respect the rights of others locally, nationally and globally, and to uphold their own rights.**

*“We live in a very diverse society, not everyone is accessing their rights, so it’s important to talk about these issues, educate people and claim our rights.”*

[RRSA school accreditation report, Pupil, All through School, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*“We have a voice and its taken seriously; it gives you confidence and peace of mind. We know our opinion matters and we can do something to make a change.”* [RRSA school accreditation report, Pupil, Secondary school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*“Pupils learn about major issues across the planet such as child labour, war and the experiences of refugees. This helps strengthen pupils’ understanding of human rights. They empathise with those less fortunate. They raise funds for a range of national and international charities.”* [Ofsted report, Primary school, Gold RRS, England, 2024]

*“The change in my child is incredible – because he knows he has rights he will speak out in class. He’s empowered.”* [RRSA school accreditation report, Parent, Special school, Gold RRS, England, 2023]



## An Inclusive School Environment

Our data shows that school leaders report RRSA contributing to a more inclusive school environment for their pupils.

- 74% of headteachers in Gold schools report some noticeable or significant impact on **reducing numbers of exclusions and less bullying** compared to 63% of headteachers in Silver schools.
- 98% of headteachers in Gold schools, and 93% in Silver schools, report some noticeable or significant impact on children and young people **demonstrating positive attitudes towards diversity in society and overcoming prejudices.**

*"Everyone gets the things they need so they can be the best they can be"*  
[RRSA school accreditation report, Pupil, Primary school, Gold RRS, Wales, 2024]

*"Pupils at [the school's name] are proud to attend their 'rights respecting' school. Their attendance is very high. They experience an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment in school. The school community takes opportunities to celebrate its diversity often."* [Ofsted report, Secondary school, Gold RRS, England, 2024]

*"Our mission statement is about excellence for everyone...every child matters. Our culture and ethos is about putting children at the centre, supporting their wellbeing. The past few years have been difficult, but rights are very much at the forefront of everything we do."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Staff, Secondary school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*"We have a voice and it's taken seriously; it gives you confidence and peace of mind. We know our opinion matters and we can do something to make a change."* [RRSA school accreditation report, Pupil, Secondary school, Gold RRS, Scotland, 2024]

*"The work of the Rights Respecting School group has led to pupils having a clearer understanding of their rights as a child and fosters a greater role for pupil voice through the school Senedd."* [Estyn report, Primary school, Gold RRS, Wales, 2024]

## Box 2: Pupil survey results from 2020 Impact Report

### What did pupils say in our 2020 report - RRSA Impact: The Evidence?

*Our latest data does not include the views from children directly, as we paused collection of the pupil survey during the pandemic, following years of surveys showing consistent results. Our most recent pupil survey analysis, based on over 190,000 pupil surveys over three years (2017-2019) showed that in Gold schools:*

- 70% of pupils enjoy being at school
- 78% of pupils know how to make progress in class
- 79% of pupils agreed that adults treat them with respect
- 82% of pupils could tell someone if they felt unsafe
- 82% of pupils agreed that teachers listen to them
- 70% of pupils agreed that they can influence decision in their school
- 75% of pupils agreed that they can do things to help people locally and globally

Further research and evaluation is planned to gather pupils' views in 2024/25.

## Changes Over Time

Our data indicates a general upward trend across headteacher reported outcomes over the report period (2022 – 2024) compared to the data between 2017 and 2019, particularly in children's enjoyment of school, development of positive relationships, and children feeling empowered to respect and uphold the rights of themselves and others. Potential factors contributing to this trend could include schools implementing the programme to a greater degree due to an increased number of teachers accessing RRSA training since the COVID-19 pandemic, the availability of additional supporting resources and the shift to an RRSA membership model.

## Conclusion

In the current challenging educational landscape, schools continue to see a positive impact of RRSA on their pupils during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. This report adds to the existing evidence supporting the impact of RRSA on children and school communities. High proportions of headteachers in Gold schools report that RRSA contributes to children's engagement with school and learning, positive relationships at school, respecting the rights of others and an inclusive school environment. Positive progress towards these changes is also reported in Silver schools on their journey to becoming fully Rights Respecting. Further research and evaluation is planned to continue to explore different aspects of our impact for children.



All images: UNICEF/Maule-FFinch

The images in this booklet were produced in collaboration with children and young people in Gold Rights Respecting Schools.