

# UNICEF UK RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOL AWARD

## ASSESSMENT REPORT LEVEL ONE

|                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>School:</b>           | Brookland Junior School  |
| <b>Headteacher:</b>      | Gavin Douglas            |
| <b>RRSA coordinator:</b> | Pauline Coombs           |
| <b>Local authority:</b>  | Hertfordshire            |
| <b>Assessor:</b>         | Paul Harris              |
| <b>Date:</b>             | 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2017 |

### The school context:

Brookland Junior School is a community school for pupils aged 7 to 11 years. There are currently 314 pupils on roll. Approximately 27% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium and 11% have English as an additional language. 2.5% of pupils have either a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The school was graded 'good' in all areas by Ofsted in November 2013.

**First registered for RRSA:** February 2015

**Recognition of Commitment:** January 2016

### Assessment information:

| Progress and evaluation form received                  | Yes   | Impact evaluation form received | Yes |
|--|---|---------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Attendees at SLT meeting</b>                        | Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Inclusion Manager and the RRSA co-ordinator.   |                                 |     |
| <b>Number of children and young people interviewed</b> | A pupil focus group (22 pupils, years 3 to 6) and discussions with 2 classes (year 3 and year 6).                                     |                                 |     |
| <b>Number of staff interviewed</b>                     | 3 teachers, 4 support staff, 3 parents and 1 parent governor.   |                                 |     |
| <b>Evidence provided</b>                               | Learning walk (with 8 pupils from the steering group), written evidence and meetings with pupils, staff, parents and parent governor. |                                 |     |

### The Assessment Judgement:

**Brookland Junior School has met the Standards for Unicef UK's Rights Respecting Schools Award at LEVEL 1**

## The following good practice evident at the assessment contributes to the school's success at Level 1:

### Standard A:

#### Rights-respecting values underpin leadership and management

- School leaders are committed to the principles of the UNCRC and as the headteacher explained Brookland's rights respecting work helps to underpin the school's values of '*putting children at the centre*'. In the school's evaluation of such work, a 'significant impact' grading was given for five out of eight areas of school life. The RRSA co-ordinator described how pupils have '*gained a much wider awareness of others in [the] school community and outside- locally and globally*' and the Inclusion Manager explained how pupils were '*feeling more confident to speak*' with regards to any concerns they had.
- Strategic planning has helped to ensure that the RRSA is a key part of Brookland's work as evidenced by its inclusion within the school development plan which has as one of its success criteria that 'RRS is embedded into all school life and enhances the school experience for the pupils and all stakeholders in RRS'. A current review of the 'behaviour for learning' policy will be linked to rights respecting principles and as the school's British Values statement explains 'as we work towards our accreditation as a Unicef Rights Respecting School, values of tolerance and respect permeate all areas of school life'. Additionally, dedicated time is provided for the RRSA co-ordinator and there is a link governor. Staff have received training and are regularly kept up-dated on the school's rights respecting work which the co-ordinator explained has been a '*constant feature in our weekly [staff] briefing*'.

### Standard B:

#### The whole school community learns about the CRC

- Pupils were able to cite a range of rights including the rights to an education, to be safe, to be able to express views and opinions, to have healthy food and clean water, to be able to practise one's own religion and the right to privacy. They had a clear understanding that rights are universal and unconditional. Additionally, pupils were able to apply their knowledge about rights in different contexts. For example, in connection with the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, pupils understood that this affected a wide range of rights including the rights to safety and to an education. In a discussion about the effects of flooding caused by climate change, links were made to contaminated water being a possible source of disease that could affect children's health. Pupils were also aware that in the UK the impact of poverty meant that some children were being denied their rights, linking for example the work of the local food bank to article 24.
- Pupils have opportunities to learn about rights in a range of ways including through assemblies, special school events and the curriculum. Assembly themes have included 'Martin Luther King Day', 'What is Unicef?', 'Universal Children's Day' as well as a focus on particular rights. In March of this year, pupils explored article 24 in a whole day event which included topics about environmental pollution, healthy eating and the health challenges that children experience around the world. Weekly 'circle time' activities focus on PSHE topics which are delivered within the framework of rights. Additionally, RE and topic units are cross referenced with specific articles from the UNCRC as appropriate. For example, 'religion in the local community' in year 4 RE is linked to articles 13 and 14, democracy in a year 5 'Ancient Greece' topic is linked to article 12 and a year 3 topic about 'water' is linked to article 24. The school also has an 'article of the month' which provides further opportunities to focus upon particular rights and a large display of different articles of the UNCRC illustrated with drawings from pupils across the school is a feature of the dining hall.
- Staff, parents and governors are very supportive of the school's rights respecting work and spoke positively of the effect that it was having within the school community. For example, a member of support staff explained that it had '*a huge impact at lunchtime*' in establishing a respectful environment. It was commented that pupils were more aware of the needs of others and showed compassion in wanting to help those children who were less fortunate than themselves.

### Standard C:

#### The school has a rights-respecting ethos

- 'Class agreements' are displayed prominently in classrooms and have been produced with the active involvement of the pupils. Each agreement includes rights respecting actions linked to particular articles of the UNCRC which the pupils have chosen. For example, articles 12, 24, 28 and 31 were referenced in a year 3 class agreement. Playground, dining room and after school club agreements which have been developed over time with the help of RRSA steering groups also emphasise the importance of respecting others. When asked, pupils said they felt safe at school. Pupils' safety and well-being are supported in a variety of ways including through e-safety guidance, road safety training and by promoting healthy eating and good mental health. A 'daily mile walk' also brings the whole school together at the start of the day.
- A positive and supportive learning environment was evident throughout the assessment visit. Brookland's inclusive ethos is supported by high levels of respect within the school community. For example, during the focus group discussions pupils listened carefully to the contributions that were made by their peers. Pupil 'buddies' help support other children on the playground and a 'quiet zone' is also available for pupils to use. A reflection sheet which encourages pupils to think about how their behaviour may have affected the rights of other pupils further helps to develop pupils' understanding of the importance of respect.

### Standard D:

#### Children are empowered to become active citizens and learners

- 'Pupil voice' is a strength of the school. Project and enquiry based learning encourages pupil participation. The TASC framework is also used which helps to personalise learning and a year 6 teacher commented that pupils were '*so much more engaged*'. There is a 'Children's Committee' of five year 5/6 pupils who are elected by their peers and who work alongside governors in reviewing particular aspects of school life and a 'Unicef 8' RRSA steering group made of eight pupils from across the different year groups. Other opportunities for pupils to play an active part in the life of the school include being part of the interview panel for new staff and submitting designs for a new packed lunch room. The front cover of the school planner is about children's rights and was designed by one of the pupils as part of a school completion. The planner also contains useful about the UNCRC. The 'Unicef 8' group have completed learning walks around the school with a focus on rights respecting work and are taking the lead in planning the Unicef UK's 'Day for Change' event at Brookland later in 2017.
- The school supports a wide range of charities including Children in Need, NSPCC, Save the Children and Unicef UK. The school has also supported the Broxbourne foodbank. Pupils' awareness of the world around them is developed through various curriculum activities and assembly themes. As the school website states as part of Brookland's overall educational aims for its pupils it seeks to help them 'respect and understand the diversity of the wider world and our place as citizens of it' and it is clear that pupils are embracing this vision through an understanding of children's rights.

## Moving to Level 2:

Level 1 is an important milestone on the Rights Respecting journey. In the light of the assessment visit, the assessor has identified the following priorities for further progress. These recommendations, based on Unicef's experience with schools across the UK, will have been discussed in more detail during the assessment visit:

**In order for the school to progress successfully to Level 2, the following steps and actions will be required:**

### Standard A

- Explore ways that the UNCRC can be used as an overall framework for the school's vision, values and everyday practice. (Criterion 1).
- Consider developing the school's improvement plan to link most school priorities to the relevant articles of the UNCRC. (Criterion 2)
- Ensure that most school policies are explicitly cross-referenced to appropriate rights from the Convention. (Criterion 2)
- Enhance ambassadorial activity by enabling pupils and staff to promote and encourage rights respecting values & actions and knowledge of the UNCRC with other schools and in the wider community. (Criteria 4 and D18)

### Standard B

- Continue work towards deepening and widening the knowledge and understanding of the UNCRC across the whole school community- for all staff (teaching & support), pupils, parents and governors including through the provision of information on the school's website and in newsletters. (Criteria 6 and 7)
- Continue to develop pupil's knowledge and understanding about rights and the UNCRC by linking topic displays with specific articles. (Criterion 8)
- Further embed a focus on the planned learning about children's rights to ensure systematic and planned coverage throughout most aspects of the curriculum. Cross reference curriculum documentation with specific articles of the Convention. (Criterion 8)
- Continue to develop the focus on global citizenship and sustainable development. Also consider engagement with [The World's Largest Lesson](#) and [UN Global Goals](#) (Criterion 9)

### Standard C

- Continue to use the [Unicef UK Charter Guidance](#) with its focus on the language of 'respect for rights' and the link to articles of the UNCRC. (Criterion 10)
- Continue to support adults and children in the use of language which emphasises respect for rights. (Criterion 11)
- Where appropriate, enable pupils to look at global issues from a perspective of rights so that they develop a heightened sense of justice and equity. Issues that could be explored include fair trade and climate change. (Criterion 15)

### Standard D

- Continue to strive for further creative and significant opportunities for the participation and decision making of pupils to influence and shape the life and work of the school, including rights respecting work, and for the impact of this work to be displayed and celebrated. (Criterion 16)
- Build on the good charity work already undertaken by enabling and empowering pupils as appropriate to become advocates and campaigners for the rights of all children locally and globally. Consider joining in with Unicef UK's [Outright](#) Campaign. (Criterion 18)

**In addition, the school might also consider:**

- Attending Level 2 training to support your continuing RRSA journey. Please see web link [here](#)
- Visiting a recently accredited Level 2 RRSA school to share expertise.