

Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award

After our accreditation visit in August, we were notified in September 2025 that Arrochar Primary and ELC had received the Gold Rights Respecting School award!

Our Rights Committee members were delighted, they had been working towards this award for three years, since we were awarded the Silver award in 2022.

The strengths that were noted were:

- Rights learning that is embedded across the curriculum including the nursery, using a wide range of age appropriate, creative resources.
- Duty bearers who are passionate advocates for ensuring children access their rights.
- A caring and nurturing family atmosphere with strong relationships with parents/carers and the wider community.
- The school's work on health and wellbeing, in particular the consideration of mental health and emotions.
- Pupil voice that is valued highly with a range of pupil voice groups giving opportunities for all young people to put their suggestions forward and for these to be acted upon.

Visitor highlights were:

- The children spoken with demonstrated excellent knowledge and understanding of rights and the concepts underpinning them. They demonstrated an awareness of where and why some children may not be able to access their rights, for reasons such as war, poverty, and neglect. The Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) Committee meet fortnightly to implement and evaluate the action plan for Gold, feeding back to the rest of the school after each meeting. The committee have shared their knowledge of rights through a series of activities in school, including a rights treasure hunt, and home learning activities, as well as meeting with rights groups from other local schools. The whole school is taught about their rights through Right of the Week during whole-school assemblies, IDL topics, and Health and Wellbeing lessons. Class teachers explained how rights are now referenced on the school's new digital planning documents, *"...so they're in the forefront of our minds."* All school staff have completed training about the CRC. The headteacher described how *"Rights permeate our curriculum and ethos,"* and *"...are embedded in everything we do."* Parents/carers are informed of the school's rights respecting work through newsletters, Seesaw, open afternoons, and posters displayed in the community.
- The headteacher spoke of how staff are, *"...all committed to a shared vision of how we ensure children's rights are met. Our language is the same. Rights are embedded from the moment they walk into the nursery right through to when they leave."* The children described how school facilitates their enjoyment of a wide range of their rights and said they trust that duty bearers will act upon any concerns about their rights not being met, sharing, *"You could go tell an adult and they would try to help,"* and, *"...you could tell them what you need."* The children understand the concepts of fairness and equity, describing it as, *"Not everyone gets the same things, but everyone gets what they need,"* and can describe how the school puts them into practice.
- The school follows Argyll and Bute's 'Promoting Positive Behaviour' guidance and uses rights-based restorative practice that ensures the voice of pupils is heard. The children described how positive relationships are encouraged, sharing, *"The adults outside help you on the playground,"* and, *"The teachers won't just take one side; they'll sort it out."* Older pupils can choose to complete a 6-week training block to become peer mediators. Pupils are

clear that they are treated with dignity and respect at school, sharing, *"The adults respect us; they're really polite to us,"* and, *"If you had your own opinion on something they would listen and take it into consideration."*

- Pupils said they feel safe in school and described what contributes to this, sharing, *"The adults nurture us and keep us safe, and they listen to us."* Emotional check-ins, wellbeing wheels, private worry boxes, Childline posters displayed around the school, and a buddy system between P1 pupils and P7 pupils, all support the children to feel safe, with the ELC also using NSPCC's Pantosaurus resource and SIMOA. The children described what they would do if they did not feel safe, sharing that they would, *"Tell a teacher or parent," "You could call ChildLine,"* and, *"The police are also duty bearers, so if it was a serious problem you could talk to them."* One pupil added, *"We feel like we can go talk to the teachers, not that we'd feel too afraid to."*
- The P5-7 teacher shared, *"We use the Healthy Schools Programme, which we've tailored so each area of SHANARRI has specific rights linked to it,"* whilst the ELC practitioner shared, *"We link SHANARRI to rights through a programme called CAL [Care and Love]."* Wellbeing wheels, emotional check-ins and the PATHS programme all support emotional literacy and wellbeing. Seasons for Growth and targeted nurture sessions take place for children who require additional wellbeing support. Weekly outdoor learning lessons support positive mental health, and the children learn about healthy eating through cooking lessons. The school's focus on exercise and healthy lifestyles has earned them the Gold SportScotland Award.
- The children spoken with described how everyone is included and valued by being respected, listened to, and involved in decisions about their life in school. The headteacher described how equity is promoted in the school, sharing, *"We try to always think of ways we can overcome barriers by working together."* A member of staff is a trained Young Carer Champion who checks in each day with the young carers in the school and holds young carer meetings on a weekly basis, sharing *"They're very aware they can access additional help if they need it. We ensure the children are accessing local services they're entitled to and they're getting everything they need."* All staff in the ELC and primary school, including the janitor, are trained in teacher inclusive education.
- Learning across the school is pupil-led and play and enquiry based. Pupils are involved in planning their learning and older pupils keep a record of their targets which are regularly reviewed. The headteacher spoke of the, *"...absolute empowerment of young people,"* through Personal Learning Plans and All About Me Books. One teacher shared, *"From P1 they're making decisions about what they want to learn and where they want to go with it. They want to take ownership over what they're doing."* The ELC practitioner shared, *"We have a big learning wall, and the children's voices are all over it; we make it into their language and their experiences and link to what they understand. All learning is enquiry led and around the interests of the child."*
- The children described how they have been involved in decisions about their life in school, including choosing clubs, planning school trips, and designing the new playground. One parent shared, *"They really feel they are part of school life and involved in decisions that are made."* The children described how all pupils are part of a school committee which meet fortnightly to, *"...gather together to try to improve the school as much as we can."* Older pupils also form a pupil parliament, with a school minister and cabinet voted in, who each develop a different aspect of school life. The local MSP has visited the school to teach about democracy, whilst the older children visit the Scottish Parliament when learning about the Scottish Government.
- The children described how they have taken action to claim their rights and promote the rights of others, locally and globally, including *"We brought in toys that could still be used and canned food for donations," "We have a sponsored walk to give money to charity,"* and,

"We compete in Christian Aid sports competitions." Weekly whole-school assemblies provide time for discussion of local and global issues. Class teachers described how they explore global issues with the children through curricular areas and the UN Global Goals.

We will now continue to build on our practice at Gold level.