

UNICEF RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS AWARD



Camden schools report

**Capturing the UNICEF Rights
Respecting Schools Award in
Camden schools**

This project

Camden Learning commissioned think and action-tank The Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY) to capture the work of schools in Camden accredited with UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA).

In particular, we explored the impact of participation in the initiative on:

- attainment and attendance
- behaviour and wellbeing
- reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes
- teacher recruitment and retention.



This project

Although young people's participation in the RRSA can contribute to a range of positive outcomes, there is an explicit link to Building Back Stronger - Camden's Education Strategy to 2030¹, and the ambition for young people to leave school as:

"socially and morally responsible changemakers, who not only understand their rights and respect the rights of others but are also able to contribute actively to their community and to the planet."

Participation is also aligned with Camden Learning's 'curriculum plus' enrichment pledge. One of its twelve promises is to give every pupil in a Camden school the opportunity to:

"understand and feel part of a global and diverse world."



"We would argue that there's nothing that the school does in its interaction with children and families that isn't underpinned by the UNCRC. It's the most all-embracing approach to school improvement you could possibly have."

UNICEF UK

What is the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award (RSSA)?

UNICEF UK raises funds for emergency and development work around the world, promotes youth voice and advocates for lasting positive change for children.

As well as supporting other children's services, UNICEF UK works with schools to "create safe and inspiring places to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive"².

The RSSA embeds these values in daily school life, helping schools to give children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and be responsible, active citizens.

The RSSA particularly recognises a school's achievements in incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)³ into practice within the school and beyond.



² For further information, please see: <https://www.UNICEF.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/about-the-rrsa/>

³ For further information, please see: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/introducing-the-crc/>

Becoming a Right Respecting School involves putting the UNCRC at the heart of planning, policies, practice and ethos.

For a school to receive accreditation, it must evidence that it has achieved a series of outcomes across three assessment strands⁴:

Strand A: Teaching and learning about rights

The UNCRC 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.

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.

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.

The Rights Respecting Schools Award includes three levels of attainment⁵:

BRONZE

Bronze: Rights Committed

- This is primarily a planning stage. A school supplies documented evidence of commitments towards becoming a Rights Respecting School. This process usually takes between three and six months and does not involve an assessment visit.

SILVER

Silver: Rights Aware

- This is granted to schools that make good progress towards embedding the principles of the UNCRC into their ethos and curriculum. Assessed through a visit from UNICEF UK, accreditation lasts for three years.

GOLD

Gold: Rights Respecting

- This is granted to schools that have fully embedded the principles of the UNCRC into their ethos and curriculum. Assessed through a visit from UNICEF UK, accreditation lasts for three years.

A number of Camden schools have achieved Silver and Gold Awards*:



Torriano Primary School
Brecknock Primary School
Christ Church C of E Primary
School
Kentish Town CE Primary
School

*A total of seven out of 40 primary schools in Camden (17.5%)



Brookfield Primary
School
Carlton Primary School
The Mulberry House
School (*Independent*)

Review of practice

For this research, we visited three of the four primary schools accredited with the Gold Award:

- **Kentish Town Primary School** - One focus group with three staff members and a parent, and another focus group with pupils.
- **Christ Church Primary School** – Two interviews with staff members.
- **Torriano Primary School** – One focus group with two staff members and one with pupils.



Additionally, **Brecknock Primary School's** Rights Respecting Champion attended the focus group discussion at Torriano Primary School and CfEY also conducted interviews with two staff from **UNICEF UK**.

About the schools

- Torriano and Brecknock are community schools, while Kentish Town and Christ Church are Church of England voluntary aided schools.
- Torriano is the largest school, serving 451 pupils, and Christ Church is the smallest with 189 pupils. Three of the schools have nursery classes, but Christ Church does not.
- Torriano and Brecknock Primary Schools formed a federation in 2022. Each school has its own leaders, teachers, support staff and budget, but the Federation has a shared governing body.
- The schools have between 5% (Christ Church) and 57% (Brecknock) of pupils in receipt of free school meals or Pupil Premium funding.
- Torriano has a language resource base for 14 pupils who are identified as having developmental language delay and Kentish Town has resourced SEND provision for Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Physical Disability, which supports 21 pupils.
- Torriano, Kentish Town and Christ Church are rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, while Brecknock is rated 'Good'.
- Torriano and Christ Church began work on the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Award in 2009, Brecknock in 2011 and Kentish Town Primary in 2012.

Findings

Findings

In this section we explore the four Camden schools' involvement in the RRSA, looking in particular at:

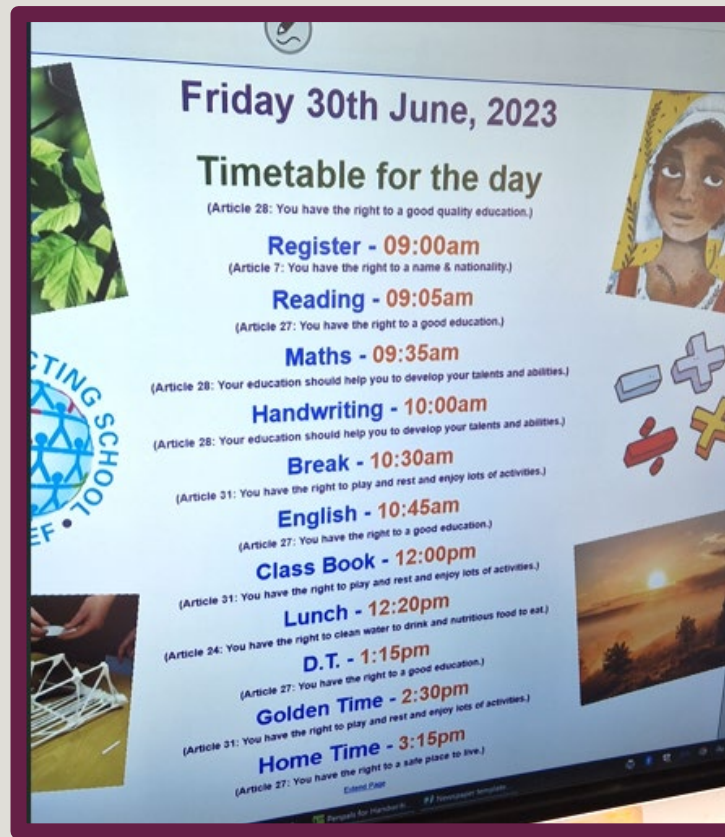
- The benefits of an embedded whole school approach
- Behaviour and relationships across the schools
- Wellbeing of staff and pupils
- Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes
- Pupil voice
- Recruitment and retention
- Attendance
- Attainment

We also share some thoughts from the schools on how others can get involved with this initiative in the future.



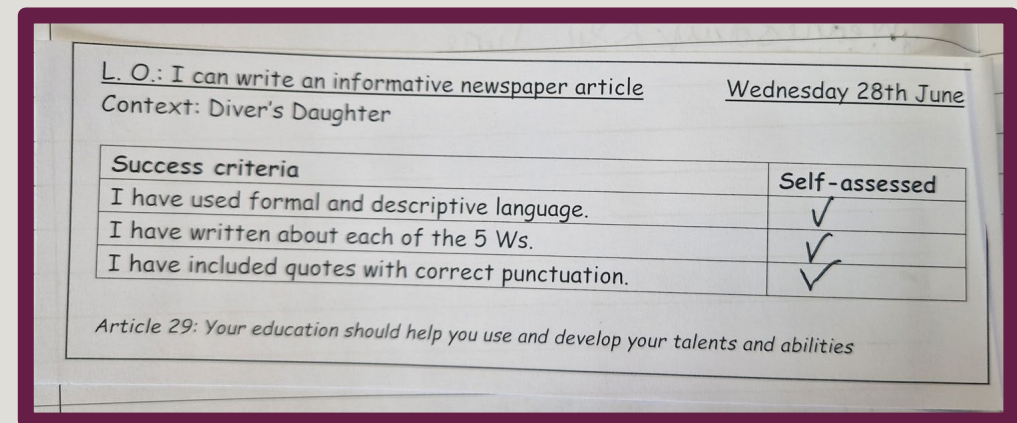
An embedded, whole school approach

In all four schools the RRSA work runs throughout the curriculum, rather than being an 'add-on' reserved for discussions in PSHE or citizenship lessons. The schools have used the rights as a starting point for teaching children about challenging topics. At Torriano and Brecknock this has included, for example, the Windrush scandal and the impact of discrimination.



"All of our lessons, when we put up the timetable of the day, each lesson is linked to an Article ... everything is linked to it. We have success criteria stuck into their books and the Article would even be linked to their learning in that way as well."

Kentish Town staff member



An embedded, whole school approach

Teachers across the schools connect the rights of the child to the curriculum in different ways. This could be through texts they are reading with their classes, teaching children about historical events, or discussing current affairs in the news that relate to both the rights and a particular subject – for example geography and natural disasters such as earthquakes or flooding.

"We've spent a lot of time curating our curriculum to ensure that it is very diverse ... and that the rights are embedded ... for example, in Year Four there is a unit which starts with the Magna Carta and builds up how the rights of children and of people link in with British values and the idea of democracy."

Torriano staff member

"In year five, I read a book called 'No Ballet Shoes in Syria' to my class, which is all about a refugee who has to leave Syria ... And we linked that again to the rights of a child and how war and becoming a refugee can affect your access to those rights."

Christ Church staff member

"We were talking about children's right to having a safe, clean home and how if there's a natural disaster ... that right can be affected ... Just because you have the right doesn't necessarily mean that it will always be met, depending on what's happening around the world."

Christ Church staff member

The challenges of an embedded, whole school approach

All four schools have worked hard to gain the support of the whole school community for the RRSA work. School leaders highlighted that securing this full buy-in to the RRSA required concerted effort at the outset. Some staff were concerned that the award would increase their workload, while other staff and parents worried that teaching children about their rights would make it difficult to enforce rules and policies.



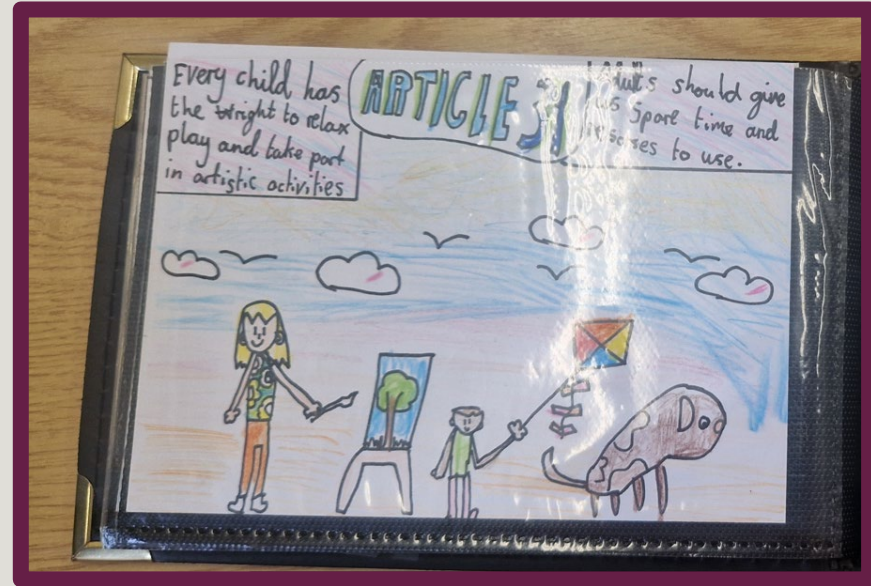
"Sometimes it can be that they feel haven't got the time. Teachers might find that they'll say, 'Oh, I don't have time to do that.' ... But then when they see all of the events and the ideas coming to fruition as the year goes on and what it means to the children, you really see a difference in the approach. The buy-in definitely comes along."

Torriano staff member

The challenges of an embedded, whole school approach

School leaders described how, in the onboarding process, some staff members feared that children might use the rights as a defence when being asked to do something they didn't want to do.

One teacher gave the example of bringing a child in from the playground because they were not acting safely, but being challenged that this conflicted with their right to play.



"I think early on there was quite a lot of reticence from people about the idea that children had rights and that children would use that ... 'It's my right to do this. How could you stop me doing this?' ... But I don't think that is an issue at all now. I haven't heard that for many years."

Christ Church staff member

The benefits of an embedded, whole school approach

In practice, schools found that these worries lessened as the school community got used to working with the rights. Staff found that having the award embedded throughout school activities complemented existing work rather than creating new additional commitments. They were also able to highlight to children the breadth of rights in the UNCRC. They found it helpful to teach pupils the importance of appreciating their access to all of the rights and using this privilege responsibly, by respecting the rights of others in their community. For example, while the UNCRC states that all children have a right to play and to express their views, they also have a right to a good education, to be kept safe, and to have their best interests looked after by adults.

"I think they have a good understanding that adults are there to keep them safe and that's the adult's responsibility to ensure their rights are met ... we talk about the fact that they have rights and these are some ways you can respect those rights. So you have the right to have your ideas listened to, but you should respect that right by making sure that your ideas don't hurt anyone intentionally, for example."

Christ Church staff member

The RRSA outside of the curriculum

As well as threading their RRSA work throughout the curriculum, the schools also incorporate the Articles into many other activities, from school policies to day trips and clubs. Visual displays throughout the schools proudly showcase this work. Assemblies and INSET days are used to spotlight themes at particular times in the school calendar. The schools also use UNICEF UK's Article of the week⁶ resources, which include activities to complete with children. Some schools send these home for parents. The Articles of the UNCRC are mentioned in school newsletters and reports to governors, and coffee mornings and workshops take place to support parents' understanding.



Assemblies exploring the Articles of the UNCRC

TORRIANO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brecknock Primary School
A lighthouse of learning

43-54

HOW THE CONVENTION WORKS

Article 45 ensures that children's rights are inherent.

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Monday 20th June - World Refugee Day

JUNE 20
WORLD REFUGEE DAY

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS
unicef

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

SOCCER AID
in partnership with unicef

TORRIANO PRIMARY SCHOOL

TORRIANO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brecknock Primary School
A lighthouse of learning

unicef
for every child

unicef
UNITED KINGDOM

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS

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EVERYONE MUST KNOW CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

World Children's Day

Active Citizen

What does being an active citizen look like in the playground and around the school building?

- How do we walk around the school?
- What does lining up look and sound like at the end of all playtimes?

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

TORRIANO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brecknock Primary School
A lighthouse of learning

Islam

eid

14

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND RELIGION

Recruitment and retention

While some staff felt unsure about the RRSA at first, school leaders reported that others had sought out careers at their schools because of the Award. Prospective employees who already knew about the RRSA were often excited to work in a school with the accreditation because of the type of environment it can create.

"I would say feeling part of a school that is a Rights Respecting school really means something to me."

Torriano staff member

Staff 1: "It's quite interesting when you start, some teachers will know about the rights when they join the school, and some won't have any idea."

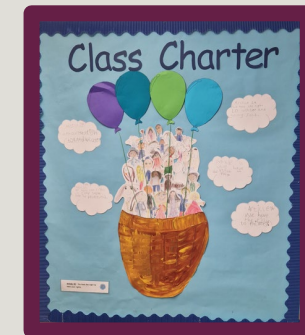
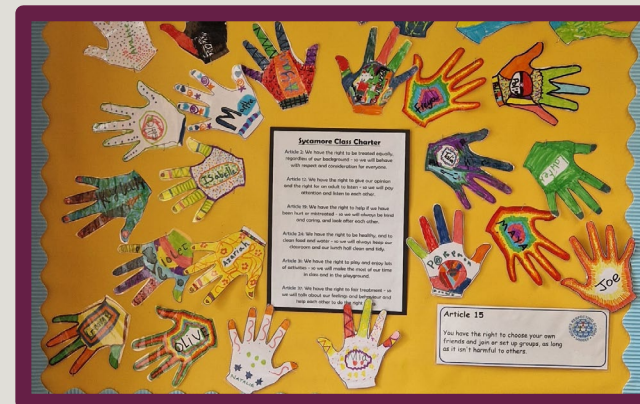
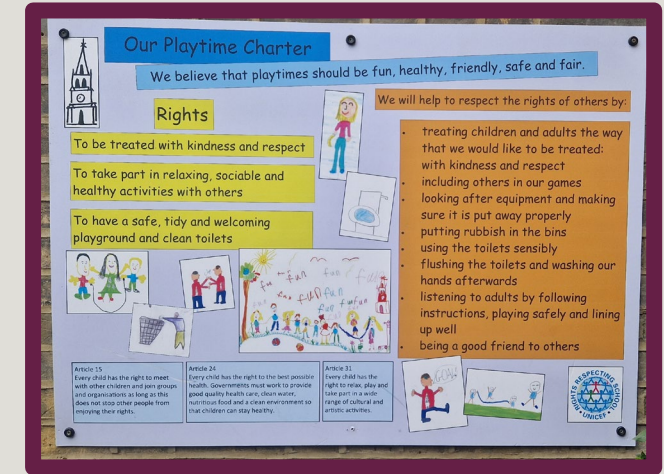
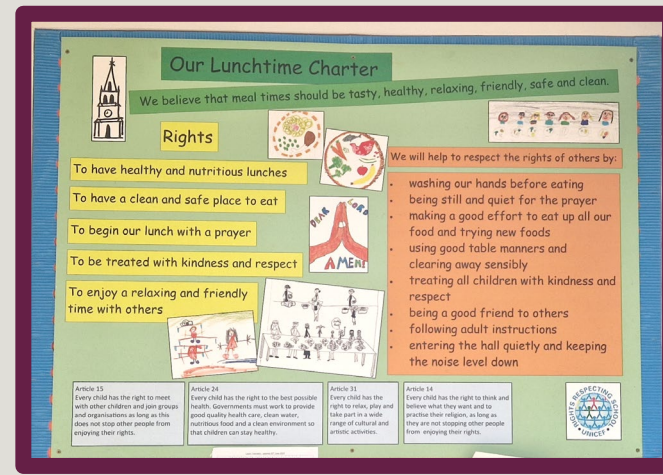
Staff 2: "And it can be, in interviews and things, they're really excited to work in a Rights Respecting School if they've heard of it."

Staff 1: "Some have come because it's a Rights Respecting School."

Torriano staff members

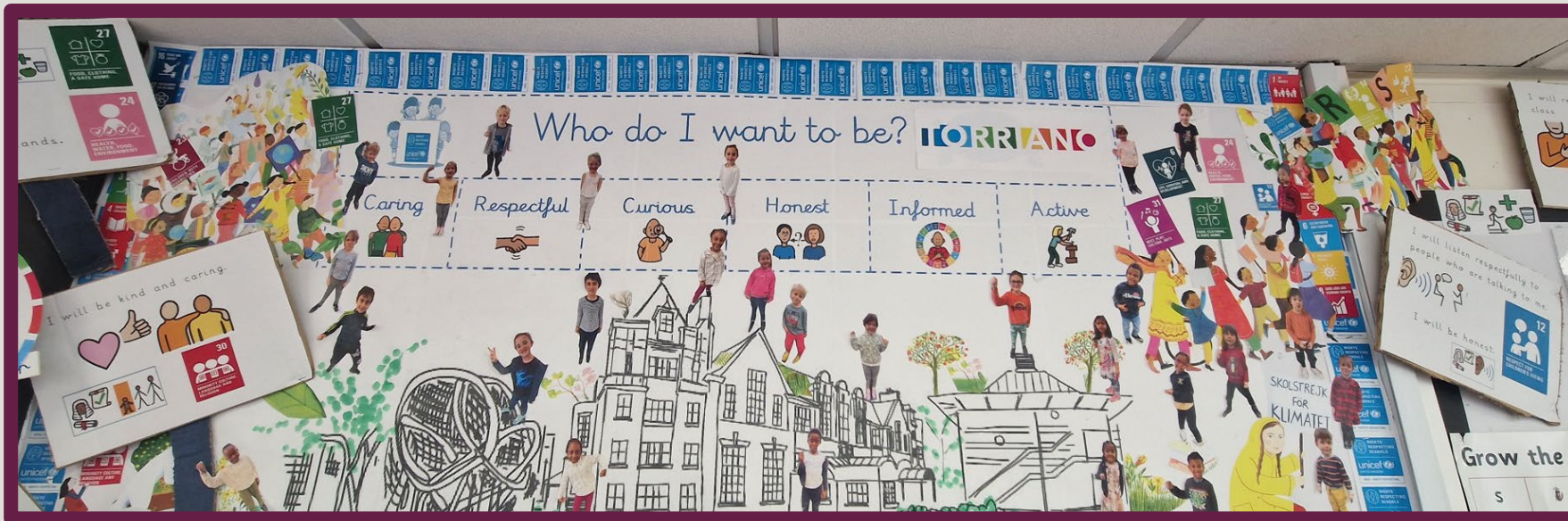
Behaviour and relationships

All four schools use the RRSA as a framework for establishing positive behaviour and relationships. The RRSA underpins key school behaviour policies, such as anti-bullying policies. All of the schools use 'charters' for different classes or parts of the school, which form the basis of expectations around behaviour. These are co-created with the children to bring a sense of ownership over the content. The language of the Articles from the UNCRC is used by staff as the basis for positive conversations about behaviour and relationships with and between pupils. Kentish Town Primary staff wear the rights on lanyards so they can be used as visual prompts in discussions with pupils.



Behaviour and relationships

One Brecknock staff member explained that their school introduced the RRSA at a time when they were working to move away from a rewards and sanctions approach to behaviour management. With support from Camden Learning and UNICEF UK the school delivered staff training around implementing a restorative approach to behaviour management, which introduced children to their rights and how to respect the rights of others.



It's central to the ethos. So it really does have an impact on behaviour ... it's all about a restorative approach.

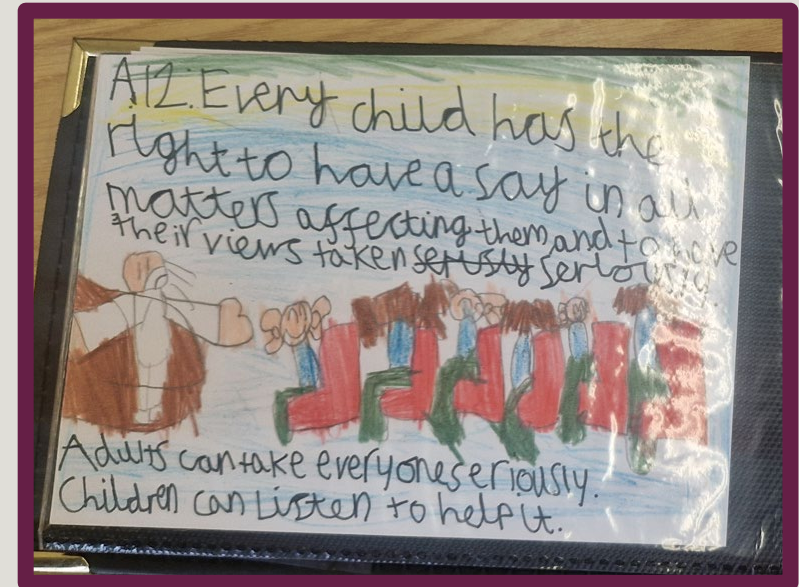
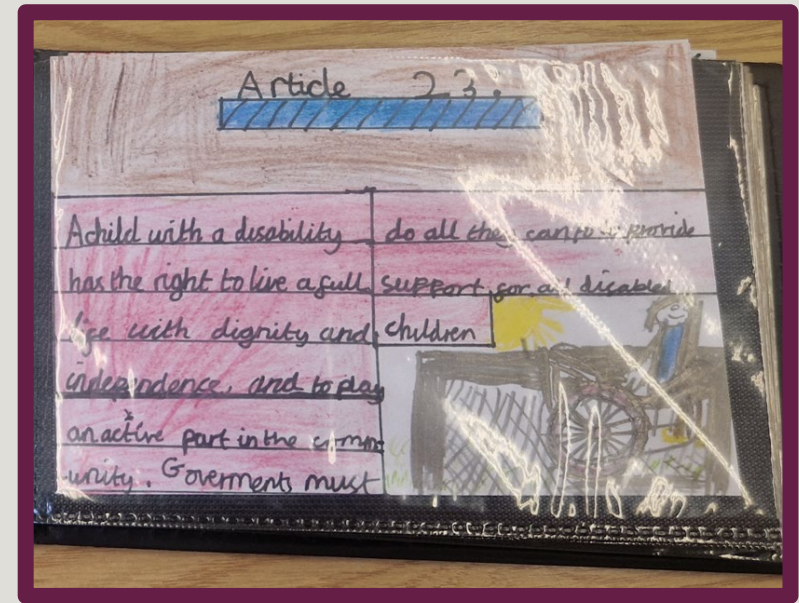
Brecknock staff member

Behaviour and relationships

One parent of an autistic child at Kentish Town Primary explained that she felt the rights had provided a helpful framework for teaching her son to both stand up for himself and also be respectful of others. In situations outside of school where reasonable accommodations for his autism were not being made, such as attending a play centre, she said he now felt able express his right to be included. This ability to advocate for himself was also balanced by an improved understanding of how to ensure his actions did not infringe on the rights of other young people.

"My son is autistic, so he might struggle with that a little bit more than other children, but he understands that he's not supposed to talk over other people, that they have the right to talk as well as he does. And when they have that growing up, it's very different ... I think it helps them to become better adults."

Kentish Town parent



Behaviour and relationships

The Articles of the UNCRC are also used as a basis for conversations with parents, providing a shared language to help tackle challenging issues. Staff at Torriano and Kentish Town felt parents appreciated the way the Articles created an atmosphere of fairness and trustworthiness around the schools.



"It gives [children] good foundations for having really good morals, because they know not only what their rights are, but what other people's rights are ... I feel it does give them that balance of where they fit in."

Kentish Town staff member

"It really does help frame conversations ... Even when we've had them about religion ... you're able to say ... 'minority culture, language and religion. We respect that at our school'."

Torriano staff member

"It's really useful ... when we were very young, we didn't understand what our rights were as children. So if someone did something to us, we might not realise that they were doing something that wasn't ok. I think it's a very different approach to making sure that they definitely know what their rights are and how they work."

Kentish Town parent

Wellbeing

Staff across the schools felt the RRSA had a positive impact on wellbeing by improving pupils' relationships with adults and peers, providing them with the language to work through challenges, and encouraging them to practice gratitude. They also felt it had an impact on staff wellbeing, by helping to create a favourable learning environment where children are ready to learn and treat others with respect.



"Lots of [the pupils] talk about how fortunate they are, because they understand quite deeply that maybe not all children around the world have access to the rights as they should do ... It frames some quite difficult conversations in a child-friendly way, which I think encourages them to open up or to talk about things."

Christ Church staff member

"[As well as] a calm learning environment, I think it helps to foster respect between adults and children. I would say that indirectly supports staff wellbeing because I see classrooms where children are well-behaved and staff are able to teach and there's a good relationship between adults and children, it's a nice place to work."

Christ Church staff member

Wellbeing

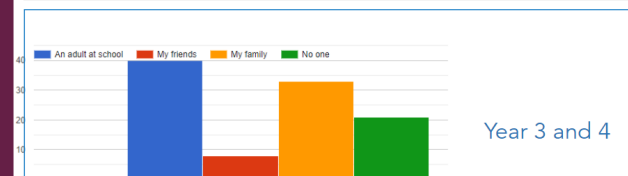
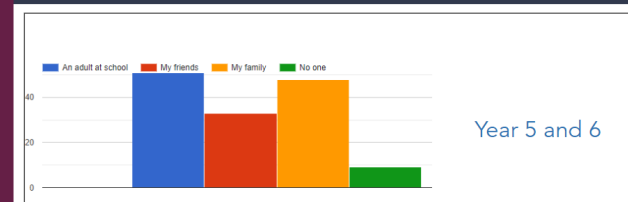
Children at Torriano and Kentish Town Primary were aware that they were entitled to rights that support their wellbeing, such as the right to food, drink and a safe home, a good education, and leisure time.

As well as improving pupils' awareness and understanding of their rights, staff across the four schools also worked to make them accessible for all children. They liaised regularly with parents and provided activities such as breakfast or afterschool clubs, supporting children whose home lives might make it challenging to access basic needs such as regular healthy meals or leisure activities. They also gathered feedback directly from pupils about their experiences to ensure their rights were being met.

"In our class charters, we've got rights which the whole class agrees on ... And we also have PSHE lessons, where we have circle time and we talk about things like, 'I feel this or I worry about these things.' And then we have boxes in our classroom, so if we want to add if we're worried about something or we want to suggest something."

Kentish Town pupil

If you experienced racism at school, who would you tell?



Wellbeing

Torriano Primary School has also connected its rights work to the NSPCC campaign 'Speak Out, Stay Safe'⁷, for children aged 5- to 11-years-old. This safeguarding initiative helps children to recognise the signs of abuse, understand that abuse is never a child's fault, and know where to get help if they need it. 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' aims to help children accept that they have the right to be safe, overlapping with the UNCRC rights to be protected from violence and abuse. At Kentish Town, the rights are also linked to safeguarding practices, including support from Childline.

*"You get rights when you are born and nobody can take them away from you, so you always have rights."
Kentish Town pupil*

Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes

The content of the UNCRC has provided a framework for the schools to have conversations with children on challenging issues, encouraging them to see themselves as “changemakers” within their schools and the wider community. As a result, pupils have taken action to stand up for their own rights and the rights of others. Staff members from Torriano and Christ Church highlighted that as well as learning about differences and inequalities, the RRSA also provides an important framework for children to learn about what they have in common with others across the world.

“It's quite a powerful message ... so that they don't see other children as completely unlike them. They need the same things ... The idea that actually there's some children who don't get those things - that seems like a really awful thing for children here and they want to do something about it.”

Torriano staff member

“It helps with their relationships between each other ... that encouragement to listen to one another, to be respectful of different faiths and different religions and disabilities ... there's a lot of importance in the rights put on diversity.”

Christ Church staff member

“We have someone in our class that has a disability and a lot of people in our class start playing with that person ... And we don't say rude things about them because they're different than us.”

Kentish Town pupil

Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes

Torriano and Brecknock have used the RRSA to guide work on key issues such as gender equality, racism and discrimination. They have conducted audits of lessons and resources such as books to ensure that they fully align with the rights and values that the schools are committed to. The schools have also established an Anti-Racist Parents' Group, which has developed policies and language resources to promote equality and equity in the school community.

"If someone's like ... being just racist ... It doesn't matter, even if you're a child, you still can't speak up and tell the other person to stop. It doesn't matter if you're an adult or child."

Torriano pupil



"We moved on in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement to ensure that we were really focusing on being an anti-racist school, around more than just decolonizing the curriculum ... actually having that framework of the rights, it gave us a really strong starting point and almost gave us that language ... It frames the way that we operate ...and allows us to move forward."

Torriano staff member

Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes

Events and displays celebrating diversity at Torriano Primary School



Torriano Primary @TorrianoJuniorS · Apr 28

We welcomed families to our Eid assembly this morning, with children sharing their family traditions and beliefs. We are looking forward to the Eid Fair this afternoon. The sun is shining!



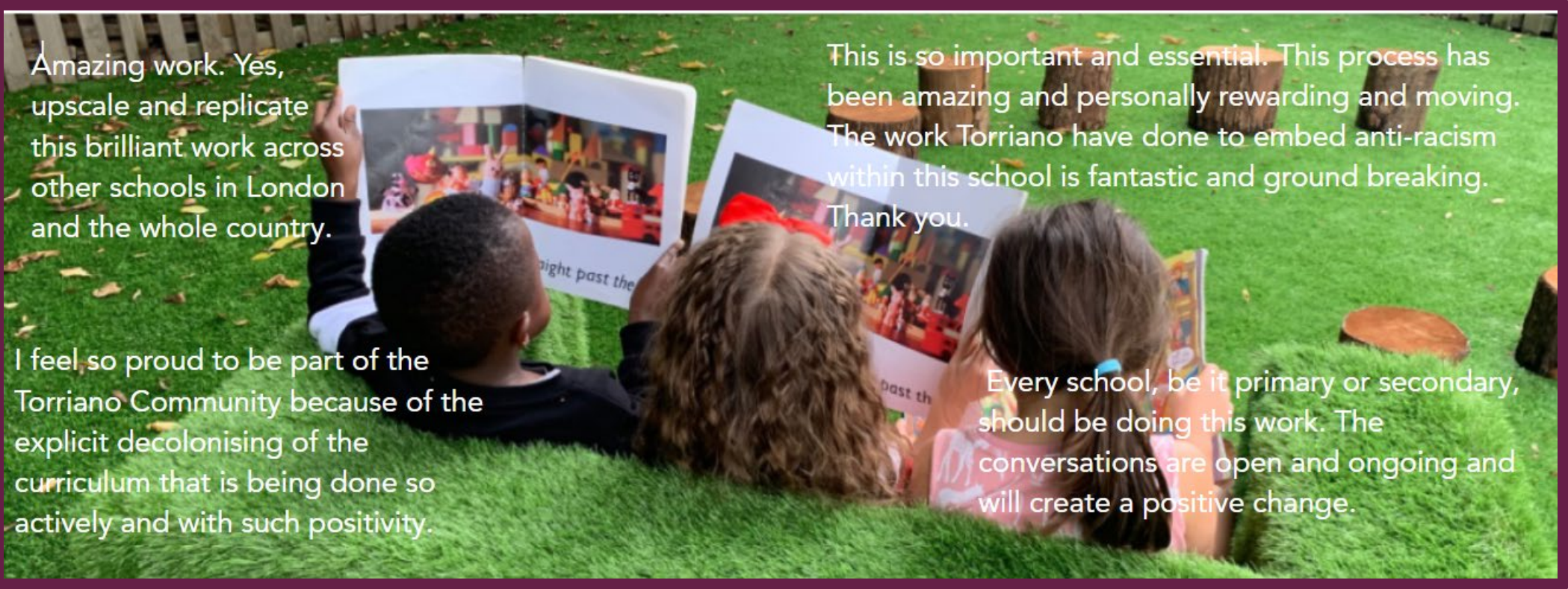
Torriano Primary @TorrianoJuniorS · Mar 17

This week we celebrated our unique strengths and differences during Neurodiversity Week. Not everyone learns, thinks or communicates in the same way. We are all unique! Year 1 created posters to teach others how we can be good friends to everyone #NeurodiversityCelebrationWeek



Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes

Parents' comments on Torriano Primary School's work to decolonise the curriculum and ensure that anti-racism is embedded across the school



Amazing work. Yes, upscale and replicate this brilliant work across other schools in London and the whole country.

I feel so proud to be part of the Torriano Community because of the explicit decolonising of the curriculum that is being done so actively and with such positivity.

This is so important and essential. This process has been amazing and personally rewarding and moving. The work Torriano have done to embed anti-racism within this school is fantastic and ground breaking. Thank you.

Every school, be it primary or secondary, should be doing this work. The conversations are open and ongoing and will create a positive change.

"Every child in the school could talk to you about discrimination and what that means and what it is to be anti-racist and have to stand up against discrimination."

Torriano staff member

Reduction in prejudice and discriminatory attitudes

At Kentish Town Primary pupils spoke confidently about their different backgrounds, why they were proud of their heritage, and the importance of respecting and celebrating diversity. Staff members and a parent also described ways that the school aims to be inclusive, by celebrating a variety of religious holidays and cultural differences. At Christ Church Primary, children have taken part in activities to celebrate diversity and stand up for the rights of others. These have included a refugee club, which teaches children about the experiences of refugees and raises donations to support them.

"I was born in the UK, but my mother used to live in Kosovo. She had to leave because of a war between Serbia and Kosovo. ... So, I have a sense of how it feels for other people, how it feels for refugees coming from another country to here or anywhere else in the world. It's good to help those people out."

Kentish Town pupil

"I'm part of the charity that works with the school ... we try and help as many people as we can and we integrate as many people. And that works into those Articles and how we respect everyone's rights. And that's why we have to plan events that have alcohol and don't have alcohol because we've got Muslim parents."

Kentish Town parent

Pupil voice

Involvement with the RRSA provides a wide range of opportunities for student voice. All four schools have School Councils elected by pupils, affirming that all children can make a difference by making their voices heard.

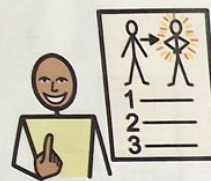
Torriano and Brecknock also have a 'Pupils' Parliament' in their federation. Pupils from across both schools come together to make decisions about school life.

Christ Church has used the rights as the basis for an 'expert week', where children have taught others about something they are an expert in, such as a different country they know about or a hobby. This experience was linked to the right to be heard and to share their ideas and their opinions.

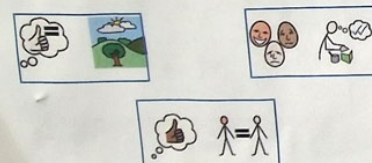
"I feel confident and proud to stand up for what I believe in."

Kentish Town pupil

Article 29



I have the right to an education which develops my personality, respect for others' rights and the environment.



"Children and young people know that their views are taken seriously ... every child in the school gets to vote."

Torriano staff member

T Torriano Primary @TorrianoJuniorS · Sep 30, 2022
Year 2 children have been incredibly active in their campaign and delivering their manifestos. We can't wait to find out who are School Councillor representatives are! @camdenlc #UNCRC #article12



Pupil voice

Pupils from Torriano and Brecknock have taken part in a Takeover Challenge in the local Council Chamber. They presented their ideas around key topics such as climate change and wellbeing to Camden Council representatives, including the Mayor. Pupils made recommendations for action by the Council and Camden Learning to help improve the lives of children and young people in the area.

Each year a group of Torriano and Brecknock pupils visits the Houses of Parliament. These trips have helped pupils to understand how laws work and how citizens can take part in the decision-making process. The schools also schedule classroom conversations to discuss key topics. They survey pupils regularly for their opinions on the curriculum and issues such as wellbeing, to make evidence-informed changes.



Classroom Conversations



Gender Equality
Maintaining Healthy Relationships
Resolving Conflict
Online Safety
Keeping Safe
Advertising and Appearance
Stereotyping & Celebrating Differences
Tolerance
Discrimination and Democracy
Fair Justice & Challenging Injustice
Road safety



Targeted, responsive to emerging needs, carefully mapped out.



Ensure children feel safe, secure and find their voice sooner.

Providing children with agency and encouraging personal growth.

Pupil voice

Torriano Primary School has used the rights as a platform for developing pupils' oracy skills. One staff member explained that encouraging pupils to present their work around rights had highlighted that some children lacked oracy skills, particularly those who "didn't have those opportunities to have conversations at home".

This led the school to form a partnership with national oracy charity Voice 21 to help pupils across the school to improve their abilities and confidence to express themselves.



Torriano Primary @TorrianoJuniorS · Apr 28

Inside the Green Dragon's Den... our children used their oracy skills to deliver a superb pitch. Well done everyone! We are so proud of you.

[@ThinkDoCamden](#) [@CamdenLearning](#) [@camdenclimate](#) [@VeoliaUK](#)

[@TroupBywaters](#)



Attendance

Staff members from across the schools explained that although it was not possible to make direct causal links between the RRSA and pupil attendance, working closely with families around the right to education did help to build positive, trusting relationships and convey the importance of pupils being in school.

"The fact that we're a Rights Respecting School, the fact we're inclusive, the fact we celebrate diversity of our population makes children happy to be here and makes them want to come to school. It makes their families feel part of our community and makes those families think, yes, my child wants to come to school, I'll get them here."

Christ Church staff member

"I just feel more positive about getting to school and what I'm going to be doing because every day at school is, kind of, unique and special."

Kentish Town pupil

Attendance

Staff across the schools felt that teaching pupils that some children across the world are denied the right to education helped to encourage them to value the opportunities they have at their own school and make them feel more positive about attending.

Pupils also expressed this, saying that they felt grateful for and enthusiastic about their own experiences at school.

"I feel grateful to be here because sometimes I imagine being one of those kids who can't go to school and you go to school so you can get a good job when you're older, so you can get good money because there's the cost of living right now."

Torriano pupil

"They understand that they have rights and that all children have rights, but some children don't have access to their rights. So I think that's very powerful for them to know."

Torriano staff member

Attendance

Torriano and Brecknock Primary Schools have linked to their RRSA work to the 'Send My Friend to School'⁸ initiative. This coalition brings together different groups to campaign for quality education for all children.

Pupils have taken part in activities such as writing to their local MP, explaining the importance of all children having access to school. This year pupils wrote on behalf of children who are unable to attend school because of emergencies, and were involved in petitioning the government to support other countries coping with issues such as natural disasters. Staff felt that participating in these kinds of activities helped pupils to value their own education and want to be in school.



"[The Send My Friend campaign] really helps the children to understand how some children don't have the opportunity to go to school."

Torriano staff member

Pupil 1: *"For some people in different countries, they don't have enough money to be able to go to school and get a good education."*

Pupil 2: *"But here, we get a free education."*

Pupil 3: *"Some people have no education at all. Some people maybe have education and then a disaster happened and then they got no education anymore."*

Torriano pupils

Attainment

As with attendance, staff members from across the schools were unable to say that the RRSA directly affected pupil attainment, but they did feel that the award helped to foster good learning behaviours and create a positive learning environment, which in turn supported pupils to achieve their full potential. Some staff members felt that understanding their rights in a global context motivated and inspired pupils to take ownership of their learning and view it as important preparation for the future.



"I think the idea that they've got a right to learn, right to be heard, that they're involved in decisions about their schooling, that they can make choices in appropriate ways about what they're learning and how they're learning it, that's all got to help children's attainment."

Christ Church staff member

Attainment

Staff and pupils across the schools explained how the RRSA work fostered positive attitudes and aspirations, which benefited wider learning.

"We have all these different subjects ... and each year, we learn those things a bit more harder and that will help us to build up our minds ...

Each year it will be easier for us to know that when we're adults we will know how to stop bad things happening in our world."

Kentish Town pupil

"I think it makes children realise that by trying hard ... and doing the best they can with regards to their learning, by doing that, they're accessing a right that they have. And I think it shifts the focus on that they're doing it for themselves rather than they're doing it for an adult ... or they're doing it because they have to."

Kentish Town staff member

"I think there's an attitude that everyone can achieve - you have the right to education and everyone can achieve. And I think it's a very positive system ... Also I think [it creates] quite a resilient attitude from lots of children, which then supports attainment."

Torriano staff member

Next steps

Expanding involvement in the RRSA across Camden schools

Staff we spoke to across the four Camden Gold Rights Respecting Schools shared with us their advice for other schools interested in getting involved with the RRSA.

Take a slow and steady approach

Don't rush to implement your Rights Respecting work, taking it slowly and embed it gradually throughout your school.

Explain clearly and carefully to all staff the rationale behind the RRSA

Make sure all staff including school governors understand the UNCRC, and why you are choosing to honour these rights in your school. Share examples of good practice from elsewhere to demonstrate the potential benefits for staff, parents and pupils.

Nominate staff champions

To achieve full staff commitment, you will need some staff champions to drive forward this work, with the support and clear leadership of the school's senior leadership team.

Expanding involvement in the RRSA across Camden schools

Highlight the benefits for marginalised or disadvantaged young people

The RRSA is especially powerful for young people who face challenges or discrimination. Make sure staff and parents understand how this work can support inclusion and empower these children in particular.

Connect with other schools in Camden already involved in the RRSA

Engage with other schools to share best practice and troubleshoot any challenges with Rights Respecting work.

Get involved with global events

There are many events around the world that link to the work of a Rights Respecting School. These include the work of **Global Action Plan**⁹, **World Children's Day**¹⁰, **Soccer Aid Schools**¹¹ and the **OutRight campaign**¹². Find out about them from UNICEF and other Rights Respecting Schools.

⁹ For further information, please see: <https://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/about-us>

¹⁰ For further information, please see: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-childrens-day>

¹¹ For further information, please see: <https://www.socceraid.org.uk/schools/>

¹² For further information, please see: <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/teaching-resources/outright/>

Further information

The RRSA

- <https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/the-rrsa/about-the-rrsa/>

The Schools

- Torriano Primary School: <https://torriano.camden.sch.uk/>
- Brecknock Primary School: <https://www.brecknock.camden.sch.uk/>
- Kentish Town Primary School: <https://www.kentishtown.camden.sch.uk/>
- Christ Church Primary School: <https://christchurchschool.co.uk/>

Research partner – The Centre for Education and Youth

The Centre for Education and Youth (CfEY) creates connections, insights and actions that improve young people's childhoods and life chances.

Our vision is of a society that ensures all children and young people receive the support they need to have a fulfilling childhood and transition to adulthood.

We partner with a diverse range of organisations and people, bridging gaps between sectors, practitioners, policymakers and researchers, to help make wise, bold decisions about how best to support young people.

We collaborate as learning, investigation, action or communication partners, carrying out timely, accessible and rigorous projects that get under the skin of key issues.

We shape debate, inform policy and change practices, helping to create systems where all young people, but especially those most at risk of poor outcomes and marginalisation, thrive.

We are positive about the future and, as a team of teachers and youth workers, believe in the power of brilliant practitioners to realise the potential of all young people.

Contact the team at: hello@cfey.org

