

# IMPACT REPORT: 2018 CREATING ACTIVE & ENGAGED CITIZENS



Unicef/Sutton-Hibbert

**The Unicef Rights Respecting Schools Award improves the lives of children in the UK by taking a whole school approach to putting children’s rights at the heart of school policy and practice.**

Our 2018 survey results showed that child rights education plays a key role in developing children and young people as **active, engaged local and global citizens**.

Children in Rights Respecting Schools feel **safe** in school, **respected** by and enjoy supportive relationships with the adults who care for them and **engaged** with their local community, their education and the global agenda. These results hold true from our survey in 2017.

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## INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

**Over 1.7 million children in the UK go to a Rights Respecting School and over 5,000 schools in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are working through the Award.**

In 2018:

- 1256 schools were registered, including 587 registering that year.
- 1712 schools were Bronze: Rights Committed, with 556 awarded that year.
- 1546 schools were Silver: Rights Aware, with 308 awarded that year.
- 490 schools were Gold: Rights Respecting, with 143 awarded that year.

Our quantitative and qualitative results found that Child Rights Education through RRSA often enhances and strengthens effective practice within a school. Rights have been described as a 'heartbeat' in school life; like a 'golden thread' or 'stick of rock' that underpins and informs their practice.

In a Rights Respecting School a child rights-based approach underpins school culture, ethos and relationships as well as the more tangible changes to practice, policy and environment.

By the third stage of the Award, Gold, schools achieve positive performance across a broad range of outcomes:

- **Children know about their rights and support the rights of others locally and globally.**
- **Children feel happier in themselves.**
- **Children feel safe in school.**
- **Children are engaged in their education.**
- **Adults have positive relationships and enjoy their job.**

Underpinning the transformation that takes place in Rights Respecting Schools is a theory of change designed to bring about sustainable, long term transformation.

You can view the Rights Respecting theory of change here: [unicef.uk/rrsa-theory-of-change](https://www.unicef.uk/rrsa-theory-of-change)

*The rights of the child now run like a golden thread through everything we do, they are not shoe-horned in but they sit in every lesson to be drawn upon as needed, as a tool for comparison, for discussion, for persuasion and for campaigning."*

**Headteacher, Gold, Primary, England**

*"Rights respecting is a common thread throughout school life... we are very proud and passionate about RRSA."*

**Headteacher, Gold, Primary, Jersey**

*"It's like the rights are transforming their lives... it transcends everything; it's like a stick of rock, it's right through [what the school does]."*

**Adult, Special, Gold School**

## METHODOLOGY

This report presents the perspectives of children, headteachers, teachers and other adults working in Rights Respecting Schools in 2018.

As schools progress through the Award they are asked to complete three questionnaires and provide us with aggregate school-level results. The questionnaires are completed before assessment at Bronze, Silver or Gold.

This report represents the views of over 80,400 children and young people from over 700 schools across the UK. Schools are asked to sample a minimum of 10 per cent of pupils. Also represented are 12,800 teachers, teaching assistants and staff from over 600 schools provided school-level adult survey results. When the findings refer to per cent of children or adult views, it means the mean proportion of respondents within schools.

In addition, 325 headteachers or senior leaders provided their perspective and evidence on the impact that becoming a Rights Respecting School has on their pupils at Silver and Gold. This report also draws on independent school inspection reports for Rights Respecting Schools, from Ofsted (England), Estyn (Wales), HM Inspectorate of Education Scotland (HMIE) and the Education Training Inspectorate (Northern Ireland). We also draw upon parent, staff and children's quotes gathered through the assessments undertaken by RRSA Professional Advisers at Silver and Gold.

Table 1: Sample numbers for questionnaires completed by schools awarded in 2018.

Award stage	Schools Awarded in 2018	Children's survey		Adult survey		Headteacher survey
		N. schools	N. children	N. schools	N. adults	
Bronze	556	390	39743	336	5963	N/A
Silver	308	205	24012	171	4002	202
Gold	143	112	16660	96	2874	123
<b>Total</b>	<b>1007</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>80,415</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>12,839</b>	<b>325</b>

# FINDINGS

## 1. CHILDREN KNOW ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS AND SUPPORT THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY

- 82% of children and young people at Gold schools say they are taught about their rights, a rise of 40% from before work began.
- 71% of children and young people at Gold schools say they can help others locally and globally, a rise of 22% from before work began.
- 97% of adults at Gold schools are comfortable talking about rights, a rise of 9% from before work began.

Child Rights Education ensures children, young people and adults know about and understand children's rights. This knowledge helps to ensure rights are respected and breaches of rights can be challenged.

In Rights Respecting Schools teaching and learning about, through and for children's rights occurs through a wide range of methods which can include class and school charters, assemblies and curriculum integration. At Gold key terminology relating to child rights, such as principles and articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention or the CRC) should be used explicitly and should be prominent throughout the school.

As well as becoming aware of their own rights as children, pupils in Rights Respecting Schools learn to consider the rights of other children in the UK and globally. Knowledge of child rights can help children develop an understanding of and compassion for social justice issues and understand how actions can promote and protect the rights of others. Rights Respecting Schools help children learn about their role as global citizens, supporting them to be active citizens in local and global communities in the future.

Survey results show a clear progression in children's feelings of being able to help others both locally and globally as schools progress through the Award.

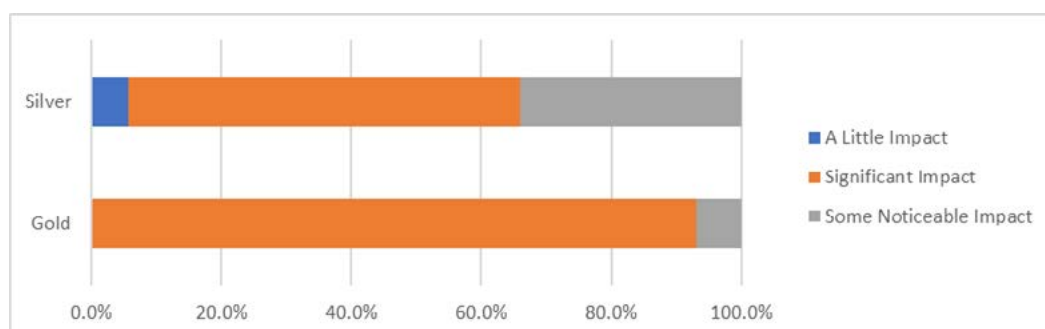
Award stage	N	Mean per cent pupils who learn about rights
Bronze	352	47.9%
Silver	187	76.8%
Gold	101	82.1%
Total	640	61.7%

		<b>Per cent of adults who say they feel comfortable talking to pupils about their rights.</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	336	87.5%	8.0%
Silver	171	92.9%	34.0%
Gold	96	97.2%	50.0%

		<b>Per cent of pupils who believe they can do things to help others in the local community</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	388	50.9%	0.0%
Silver	202	66.4%	10.0%
Gold	111	71.6%	0.0%
Total	701	58.7%	0.0%

		<b>Per cent of pupils who believe they can do things to help others around the world</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	386	46.3%	0%
Silver	200	63.3%	0%
Gold	112	71.1%	0%
Total	698	55.1%	0%

Chart 1. Impact reported by headteachers of RRSA on the empowerment of pupils to support the rights of others locally and globally.



## What children and adults told us...

*"I didn't know anything about rights until I came to this school. We learn about them all the time and they are all over the school."*

**Pupil, Gold Secondary, Scotland**

*"The biggest area of impact has been our political campaigning and fundraising – we have felt the power of our relationship with UNICEF as deeply helpful – our children have become politically motivated and they care deeply about the experiences of other children around the world."*

**Headteacher, Gold, Primary, England**

*"Children have a strong understanding of children's rights around the world ... and are passionate about ensuring these rights are met."*

**Staff, Gold, Primary, Jersey**

## What school inspectorates say...

*"You are keen for pupils to view themselves as global learners. The school's engagement with the Rights Respecting Schools' Award programme enables pupils to become active both in school life and the wider world. The rights of the child are central to the ethos of the school. Pupils respect and acknowledge differences and are prepared well for secondary school and for life in modern Britain."*

**Ofsted report, Silver, Primary, England**

*"Pupils are proud of their school. They are encouraged to be confident and are aware of their rights as citizens of the world through the school's curriculum. Pupils explained to inspectors how the school has recently achieved the Silver award as part of being a Unicef UK Rights Respecting School. One pupil enthusiastically told an inspector that Article 12 of the Human Rights Act was very important to him because 'We are all different, but we should all have the same rights.'"*

**Ofsted report, Silver, Primary, England**

*"The rights of the child are at the heart of the school's vision. This is an excellent feature. Pupils have an exceptional understanding of their rights under the United Nations Convention, and this promotes their awareness of fairness, equality and tolerance effectively. Older pupils conduct regular assemblies to discuss the rights of the child. This is advertised around the school, on the television and with local Members of Parliament. As a result, nearly all pupils' wellbeing and attitudes are excellent."*

**Estyn report, Gold, Primary, Wales**



## 2. CHILDREN FEEL HAPPIER IN THEMSELVES

- 78% of children and young people at Gold schools say they feel happy in themselves, an increase of 5% from before work began.

Rights respecting schools support children and young people’s wellbeing. By promoting the values of respect, dignity and non-discrimination, children’s self-esteem and wellbeing is boosted. A child who understands their rights understands how they and others should be treated and their sense of self-worth is strengthened. The school ethos, environment and relationships can all change to become more conducive to supporting children’s wellbeing. Insight into these changes has been more effectively captured in the qualitative evidence compiled in this report, with the broad theme of wellbeing underpinning many of the reflections in school assessments and inspections in relation to the impact of the Rights Respecting Schools Award in schools. Pupil survey results indicate an improvement in pupil wellbeing as schools progress through the Award stages. The average percentage of children who feel happy in themselves increases from 73% at Bronze to 78% at Gold.

		Per cent of pupils who say they ‘like the way I am’	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	387	73%	11%
Silver	202	77%	0.0%
Gold	111	78%	25%
Total	700	75%	0.0%

### What children and adults told us...

*“[Rights] gives them the language and the confidence to put their emotions into words.”*  
**Staff, Gold, Special School, Scotland**

*‘They come in thinking they’re ‘bad boys’ and they leave as confident young men – that’s a lot to do with rights.’*  
**Teacher, Gold, Special School, Scotland**

*“Rights are important, and they have helped our school be better because we are now aware that if something goes wrong, we have rights and they can help us discuss problems”*  
**Pupil, Silver, Primary, Wales**

*“My son really struggled with emotions and anger, but he’s changed. Academically he’s doing well, but he’s such a lovely guy. His future is so much brighter because he’s had that support... Now it’s turned around, we’ve got our family back.”*  
**Parent, Gold, Special School, Scotland**

### What school inspectorates say...

*“Members of staff and pupils who spoke to me also described the school as a caring, nurturing place. Across the day, both in lessons and at social times, I saw older pupils working with and supporting younger pupils. It was clear to see that the school’s attention to respecting individual rights has had a significant effect and has helped to build a cohesive school community.”*

**Ofsted Report, Gold, Primary, England**

*“There is a nurturing, caring ethos throughout the school. Children appear happy, and positive relationships with the adults and between children are evident across the school. The positive ethos and culture are enhanced by the school values and a commitment to children’s rights. These are understood and demonstrated across the school. Children are polite and well-mannered, with almost all engaging in their learning and working well together.”*  
**HMIe Report, Silver, Primary, Scotland**

### 3. CHILDREN FEEL SAFE IN SCHOOL

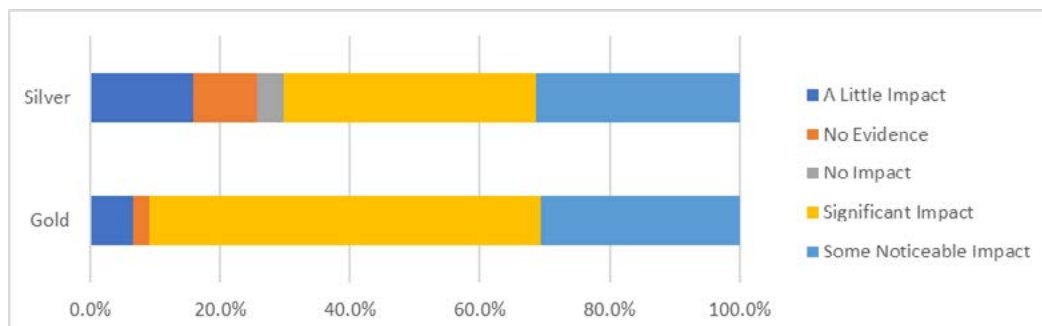
- 82% of children and young people in Gold schools say they feel safe in school, an increase of 6% since before work began.
- 82 % of children and young people in Gold schools say they could tell someone if they felt unsafe, a rise of 6% since before work began.
- 93% of headteachers in Gold schools report a noticeable reduction in exclusions and bullying, an increase of 23% from Silver.

We expect children and young people at Rights Respecting School to feel safe in school due to several interrelated changes that take place. Children and adults become more aware of child rights and so everyone respects each other's rights and bullying, which can be a key aspect of how safe a child feels at school, reduces through children respecting each other's rights. Children also become empowered to challenge and disclose behaviour that is disrespectful of rights, so safeguarding issues can be identified and addressed.

		Per cent of pupils feel safe in school	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	388	76.4%	7.0%
Silver	205	81.1%	40%
Gold	112	82.2	51%
Total	705	78.7%	7.0%

		Per cent of pupils who could tell an adult at school if they felt unsafe	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	388	75.2%	5.0%
Silver	205	81.0%	41.0%
Gold	112	81.6%	38.0%
Total	705	77.9%	5.0%

Chart 2. Impact reported by headteachers of RRSA on bullying and exclusions.





## What children and adults told us...

*"Knowing about your rights is important because they help you to be safe and you can speak up if there is a problem."*

**Pupil, Gold, Primary, England**

*"For me, most importantly it [RRSA] helps children to gain clarity around their rights which could encourage them to speak up and seek help if they need to, when the world can be a confusing place with adults not always having the child's interest in mind."*

**Parent, Gold, Primary, Jersey**

*"If somebody is bullying, they might be stopping the person getting their rights to be safe and to play."*

**Pupil, Gold, Primary, England**

*"Charters help us to be safe and they remind you to respect other people's rights"*

**Pupil, Gold, Primary, Wales**

## What school inspectorates say...

*"There is a very caring and supportive ethos, where nearly all pupils are happy and feel they are valued. All pupils learn about their rights, which helps them to support each other and to feel safe in school. They show a strong understanding of respect and tolerance, based on their knowledge of the values that the school promotes. Nearly all pupils behave very well and are polite and welcoming to visitors."*

**Estyn report, Gold, Primary, Wales**

*"The school's work to promote pupils' physical and mental well-being is a strength. For example, the recent whole-school theme of 'Rights Respecting Schools', linked to pupils' creation of a whole-school art exhibition, has enhanced pupils' ability to express when they feel safe or unsafe. Pupils wrote to the local press and acted as tour guides for visitors to the 'gallery'. The overall impact of the project has been to create a sense of pride and belonging for both staff and pupils."*

**Ofsted report, Silver, Primary, England**

## 4. CHILDREN FEEL RESPECTED BY ADULTS AND ENJOY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- 66% of children in Gold schools say other pupils are kind and helpful a rise of 6% since before work began.
- 84% of headteachers in Gold schools say being Rights Respecting has had a significant impact on children’s respect for themselves and others, this is a rise of 34% from Silver.
- 89% of headteachers in Gold schools say that pupils enjoy positive relationships, an increase of 25% from Silver.
- 87% of headteachers saw a significant impact on positive attitudes towards diversity and overcoming prejudices.
- 98% of adults working in schools feel respected by pupils, an increase of 6% since before work began.

Chart 3. Children and young people have improved respect for themselves and for others.

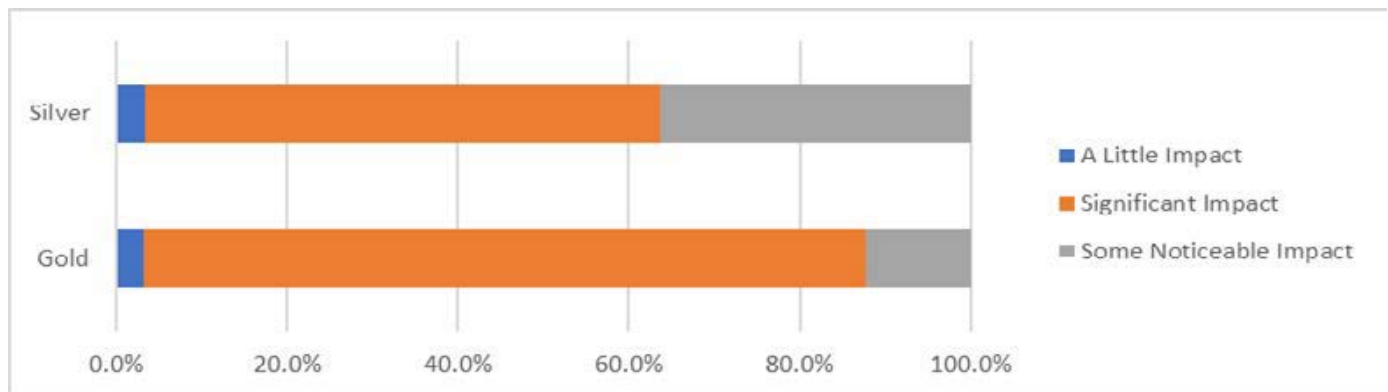
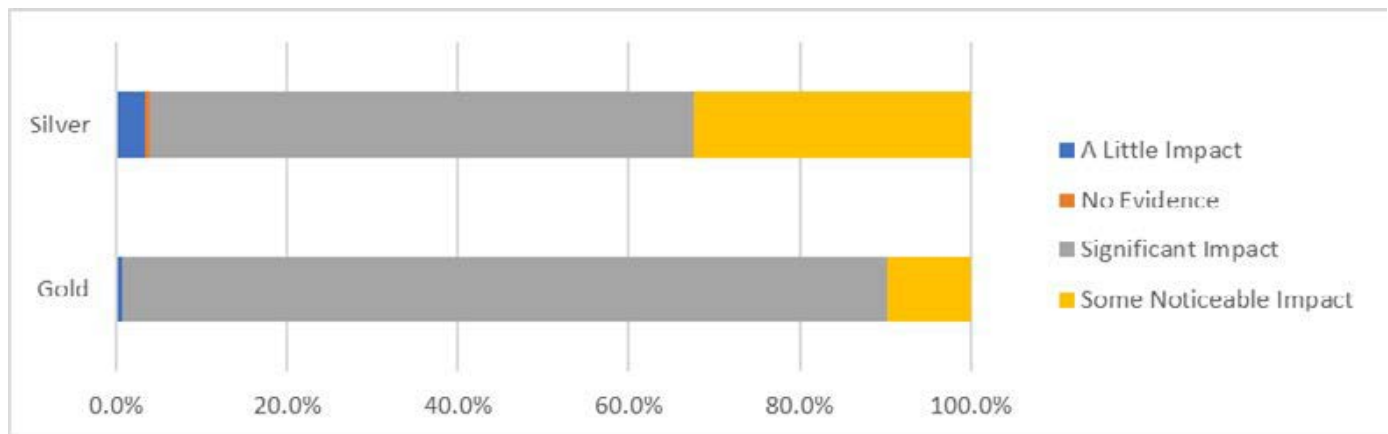


Chart 4. Children develop positive relationships.



		Per cent of pupils who say other pupils are kind and helpful	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	388	59.8%	2%
Silver	204	64.1%	16%
Gold	112	66%	23%
Total	704	62.1%	2%

		Per cent of adults who say they are treated with respect by pupils in the school	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	336	91.6%	10.0%
Silver	171	94.2%	14.0%
Gold	96	98.1%	47.0%

### What children and adults told us...

*"We are shown respect and expected to respect others... Our diversity unites us... We are different but one at the same time".*

**Pupil, Gold, Secondary, England**

*"As a school with pupils of more than forty nationalities, the RRSA offers many opportunities to celebrate both diversity and inclusivity, with a firm emphasis on equality of opportunity"*

**Adult, Silver, Secondary, Wales**

*"Changing demographics mean the school has more vulnerable children and families who have suffered trauma, so it is very important that these children know and understand their rights... The school has many different languages and rights are a good place to start for better communication."*

**Headteacher, Gold, Primary, England**

*"I believe that learning about rights at school has helped our children to accept difference and diversity among their peers and community.... [She is grateful to the school for] helping to calibrate our children's moral compass at such an early stage in their lives."*

**Parent, Gold, Primary, Jersey**

### What school inspectorates say...

*"The work that pupils are undertaking to achieve Unicef's final Rights Respecting Schools Award makes a very valuable contribution to preparing them for life in modern Britain. The pupils with whom I spoke had a clear understanding of their own and others' rights. They had a similarly sound awareness of the principles that underpin fundamental British values, and the importance of respecting diversity. Pupils referred to skin colour, race, religion, sexuality, disability and social class in explaining the rights of all people to be respected."*

**Ofsted report, Gold, Primary, England**

## 5. CHILDREN ARE ENGAGED IN THEIR EDUCATION

- 80% children and young people at Gold schools feel listened to, an increase of 6% from before work began.
- 59% of children and young people at Gold schools say they can influence decisions, an increase of 5% from before work began.
- 99% of adults in Gold schools report high levels of pupil engagement, an increase of 8% from before work began.
- 79% of children in Gold schools know what they need to do to make progress in class, an increase of 9% from before work began.

Our surveys show children's sense of being heard and having an influence increases, but perceived impact is higher amongst adults.

Children are expected to feel greater ownership for their learning, through talking about learning and having more positive relationships with teachers and other adults at the school. The mean proportion of children in a school who know what to do to make progress increases from 70% at Bronze to 79% at Gold. Larger change is seen in the minimum which increases from 14% to 49%. The dip in minimum at Silver is due to school with an outlier value of zero.

Pupils' enjoyment of school and learning can improve through the range of changes that enhance the school experience as it embeds the Rights Respecting approach. Qualitative observations indicate the link between school enjoyment and positive changes to relationships, behaviour and the school ethos.

		<b>Per cent of pupils who feel they know what to do to make progress in class</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	387	70.0%	14.0%
Silver	204	77%	0.0%
Gold	111	79%	49.0%
Total	702	73%	0.0%

### What children and adults told us...

*"I know my voice is really important."*  
**Pupil, Gold Secondary, England**

*"This is a place I want to be in and learn."*  
**Pupil, Gold Secondary, England**

*"[Children] really own their right to learn and to have an education. They use the language and they expect to have a say in class."*  
**Adult, Gold Primary, England**

### What school inspectorates say...

*"Older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, as members of the 'rights respecting team' and school committees, prefects and monitors in the Nursery and Reception classes. They feel valued, listened to and part of the democratic decisions made in school."*  
**Ofsted, Silver Primary, England**

*"Nearly all pupils enjoy the school's life and work, and feel safe within the caring, inclusive and supportive ethos. They treat each other and others with a high level of care and respect. The rights of the child are at the heart of the school's vision. This is an excellent aspect."*  
**Estyn, Gold Primary, Wales**

## 6. ADULTS HAVE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AND ENJOY THEIR JOB

- 98% of adults in Gold schools report enjoying their work, this is up 4% from before work began.
- 98% of adults in Gold schools report feeling respected by children and young people, this is up from 4% from before work began.
- 99% of adults in Gold schools report respectful relationships between other adults, this is an increase of 5% from before work began.

RRSA helps improve school staff's enjoyment of their jobs and feeling of being valued, through more positive relationships with other adults and children, improvement in pupil behaviour and a more positive school ethos. The school survey of adults asks governors and staff working at the school (such as teachers, teaching assistants, administrative staff etc.) if they enjoy working at the school and if they feel respected by pupils and adults.

The survey results indicate that across all three measures, the average proportion of adults with positive views increases through the Award stages, from an already high level at Bronze. Larger differences can be seen in the minimum proportions of adults reporting these views.

		<b>Per cent of adults who say they enjoy working at the school</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	336	93.9%	0%
Silver	171	96.3%	23%
Gold	96	98.2%	60%
Total	603	95.3%	0%

		<b>Per cent of adults who say they are treated with respect by other adults in the school</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	336	94.9%	10%
Silver	171	97%	27%
Gold	96	99.1%	70%
Total	603	96.2%	10%

		<b>Per cent of adults who feel respected by pupils in the school</b>	
Award	N	Mean	Min
Bronze	336	91.6%	10%
Silver	171	94.2%	14%
Gold	96	98.1%	47%
Total	603	93.4%	10%

## What adults told us...

*"This is such a different school now - inclusive, calm, polite and happy."*

**Teacher, Silver, Secondary, England**

*"I feel safe as a member of staff – we don't need a poster telling visitors to treat staff with respect like in some other places"*

**Adult, Gold, Special school, Northern Ireland**

*"Relationships are positive, children are treated as individuals... Having the shared vocabulary of RRS helps."*

**Staff, Silver, Secondary, Scotland**

## What school inspectorates say...

*"The school's highly effective and consistent focus on respect for people's 'rights' contributes most effectively to pupils' evident good behaviour, respectful relationships with staff and consideration of those less fortunate than themselves."*

**Ofsted report, Silver, Secondary, England**

*It permeates how respectfully and happily staff and pupils interact, along with pupils' reflection and thoughtfulness about a variety of issues, and their charity fundraising and contribution to community life. Just one of several examples seen during the inspection was an assembly on how education improves lives, health and earnings."*

**Ofsted report, Gold, Secondary, England**