

Embedding the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Sustainable Development Goals in whole-school and curriculum practice

As a UNICEF Rights Respecting School (Level 2), Admiral Lord Nelson School (ALNS), Portsmouth, has embedded human rights in its school improvement plan and across the school. Human rights are at the heart of its equality policy, and global citizenship features in the [curriculum policy](#) as one of its aims: ‘Global citizenship: [the curriculum] will develop our students’ understanding of the world they live in, and their rights and their responsibilities to uphold the rights of others.’

The [ALNS Charter](#) incorporates the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) explicitly, and this features in every student planner and staff handbook.

The school’s charter is on display in every classroom.
Extract © Lord Admiral Nelson School



OUR CHARTER
We all have a **RESPONSIBILITY** to uphold the rights of every child.

RIGHTS - RESPECT - RESPONSIBILITY
ALNS

Articles 1, 2, 3: All children have all the rights of the UNCRC.
Article 23: A child with a disability has the right to a full and decent life.
Article 30: A right to use their own language, customs and religion.

<p>As students we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect other students’ rights. Access the full curriculum to the best of our ability. Value everyone in the school as we would like to be valued. Contribute to student voice. Treat those with disabilities with dignity and respect. Demonstrate tolerance and awareness of everyone within the school no matter what their ethnic origin, background, gender or sexuality. 	<p>So ALNS is a...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School which is a safe and inclusive environment which protects the rights of every child and adult and ensures they are being respected and upheld. School where everyone can develop self-respect and self-esteem, work without disruption and thrive as an individual. School which provides safe places to allow students to retain dignity during personalised support sessions. School which allows individuals to express their cultural identities. 	<p>As adults we will...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value, protect and respect everyone’s rights. Ensure that other children’s learning is not affected by the poor behaviour of others. Be consistent and fair. Ensure that students respect each other’s rights too. Adapt the curriculum and environment so that it is accessible to everyone. Provide a private area for students to go when they need extra support. Educate students about the disabilities of others. Celebrate other cultures, festivals and traditions. Encourage open minds and challenge prejudice.
--	--	---

While the school has had a long-standing engagement with the Rights Respecting Schools Award (RRSA),¹ it has been extending and deepening its global learning by also incorporating engagement with the SDGs and other aspects of global learning through their involvement in the Global Learning Programme (GLP). The school is an Expert Centre and will be running two full global learning days for their local network of GLP Partner Schools in the autumn term 2017 – the first is aimed at helping other schools map where they are at with global learning, learn about core GLP themes and plan for action. The second day aims to focus on the opportunities of embedding a human rights and Sustainable Development Goals agenda into whole-school and curriculum practice. ALNS will also be sharing their work in this area at the GLP Expert Centre Conference in October 2017.

¹ Learn more about the [Rights Respecting Schools Award](#), and how the GLP can support and deepen schools’ work towards this award with our [mapping document](#).

Achieving the RRSA level 2

In their latest review by UNICEF, students described global citizenship as ‘understanding other cultures and different backgrounds’, and a Year 11 pupil explained that ‘ignoring this leads to history repeating itself – like Nazi Germany’. Key teachers within the school have worked particularly hard to achieve the very demanding Level 2 of the RRSA. Their UNICEF report highlights the depth of global learning and engagement within the school:

‘Students described lessons where they had debated issues of cultural identity, different religious beliefs and how many Syrian refugees the UK should take in. Geography topics focused on sustainable development and resources.

‘The young people spoke with confidence about their learning, and how the culture in the classroom is very supportive and conducive to good learning and progress. Students had a good understanding of circumstances where children’s rights might be denied such as war in Syria and Afghanistan or discrimination against girls impacting on their right to education in the Middle East. The school link with The Gambia, which encompassed reciprocal visits as well as fundraising, was instrumental in ALNS students realising the resilience of students in The Gambia: “They want to go to school and not give up”; “They deal with things.” Students recognised that not all children in the UK could access their rights and understood with support that the government was responsible for ensuring children’s rights are met.

‘Students could describe actions that they had undertaken to uphold the rights of children locally and globally. Much of the fundraising work is focused on the links with The Gambia. Students were very clear about the purpose of their fundraising: mosquito nets for the school in The Gambia, building some areas of the school, providing better science or sporting equipment. The fundraising is linked broadly to children’s right to education.

‘Students have also been involved in Comic Relief. ALNS is a member of UNICEF UK’s Schools Campaign network and took part in the climate change action. There was good awareness that not all children and young people are able to access their rights, and the Syrian refugee crisis was given as a key example of this. A “fair trade” fortnight is also held each year. As one Year 10 student explained with regard to helping to support fair trade, “if everyone in the world does a little bit, it can change”.’

The UNICEF report highlights the **importance of SLT involvement** in strong RRSA work. This is also prevalent in GLP schools demonstrating best practice.

‘There is a very clear commitment from the headteacher and senior leaders that the school’s rights respecting work is of central importance in supporting the school’s ethos and everyday practice. The headteacher described how... the ‘promotion of articles across [the] curriculum [is] more explicit’ and ‘our engagement is just much deeper’.

Linking their work with the Sustainable Development Goals



One key focus area that the school has been developing is the United Nations **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs). This work was started in 2015 and launched more formally with the school's involvement in the [World's Largest Lesson](#). The school held a week-long focus about the SDGs, which took place through assemblies and especially prepared lessons across the whole curriculum.



The school has found that the SDGs and CRC are highly complementary, and, as a result, work on one has often involved work on the other. The school has mapped the CRC extensively across all curriculum subject areas and in some cases has mapped the SDGs as well.

For example, the **philosophy**, **ethics** and **RE** curricula map all year group subject themes to the CRC and SDGs – an example can be seen below:

<p>The Island Article 14 – Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this. Article 19 – Governments must do what they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or by anyone else who looks after them.</p> <p>Global Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No poverty 6. Clean water and sanitation 15. Life on Island 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions. <p>Jesus Article 2 -The convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from Article 14 – Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this. Article 30 – Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.</p> <p>Global Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No poverty 2. Zero hunger 	<p>Judaism Article 2 -The convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from Article 14 – Every child has the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights of parents to give their children information about this. Article 30 – Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.</p> <p>Global Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No poverty 2. Zero hunger 16. Peace and justice – strong institutions. <p>Holocaust Article 11 – Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their country illegally or be prevented from returning. Article 19 – Governments must do what they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or by anyone else who looks after them. Article 22 – If a child is a refugee or is seeking refuge, governments must ensure that they have the same rights</p>	<p>Morality and Ethics Article 6 – Every child has the right to life. Governments must do what they can to make sure children survive and develop to their full potential. Article 12- Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously. Article 13- Every child must be free to say what they think and to seek and receive all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law. Article 38- Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war. Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Article 39- Children neglected, abused, exploited, tortured or who are victims of war must receive special help to help them recover their health, dignity and self-respect.</p> <p>Global Goals</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No poverty 2. Zero hunger 4. Quality education 5. Gender equality 10. Reduced inequalities 16. Peace and Justice – Strong institutions. <p>Inequality and sexism Article 4 – Governments must do all they can to make</p>
--	--	---

The Year 10 and 11 **personal development** (PD) curriculum also maps both the CRC and the SDGs; this also involves whole-school assembly activity and tutor-time engagement. All students experience 12 PD days a year when the normal curriculum is replaced. Most of the PD days are globally themed (e.g. ethics and tolerance day, Africa day, Gambia Day, conflict and resolution, and multicultural day). There is a large team of staff and students dedicated to building a sustainable environment and a thriving team of Rights Respecting School ambassadors who work outside the school promoting the rights of young people. A group of Year 10 girls, for example, have been actively involved in speaking about Goal 5 (Gender Equality) to wider members of the community. On top of this, the school has a '[right of the week](#)' each week throughout the school year, and assembly themes reflect these.

Encouraging social responsibility

At the heart of the pedagogical approach to global learning at ALNS is the idea of responsibility, as captured by the following quote in the '[Social Responsibility](#)' section of their website:

'At ALNS we believe in taking ACTION. We don't just talk about things that concern us; we try to do something about it. We want to make a difference. We are trying to make our school a better place. We are also aiming to help others too.'

Much of this global learning work comes down to the efforts and enthusiasm of a core group of teachers who have been responsible for keeping up the motivation, momentum and sustainability of initiatives. The dedicated GLP Expert Centre co-ordinator, Julia Firth, has been leading on all this amazing work. The school's recent UNICEF report shows clearly that students feel that the global learning work of the school is hugely relevant and impactful. As a GLP Expert Centre Co-ordinator, Julia is now sharing the school's global learning experiences to support the deepening and embedding of global learning in local Partner Schools.

The school in context

Admiral Lord Nelson School is a large 11–16 secondary school on the outskirts of Portsmouth, with nearly 1,000 pupils on roll. It is located in a highly-urbanised part of the city. The school has achieved a number of awards, including: Rights Respecting School Award Level 2 (the first school in Portsmouth to achieve this), International Schools Award, Artsmark Platinum, Fairtrade, Healthy School, and foundation International Schools Award. Admiral Lord Nelson is also a Global Learning Programme (GLP) Expert Centre and National Leadership Development school.