**St Mary’s Catholic Primary School in Axminster is proud to be a Unicef Rights Respecting School.**



**The UNICEF Rights Respecting accreditation recognises our commitment to creating a safe and inspiring place to learn, where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive. Developing a Rights Respecting ethos ensures that these values are embedded in daily school life, giving children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens, both locally and globally.**



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**What does it mean to be a rights respecting school?**

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The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children’s rights at the heart of schools in the UK.

A key driver for us was that each child can find their voice and can use it effectively to be a change maker. ​The Rights Respecting Schools Award has helped us to make that a reality in our school.

There are three stages to the Rights Respecting Schools Award. Its transformative and rigorous approach means the journey to the highest stage can take up to four years.

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Together young people and the school community learn about children’s rights, putting them into practice every day.  The Award is not just about what children do but also, importantly, what adults do. In Rights Respecting Schools, children’s rights are promoted and realised, adults and children work towards this goal together. The Award recognises a school’s achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into practice within the school community and beyond.

*Rights are important because you learn that what you do, someone else and then someone else will do and in the end the whole world will be a better place ( Year 2 pupil )*

*I know my rights keep me safe at school because I can say ‘Stop’. I have the right to be safe and choose my friends. ( Year 6 pupil )*

*We have been learning that all children in the world have the same rights and lots of people work to make all children’s lives better. I think that is really important. ( Year 4 pupil )*

 **What are the children’s rights?**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, or UNCRC, is the basis of all of Unicef’s work. It is the most complete statement of children’s rights ever produced and is the most widely-ratified international human rights treaty in history.

The Convention has 54 articles that cover all aspects of a child’s life and set out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all children everywhere are entitled to. It also explains how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights. Every child has rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status.

Please see the rights overview for a summary of Articles 1-42.

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**Why become a Rights Respecting School?**

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* It develops a common language to build the schools vision and values
* Children and young people become actively involved in the learning process
* Children and young people take responsibility for respecting their right to an education, and the rights of others
* It is an efficient and effective framework for School Improvement
* To build good global citizens

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**What is the impact of being a rights respecting school?**

* Everyone in the school community has a clear framework of reference
* Understanding that every child has rights and will be listened to is very empowering. It is a key driver in helping children to understand that each one of them is unique and valued.
* Children become advocates for their own learning: “We learn about our rights and we learn that we all have the right to learn. I think that is really special” ( Year 2 pupil )
* Learning is not what’s done to us- we are responsible for leading it – it’s our right” (Year 5 pupil )
* Less passive and more active learners
* Improved results

**Article 3 (Best interests of the child): The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.**

 **Surely with rights come responsibility?**

The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18. Anyone above that age is known as a duty-bearer. Children are not responsible for upholding their rights, a five-year-old for example, can not be responsible for ensuring that they are not kidnapped. Duty-bearers are responsible for teaching children about their rights, and for up-holding them. Children are responsible for *RESPECTING* their rights, and the rights of others.

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​[**Click here for a child friendly summary**](https://ea07ba99-03f0-4abc-b80d-3dc3b429eec4.filesusr.com/ugd/e32410_7421daa5e8474c7eab9e4559878caa88.pdf) **of the Unicef Rights for all Children**

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/11/UN0332751.pdf>

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You are **amazing**

You are **important**

You are **special**

You are **unique**