



An evaluation of UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Programme

The UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme aims to raise pupil achievement at school and improve the quality of their own and their families' lives. Pupils learn what their rights and responsibilities are according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and how to use this understanding as a guide to living. The programme is closely related to the Government's *Every Child Matters* policy that aims to ensure that every child and young person, whatever their background or circumstances, have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being.

Organisations involved with providing services to children are expected to share information and work together, to protect children and young people from harm and help them achieve what they want in life. The aims include giving children and young people far more say about issues that affect them as individuals and collectively. The Rights Respecting Schools Programme provides an approach that helps schools develop the culture to support this pupil participation.

The DfES has funded UNICEF's Education Department to roll out the programme in partnership with five Local Authorities: Durham, Rochdale, Bracknell, Hampshire and Dorset. The plan has a built in evaluation which is being undertaken by the University of Sussex. The evaluation is assessing whether and how the programme is realising its aims and will provide feedback so that improvements can be made. The evaluation will also consider how far UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Programme inspires and supports schools who want to provide children and young people with a rights-respecting guide to living.

The research will involve in-depth case studies of 12 schools across the 5 local authorities. Interviews (with pupils, staff, parents/governors, senior managers), observation and documentary analysis in these schools, where possible drawing on school self evaluation, will inform the research. In addition, school cluster or group meetings will be attended and some telephone interviews may be involved. This will provide an overview of different perspectives and clarify ways in which schools are developing pupils' rights and responsibilities, linking it to other initiatives and existing developments and extending and enriching their current practice.

The project runs from April 2007 to March 2010 and is being undertaken by Carol Robinson and Judy Sebba from the University of Sussex.

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