

Executive Summary

1. Children in schools participating in the Super Ambassadors scheme have a relatively high awareness of children's rights. Of those consulted, 76% said that they knew what rights were and most were able to name at least one right.
2. Children's awareness of the UNCRC (46%) was lower than their awareness of rights in general. This suggests that while children have a good knowledge of the rights they are entitled to, their understanding of where rights come from, why they have rights, and who is responsible for ensuring their rights are realised, is lower.
3. Their knowledge of the Children's Commissioner was higher than that found in previous surveys at 58%. Of those who had heard of the Commissioner, the majority believed that she was successful in speaking up for children, informing them about their rights, listening to them and ensuring they have their rights.
4. Welsh-medium schools have traditionally been under-represented in the scheme. However, the introduction of a Welsh language offer at the Super Ambassador Conference and a Commissioner who is able to run sessions and conduct school visits through the medium of Welsh appears to be having an impact. The number of Welsh-medium schools participating this year has more than doubled.
5. The proportion of Special Schools participating in the scheme is relatively low. The research suggests that the scheme may not be appropriate for all pupils in Special Schools and that further collaboration with these schools is required to understand how to build engagement in this sector.
6. Super Ambassadors undertake a range of activities in their schools, the most common of which was to speak at an assembly about children's rights and to produce posters aimed at raising awareness of rights.
7. Awareness of the Super Ambassador scheme amongst surveyed students was high, with over two thirds having heard of the scheme and the majority believing that their Ambassadors had helped them understand their rights.
8. Teachers and children are generally positive about the scheme, although more specific missions, such as Sam's Story, tend to be preferred over general awareness-raising missions. This was particularly the case in schools that already had a strong rights ethos, such as UNICEF Rights-Respecting schools, where staff and children indicated that they did not add a great deal to their existing work.
9. Teachers rate their knowledge and understanding of children's rights highly, but the majority would also like further training on rights.
10. Special Missions which involve data collection are an effective mechanism to gather the opinions and experiences of children in Wales and for influencing government policy. Recent changes have been made to the planning of the Special Mission since the current Commissioner has been in post. These have embedded the missions within the wider priorities of the Office, which are determined by consultations with children and young people. The missions now have a clear influencing plan which has had a demonstrable policy impact in the case of the Sam's Story Special Mission.