

Citizenship – the evidence (summary)

Key facts

- Citizenship is the only subject in the national curriculum that teaches about the way democracy, politics, the economy and the law work.
- Half a million young people have achieved a GCSE or A level qualification in citizenship to date since 2002.
- Young people initiated over 100,000 active citizenship projects in their communities since the GCSE was introduced.
- Citizenship is not about indoctrination: teachers and local authorities are required by the Education Act 1996 to make sure that students are presented with different points of views so that they can make up their own minds.
- Citizenship education is also not only a Labour project: it was introduced as a cross-curricular theme by a Conservative government in 1990.
- Citizenship has been a National Curriculum foundation subject in maintained secondary schools in England since 2002.
- It was a long time coming – politicians and educators alike had been lobbying for citizenship to be a fundamental part of education for 100 years.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision for citizenship has improved since 2005, but there is more to be done

- Curriculum provision and outcomes for students are improving overall in schools according to the latest Ofsted report 'Citizenship established? (2009).
- The curriculum was good or outstanding in just under half of the 91 secondary schools visited. Even in the schools visited where provision was weak, there was mostly an encouraging direction of travel. (OFSTED)
- The 36 schools where the curriculum was only satisfactory often did not give enough attention to the key area of political understanding (OFSTED)
- Poorly planned cross-curricular provision in Key Stage 3 [such as teaching citizenship through other subjects such as history and RE] and a dependence on option choices [ie that not all students get their entitlement to the national curriculum for citizenship] in Key Stage 4 meant that, in 12 schools, the curriculum for citizenship was inadequate. (OFSTED)

Student achievement and qualifications

Student achievement and the numbers gaining qualifications continues to increase

- Students' achievement was good or outstanding in citizenship in just over half the 91 secondary schools visited by Ofsted.
- Interest expressed by students interviewed had been stimulated by lively and engaging study of government and politics. Where standards were low, this reflected uninspiring lessons and a lack of enthusiasm by teachers.(OFSTED)
- Citizenship Studies is the fastest growing GCSE subject. For the last two years just under 100,000 students attained the GCSE qualification with 55.2% achieving an A*-C (Joint Council for Qualifications)
- In 2009, more than 94,000 students worked on social or community action projects across England as part of GCSE Citizenship Studies. Projects involved young people working to-

gether to reduce crime and graffiti in their local town, work with NGOs to tackle poverty in the community and with the local council to improve facilities for the community and young people themselves. (This compares with plans for 10,000 young people to participate in the first year of the Coalition government's National Citizens Service) (DL)

Teacher training and development

Specialist citizenship teaching makes a significant difference to the quality of citizenship education, but more trained teachers are needed

- The best citizenship lessons were taught by teachers with specialist subject knowledge, gained through training and experience. (OFSTED)
- 1800 specialist PGCE citizenship teachers have been trained since 2001/2. At this rate, it could take another two decades for each of the 3360 maintained secondary schools to have one trained citizenship teacher. (Jerome/Hayward, 2009)
- The 2008 survey data from the NFER Longitudinal study, suggests that 50% of citizenship teachers had not had training in the subject and a number felt further training was needed, particularly in relation to political literacy. (Citizenship Education Longitudinal Survey 2009)

Leadership

Citizenship flourishes and has status where there is effective senior leadership and support

- Leadership was good or outstanding in just over half, 49 of 91 secondary schools visited. The aims of citizenship education were well understood, and informed vision and practice in these schools. (OFSTED)
- In schools where citizenship was well developed, it had equal visibility and status compared with other National Curriculum subjects.(OFSTED)

Integration and cohesion

Students understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the UK is developing, but more needs to done to develop political literacy and participation to support integration

- The DfE have recently reported on an evaluation of community cohesion. The report found that 'perceptions of fairness, belonging and opportunity are strongly associated with levels of cohesion among young people'. The report says 'This raises important questions about the way that citizenship is taught in schools. In particular, it points to the importance of complementing efforts to promote political literacy and participation and to strengthen notions of identity. The curriculum, in delivering on the aim of enabling young people to become responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society, should seek to support young people to recognise their citizenship rights and to negotiate the processes that might prevent them from exercising these rights. It also appears, judging from the relatively large proportion of young people reporting low levels of societal cohesion, that many young people do not perceive themselves to be accepted as worthy, valuable and responsible members of society. This finding reaffirms the importance of the citizenship agenda'. (DfE report on Young people and Community Cohesion, October 2010)

International

There is a clear movement internationally to develop strong citizenship education

- On 11 May 2010, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and representatives of the 47 Council of Europe member states adopted [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2010\)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education](#) at the 120th Session of the Committee of Ministers. The Department for Education is signatory to the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education. The Charter is dated 11 May 2010 so it was accepted formally by the present government. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/edc/default_en.asp In agreeing to the Recommendation the Government agreed that 'Member states should include educa-

tion for democratic citizenship and human rights education in the curricula for formal education at pre-primary, primary and secondary school level'. (Council of Europe)

- In the summer, the Finnish National Board of Education made changes to the national core curriculum for basic education and general upper secondary education (which came into force on 1 August 2010). The adopted texts refer to the Council of Europe work on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights as the basis and inspiration for the reforms. (Amnesty International/Council of Europe)
- Many countries across the world look towards the English citizenship curriculum as a model of effective citizenship education. In recent years there have been visits from Ministry of Education delegations from countries such as Estonia, South Africa, Singapore, Japan, Israel, The Maldives to find out more about citizenship education in England. (DL)
- Regular country exchanges between England and the rest of the UK and Ireland continue through the annual '5 nations citizenship and values conference' organised by the Institute for Global Ethics. (DL)
- Co-operation across Europe through the European Council work on Education for democratic citizenship and human rights, and the IEA civics study and across the wider world with a ministerial US/UK exchange in 2002 and through the International Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks thematic studies which involved 14 countries from around the world in 1999 and 2005. (DL)

Sources of evidence

'Citizenship Established?' Ofsted (2009)

Citizenship Education Longitudinal Survey, National Foundation for Educational Research on behalf of the DfE (2009, next report due before Christmas)

Qualification statistics for GCSE and A level published between 2002 and 2010, Joint Council for Qualifications (2010)

'Crick and Teacher Education' Jeremy Hayward Institute of Education, University of London
Lee Jerome, London Metropolitan University (2009)

Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights, information published online, Council of Europe (2010)

IEA International civic and citizenship education study, information published online, International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (2010)

US/UK exchange on citizenship education and civics, Conference Papers, Washington (2002)

Information papers from the Coalition for Democratic Life, Campaign for Citizenship Education, (2010)