



The need for action on Citizenship

Children and young people today are growing up in a complicated world where technological, political, social and environmental change is affecting us all. Many young people are concerned about the future and find it difficult to navigate through the many forms of information they access. Some feel excluded and question whether our political system and democratic values are working for them and their communities and some are being drawn towards extremism.

Citizenship is a subject that teaches children and young people about how democracy, politics and law work in practice and develops understanding of how society has developed and is changing. Citizenship helps young people make sense of the world around them by giving them the concepts and knowledge to think critically about challenging political and social issues and space to explore difficult and sensitive topics. The subject builds understanding, critical literacy and practical skills to think, question, explore and debate, to speak out on issues of concern and take action with others to address problems and contribute positively to democratic life.

Citizenship has been a part of the National Curriculum in England since 2002. Yet since 2010 there has been a decline in the provision for Citizenship and quality of teaching in too many schools. There has been some ambiguity about the role and status of Citizenship in primary and secondary education and this together with pressure to focus on a narrow, academic core of subjects that excluded Citizenship has led to some schools dropping the subject altogether.

Every child deserves high quality, well taught Citizenship as a guaranteed part of a broad and balanced curriculum that properly prepares them for the challenges and opportunities of life and work.

With this in mind the Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship and a range of citizenship organisations have come together to call on the DFE to support A National Action Plan for Citizenship – ‘Citizenship for all’ with five key objectives to strengthen the subject. We welcome your comments and support. It is time to reverse the decline in Citizenship education. It is time to take action.



Expert Subject Advisory Groups

A National Action Plan for Citizenship – ‘Citizenship for All’

1

A 'curriculum guarantee for Citizenship' in every primary and secondary school and clear progression to further Citizenship education post 16

Every school in the country, primary and secondary, should be required by statutory order to offer a programme of citizenship education as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Citizenship is a National Curriculum subject at key stages 3 and 4 and this must continue but currently not every school is required to follow the National Curriculum. Citizenship Studies is a GCSE but it is not part of the Ebacc. There should be clear progression to opportunities for further Citizenship education post 16 and links with the National Citizen Service. The current ambiguity around the role of Citizenship in the curriculum has negatively affected the provision, status and quality of Citizenship education in too many schools.

2

Make Citizenship a priority teacher training subject with bursaries

In 2016 just 54 teachers were trained in Citizenship (compared with 243 in 2010). In part this is because Citizenship has no bursary to provide financial support for those wishing to specialise in the subject. Training fees of £9000 plus living costs, means potential Citizenship trainees with relevant degrees are looking to other teacher training subjects with bursaries or are being put off teaching altogether. We know where schools employ trained Citizenship teachers there is a more coherent and well-planned Citizenship curriculum and better outcomes for pupils. We believe every school should have at least one trained Citizenship teacher by 2030. Citizenship must be given priority subject status with training bursaries.

3

‘Beacons of Excellence’ through Citizenship subject knowledge enhancement

We urge the DFE to support a programme to establish of ‘Beacons of Excellence’ aimed at increasing the capacity of teachers through Citizenship subject knowledge enhancement and CPD programmes. This would involve creating links between University Politics departments and schools to build Citizenship subject knowledge, supported by the relevant Subject Associations - the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) and the Political Studies Association (PSA) and other Citizenship organisations.

4

Benchmarking best practice to highlight effective Citizenship education

Ofsted should be asked to undertake a special survey of the subject to find examples of best practice and include comments on Citizenship within Section 5 inspection reports. The subject association, ACT should provide a digital collection of best practice online. The DFE should also re-instate England as a participant in the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study, which takes place in about 30 nations every 5 years. England was a leading participant until 2009. <http://www.iea.nl/iccs>

5

Stimulate high quality teaching resources for Citizenship

Building on the work undertaken to identify gaps in the market by the DFE Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship in 2014, the DFE should commission Citizenship organisations to develop high quality resources that are free of charge and meet the ACT Citizenship Quality Mark for teaching resources. Given the large number of non-specialists who currently teach the subject these resources will help raise the quality of teaching and learning across schools in the immediate term.