



Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT)



“Our vision is for all young people to be active, informed citizens, equipped through effective Citizenship Education with the knowledge, skills and experience to participate in and shape a strong and vibrant democracy based on equality, fairness and justice.”

Welcome from Honorary President, Lord Blunkett of Brightside



The role of those teaching Citizenship is fundamental to the success of all children in their learning and lives as well as reinforcing a functioning democracy. The subject of Citizenship develops essential knowledge and understanding of how we live together, an appetite for engagement with politics, and practical skills to work together to take citizenship actions forward.

The Association plays a critical role working with teachers nationally and influencing policy to develop, support and promote the high-quality Citizenship education that every child should have. There is still much to do. This new strategic plan will help us get there.

Introduction from the Chair of Trustees, Scott Harrison



The need for effective Citizenship education has never been greater. In the past, people lacked the information they needed to make informed choices and play their part. Now, individuals are overwhelmed by data. The problem is how to make sense of it and to recognize truth. For young people to participate in society as democratic citizens, they must make their voices heard above the digital din. To do this, they need the knowledge, understanding and skills embodied in the citizenship curriculum - and to acquire this through the expertise of great teachers.

“ A strong and vibrant democracy enhanced by young people who are educated in Citizenship ”

ACT's Vision

“Our vision is for all young people to be active, informed citizens, equipped through effective Citizenship Education with the knowledge, skills and experience to participate in and shape a strong and vibrant democracy based on equality, fairness and justice.”

We are a registered education charity and membership association that transforms lives through Citizenship education. We work to ensure that, through effective Citizenship teaching, every child and young person can become a confident, active and empowered citizen who can contribute to democratic society and, with others, try to improve the world around them. We do this by working with teachers in schools and colleges across the UK to reach children and young people aged 5-19.

Our values

ACT's values are embodied in the way we work: we are **open, democratic, collaborative and ethical**. Equality and justice are at the heart of what we do. We work efficiently to make the best of scarce resources in the interests of members and the wider community. We are inclusive and seek strong and lasting relationships with like-minded organisations.

Purpose of ACT

ACT is the recognised subject association and professional body for teachers and everyone involved in Citizenship education. Our key purpose is to support and strengthen the teaching of Citizenship education and to promote wider public understanding of the subject of Citizenship, including through the publication of research.

Our work is focused on our long-term strategy to embed high quality Citizenship curricula in schools and colleges as the only effective and systematic way to try to ensure every child and young person receives good Citizenship education.



Membership of ACT allows me to access expert subject and curriculum advice, training and opportunities to meet and work with other teachers on national projects



(Citizenship Teacher, Kent)

We do this through membership and a range of products, services and projects that enhance subject knowledge and teaching expertise including CPD, training and access to professional networks and conferences, as well as through the dissemination of research, guidance and teaching practice in our journal, 'Teaching Citizenship' and on our website.

Our history

The Association for Citizenship (ACT) was founded in 2001 by Professor Bernard Crick and representatives of key organisations from the Citizenship subject community. This followed the announcement that Citizenship would be introduced as a statutory, National Curriculum foundation subject to be taught in secondary schools in England from 2002. The formation of ACT was part of a wider plan to put in place the necessary infrastructure to support the teaching of the Citizenship in schools. David Blunkett, then Secretary of State for Education and the driving force behind the citizenship initiative, is now the President of ACT.

Our work is a vital contribution to achieving the vision of the Advisory Group on Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools, 1988:

'We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think for themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action amongst themselves.'



Open, democratic, collaborative and ethical



What is Citizenship education?

Citizenship is a subject in the school and college curriculum that develops knowledge, skills and understanding that young people need to play a full part in society as confident, active and empowered citizens. Pupils learn about democracy, power, politics, parliament, government and voting as well as human rights, justice, equality, diversity, the law and the economy. As they study they also learn the skills of investigation and critical thinking, debating and deliberation, collaboration and negotiation, and using their knowledge and skills as they campaign and undertake different forms of citizen action (active citizenship) aimed at improving the world around them. Teaching is brought to life using real issues, problems and events in local to global contexts.

“
Civic and political knowledge about how democracy works greatly increases the likelihood of engagement
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Dr James Sloam,
University of
Holloway.

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 and in the early years was becoming well established in schools. In 2009 almost 100,000 students a year were taking the GCSE in Citizenship Studies. However, since 2010, DfE workforce statistics show that numbers of Citizenship teachers and the amount of teaching time given to the subject has halved and the numbers of students taking the GCSE had reduced to less than 20,000 in 2017. This has come about following a shift in education policy, encouraging schools to focus on core academic subjects that excluded Citizenship; and the increase in the numbers of schools that are academies and therefore do not have to follow the National Curriculum if they choose not to.

In 2014, the government decided to retain Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject and still refer to it as ‘the benchmark’ for every school. More recently there has been a renewed interest from the Department for Education in ensuring schools provide a broad and balance curriculum that prepares all young people for life in modern Britain. More widely, the government has begun to take forward work to promote democratic engagement and in 2018 the Cabinet Office launched a five-year strategy to this end. There is considerable work to do in re-establishing the subject of Citizenship and supporting teachers over the long term so that high quality Citizenship and democracy education becomes a reality and an entitlement for every child.

Theory of Change

The need for Citizenship and democracy education

Children and young people are growing up in a complicated world where technological, political, social and environmental change is affecting us all. Many 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, what life for them and their communities will be like after Brexit, and some are being drawn towards extremism.

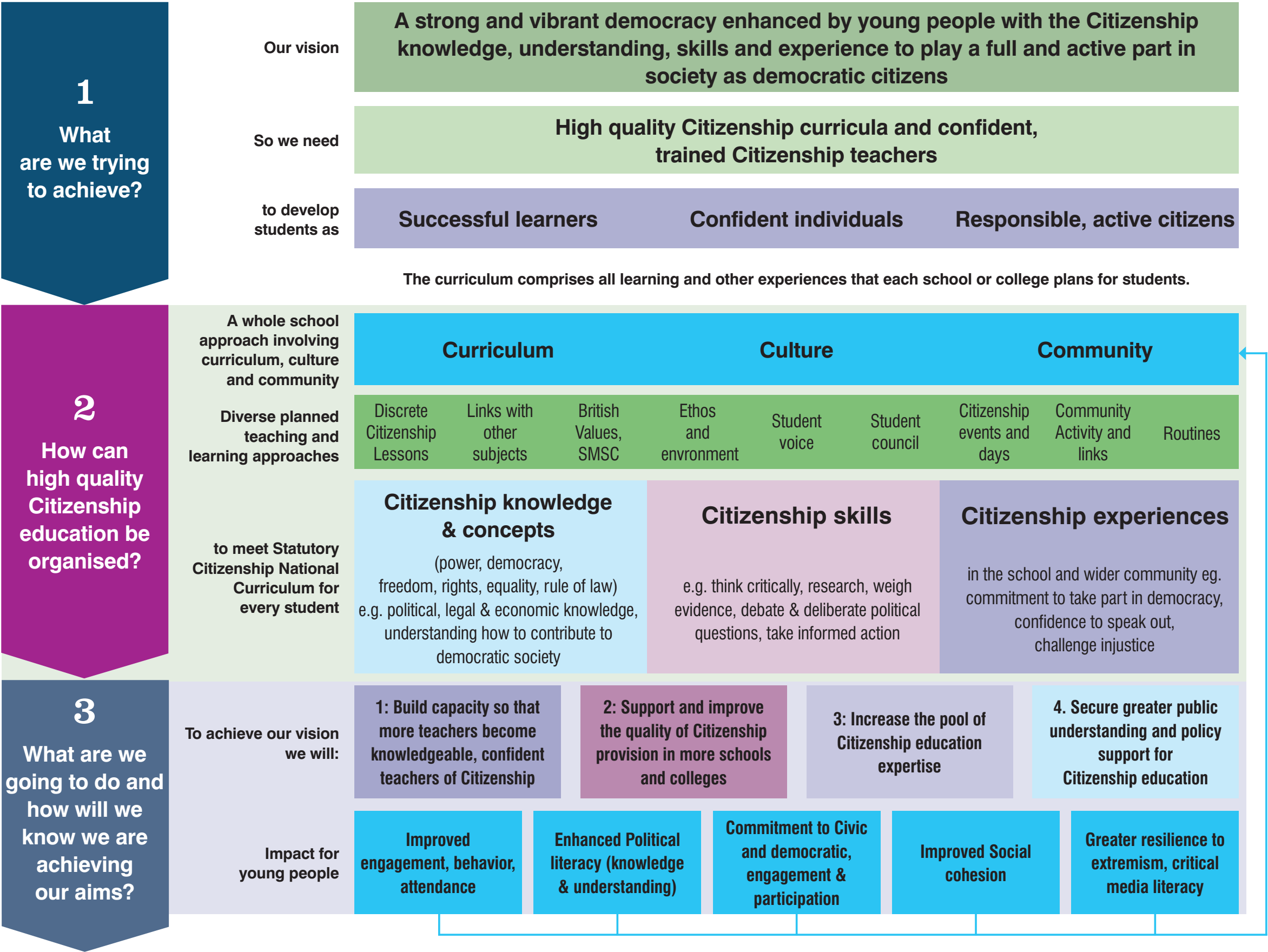
Citizenship is a subject that teaches children and young people about how democracy, politics and law work in practice and develops understanding of how society has developed and is changing. Citizenship helps young people make sense of the world around them by giving them the concepts and knowledge to think critically about challenging political and social issues and space to explore difficult and sensitive topics. The subject builds understanding, critical

“
Citizenship education increases the chance of citizen’s resilience against populism and extremism.
”

Dr Lee Jerome, University of
Middlesex.

Three key questions

ACT: Our Theory of Change



Aim:

If we want a strong and vibrant democracy where every young person develops as confident, active and empowered citizens who can play a positive role in society, bring about change in the world around them and contribute to a more equal, fair, just society for all,

then we need to ensure every child has good quality Citizenship education; and this is seen as an entitlement for all children wherever they learn.

Action:

We find Citizenship education at its best in schools and colleges where the subject is valued and the conditions for successful and innovative Citizenship teaching and learning are in place - which we refer to as the three C's of Citizenship. This is where Citizenship is deeply embedded in the **curriculum**, **culture** and **community** of schools and colleges:

- A rigorous, well-planned Citizenship **curriculum** with regular teaching time, is taught by trained Citizenship teachers
- Citizenship is at the heart of the **culture** of the school or college, supported by the leadership team and students have regular opportunities for taking part in active, democratic citizenship and contributing to school or college life and decision-making
- Citizenship inspires positive relationships with the wider **community**, which is actively involved in supporting the school or college in achieving its civic mission and involved as contributors to the Citizenship education offered.

Our work is designed to create and support the conditions in which Citizenship education can flourish in more schools and colleges.

Impact:

Our work focuses on building a community of practice through members who develop the subject knowledge, pedagogy and repertoire of practice, and who can inspire, motivate and challenge children and young people to learn and achieve their best in the subject and develop as confident, active and empowered citizens.

Our work to improve Citizenship education

ACT has established itself as the voice for citizenship education, representing teachers and other educationalists in England and beyond. At the time Citizenship was introduced into the National Curriculum, ACT was supported with direct funding from the government and indirect funding through government support for all citizenship teacher trainees.

Recently the context has changed and the environment for Citizenship education is more challenging, however, ACT continues to punch above its weight. We are successful in influencing policy makers and education leaders and provide a range of professional development and support services including a well-respected journal, 'Teaching Citizenship', and national conferences.

In the period leading up to this strategic plan, our focus has been on improving the range and quality of ACT's offer, securing our financial position and extending our impact.

- We have maintained and extended ACT membership with the help of a new website, customer relationship management system and new approaches to communication and marketing. We now offer full and e-membership which enables us to reach over 3000 teachers and educators
- We have successfully campaigned to secure Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject in secondary education, with a reformed GCSE Citizenship Studies qualification
- We have changed our funding model, secured new income streams and expanded our consultancy offer to provide specialist advice to organisations such as the BBC, Global Learning Programme, Comic Relief and the British Library
- We have established relationships that bring continuity to ACT's work such as through the Five Nations Network; and
- We have developed new relationships with organisations who collaborate with us. For example, the English-Speaking Union, Parliament's Education Service and Robert F Kennedy Human Rights.

Our supporters and partners

We work with a range of long term supporters and partners to do our work.

- We *advise* government departments, local authorities and schools on all aspects of Citizenship policy and practice including the Department for Education, Home Office and Cabinet Office.
- We *deliver* The Five Nations Network Programme funded by the Gordon Cook Foundation which brings together Citizenship teachers, educators, academics and policy makers from across the England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- We *collaborate* with others including the Parliament Education Service to support Citizenship and democracy education, for example as a Parliament Week partner.
- We *quality assure* Citizenship education resources such as those from the British Library and publishers including Hodder Education.
- We *develop and disseminate* resources with organisations such as the English-Speaking Union and Middlesex University and to support the Robert F Kennedy Speak Truth to Power Human Rights Curriculum.
- We *train and support* existing teachers with continuing professional development and new Citizenship teachers working alongside teacher training providers.
- We *campaign* with others to influence policy and secure resources to support Citizenship education as Chair of the Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship, with members of the Political Literacy Oversight Group supporting the All Party Parliamentary Group on Democratic participation, and with the Learning for Democracy coalition for better Citizenship and democracy education.

- We *publish* research online and in our journal 'Teaching Citizenship', to share impact, best practice and the latest thinking on curriculum, pedagogy and teaching. We draw insights from our members and by working with those in HE via our ACT HE network.

Governance and staffing

The Board of Trustees sets the strategic direction for ACT and has legal responsibility for its actions. The Board of seven is answerable to members at the ACT Annual Conference.

ACT's work is informed by teachers and members, in particular those who serve on the ACT Council. ACT Council is a group of 20 volunteers from different schools and colleges as well as initial teacher education and academia, who meet regularly to discuss ACT's work and shape our programmes. The Council has a Chair and Vice Chair who are both teachers.

ACT, has a small core staff led by a Chief Executive, supported by a group of associate consultants and members of ACT Council, and this gives the organisation flexibility to respond to changing demands.

Our impact

We support thousands of teachers to help children and young people engage in real political and social issues in schools and colleges across the country and beyond.

3500 teachers and educators supported with advice and expertise every year

1000 teachers received specialist ACT training and CPD in the past 3 years

75 organisations connect with us to support better citizenship education.



Supporting Outstanding Citizenship teaching

Citizenship teachers need a particular skill set. Their subject knowledge has to be deep and constantly updated. They have to be adept at dealing with the contemporary issues that young people raise. Through its advice, the ACT Journal, CPD, conferences and projects, ACT supports and shares the best practice. We support thousands of teachers to help children and young people engage in real political and social issues in schools and colleges across the country and beyond.

The following examples (written by teachers themselves) illustrate the impact of our work in a diverse range of schools and colleges in developing outstanding Citizenship teaching.

Case Study 1: Innovative Citizenship curriculum development

Priory School, Southsea, worked with ACT's support on a project entitled 'Extremism and terrorism as reported in the media'. The aim was to develop Year 9 students' critical thinking, problem solving and enquiry skills. ACT facilitated the whole programme, providing support and advice with planning and resources, as well as observing lessons and talking to students about their experience. Drawing on what they had learned about democracy, rule of law and rights and responsibilities, students looked at case studies of Islamophobia. Pupils critically engaged with the reporting of the Paris terror attacks in the media and on social media. This gave students confidence in using terminology such as 'extremism', in putting forward their own views and in devising creative ways to express their opinions and challenge Islamophobic ideas.



Case Study 2: The ACT Quality Standard for Schools

Altrincham Girls' Grammar School had very successful links with ACT for a number of years. The head of the Citizenship department proposed to showcase the school's work by obtaining the ACT Quality Standard. A useful period of reflection led to the production of a robust subject audit document which explored areas of strength and others that needed development. One of these was to support for the non-specialists who were going to be teaching the subject- ACT assisted with valuable training. Meanwhile, the head of department drew on ACT's excellent support to put together the portfolio of evidence to demonstrate that the department met the criteria and standards required for the award. The award was of value in itself, it contributed greatly to further improvement to the school's provision and also provided excellent professional development for the head of department as a middle leader.

Case Study 3: Expert support with Citizenship Professional development

In May 2016 Croydon College discussed the possibility of having professional training relating to the teaching of controversial issues, the Prevent duty and British values, set within a context of Citizenship education. ACT was asked to help facilitate these sessions and a member of the ACT council contacted the college to plan and deliver the sessions required. These were a resounding success, developing lecturers' skills in teaching controversial issues across the college's curriculum. The training enabled lecturers to consider what they are required to do legally, morally and professionally,



applying these concepts in their own subject areas. As an ACT member, the college has made use of online materials and further training to develop aspects of

practice, including highlighting strategies within schemes of work and lesson plans. More broadly, college leaders have decided to make a statement of 'Citizenship values' as an intrinsic part of the college structure. This will be the basis for the first application from a Further Education college to achieve the ACT Quality Standard.

Influencing policy

ACT was founded at a time when Citizenship education was centre stage in government policy. Since that time there has been less consistency in how the subject of Citizenship, is supported and resourced. This has affected school leaders' attitudes to the subject, teacher supply, and uptake of qualifications, for example.

ACT has worked to influence and inform governments and other decision makers to promote initiatives to support the subject and mitigate policies that threaten the status of Citizenship education. In the last ten years a policy consensus has held that Citizenship is an important aim of the curriculum and following our successful campaign Citizenship remains a National Curriculum and GCSE subject in schools. ACT continues to campaign for decisions and policies that enable Citizenship education to flourish.



The course has cleared up several issues for me regarding assessment objectives, specification coverage and marking. Extremely useful - thank you.

Teacher participant, GCSE Citizenship Studies Training 2018.



Case Study 4:

Thought leadership on Citizenship

We work strategically and collaboratively to seek opportunities to move the national conversation about Citizenship forward. Well-established relationships with schools and teachers means that we are often asked for our expert advice by the DFE, other government departments and Parliament. We are regularly invited to attend round tables and contribute to national policy consultations.

In 2014 we campaigned successfully, with others to retain Citizenship as a National Curriculum and GCSE subject. We hold the Chair of the Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship, which was established by the Department for Education to provide strategic advice on Citizenship. Leadership of this group has resulted in the development of clear and public positions about the role and importance of Citizenship. For example, the Group has developed a National Action Plan for Citizenship, setting out key changes that are needed to create stronger Citizenship education in more schools.

In 2017 we were invited to contribute to the House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic engagement which made important recommendations on Citizenship education that reflect our position and the National Action Plan. In the same year we were invited to join the Political Literacy Oversight Group which advises the All Party Parliamentary Group on Democratic Participation. In 2018, our Chief Executive was asked by the Department for Education to be the UK representative to the Council of Europe Education Policy Advice Network on Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights.

What we plan to do next

Society benefits from a more participatory democracy in which citizens are active, being equipped with the knowledge and skills to take part in decision-making, to play an active role in their communities, to speak out on issues of concern and contribute to developing a fairer and more just society for all.

We have ambitious plans for the next five years which focus on four strategic priorities linked to our vision.

Four strategic priorities to 2023	
1. Build capacity so that more teachers become knowledgeable, confident teachers of Citizenship who can inspire, motivate and challenge children and young people to learn and achieve their best in the subject.	2. Support and improve the quality of Citizenship provision in more schools and colleges to develop curricula that reflect the essential knowledge, understanding and skills needed to become confident, active and empowered citizens and promoting excellence through training, CPD, quality awards and publications.
3. Increase the pool of Citizenship education expertise by establishing ACT Teaching Ambassadors, new regional networks of teaching experts and mentors, as well as academics and supporters across the regions of the country.	4. Secure greater public understanding and policy support for Citizenship education so that the aims, role and contribution of the subject is more clearly understood and valued.

1. Build capacity so that more teachers become knowledgeable, confident teachers of Citizenship who can inspire, motivate and challenge children and young people to learn and achieve their best in the subject.

ACT provides a coherent programme of support for citizenship teaching in and beyond schools in England. It offers a programme that is attractive to current and potential members. With key input from the ACT Council of teachers, the programme will evolve to meet teachers' identified needs,

expanding our offer of training and CPD to develop teachers' subject knowledge and pedagogy and to share practice.

The work will involve: researching potential funders; reviewing and developing ACT CPD/training offer and online products; delivering ACT's annual teaching conference.

What we have done	What we plan to do
<p>We provide high quality training, continuing professional development and expert subject advice to teachers. We support new and experienced teachers both Citizenship specialists and non-specialists, in schools and colleges across the UK.</p> <p>We have led the Five Nations Network for citizenship and values education and supported teachers across the UK and Ireland with opportunities for curriculum development and CPD.</p>	<p>Over the next five years we plan to develop a new offer of training, CPD and conferences to improve subject knowledge, pedagogy and practice in line with teachers' needs. We are seeking new funding to achieve this and are building a network of organisations who can support us as we look to establish a regional presence across England.</p>





Indicators of success include:

- Review of CPD/training completed, funding research and priorities for development established
- Teacher needs and concerns are used to drive priorities
- Demand for membership and membership products and services increases.

2. Support and improve the quality of Citizenship provision in more schools and colleges to develop curricula that reflect the essential knowledge, understanding and skills needed to become confident, active and empowered citizens and promoting excellence through our quality awards.

ACT provides highly valued national expertise in Citizenship policy, curriculum, teaching and pedagogy which we share with schools in the form of membership services and bespoke tailored support. Materials and toolkits for schools are also developed and disseminated through our website, journal and the ACT quality award for schools, which involves a self-evaluation and improvement process. With input from the ACT Council and members, we will review and update our offer and seek funding to improve our digital resources, published journal, 'Teaching Citizenship' and ACT Quality Standard for schools and colleges. We will regularly survey members to build a picture of how improvements in our offer has impacted on quality and provision in schools and colleges.

What we have done	What we plan to do
<p>We develop and disseminate curriculum support materials and teaching resources for schools and share subject expertise, research, effective teaching practice and strategic policy advice through our journal, website and communications.</p> <p>We recognise and reward excellence through the award of 'Quality Marks' for high quality resources and citizenship provision in schools and colleges.</p> <p>In the past three years we have established a reputation for our published resources and we won new commissions to develop innovative new curriculum resources for government: in 2016 for the Home Office to support countering extremism through Citizenship Education; and in 2017 for the Department for Education on a two-year project to design new resources to support classroom based topical issue debates and teaching British values.</p>	<p>In the next five years, we will build on this reputation and continue our work to support high quality curriculum and teaching of Citizenship. We will review and update our curriculum resources and provide new ways to access practical teaching support through our website. We will seek funding to develop our online platform so that our journal can be digitally published. We aim to double traffic to our website in their period.</p> <p>In 2014 we relaunched the ACT Quality Standard for schools and since then four schools and one college have achieved the Standard. In the same year we launched a new Quality Mark for Citizenship teaching resources that education publishers apply to and 13 have successfully achieved the Mark. In 2018 we will begin a process to review and enhance and digitise these Quality Marks so they are more accessible, interactive and we can expand our offer.</p>



Indicators of success include:

- Review of digital resources and journal completed, funding research and priorities for development established
- Demand for membership products, services and Quality Marks increase
- Quality improvements are demonstrated through annual teacher survey.

3. Increase the pool of Citizenship education expertise

by establishing ACT Teaching Ambassadors, new regional networks of teaching experts and mentors, as well as academics and supporters across the regions of the country.

ACT currently has a network of members and e-members who we regularly support and communicate with. We want to improve the quality and depth of our interactions with teachers and use marketing and communications activity to increase our membership reach through a planned approach to recruitment and retention. Further we want to establish new regional networks to increase our geographical reach and to support teacher professional development and status as Citizenship experts. We will develop and roll out a new programme of ACT Teaching Ambassadors whose role will include working to support other teachers locally.

What we have done	What we plan to do
We continue to connect teachers to regional and national membership networks and other organisations that support Citizenship education.	In 2017 we began a new programme of regional 'teachmeets' to bring teachers together in local and regional networks to share ideas and discuss subject issues as well as to support teacher wellbeing. We will continue to expand and add value to this work by establishing new networks of ACT Teaching Ambassadors so that by 2023 the 9 regions of England have access to this programme and 20 Ambassadors are established across the country.



Indicators of success include:

- new strategies developed to reach new members, particularly drawing on contacts made through other activities and new regional Teaching Ambassadors
- Teaching Ambassador programme is established and recruits target of 20
- continued improving trend in numbers accessing website and communications evidenced via website and social media statistics
- support from strategic organisations increases.

4. Secure greater public understanding and policy support for Citizenship education

so that the aim, role and contribution of the subject is more clearly understood and valued.

ACT uses research including insights from our members, strategic policy advice and funded projects to promote public understanding of the subject of Citizenship and in seeking to influence policy makers.

ACT will work to continue successful relationships with the Department for Education and other decision makers to secure support for Citizenship education in England. It will maintain its role as a key player in the Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship and seek new opportunities to influence policy networks and education leaders.

What we have done	What we plan to do
<p>From 2012-2016 we were a leading partner in the successful 'Democratic Life' campaign for the continuation of Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject with a GCSE Citizenship Studies qualification in England.</p> <p>ACT is chair of the Expert Subject Advisory Group that regularly advises the Department for Education</p> <p>ACT made a leading contribution to the House of Lord Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic engagement in 2017, providing written and oral evidence and advice on recommendations</p>	<p>Continue to campaign for better policy, resources and support for effective Citizenship education.</p> <p>In particular, we will focus on securing the support of education leaders and policy makers to increase the numbers of trainee Citizenship teachers and to support a national offer of CPD and mentoring to support existing Citizenship teachers. Our long-term ambition is that, by 2030, every school has access to a trained Citizenship teacher.</p>

Indicators of success include:

- ACT continues to be recognised as the leading source of expertise on the subject of Citizenship
- positive working relations with the Department for Education and other decision makers, including regular meetings
- evidence of support for Citizenship visible in national policy, for example through policy announcements, decisions, documents, meetings
- key messages about citizenship reaching wider audiences as seen through interactions in person and online within and beyond the UK.

How we will achieve our new strategic priorities

By 2023, we will have made significant progress to diversifying our funding model and improving our reserves position.

We are looking to ensure the funding we receive provides an excellent return on investment and helps us extend our reach and improve our market position and continue to promote high quality Citizenship education to more teachers in more schools and colleges.

We are looking to improve our use of digital and online to help us increase our reach, provide quality and targeted services and raise the profile of our brand.

To achieve our goals we will be looking to build our regional networks, increase our staffing capacity and develop the pool of experts and Ambassadors who we work with to help us deliver our goals.

Finally, we will continue to press to improve the status and positions of Citizenship and democracy education in policy and build greater support and understanding of the subject and its transformative impact on children and young people.

Thank you

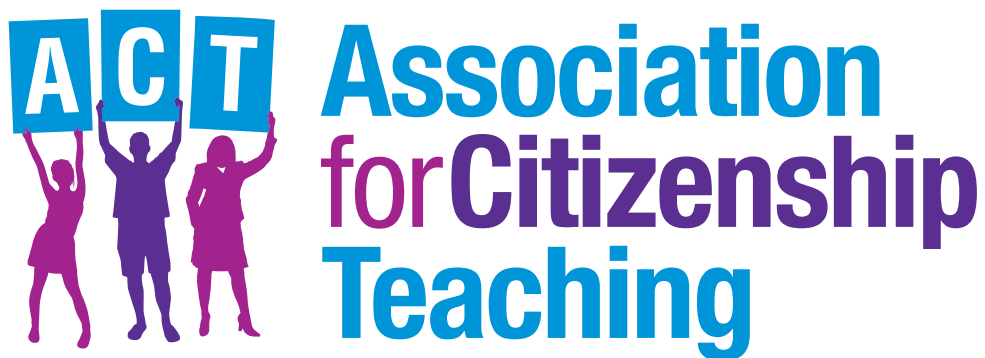
We would like to say a huge thank you to our funders, members and supporters without who we could not achieve our work.

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