

Journeys to Citizenship Education

Four Case Studies

***Lee Jerome
Faiza Hyder
Yaqub Hilal***

In association with



**Middlesex
University
London**

This summary report has been produced by the Association for Citizenship Teaching and Middlesex University as part of the research and evaluation of the Active Citizenship in Schools programme, that is running from 2021-25. The programme offers a strategic approach to embed social action and active citizenship within the school curriculum. It aims to identify models and practices that ensure pupils engage in and benefit from citizenship education in a sustained and impactful way.

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank the teachers, school leaders and students who hosted us in their schools, allowed us to observe lessons, shared their resources and schemes of work, met for focus groups and interviews, and gave us guided tours around their schools.

In particular we would like to thank the subject leaders in each school who organised our visits, gave their time freely and commented on drafts of each case study.

- Kelly Allchin, Leeds City Academy
- Terri Barry, Brockhill Park School
- Helen Blachford, Priory School
- Steven Humphreys, Altrincham Girls Grammar School

To cite this report use the following reference:

Jerome, L., Hyder, F. & Hilal, Y. (2022). *Journeys to Citizenship Education: Four Case Studies*. London: Association for Citizenship Teaching.

© Association for Citizenship Teaching

Contents

Introduction 4

Overview 6

Case Studies

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls 16
Combining Citizenship with PSHE & RSE

Brockhill Park Performing Arts College 32
Citizenship entitlement for all students in all years

Leeds City Academy 49
Embedding Citizenship in the life of the school as part of a school improvement strategy

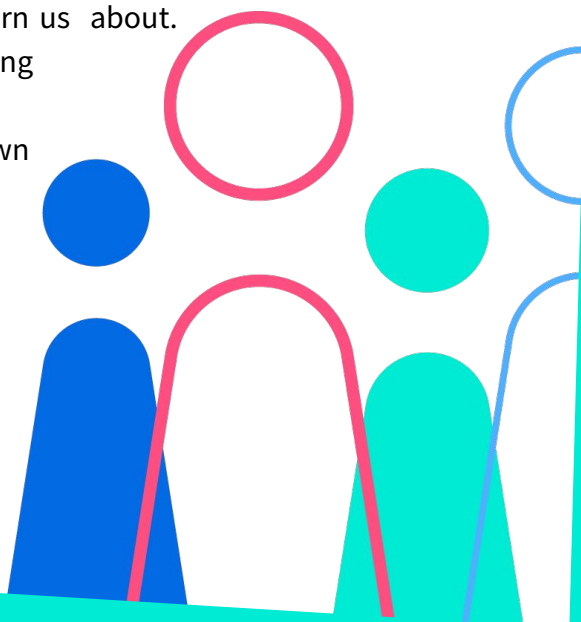
Priory School and Bohunt Education Trust 63
Coordinating Citizenship across a multi-academy trust

Introduction

ACT has commissioned these case studies as a way to capture some of the professional wisdom from schools around the country. Case studies in education are valuable for a number of reasons, but primarily because they detail the kind of practices and decision-making that often go undocumented. These case studies have been produced at the beginning of a four year project to collect examples of practice from around the country and to record some of the ways in which Citizenship has been adapted within four different contexts to achieve subtly different purposes.

Each case study is distinctive because it describes aspects of practice that are unique to each school. They illustrate a variety of interpretations of the national curriculum and / or exam specifications for Citizenship as teachers have adapted them to their specific context. As such case studies do not offer easy lessons to pluck out of context and apply in your own school. Rather these case studies are offered as a form of vicarious experience to help others see what kinds of practices have developed in schools, what decisions people have made, what they think is working and what next steps they are planning.

The lessons learned will be as varied as the readers are varied. We arrive at case studies with our own knowledge, beliefs and context-related priorities. Some of the ideas presented here may resonate with you as possibilities for your own practice, others will not feel feasible. But if they have helped you to think afresh about aspects of your practice, and to consider possibilities for further development, they will have done their job. At their best, a case study might help us take a shortcut to a new idea or sidestep a possible challenge that someone else can warn us about. But at the very least they should provide you with a contrasting example, and prompt you to recognise what you are doing, clarify your rationale, and feel more reassured about your own practice, or suggest some ideas to explore and discuss with colleagues.



We are offering these case studies as one source of evidence about what schools do. They illustrate how Citizenship can be interpreted and enacted in school, and as such they celebrate how teachers can exercise their professional agency to promote the kind of education they believe in, even when policy might be promoting other priorities. But, they are descriptive rather than evaluative, and when we were visiting schools we were clear that our role was to document their work for others to learn about, rather than make our own judgements about what worked.

ACT has also commissioned other research reports, focusing on the evidence base that exists in the research literature about Citizenship and a new research project running from 2022-25, which schools can use to evaluate their own work.

The literature review has led to a publication for school leaders (The Impact of Citizenship Education), which focuses on the overall evidence of the impact of citizenship education on a range of educational outcomes. It has also led to a report for Citizenship teachers and subject leaders (Effective Teaching for Active Citizenship), which explores lessons learned from the research about what kind of teaching might be most beneficial.

The research project offers schools a teacher survey, which generates automatic feedback with suggestions for further improvement. It also offers schools a student survey, which can be used to track the impact of your Citizenship provision on your students. The survey can be completed in the summer term and will generate a report for schools detailing students' perceptions of the curriculum, their reported participation levels, their attitudes towards participation and their views about democracy and toleration. We anticipate this will both provide schools with evidence of the positive impact of their provision and data to be used in evaluation and improvement planning. In addition to the information we can provide individual schools, the data overall will build into a valuable database to explore what works and whether and how this varies in different schools.

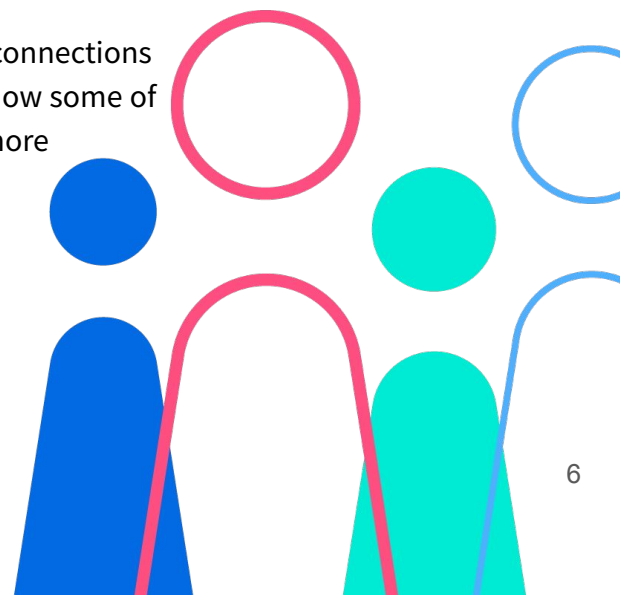
For more details contact us via the ACT website.

Overview

It is commonplace to note that Citizenship is both a subject and more than a subject, by which we mean it is a national curriculum subject with the same status as more established subjects such as history or geography, and that it clearly has a whole school dimension, especially in relation to whole school opportunities for active participation, taking responsibility, working with others in the school and wider community. The flip side of this hybrid or expansive agenda is that it can sometimes be diffused through the life of the school, turning it into one of those initiatives which is broken down into its constituent parts and then mapped against activities across the school. In this way, Citizenship can fall into the trap of being everywhere and nowhere, in the sense that it is mapped superficially across the school, but in a way that means it is always playing second fiddle to another agenda, and therefore can disappear from sight. These case studies capture examples of schools that have taken Citizenship seriously as a curriculum entitlement for all students and an essential part of the life of the school, and which have done so by carefully planning a combination of experiences which knit together into an explicit and cohesive programme.

The schools described in the following pages take a broad view of the curriculum and include examples of explicit timetabled Citizenship lessons that ensure a core provision for all students. Several also take different approaches to connecting Citizenship and other subjects. Whilst Altrincham Girls Grammar School (AGGS) and Leeds City Academy have taken the more traditional route of combining Citizenship with PSHE (including careers and RSE), Brockhill and Priory Schools have explored the subject's relationship with RE, and these case studies illustrate how the nature of that pairing focuses on different points of connection and emphasis.

The differences between the case studies illustrates how such connections have to move beyond simply 'mapping' the content, and they show some of the creative and innovative outcomes that emerge by thinking more deeply about the way these subject combinations work to focus on core concepts, values, and attitudes.



Citizenship is also distinctive because it is both concerned with the acquisition of knowledge and an enhanced capacity for action. A more traditional subject like history is of course also trying to teach children how to 'do history' and learn the skills and capacities that mark out the work of historians. But Citizenship feels slightly different because the action very often takes place outside of the classroom (or school) and connects to the everyday concerns and experiences of young people in their communities. As such, these case studies demonstrate how learning about active citizenship is such an integral part of the subject, and they explore some of the practicalities associated with learning for future action and through active citizenship experiences in the here and now. In relation to this aspect of practice Brockhill School provides an interesting insight into how active citizenship can be framed for whole year groups undertaking the GCSE in Citizenship Studies, whilst Leeds City Academy and AGGS demonstrate the multi-dimensional programmes and opportunities that run across their schools, and Priory demonstrates how the very concept of active citizenship (through their vision of 'gamechangers') can provide a unifying theme across the entire school and academy chain. These schools are also at different stages of embedding systems to record and monitor these diverse experiences, and the case studies illustrate some of the challenges that arise when schools take seriously the idea that the curriculum is the sum total of the experiences offered to young people through the school and its community partnerships.

A common thread running across all the case studies is the seriousness with which these subject leaders have planned their core curriculum and subsequently reflected on their models to make improvements. Each case study includes overviews of the curriculum maps developed in each school and discusses the rationale for the various models. Leeds City Academy illustrates how to combine PSHE and Citizenship through topic-led units, AGGS and Brockhill provide some examples of discrete units, with occasional blended units; and Priory demonstrates how to plan a flexible curriculum that can be adapted to suit the contexts of ten schools, whilst ensuring a clear core entitlement runs across the Academy chain.

As we were visiting each school to compile these case studies we asked colleagues for any advice or insights they could offer to other Citizenship teachers. These lists appear at the end of each case study, but we have also used them to structure the next section of our overview. The text below simply blends together some of their insights to provide an overview of what you will encounter in the detail of their case studies. By reflecting on

their collective wisdom, we aim to offer some pointers that might inform the planning of others who step into the role of subject leadership for Citizenship.

Clarifying the big picture

School leaders and curriculum leaders argued it was important to develop a clear sense of purpose, to underpin the development of a comprehensive Citizenship programme. As the Headteacher of Priory put it, 'Get the 'why' sorted first, and then the rest follows more coherently.' This does not necessarily mean the vision has to be developed before anything happens – most schools already have some kind of provision in place. Rather our participants described developmental processes where there were key moments of reflection and clarification. For example, the rich mix of provision in Leeds City Academy was not devised as one master plan, but as it has grown, staff have reflected on the nature and purpose of their provision, and this clarity enables them to continue to develop in scale and coherence.

This gave rise to a number of related observations. The first was that it is important to look at the strengths and distinctive attributes of your school and community and ensure that Citizenship builds on them. Building on strong foundations, moving with the grain, is a good way to build success.

The second was that Citizenship advocates need to be attentive to the way policy is changing. Several colleagues in these schools mentioned Ofsted policy around personal development and the opportunities opened up through revisiting the intent statements around the curriculum. Within schools these conversations have created a space to reflect on the underlying rationale for the curriculum and prompted people to revisit ideas of holistic education, aiming for GCSE success plus some defined vision of what skills, attitudes and attributes might best equip 16-year-olds for their adult lives. These subject leaders are confident in arguing that Citizenship is not another small subject lobbying for more curriculum time, but actually embodies a core commitment to what kind of life is worth living. Working with others, developing relationships of mutual obligation, and forging shared identities are essential to building a meaningful life in community with others. Citizenship is the only subject where these ideas are central to its purpose and content.

The third observation was that the developments documented in the following pages did not happen overnight. They all took time to emerge, they progressed step by step, and in all the schools curriculum models had changed over time to fit changing staff, shifting policy, changing in-takes and other contextual factors. When these subject leaders thought about advice for others (often framed as what they would tell their younger selves), they often talked about being patient. They mean taking the time to win people over – students, parents and colleagues. They also mean allowing innovations to become embedded, before introducing more bright ideas. There is something very positive in these models of provision that shows how small steps, when properly consolidated, can lead to incremental progress, which in time can open up possibilities that would have been unimaginable. Patience is not just about slowing down (none of these teachers seem to have slowed down) but it is about ensuring the previous stages are firm enough to build on.

Working with colleagues

Relationships and effective communication are key factors in all four schools described here. We spoke to teachers in each school, as well as subject leaders, and every Citizenship teacher we spoke to told us about how well-supported they felt. Several had started off on the periphery of wide and varied Citizenship teams, but over time had moved closer to the core team, simply through being supported so they could build their confidence and enjoyment of the subject. Support from subject leaders was also important for those teachers who were passing through that broader peripheral team, perhaps teaching one or two classes for a year and then moving on. All four subject leaders had an open door policy, which was real in that teachers felt able to ask for advice and help if they needed it. Subject leaders felt this was a demanding aspect of their role, but also recognised there was no other practical way to work with such large non-specialist teams. But some schools, for example Priory, have also formalised this into regular timetabled meetings, where all 24 teachers with some Citizenship on their timetable meet every month to undertake the same kind of quality assurance and enhancement activities they do in their regular subject departments. These meetings include professional development workshops; assessment, moderation and reporting; formal and informal reviews of schemes of work; and the teams also participated in book-looks; learning walks and mock ‘deep dives’ to check quality.

To a large extent, supporting colleagues also means providing them with high quality resources. It is simply unsustainable to expect dozens of non-specialist staff to plan their own lessons in a way which leads to consistency, but, as ever in schools, the relationships are not simply one way – all of the schools here also included examples of devolved responsibilities for certain topics or year groups. In Brockhill in particular staff talked about the different backgrounds of the core team of teachers, which included an elite sportswoman. The team recognised that she had experience of team working and motivational techniques that far surpassed the others, and so sought to build on this. Similarly a senior colleague who had come from a fairly deprived background led work on class and economic inequality. Subject leaders benefitted by sharing the workload, colleagues benefitted by sharing their passion and expertise, and the students benefitted from resources provided by passionate and well-informed staff.

Thinking about students

For all the subject leaders discussed here, the commitment to nurture students' own agency was a central element of their vision for Citizenship. This has several dimensions – students need to learn about how people make change, they need experience of trying to affect change themselves, and they need to see themselves as part of the issues they are studying.

All the curricula, as one would imagine from Citizenship, included a rich variety of case studies of active citizens, including young people, in order to demonstrate the diverse methods adopted to achieve change. In Priory this was most developed through the 'gamechanger' curriculum and several teachers noted how important it was that Priory students were also represented as gamechangers. Here is a good example of the students themselves becoming role models and learning resources for their peers. This also happened in AGGS where students led projects and teams for other students, for example, taking on ambassador roles across the school or leading Model United Nations work to provide opportunities for others to participate.

This commitment to agency also works through into the everyday classroom dynamic, where teachers repeatedly talked about drawing on the expertise of students in the classroom. Because Citizenship is related to the diverse experiences of people, it is impossible to pretend the teacher is

the expert in the room for all topics. When teaching about migration, teachers drew on students' experiences of migration; when discussing prejudice, teachers drew on students' own experiences (as victims and perpetrators); when discussing religious diversity, teachers encouraged students to speak about their own experiences of living within different religious communities. Several teachers mentioned how such opportunities can also be significant for children who feel relatively marginalised from the rest of school, as they find a role that can feel quite distinctive. This requires a certain level of professional humility and a commitment to build a classroom culture where students feel able to speak up and to be listened to. Several of the teachers described being challenged by students and going away and revising lessons to broaden their own perspective or provide better representation.

Teachers also valued the regular routine of Citizenship on the curriculum as an opportunity to build this sense of agency and involvement over time. As one teacher argued, if a student erupts in anger or frustration in a heated class debate, the outcomes are very different if this is a one-off debate as opposed to a regular opportunity. It can take years to enable some young people to become comfortable listening to diverse viewpoints, and having their own viewpoint challenged. But if there are routine opportunities for open discussion, it is easier to plan for progress over time, and easier to build routines and expectations in the classroom to ensure the groups are relatively self-regulating. Here then, there was a sense that regularity and routine offer opportunities for nurturing responsible agency over the long term, that are simply not present when provision is sporadic or occurs in disparate curriculum areas.

And of course, all of this is most obvious when we look at the opportunities for active citizenship facilitated by the Citizenship department. There are different models in all the schools, but common to all was a commitment that all students should participate in some core active citizenship experiences, and that some students would have additional opportunities to reflect their own interests and skills. There is a trade off between the entitlement and enrichment, and readers will be able to see how these schools have struck the balance differently.

Planning the curriculum

The curriculum models developed in each school are described in some detail in the case studies. Here we focus on some of the practical advice offered by the subject leaders.

Firstly, it is important to think about the long term sequencing of topics and activities. Several teachers noted that some topics (especially relating to PSHE / RSE) lend themselves to particular age groups and points in the year. So, if Citizenship is being developed alongside PSHE, it makes sense to schedule these time-sensitive topics as priorities and teach them at the time when they might be most relevant. In AGGS the year 11 curriculum was dominated, in the year of the research, by the need to cover RSE elements which had not been dealt with when lessons had moved online during Covid. This means that Citizenship topics had moved around for pragmatic reasons. But in the same school the Citizenship programme was driven by a focus for each year group as topics moved from a local focus (year 7), to a national focus (year 8), and then to a comparative perspective (year 9) and finally a global perspective (year 10). PSHE topics were scheduled, where possible, to enhance this kind of focus. Where Citizenship was taught alongside another subject (RE or PSHE for example) teachers had a strong rationale for when they developed units in a combined and complementary way, and when they simply taught units separately. They felt it was important to have a clear justification and recognised the value in making conceptual links where appropriate, but not forcing the issue where links were less evident. This avoids the distortions that can occur where several subjects are blended as a principle rather than for pragmatic purposes.

Several of the schools also mentioned how feedback from students had informed revisions to the curriculum. In both AGGS and Priory staff mentioned that students had suggested more should be done to deal with violence against women, and so both had expanded and / or added units.

Subject leaders also spoke at length about the centrality of case studies to their planning and teaching. They were seen as practical ways to make the teaching feel very relevant and contemporary, and they also helped to teach abstract concepts (such as power, justice, equality) through concrete stories. Good case studies also demonstrate how the same events can be perceived very differently from different perspectives. AGGS had developed a clear approach to devising resources to enable them to be updated with

contemporary case studies. Here the unit booklets for students were structured around activities but deliberately left out detailed information, which meant it was possible to update case studies year on year in PowerPoints and lesson materials, whilst leaving the student booklets relatively untouched. This had a big impact on keeping the ‘updating’ manageable.

For all these reasons, all the subject leaders agreed that the curriculum felt like a journey that was never complete. But this was seen as essential to ensure it was up to date, reflected the contemporary interests of students and felt relevant. However, it is also important to note that this did not mean everything was always unsettled. Underpinning this flexibility was a strong underlying structure that still enabled longer term progression to be built in. An obvious example is provided by Priory School’s media literacy work, which builds on a very clear framework developed by the subject leader and shared widely through articles, lesson materials and CPD training workshops to teachers around the country. Whilst this framework includes clear terminology and a model for leading students to more sophisticated analysis of the media, the case studies and source material can be easily updated year on year.

Teaching

The previous sections have already indicated some of the distinctive approaches to teaching in these schools. Here we will focus on three observations about teaching that follow from the discussion about students and curriculum planning.

First, school leaders and subject leaders were clear that Citizenship provides a space for some subtly (but significantly) different relationships between staff and students. The active citizenship projects that took place in each school provided the most obvious example where staff took on a more explicit facilitator role, and where students had much more scope to identify what they wanted to focus on, what they wanted to achieve, and how they might best achieve it. As the curriculum and GCSE specifications in other subjects have become increasingly dominated by more and more content, everyone we spoke to had become more acutely aware of how important it was to embrace these opportunities to cede more control to students. The teachers we spoke to also felt that Citizenship sometimes connected with disillusioned students, who did not respond so well to the pressures associated with more teacher-led direct instruction modes of teaching.



Second, teachers felt they were able to create a classroom culture where students can discuss controversial issues respectfully and teach the language and ideas required to handle the sensitivities arising. This means an element of controlled risk-taking, for example, seeing examples of prejudice in discussions as opportunities for reflection and learning rather than infringements. Several teachers argued it was important not to judge the students and accept the fact that there will be different opinions and to teach with and through these differences. Not only does this help students to learn from each other, it also models how to live in a diverse democratic society.

Third, although the subject leaders all invested huge effort in providing high quality resources for every lesson, they all urged their teacher colleagues to treat these as a starting point for the lessons. Lessons can be updated by the person planning the resources, but the teacher using them must also embrace the freedom to respond in the moment to the students. There was a strong commitment to reading the room, identifying what students were most interested in, where the conversation was heading, and trying to build on these moments of engagement and motivation. One teacher we spoke to explained this as the main feature that differentiated her Citizenship / PSHE teaching from her more familiar geography teaching – in geography she felt she was working through the lessons to cover all the material, whilst in Citizenship it felt possible to change the pace and shift emphasis depending on students' response. Students we spoke to also commented on this as one reason why Citizenship feels different to other subjects. In GCSE classes this flexibility was maintained by teaching students explicitly how to discuss different case studies in relation to exam questions, enabling students to continue to draw on topics of interest, even in the exam.

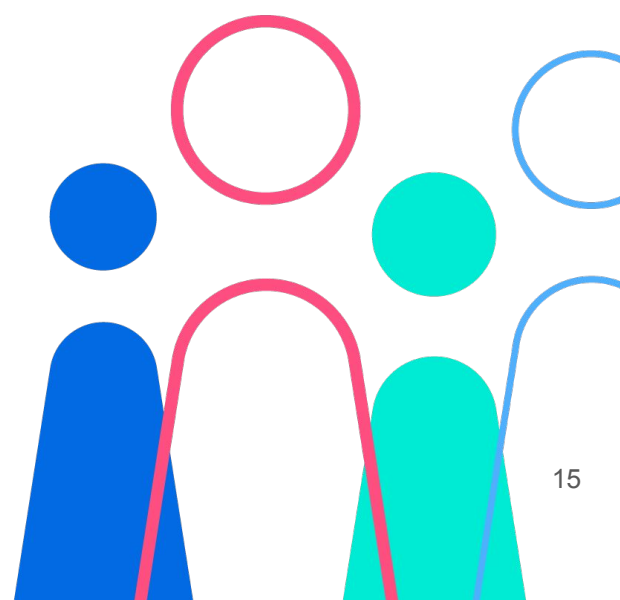
Networking

Whilst we have noted that all the subject leaders worked intensively with their colleagues in school, it was also evident that subject leaders are often the only subject specialist in school. In all four schools they made the point that external networking enabled them to tap into expert CPD and to find support and critical friends to help them develop their ideas. Whilst everyone was a member of ACT, they also drew on wider networks, for example through collaboration with other charities involved in PSHE / Citizenship, other subject associations, exam board networks and

colleagues in the local authority. Subject leaders valued these experiences and felt they were essential to emulate what other colleagues might access through their departments.

Being an advocate for Citizenship

All of the subject leaders also recognised that Citizenship, when done well, generates plenty of eye-catching examples of student success that are well received by a variety of stakeholders. Everyone shared their success routinely with school leaders, partly to let them know what was happening, and partly to ensure that Citizenship was always on their minds. They also routinely sought positive media coverage, which was thought to be relatively easy where there was an obvious angle, such as local MPs visiting school to discuss topical issues, children helping others or campaigning on contemporary issues, community organisations working with the school to solve local problems. Including such stories routinely in school newsletters also helped to build the profile of the subject with parents. Similarly, parent evenings (now frequently online) provide an opportunity to brief parents about the subject as well as their child's attainment and experiences. As one subject leader put it, 'Citizenship teachers shouldn't be shy about their achievements'. As Citizenship remains fairly marginal in policy and in the life of many schools, there was a strong sense in these case studies that subject leaders had to be proactive in promoting Citizenship. This means raising awareness, building knowledge, reassuring people with concerns and celebrating the positive. The case studies that follow are intended to meet all these criteria.





Altrincham Grammar School for Girls

Bright Futures EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Combining Citizenship with PSHE & RSE



Introducing the school

The school has over 1300 students, including over 350 in the sixth form. The school is selective and sustains high attainment levels (99% students are entered for EBacc subjects and gain grade 5+ in maths and English) and high progress scores (+0.91). Almost all students progress to further study after sixth form and over 75% are accepted into Russell Group universities. 40% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, 15% speak English as an additional language, but very few students are eligible for free school meals or have special educational needs. The school prides itself on a huge extra-curricular programme, which includes over 100 clubs and societies for students. Staff feel one of the distinctive features of the school is students' capacity for self-regulation and a culture of students taking responsibility. Citizenship plays a key part in developing students' voice and their awareness of, and engagement with, the local community.



What the school has achieved

Piecing together the curriculum jigsaw

There is a core curriculum which combines Citizenship; Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE); and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) together across key stages 3 and 4. Citizenship Studies is also an optional GCSE course and those who choose this option do it in addition to the core KS4 programme. The core Citizenship curriculum moves from a local focus in year 7, through national politics in year 8, a comparative approach in year 9 and a global focus in year 10. Within that there are elements related to law, economics, governance and changemakers that ebb and flow into focus each year. This creates a framework for a spiral curriculum, where students revisit economics or changemakers at local, national and international levels. But, within these conceptual and thematic structures, there are also plenty of examples and case studies to help make the content more relevant and engaging.

These themes are not dealt with discretely, for example, the theme of changemakers runs through many of the other units. When students learn about human rights they learn about what rights are, where they come, and how they are reflected in specific UK legislation that protects them. They also learn that if they are not being realised there is a range of action they can undertake to pursue them including petitions, letters to MPs, protests etc. And that there are opportunities to undertake action on behalf of others who cannot take action themselves, for example, the school participates in Amnesty's *Write for Rights* project every year on Human Rights Day. In GCSE they also start to ask critical questions about the structure of the UN and the mechanisms (such as the Security Council) that sometimes restrict UN action.

Whilst year 7 starts with a focus on PSHE, it also considers communities including the school community and the need for mutual respect in communities. This is partly about school induction activities and settling students into positive relationships. This has been enhanced recently with a consideration of racism and micro-aggressions, as part of the school's diversity curriculum review. This connects PSHE and Citizenship so students consider their own experiences and responsibilities in the school, but also connect these to a consideration of institutional prejudice. The year 7 student focus group felt these lessons were well-pitched – whilst they raised some challenging issues, such as misogyny and women's safety,

they all felt it was sensitively done to raise their awareness and give them a space to talk about their experiences, but without upsetting them. During such lessons the teachers use a feedback box to encourage students to respond or ask questions. These students were able to make connections between potentially conflicting human rights, for example, recognising that women's rights to equality may be compromised by their rights to participate in religious communities where gender differences are maintained. They also made connections between the idea of equal rights and contemporary issues such as Black Lives Matters and Me Too, and between equal rights, micro-aggressions, bullying and mental health.

Whilst PSHE (including RSE) and Citizenship units are generally dealt with separately, some units combine the two. Sometimes this is driven by pragmatic issues of timings, and at other times it is to develop conceptual connections. The year 8 combined unit is an example of the first type. When the RSE curriculum was introduced there was a requirement to teach about the HPV vaccine, and so this lesson has been inserted just before the students actually have the vaccine, so they understand why it's happening. Similarly, lessons about menstruation take place in year 8, although this is also linked to Period Poverty campaigns and environmental considerations.

Year 9 develops the comparative dimension and normally includes the USA and Russia and then, to make it sufficiently topical, the Head of Department (HoD) tries to pick a country with an election each year each year. This approach provides an opportunity to consolidate the national politics content from year 8 and to extend it through comparisons and contrasts. The Economist's Democracy Index provides a basis for the comparative dimension, as this includes categories to compare political systems, including electoral systems, civil liberties, pluralism etc. In 2021-22, the election case study was Germany, which also enabled a focus on proportional representation. This stood out as being particularly significant and interesting for the students we spoke to, who found the comparative perspective very helpful for sharpening up their appreciation of what they might take for granted in the UK and what other possibilities there are for organising politics and citizenship.

Year 10 has a global citizenship focus. The HoD feels it can be quite a challenge to engage students with economic globalisation at the outset, so this scheme of work blends Citizenship with PSHE to develop conceptual connections. The topic starts with economic globalisation, including an

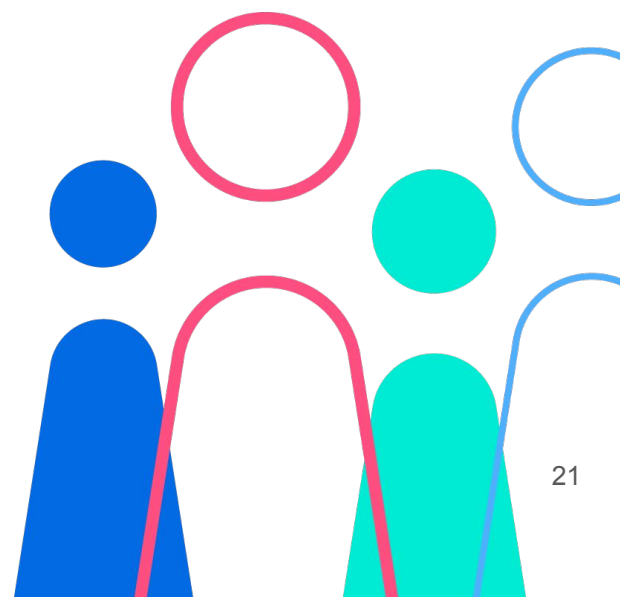


exploration on Ritzer's 'McDonaldisation' thesis, but moves quite quickly into the drugs trade, and then considers the personal and social consequences of that. Then things move on to case studies such as fast fashion, to consider the wider effects and individual consumer decisions such as the impact on poorer producers, the environmental effects etc. This also links to some more explicit financial education, drawing together some of the curriculum content from key stages 3 and 4. This is also an opportunity to connect to contemporary issues, so in 2021-22, year 10 looked at the UN, COP26, and the role of trade in exacerbating and / or resolving problems. Blending PSHE and Citizenship here also has pragmatic benefits as the globalisation content can feel a little abstract and academic and so having a period in between when the students refocus on individual stories and issues close to their own experience helps to vary the way the course feels and the nature of lessons. PSHE lessons are more discursive and reflective, so students experience this unit as a change of pace, whilst also engaging with the personal implications of global economic structures.

Local links also run throughout the whole programme and include students engaging with the local MP, talks from Trafford Youth Justice, working with Connexions staff, contact with local magistrates and developing links with councillors and council employees. The HoD is also planning visits to a mock court room and a prison visit. Students also make local connections for their individual projects, for example, by researching local charities and campaigning organisations.

Topic booklets help to ensure there is some consistency in the core curriculum experienced by all students, despite the large and varied team of non-specialist teachers. The HoD is aware that this can be pedagogically restrictive – not all teaching and learning activities lend themselves well to a booklet format, and so they tend to focus on a specific repertoire of activities. Teachers see the booklets as a handy collection of collated worksheets and, whilst they generally stick with the running order, they do take advantage of the flexibility to allow conversations to develop in response to students' interest. At points through the year the HoD asks colleagues to indicate where they are up to, to enable him to reschedule future running orders if necessary to fit in essential topics.

In relation to assessment, the units include short quizzes, retrieval tasks and knowledge checks to ensure comprehension and recall. The school has recently introduced short speeches as a form of assessment in years 7-9. These are assessed using rubrics adapted from School 21's oracy resources. The department is introducing extended written assignments and there are also end of year exams, which mirror the structure of GCSE papers, with multiple choice, source questions and extended writing.



Autumn (1)	Introducing PSHE, RSE and personal development...	Media	Comparative government & politics	Global Citizenship, including global drugs trade...	Sex Education
Autumn (2)	... continued	Media and well-being, active citizenship & human rights	Personal political beliefs, ideology & feminist thought	...Alcohol & substance abuse	Sex Education
Spring (1)	Rights, linked to changemakers project	Personal finance; health; running a country - politics	Careers & health	Economic globalisation	Sex Education
Spring (2)	Local government and local community issues	Government and law-making; the economy; changemakers	Social action project (i)	Periods & sleep health	Health Education
Summer (1)	Law and crime	Migration & climate change	Social action project (ii)	Where does money come from? Economics	Health Education
Summer (2)	Punishment and justice	Family	Sexual health	Where does money come from? Economics	The wider world – safety, travel and festivals

Core / optional citizenship

There are roughly 200 students in each year and in KS4 about a quarter of the students choose the Citizenship Studies GCSE. Because approximately half the students do triple Science, those that select triple science only have one free option, so this is a healthy number. It also means that there are two classes in each year in KS4, which takes up most of the HoD's timetable. The results are very good – the lowest grade in the last exam year (2019) and in the recent round of centre assessed grades (CAGs) was 7.

Students often pick the subject at GCSE because it is seen as a route into A level law, politics and sociology, and then onto potential careers in politics, law or diplomacy. It was also common for students in focus groups to talk about the importance of the subject in helping them keep up to date with contemporary affairs, and ensure they build their general understanding of the world. Some also choose the subject simply because they enjoy the subject and the way the lessons feel slightly different to their other lessons. When clarifying what made them feel different, students tended to mention the quality of their relationships with their Citizenship / PSHE teachers and the fact that lessons incorporated so much discussion.

The students we spoke to also felt that having Citizenship lessons helped them to build their appreciation of why politics is so important and relevant to understanding what is going on in the world. They talked about a virtuous cycle in which having a better basic understanding helps them tune in to the news and understand it more clearly, and thus builds into an even deeper sense of political literacy.

Active citizenship in the curriculum, culture and community

Students start to engage with active citizenship in year 7, with a unit on changemakers. In year 9 students spend the summer term working on an active project. The year 9 classes are taught by the HoD and one colleague which makes it easier to plan and coordinate the project across the whole year group. Here, buying into the *First Give* programme has been useful and it also means the group of students who win the competition get money to spend on their project. During the pandemic, when opportunities for active citizenship were restricted, students undertook research and advocated for action on topics as diverse as global warming, LGBTQ+ equality, learning self-defence for young women, and Marcus Rashford's campaign on free school meals. Covid lockdowns and home learning meant the focus was more on what others have done to affect change, and what the students could do in their everyday lives (for example to tackle prejudice). Nevertheless, some of the projects led to action, such as a case study on *Our Streets Now* and sexual harassment, in which some of the students wrote to their local MP to ask him to raise the issue in parliament, so they got a response to show they can take action and have some impact.

GCSE projects typically involve projects focused on raising awareness, teaching peers, letter writing, collections and donations, and participating in campaigns. Before they undertake any action they have to map their project against the exam specification and justify the link to their teacher. In many cases this is established via the connection back to human rights. The active project comes towards the end of the course so that students have covered the whole specification first, to ensure they can pick from across the range of topics. The HoD feels it is important to give students autonomy over their projects rather than restrict their choices. During our visit to the school a year 11 focus group were undertaking projects on food poverty and homelessness, local provision for refugees, and researching UK aid in Yemen. The students felt that experiencing Citizenship throughout key stages 3 to 4 helped build their understanding of how people can make a difference and also why politics is important and relevant.



In addition to these activities related to Citizenship classes, there is a culture in the school that promotes participation, enrichment activities and student responsibility. This work is overseen by the same member of the senior leadership team who line manages Citizenship and PSHE. As with most schools, there is a school council. It has had an impact in two notable areas recently. First, there has been a lively discussion about the school's inclusion of Trans students and this has led to some changes in the curriculum, adjustments to a whole school fund-raising day, further discussions in school council with external guest speakers, and the submission of a series of requests, which elicited a detailed response from the school leadership team. Similarly, discussion on period poverty led to the establishment of a group of student ambassadors who ensure the student toilets are stocked with period products for girls to access.

Student leadership teams and a broad student ambassadors programme means that students have lots of opportunities to join or establish groups that attempt to contribute to the school community. Examples of students undertaking leadership roles include diversity, languages, sports, librarians, music, and ad hoc projects such as the period products group.

There are also several societies linked to Citizenship, including the Politics Society, an Amnesty group and the Model United Nations (MUN) Society, which is almost entirely student-led. In 2021-22 the MUN Society hosted its first whole day event for 150 people from several schools. This meant students had to prepare briefings and motions to discuss across a range of committees, covering issues as diverse as the militarisation of space, the invasion of Ukraine, the coup in Sudan, and the right to peaceful protest. In addition to researching the briefings students manage all the administration, communication, and organisation. The MUN leaders felt there was a link between MUN and Citizenship as once people had chosen the subject as a GCSE they often chose extra-curricular activities that would complement their studies. For these students the comparative dimension to year 9 Citizenship helped them to develop their interest in MUN activities. They were also inspired by the school's wider programme of guest speakers, which often includes alumni who have gone on to have careers in diplomacy, politics and political education.



The citizenship department

The Head of Department did a degree in Theology and Sociology and then trained as an RS teacher. He worked for his first year as an RS and Sociology teacher and then joined AGGS to teach RS. But at AGGS, after a year or two, he also started to teach KS3 Citizenship and, after a few years, to co-teach a GCSE group with the then Head of Department. During that transition there was a lot of self-teaching to ensure he was adequately prepared for the politics dimension to the subject, as he had not studied the subject at any level. The current Head of Department took over the department in 2019.

There are currently eight members of staff teaching Citizenship and PSHE but it has been as high as 12 in past years. The lessons are all centrally planned by the HoD and the non-specialist colleagues appreciate having that minimum offer prepared and ready to teach. This has evolved over time into topic booklets. Four teachers could be considered the core team, because they are more experienced and teach routinely on the programme each year. Some of them have grown into the role because they wanted to increase their part time contracts, but there were no extra hours available in their first subject, so by default they have come to identify more with Citizenship / PSHE. For example, one of the core Citizenship teachers had worked in another school as a full-time geography teacher and then moved to AGGS to work part time. She had gained some experience of history and A level law as well, and taught PSHE and Citizenship as a tutor. At AGGS she was looking to increase her workload and there were Citizenship hours available. She started with year 7 and has increased each year to take year 7, 8, and KS4 core lessons. She takes one class for both geography and PSHE / Citizenship and makes it clear to the students that she will adopt a different teaching style in each lesson. For example, some PSHE topics are not assessed because they are primarily for their well-being; and some techniques such as 'no hands up' won't always be used in sensitive discussions.

The teachers have one department meeting at the beginning of the year but, from then on, the relationships are sustained individually. Because other Citizenship teachers all belong primarily to another department, the relationships between them rely on the HoD making regular informal connections, updating colleagues, and offering drop-in sessions to discuss new teaching materials. Colleagues recognise that this kind of team-

-building relies on informal relations and contact outside of line management structures.

The department is line managed by the member of SLT with responsibility for safeguarding and her remit also includes the pastoral system, the enrichment activities and trips. She feels the connection between the PSHE programme and the pastoral provision and safeguarding is important and so the curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure it is responsive to changing demands (such as new policy on RSE and the mental health issues arising from Covid disruptions).

The journey to get to this point

Some developments arise from the cycle of internal review and benchmarking against other schools. For example, one of the new HoD's priorities was to re-visit the core Citizenship / PSHE provision in key stage 4 for those students who did not choose GCSE Citizenship Studies. Staff felt this could have a tighter focus or identity and so it now has a very strong focus on the global dimension – a perspective that does seem to offer students something distinctive that they might not experience in their other subjects. It also offers a useful additional dimension for those students studying for the GCSE, which is not so strong on the global dimension. This operates as both a useful core for all students and a helpful adjunct to the GCSE.

Other developments have been driven by the disruptions arising from the pandemic. Covid-19 created a number of challenges for the curriculum, largely because of the nature of some of the PSHE / RSE topics – in particular the sensitivities of sex education. Some year 9 topics were postponed because of lockdown, as staff felt the lessons would not transfer readily to online learning when students were unable to discuss issues freely, and when staff would be limited in their ability to follow up with individuals. Then on-going disruptions prevented the topics being covered in year 10, which meant that the year 11 programme was very much focused on RSE topics during 2021-22. The shift to online interaction has also underlined how important it is for the PSHE element to tackle online safety and mental health.



Yet other developments have been driven by broader social and political changes. In the wake of numerous social movements students have raised issues related to equality and diversity in the curriculum, and so the Citizenship department took the lead on a student survey to inform developments to decolonise the curriculum. Some of these changes have happened in the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum, but others are being taken on board by subjects across the curriculum, including history, geography and English. Changes in RSE have also fed into curriculum developments and sexual harassment and trans rights have also been raised by students as their priorities.

The next stage of developing provision will be to develop the monitoring and quality assurance processes and develop a CPD package for non-specialist colleagues to build their confidence and capacity for teaching beyond the topic booklets. This has been practically difficult because they are generally attached to other departments, several are part-time, and because Covid disruptions have made it even more difficult to undertake peer-observations to kick-start this process.

In terms of the curriculum, there is an opportunity to build connections to a wider range of local organisations and activists. One thing learned during lockdown was how easily this can be arranged through Zoom.

In terms of assessment, the department has recently diversified the mechanisms they use to assess learning in Citizenship, but the next stages of development will be to pull this together into a more coherent framework. At the moment it is driven by assessing the content and in relation to fairly generic communication skills. The HoD wants to devise a subject-specific progression model which will relate to all the assignments to make it easier to track progress across the subject.

Lessons learned

1

The curriculum feels like a journey that is never complete – it needs to be updated constantly to respond to external events and to maximise relevance.

2

When planning centralised resources it is very useful to update the PowerPoints but keep the booklets fairly generic so you just update one resource.

3

Part of what makes the curriculum relevant is thinking about *when* to teach specific content – lots of PSHE topics make sense at particular times in young people's lives.

4

Relevance is also driven by *what* you teach and case studies are powerful ways to secure engagement and motivation. Students at AGGS felt the constant use of contemporary case studies was particularly helpful for engaging in complex concepts in an accessible way.

5

There are some powerful links to develop between Citizenship and PSHE so they don't need to be separated the whole time. But equally, don't force connections, sometimes it's better just to explain to students that one short topic is ending and another unrelated one is starting.

6

Talk to students about their interests and concerns so you can shape the curriculum to resonate with their interests. This can be done informally through classes, but also via surveys and class representatives. If you do ask students for advice, have a plan to respond by explaining what you are doing now, what you are developing and what cannot be put into action.

7

Network with colleagues outside of school to keep gathering different perspectives and ideas. This kind of external benchmarking is important to be able to take a critical perspective to review and improve your own provision.

8

Lobby management for resources because you can save a lot of time and effort by tapping into the right services, especially to support active citizenship.



Citizenship entitlement for all students in all years



Introducing the school

The school is a non-selective rural school surrounded by grammar schools. It has developed a distinctive ethos which embraces its rural location through the operation of a school farm (with a farm shop and timetabled outdoor lessons) and combines this with a commitment to the performing arts. As a consequence, the school has a reputation for being student centred and supportive and enabling students to follow a range of academic and vocational pathways. Some students who pass the 11+ still choose to come to this non-selective school to enjoy the sense of community. Whilst Ofsted recognises the aspirational curriculum, the school's own curriculum statement also commits to developing a learning community incorporating student voice, engaging parents, and collaborating with community partners. The school council has a high profile in the school and holds formal elections with hustings, ballot boxes and polling rooms. The school has over 1300 students, with slightly below national average levels of deprivation. It has average levels of SEN provision and very low levels of students with EAL.



What has Brockhill Park Performing Arts College achieved?

Citizenship for all

Citizenship education is an entitlement for all students throughout their time at the school. In years 7 and 8 students have two Citizenship lessons per week (out of 30 x 50 minute lessons). PSHE provision is divided between Citizenship, RE and tutor time but in the Citizenship lessons the topics are dovetailed to make the most of connections, for example, the Citizenship content around personal financial decisions and broader economic understanding are accompanied by more PSHE focused topics around financial well-being and careers. The allocation of two lessons per week continues from year 9 to year 11, when all students take GCSE Citizenship Studies.

Whilst this means all students have a regular entitlement to Citizenship, it also means no-one actively chooses it. The newest teacher in the subject area felt this presented a challenge with some students, but the more experienced staff felt the vast majority of students saw the relevance and importance of the subject. Teachers work hard to focus on engagement and generating motivation through promoting 'active and creative' learning through the subject area. One teacher spoke about using art as a way to engage with sensitive topics, such as racism or identity. Such approaches provide students with the space to engage with their emotions first before embarking on more formal inquiries. Year 7 students told us that they often have emotional responses to their lessons, often linked to watching film clips about people's lives or reading case studies of people from around the world. All the teachers and students we spoke to talked about how interactive their lessons were and how central talk was to their Citizenship classes. This happens through debates, games, quizzes, think-pair-share discussions and Kagan style learning activities (an approach promoting cooperation and communication).

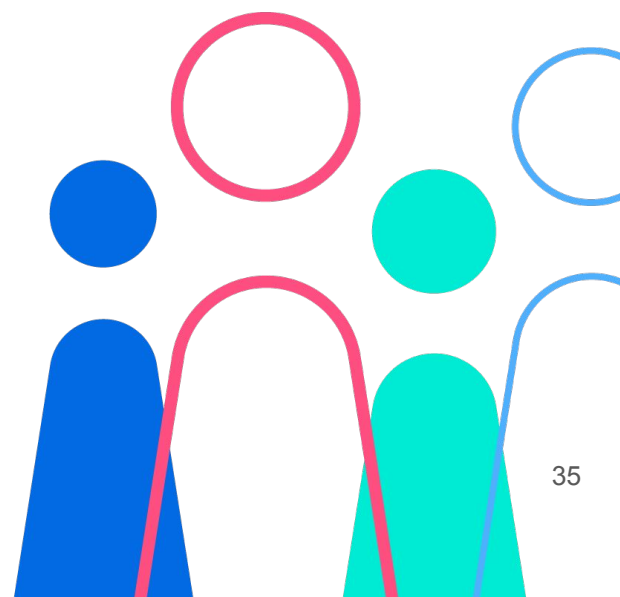
The students we spoke to said they didn't discuss political issues very often outside of school, but they sometimes initiated conversations at home as a result of their lessons in school. They recognised that their Citizenship classes were important because 'when you're older you need to know this, it's important to know what's going on in the world... how to contribute to

society and understand the issues in society, such as racism.’ In our discussions with year 7 students they valued the knowledge they gained about people around the world, and they were also optimistic that people can contribute to positive change, through treating others well, raising awareness about injustice, donating to charity, and taking inspiration from other change-makers. This reflects the focus in the autumn term of year 7 when students learn about a range of inspirational people who have improved the lives of others and stood up for social justice.

Whilst the scheme of work is very sharply focused on the core content outlined in the national curriculum programmes of study, the school is also clear about the wider contribution of Citizenship to the holistic education of the students. The school’s curriculum statement outlines how students will leave their study of Citizenship, Politics and Sociology with the following attributes:

- Accurate and imaginative spoken and written expression
- Independent, analytical and resilient reading and writing skills
- Ability to empathise and engage with sensitive emotional topics
- Ability to communicate as a means of wellbeing
- Ability to consider and listen to varying opinions
- Understanding of their place in the world, its history, society and its development
- Understanding of varying human emotions and experiences
- Ability to reflect on their own and others’ work in a constructive and supportive way.

This functions as a powerful statement of the key contribution Citizenship makes to the development of a well-rounded education.



Active citizenship for all

The programme includes an active citizenship project at the end of year 7 and again in year 11 as part of the GCSE course. Organising simultaneous projects for entire year groups requires considerable planning and organisation. The programme is tighter for the younger students and leaves more room for individual interests in the upper school.

Year 7 Active Citizenship Unit Overview

1. Reconnect with prior learning to think about what ‘active citizenship’ means, and to think about the differences between local/global and campaigning/fundraising.
2. Introduce the project, which includes fundraising activities to run during sports day. Brainstorm ideas and good causes to support.
3. Present suggestions and vote to agree a focus for the class.
4. Project plan, establish success criteria and allocate tasks. Start research and contacting relevant people.
5. Work on resources.
6. Review and evaluation. What worked and what have we learned?

GCSE Active Citizenship Project

In 2021 62% of the students achieved GCSE Citizenship grades 4-9, building on previous years when comparable rates were 54% (2020) and 48% (2019). These results exceed the school average and so the subject area makes a positive contribution to the school's GCSE attainment overall.

The GCSE project has to be fairly tightly structured to accommodate in excess of 200 students working on projects simultaneously. In practical terms, all the students work through a booklet that guides them through the project. One of the newer teachers noted this could feel as though the process-management element of the project dominated their teaching.

The Subject Lead recognises that the constraints mean individuals can't really undertake big projects, but everyone gets a taster. Individuals pick an area (e.g. votes at 16, Amnesty, fathers for justice) and they tend to focus on advocacy style activities. This means they conduct their own research (typically collect data through questionnaires) and then make presentations to peers. They used to do peer teaching to Y7-8 but as a result of Covid restrictions they peer-teach in their own year group.



One advantage of the tightly structured booklet is that it allows students to work through the process fairly independently. Last year one class surprised their teacher when most of them finished three weeks in advance. This is one reflection of the level of motivation many of the students feel about the opportunity to explore topics they have chosen for themselves. Over the years the numbers of students dragging their feet or showing scepticism has diminished as most students seem to understand the value of the project. The Subject Lead and Senior Teacher, who between them have thirty years of experience in the school, feel this is largely a result of Citizenship being so well established. Notably, the Subject Lead says she receives fewer queries about the value of the GCSE Citizenship Studies than about RE.



Local issues

Because of its large size and rural setting, many students are bussed to the school from a wide area. Nevertheless, community links are very important to the school and members of the subject area mentioned participation in a range of events and projects that make this an everyday part of school life, such as memorial days, projects with the Council, work with the local MP, school arts performances and concerts, guest speakers, and the farm shop. Citizenship benefits from these established links and it also plays a part in strengthening them.



The school is largely white reflecting its rural local population. The staff are aware that this means students do not often experience diversity and so it is easy for simplistic and stereotyped views to emerge. They see Citizenship as having a key contribution to make to widen students' understanding of multicultural Britain. The school is also relatively close to the South East coast and the recent increase in refugees and asylum seekers arriving by boat has also led to a rise in anti-asylum sentiment among some young people, reflecting the concerns (and prejudices) in the local community. Teachers seek to humanise the sensationalist news coverage and explore the real stories of people making the journey and ending up in local accommodation centres. They also focus on building knowledge and understanding, including introducing key terminology around asylum. By way of illustration, one teacher talked about a student in his class who had started with fairly negative views about refugees, but ended up using his active citizenship project to investigate Kick Racism Out of Football's campaign, with a focus on the experiences of refugees. For this teacher this was a perfect example of how the Citizenship lessons do not seek to tell students what to think, but provide them with a space to open up their opinions to critical exploration, to learn more about the topic, and to develop a more informed and nuanced understanding.

Being responsive to the issues that the young people are concerned about helps to ensure they perceive Citizenship as relevant. It also means teachers are constantly refreshing their resources. One of the experienced teachers pointed out that case studies are really useful here, as the structure of a scheme of work can remain intact, and it is relatively easy to remove one case study and replace it with a more up-to-date example, without fundamentally altering the pattern of teaching. Recent examples include introducing more work about the environment (around COP 26) and equality (in the light of Black Lives Matters).

Thinking beyond the subject

Citizenship is now a separate subject area but for a while it was managed together with RE. This means that RE and Citizenship have been closely connected in the past. The Subject Lead feels this works particularly well, and has helped boost the status and relevance of RE, which many students are sceptical about. Even without the formal managerial connection, Citizenship lessons continue to connect with RE by picking up themes that are relevant to both, for example, through exploring diverse opinions, beliefs and policy perspectives in relation to ethical dilemmas. But there are also other connections made across the curriculum, for example, exploring aspects of demography to make connections between 'Life in Modern Britain' (in year 9) and statistical knowledge and skills in maths.

The staff and students are also aware of the role that Citizenship plays in the school's wider commitment to help prepare students for adult life in the wider world. Whilst on the one hand this is a broad aspiration for young people to understand their role in society, it also includes more focused expectations that Citizenship introduces students to a range of possible careers in the social professions. The Senior Teacher we spoke to also recognised the value of Citizenship in tackling other whole school issues such as promoting the public equality duty; challenging fake news and conspiracy theories; ensuring there are spaces for dealing with controversial issues; and building a friendly community where people feel their opinion is valued.

Progression across the years

In years 7-8 the Citizenship curriculum touches on every topic the students cover in the GCSE, which builds a sense of progress. The year 10 students we spoke to appreciated coming back to topics to learn in greater depth, as one student put it 'you can feel it's getting more advanced'. This means it's important for teachers to calibrate their expectations and the experience of seeing students engage with topics initially and then again later helps the teachers to be more aware of what progression looks and sounds like. Importantly one teacher suggested that this helps him not to rush too fast

to get too far ahead of the students' ability. It is important to understand how young students will communicate their ideas about complex social phenomena, and to remember that their initial engagement is just the first step and that they will develop over time. Another colleague also pointed out that it's important to remember that even though younger students may have heard about news stories and have picked up some terminology, it is still important to teach the foundations and clarify terminology and key concepts to help them develop informed opinions.

As a guide for staff, the school summarises the transition to key stage 4 as focusing on:

- The development of evaluative skills
- The development of accurate and fast reading of sources
- The use of up-to-date news to inform their written responses

On the next page there is an overview of the entire programme of study across the five years, which clearly shows how these topics and themes reoccur at various stages.

The concept of rights runs across the Citizenship curriculum and provides a good illustration of this spiral approach to planning. Students consider the topic of rights each year and the Subject Lead explained that there are two main aims: first, to understand the principles and conventions and where rights come from; second, to appreciate how rights connect to everything else.

- Year 7: Animal Rights
- Year 8: Human and legal rights (autumn term) and human rights and the Holocaust (summer term)
- Year 9: Rights as a key theme and in relation to the fundamental British values
- Year 10: From Magna Carta to international human rights; rights in the justice system; international human rights organisations and law
- Year 11: Human rights case studies

This enables students to build their understanding over time so that by years 10 and 11 they can routinely engage with the complexity of implementing human rights in specific contexts, and discuss how tensions between different rights (and the rights of different groups) can be reconciled.

Autumn (1)	What is citizenship? A study of inspirational citizens	Life in Modern Britain: Race Relations	Introduction to key Citizenship themes & FBVs	Rights & responsibilities: From Magna Carta to human rights	Active Citizenship: What makes a successful campaign?
Autumn (2)	Our community	Human, legal, and political rights	Life in Modern Britain: Demography and identity	Rights & responsibilities: The justice system and sentencing	Active Citizenship: Your own campaign project
Spring (1)	Finance	Crime and punishment	Politics & participation: Power, devolution, and the constitution	Rights & responsibilities: Civil & criminal law, the CJS	Politics & participation: Re-cap & current case studies
Spring (2)	Introduction to politics and participation	The media	Politics & participation: Elections, voting and forming a government	International organisations	Rights & responsibilities/ Life in Modern Britain: Re-cap & case studies
Summer (1)	Introduction to rights and responsibilities: Animal rights	Government and politics: Key functions	Politics & participation: Taxation, the budget. Exam preparation	International law & conflict resolution	Exam preparation
Summer (2)	Active citizenship: Changemakers	Equality and rights: A study of the Holocaust	The media, active citizenship, and campaigning	The media	Exam

GCSE Citizenship Studies

Assessment

In KS3 students continue to develop a range of skills including; evaluation communication and empathy as a focus in Year 7, and begin to develop further some newer skills in Year 8 including analysis and critical comparison, with other key skills being linked in where appropriate. Assessment follows a five-step framework (1-5) with descriptors at each step. Students in years 7 - 8 are assessed using a variety of methods. Generally, these mirror what would later be expected of them for GCSE; for example, there might be multiple choice questions for students to assess knowledge whilst termly there is a written piece allowing students to show their comprehension and evaluation. Opportunities are given for peer and self-assessment throughout citizenship. At KS4 grades 1- 9 are used using grade descriptors to aid assessment (taken from school website; 'Citizenship Scheme of Work 2021-2022').

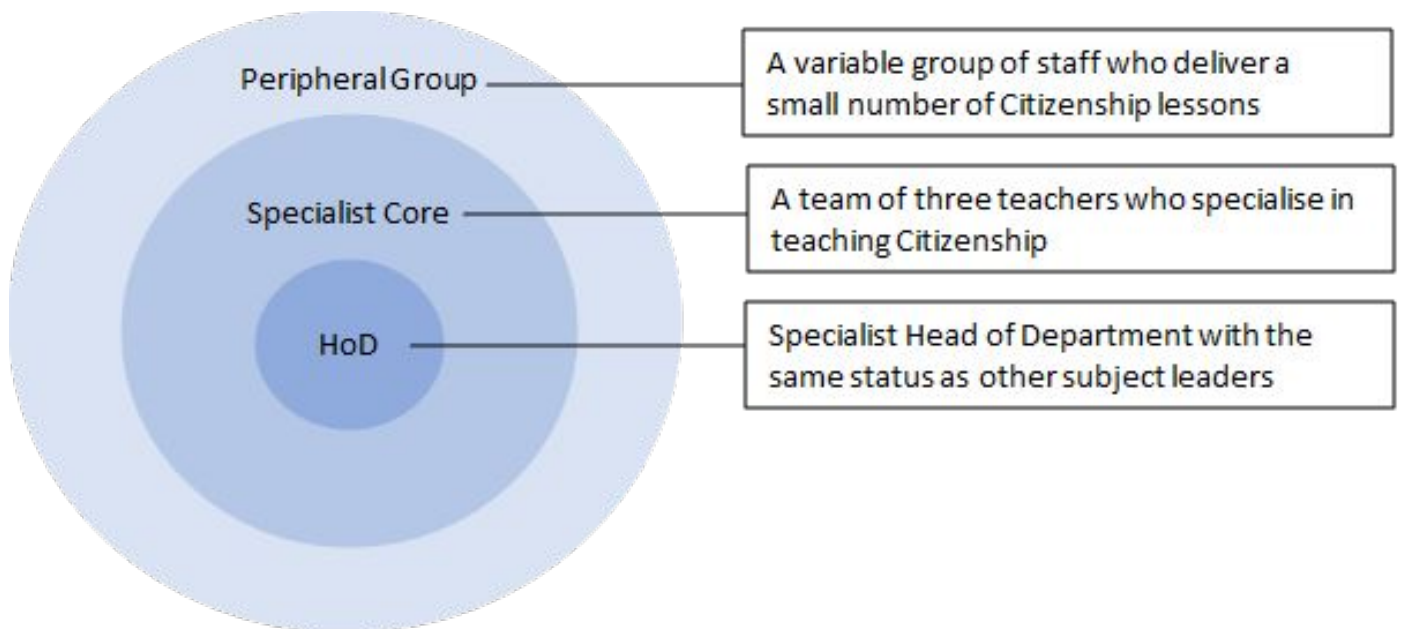


The Citizenship subject area

The decision to offer a core curriculum in Citizenship (and therefore not to deliver Citizenship through PSHE, tutor time or drop days) means the school has to invest in specialist staff. Sometimes this means recruiting people with a Citizenship ITE qualification, but it also means supporting staff as they transition from another specialism into a Citizenship role.

There are weekly team meetings (of the specialist core group). Each member of the team has lead responsibility for at least one year group, and the weekly meetings provide a forum to discuss and review planning and support newer colleagues as they assume this responsibility. Occasionally members of the peripheral teaching group attend these meetings as part of their professional development.

Citizenship has its own subject area and staff room / office area, where colleagues from the core and peripheral team often share breaks. As well as facilitating informal conversations and resource sharing, and thus building relationships between the wider team, it also meant that there was a dedicated space for displaying Citizenship-related student work.



Staff members value the experience and expertise provided by others in the wider team, for example, teachers spoke about how valuable it was to have colleagues who bring a historical perspective, or who worked in the police force, or experienced elite women's sport. These wider experiences are seen as valuable assets to inform planning.

Whilst the core team invests time to create resources to reflect the school's specific context, staff are encouraged to treat these as the starting point for their own decisions about how to meet the needs and interests of their classes. Teachers use the same starting point but adapt their lessons as necessary. Staff embrace the fact that different teachers will emphasise different elements of the curriculum, bring in their own experiences and passions, and thus infuse the taught curriculum with their own personality. The Subject Lead says this can even be seen in formal assessments where some teachers' classes routinely excel in topics where they have particular expertise.

The Subject Lead is a member of the Association for Citizenship Teaching and routinely attends professional development workshops, which are then cascaded to the team through the weekly meetings. But other colleagues also run CPD to reflect their own interests, for example, one colleague ran a session on teaching Citizenship through story. Several members of the team talked about the importance of working with their local PGCE provider to support Citizenship PGCE students, both as a contribution to the Citizenship subject community and as a source of new ideas. Since 2002 the subject area has helped train over 100 Citizenship teachers.

The journey to get to this point

Brockhill Park Performing Arts College has always been committed to specialist Citizenship provision, but there have been some significant changes along the way.

The first phase of development was led by a newly-qualified Citizenship teacher who resisted the GCSE course and textbooks to focus on activity-led teaching, including games, debates, and exhibitions. In this initial phase teachers embraced the flexibility of not having exams and the Subject



Lead's focus was on how much young people developed their skills and what impact Citizenship had on them socially. Over time, he was won over by the argument that the GCSE would bring status and accountability.

Changing Ofsted and assessment frameworks also had a bearing on this decision. Citizenship now looks and feels like it has been brought more into line with other subjects, for example, with a more sustained focus on writing. There is a sense that the loss of coursework in the GCSE was particularly regrettable as 'some students got so motivated by these large projects that they went on to work for the organisations they studied'. To this extent, the switch to more formal, knowledge-based exams is less than ideal but staff work hard to ensure the ethos of the curriculum is intact. Staff concur that, whilst passing exams is important for the students and for the status of the subject area, the exam is secondary to engagement and enjoyment.

There have also been changes in how the exams fit with other options. At one point students could choose between RE and Citizenship, choosing one as a full GCSE and the other as a short course. Then they switched to full courses for both subjects but the results declined especially for RE). Now all students complete the full Citizenship GCSE and the short course for RE. Students are generally happy to do the Citizenship qualification, very few query it, but they do query the requirement to continue with RE.

When Citizenship, RE and PSHE formed one subject area it was much easier to map connections between the subjects. Staff taught the subjects separately but also planned a combined lesson each week to consider 'contemporary issues' and this helped reinforce connections and reinforce the relevance of RE. There are divided opinions in the school about the costs and benefits of dividing the subjects, but one inevitable consequence is that it makes joint planning more demanding.

Lessons learned

1

Don't judge the students. It's important to accept the fact that there will be different opinions and to teach with and through these differences.

2

Different topics interest different students. There are differences between boys and girls and between younger and older students. Stay alert to the feedback and address this in your planning.

3

Don't become so obsessed with the minutiae of planning that you lose sight of the big picture. Every now and then take a step back and look at the students and how they engage with the world around them. Make engagement and motivation your main priority.

4

Make it real by using powerful stories and case studies to engage and motivate students and establishing plenty of connections back to students' lives and communities. Most schemes of work can be relatively easily updated - if you have planned carefully the case studies can be updated or replaced without requiring changes to the rest of the scheme.

5

Make the most of the expertise and passions of colleagues. Tap into them for useful ideas, resources and tips for engaging students, especially in topics where your students seem to struggle.

6

Some students feel challenged when they have already formed strong opinions, or feel negative about their capacity to make a difference in the world. The great strength of teaching Citizenship in every year is that there's no rush to resolve these issues – they can often be effectively addressed over time.

7

Find other interested teachers and share expertise. Remain as members of ACT (Association for Citizenship Teaching). Don't rely on generic resource sharing websites as the quality of Citizenship materials can be very variable.

8

Selecting and preparing appropriate resources is an important first step in getting the curriculum up and running but don't forget it's only ever the starting point for a lesson. As a teacher remember to skip through the bits that aren't right for your lesson. Be responsive in the moment.

9

Now that Ofsted are more interested in the big picture of what the school is offering young people, make sure your head teacher is very clear about what Citizenship has to offer to that holistic education. Don't be shy to argue that Citizenship is the most important subject, because if you can't take part in your community you can't live a meaningful life.

10

Be patient. It takes time for Citizenship to become embedded. Explain the value and purpose of the subject to students, parents, and colleagues. And collect evidence of impact to share with these different groups.



Leeds City Academy

Embedding Citizenship in the life of the school as part of a school improvement strategy



Introducing the school

The school converted to an academy in September 2014 and joined the White Rose Academies Trust. The school is much smaller than an average sized secondary school with 874 students. Students that attend the school are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, with over 40 different home languages being spoken at the school. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is therefore much higher than the national average (70%). However, the school offers a bespoke programme to ensure these students can access the curriculum effectively. Due to the high mobility of families in and out of the area there are very high levels of students entering or leaving the school at non-standard times.



The number of students eligible for free school meals is much higher than the national average (45%), however disadvantaged students make strong progress from their starting points which is also true for those students with SEND. Destination information for those students leaving Year 11 shows that they are well prepared for further education, employment, or training (86% of students stay in education or employment for at least 2 terms after key stage 4).

The unique culture of the school is built around six In partnership values (tolerant, respectful, resilient, professional, caring and aspirational) which the school refers to as the DNA of Leeds City Academy as it is the core of school values. The school has a subject specific in-depth Citizenship programme with the option to study GCSE Citizenship Studies at KS4. In previous years between 22-26 children opted to take GCSE Citizenship, however this year the number is higher with over 30 children placing it as a first option, this is believed to be an impact of the DNA work. There are opportunities for students to develop leadership skills and qualities through the school's robust student leadership and ambassador programmes.



What the school has achieved

Piecing together the curriculum jigsaw

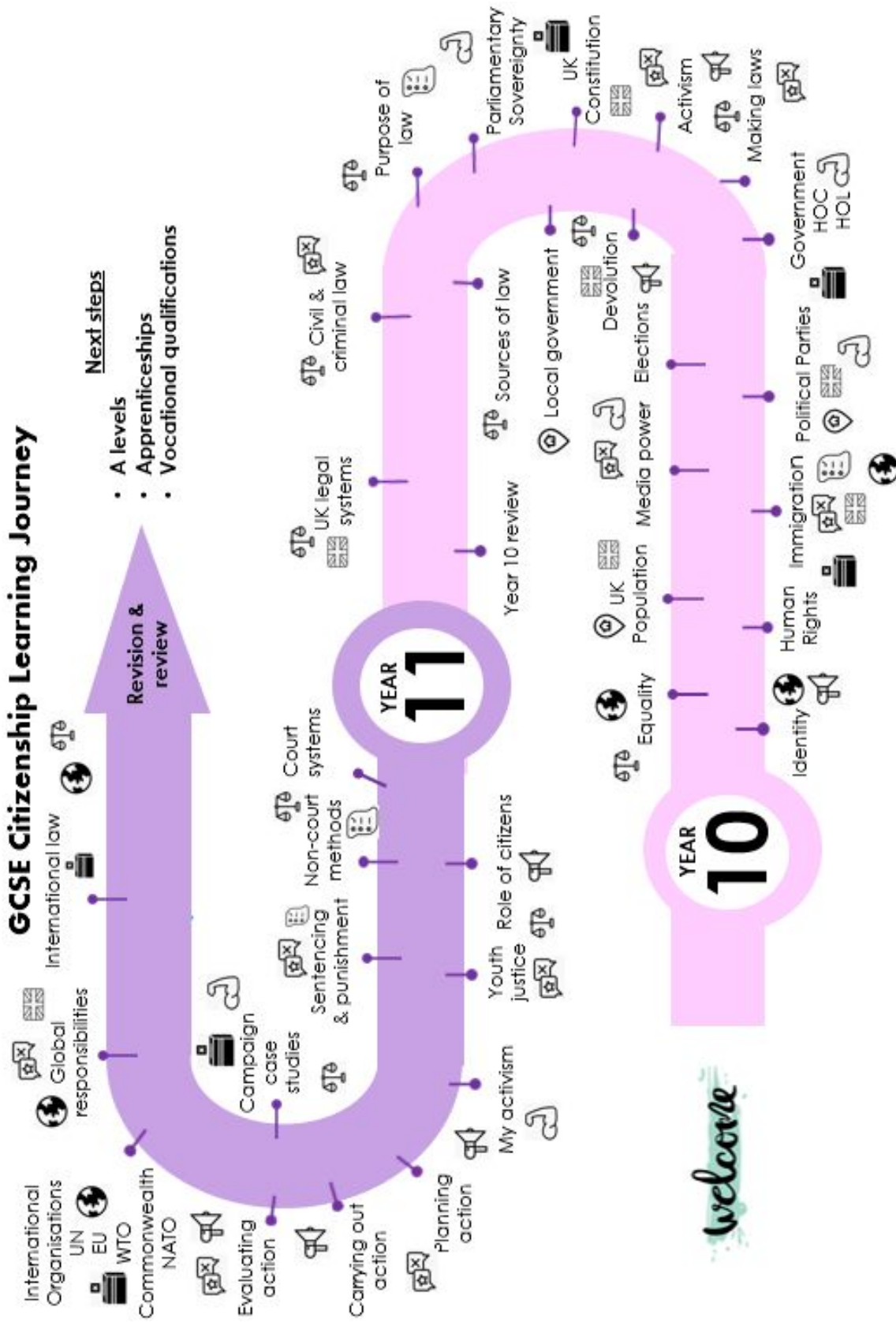
The Assistant Principal, Kelly Allchin, says that Citizenship is “not viewed as a standalone subject” but is something that we “live and breathe,” and is “at the heart of everything we do.” Citizenship education is largely taught as part of the Academy’s unique DNA curriculum offering. The DNA curriculum incorporates Citizenship, PSHE and RS into a single timetabled subject that all students attend for one hour per week from year 7 through to year 11. The classes are organized under umbrella topics that bring together elements of Citizenship, PSHE and RS, for example, the ‘Our City’ module offered in year 8 has students look at colleges and universities in Leeds as part of their careers development; the city’s welfare resources as part of PSHE; and the role of local government as part of Citizenship.



The DNA curriculum, aims to ensure that all students have access to the national curriculum for Citizenship and complete year 11 with a good understanding of the UK political and legal system, equality law and human rights, and the role of international organizations such as the United Nations. Year 10 and 11 students can opt to pursue Citizenship Studies further as a GCSE subject. The Citizenship Studies GCSE has been offered at the Academy for almost a decade and with exam results above the national average. Many of the students who take the GCSE in citizenship go onto study politics and law.



GCSE Citizenship Learning Journey



	Debate
	Political understanding
	Legal understanding

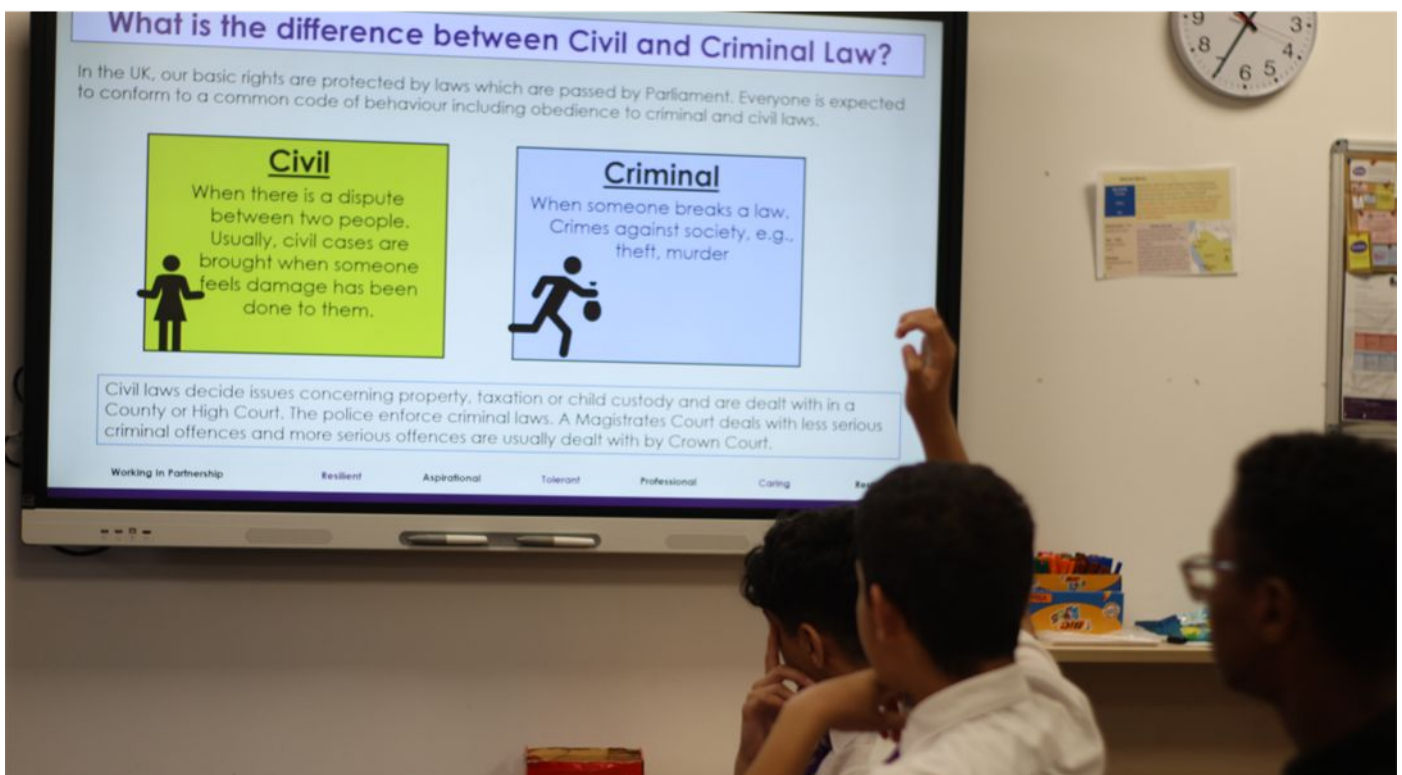
	National focus
	International focus
	Power

	Action
	Evaluate
	Local focus

Embedding citizenship in the school's culture and community

The DNA classroom curriculum is complemented with a variety of structured and aligned cultural activities and themed assemblies. Three times a year, the Academy comes off timetable so that students can participate in a “Cultural conference.” The Academy’s “Reflection and Celebration” Calendar, meanwhile, marks significant dates such as International Democracy and Women’s Rights day, with dedicated assemblies. Students are also encouraged to participate in the Academy’s Student Parliament and leadership programme.

The Student Parliament is made up of elected representatives from each year and is divided into five departments in an effort to mirror the functioning of the British government. Each department has a “link” member of staff and together these are overseen by Mrs. Allchin. There does not have to be a representative from each form or according to gender. The purpose of Student Parliaments is to give students a voice and to help develop their political literacy skills.



Student Parliament

- An elected body of students.
- 5 departments (education, health and well-being, conduct, economic growth and community) that feed directly into academy improvement.
- Each department is linked to three key staff.
- Vehicle for student voice.
- Overseen by student chair and vice-chair.

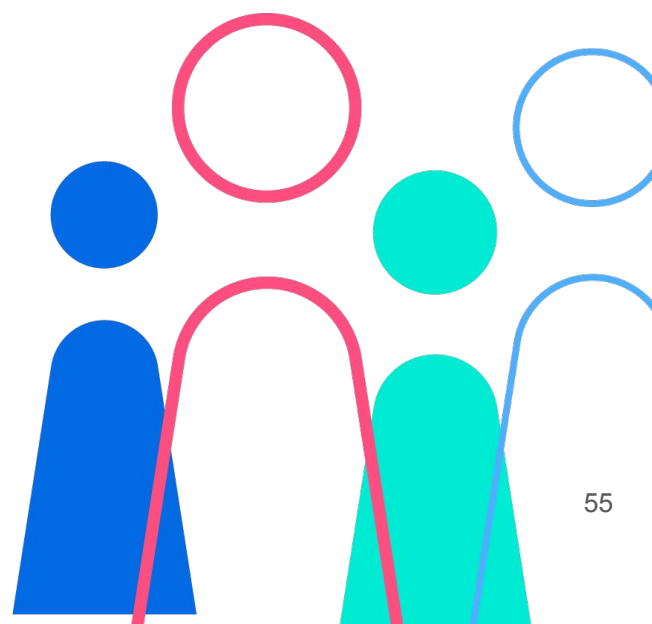
The Academy's leadership programme offers opportunities for students to engage in active citizenship. The programme, which accepts students by application, is divided into the following streams:

Community Impact Leaders

- Appointed via application form.
- Community based – Hyde Park/Woodhouse (these are two neighborhoods that are next to each other with Leeds City Academy in the middle of the two).
- Aim to improve community cohesion, community safety and community enjoyment through volunteering and social action.
- Links with external charities and organizations.

Culture Coaches

- KS4 students nominated by year managers and SLT.
- Aim to promote the school's values and increase attendance.
- KS4 Culture Coaches are linked to a KS3 student who is struggling in relation to one or more of the school values (encouraging students to be tolerant, respectful, resilient, professional, caring and aspirational).
- Culture Coaches provide regular mentoring and develop rewards.
- Overseen by SLT Student Culture team and key staff.



Curriculum Coaches

- KS4 students selected by subject leaders.
- Aim to improve academic outcomes and understanding.
- KS4 Curriculum coaches are linked to a KS3 student who needs support within a certain subject or topic.
- Curriculum coaches provide regular training and support.
- Overseen by SLT and kev staff.

LCA Pride

- Any student can join.
- LGBTQ+ and allies group.
- Working to improve visibility, create a supportive atmosphere and advise and implement change.
- Working to achieve the Stonewall School Champion award.
- Opportunities for members to conduct student voice and develop LGBTQ+ CPD.

Raising aspirations Leaders.

- Aims to raise aspiration and unlock potential with cohorts of students who may be showing apathy or lack of understanding towards further and higher education.
- CEIAG (careers education, information and guidance) focused.
- Links with external employers and Leeds City Academy alumni.
- Led by the Director of Student Culture & Personal Development and Helen the CEIAG Manager.
- Raising aspirations project alumni to support future projects.

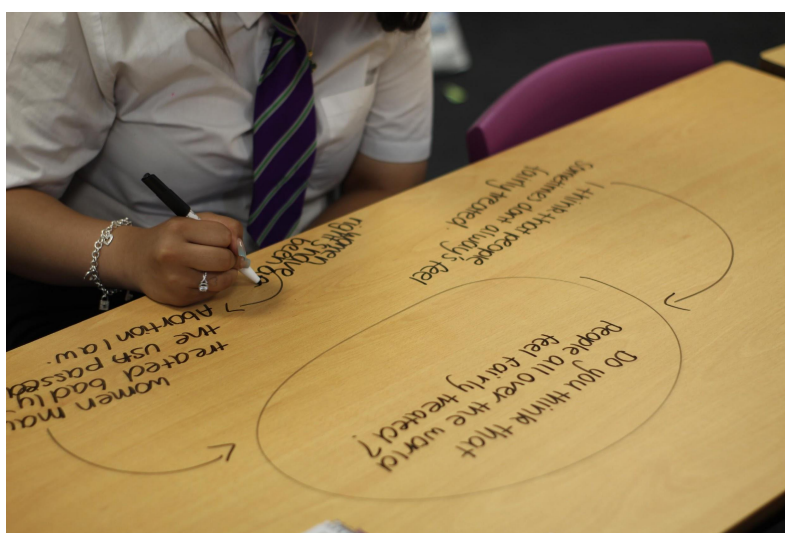
Empower group

- Year 10 female students, selected by year manager and other key staff.
- Aim to empower young women through developing their leadership.
- Work towards Student Leadership qualification Level 2.
- Plan and lead a primary transition event.

What the students say

We spoke to students from the GCSE cohort and the various student leadership groups. Various active citizenship projects that the GCSE cohort had taken ownership of include: Votes at 16, homelessness in the local area, Climate Change and domestic abuse. Such projects often enable students to make connections between their own lives and broader social issues, for example, one student described how ‘everything in the world revolves around citizenship’ and how it ‘it gives me an understanding why people might live in poverty and how the system can create this’. The students also referred to their Citizenship teacher and how her knowledge of the subject along with her own sense of humour make the lessons enjoyable and stand out from other lessons.

One student mentioned that as a direct result of Citizenship lessons and knowing they had student voice, they were able to directly write to the school Principal about a matter they were concerned about regarding hairstyles and felt confident that action would be taken. Students mentioned that applying to join leadership groups was beneficial for them and gave them skills to use in the future as it ‘was literally like applying for a job’. One student mentioned how mentoring on The Diana Award allowed an ‘open space to share opinions, say how you feel and communicate with people’. Students commented how being involved in student leadership meant that they were able to make positive changes in the school and act on issues concerning them such as securing a residential for the Year 8s after it was missed due to Covid and for skirts to be reintroduced to the uniform.



The citizenship department

Structure of the department

The core team for Citizenship is made up of Kelly Allchin and Ayla Malik, who work closely with a vastly experienced careers manager, Helen Ward. There are currently six members of staff delivering all Citizenship/DNA across the school, with the Assistant Principal for Personal Development overseeing GCSE. GCSE Citizenship Studies lessons are all planned centrally by the Subject Leader and DNA lessons are all planned by the DNA Lead teacher, Ayla Malik. The Citizenship/DNA department has regular formal fortnightly meetings, but the Subject Leader states that they encourage a very open-door policy and colleagues drop in to see each other all the time. In terms of CPD, Ayla Malik has an online CPD area (using Padlet) where staff can access links to various articles and online CPD. She also regularly seeks the views of non-specialist teaching staff on what they might need support with so that CPD can be tailored.

Teacher profiles

Assistant Principal for Personal Development – Kelly Allchin

Initially Kelly was interested in working with teenagers but not so much in teaching. She completed a health and social care advanced course before completing a degree in Psychology at University. While completing the degree she chose units in educational psychology and did a lot of youth work. The Citizenship PGCE had been recently introduced and Kelly felt that it really aligned with her passion for youth work and getting young people involved in social action projects. Kelly went on to complete a Citizenship PGCE at Bristol University where she was lucky to have had an inspirational mentor. She then worked in the Local Authority for two and a half years in the Children and Young People Involvement Service. In this role she worked across all the schools in the LA in an educational role rather than a teaching role, supporting with student leadership and democracy projects. After travelling for a short while, Kelly got a job as an NQT at Leeds City Academy where she has remained for 14 years. During these years Kelly initially taught PSHE but pushed for Citizenship as a curriculum subject and was able to get it introduced quite quickly and now leads the wider team in the subject. Kelly states that it doesn't feel like she has been working at the same school for so many years due to the changing nature of the school – it has changed status from a federation to a school

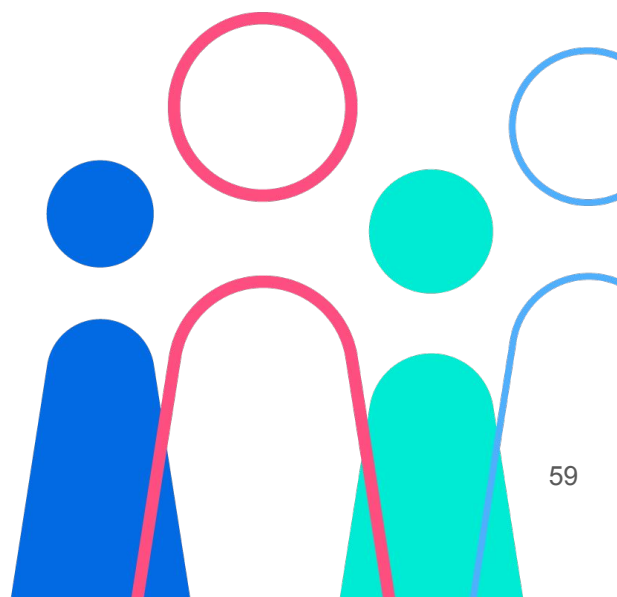


to the present academy status, she has worked for different principles, the transient nature of the school cohort means the students are always changing and the school building itself has been transformed. Having achieved such a successful integration of Citizenship across the school, Kelly’s professional motivation has been sustained by the support of school leadership and enhanced in recent years by a series of external opportunities for professional development and recognition. The school has been awarded the Young Citizens SMSC gold quality mark and is considered a Beacon School. Kelly has also been asked to share her experience at conferences.

DNA Subject Leader – Ayla Malik

Ayla completed a PGCE in History and taught at Bradford Girls Grammar School before joining Leeds City Academy. Ayla has always been interested in citizenship education but it was not until she was asked to teach AS level Citizenship at Bradford Grammar that she officially became a “Citizenship teacher.”

Ayla has been teaching at Leeds City Academy for two years and is the subject lead for the DNA curriculum. As subject lead, Ayla has been responsible for producing teacher-support booklets for years 7-11. The booklets are aimed at helping non-specialist teachers with the curriculum basics. The booklets include lesson plans, worksheets, guidance on how to discuss difficult issues and links to other useful information. Ayla emphasizes the importance of taking a flexible approach to the booklets and encourages teachers to adapt them to reflect the needs and interests of their students.



The journey to get to this point

When Kelly joined the Academy 14 years ago, there were roughly 350 students but today the school has grown to just under 900 students. At the beginning the school was under threat of closure due to decreasing numbers of students on roll, there were teacher redundancies and parents pulled their students out school. Today things are very different. In 2019 the school received “Outstanding” for leadership and “Good” for everything else. Attendance and results are on the rise, as are the number of year 6 students choosing the Academy as their first choice. The DNA Curriculum and the student leadership programme were central to the Academy’s overall improvement plan. Personal development and student experience was seen as a key to raising student aspiration and developing student confidence and cultural capital. Toward this end, an additional role was created in the Senior Leadership Team, a subject leader for DNA was established, and time was set aside in the timetable requiring all students to take DNA lessons.



Lessons learned

1

Citizenship should not be viewed as a standalone subject but as something much broader that touches on all aspects of school life.

2

Embedding Citizenship into the culture, curriculum and character of a school takes time. Be patient!

3

Embedding Citizenship pays off. Citizenship helps students to develop as whole individuals and impacts not only their behaviour but also their ability and willingness to learn.

4

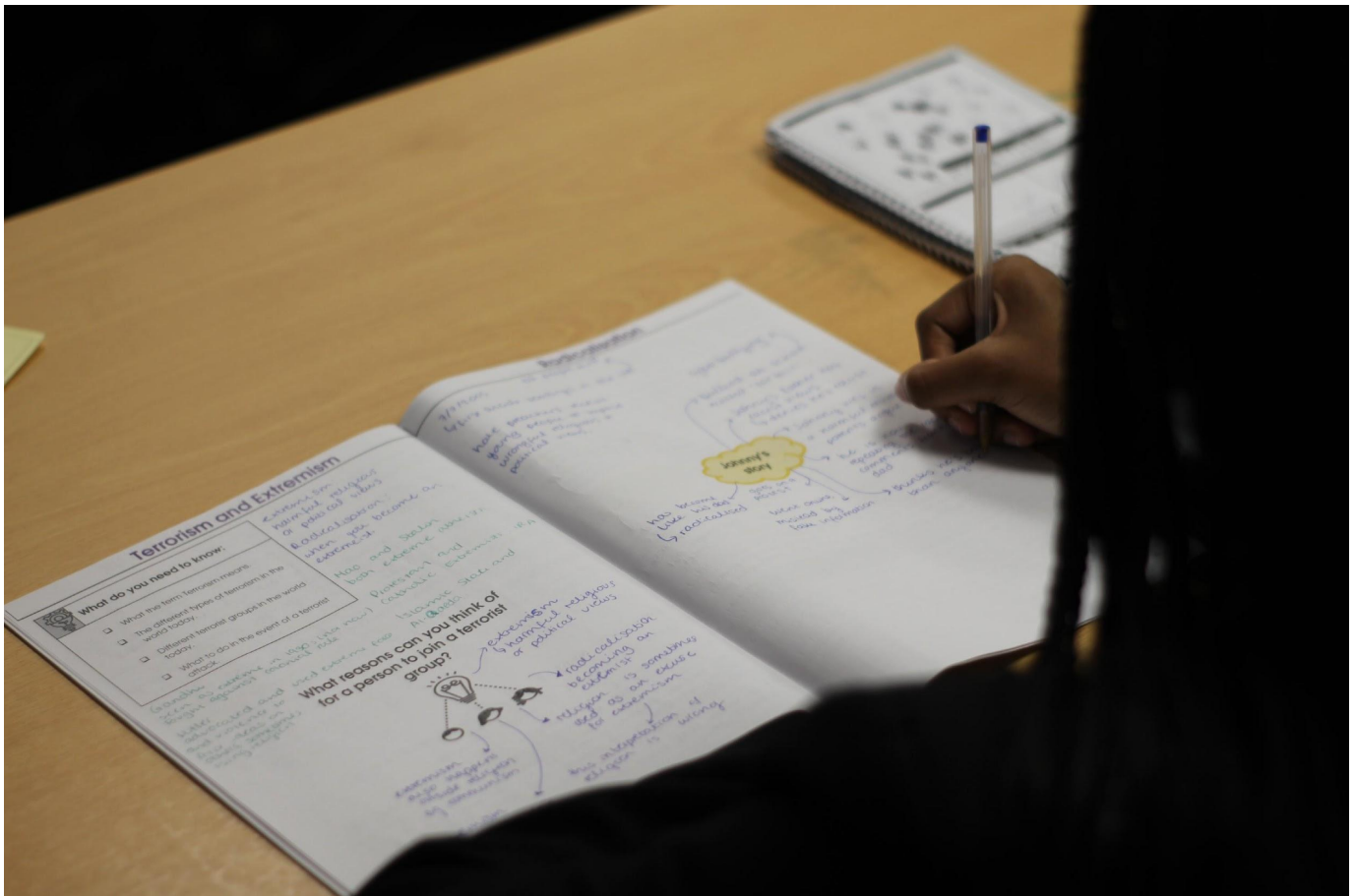
Citizenship can be a way to engage and empower disenfranchised students. When implemented effectively, it provides students with the language and institutional framework to express, and address, their concerns.

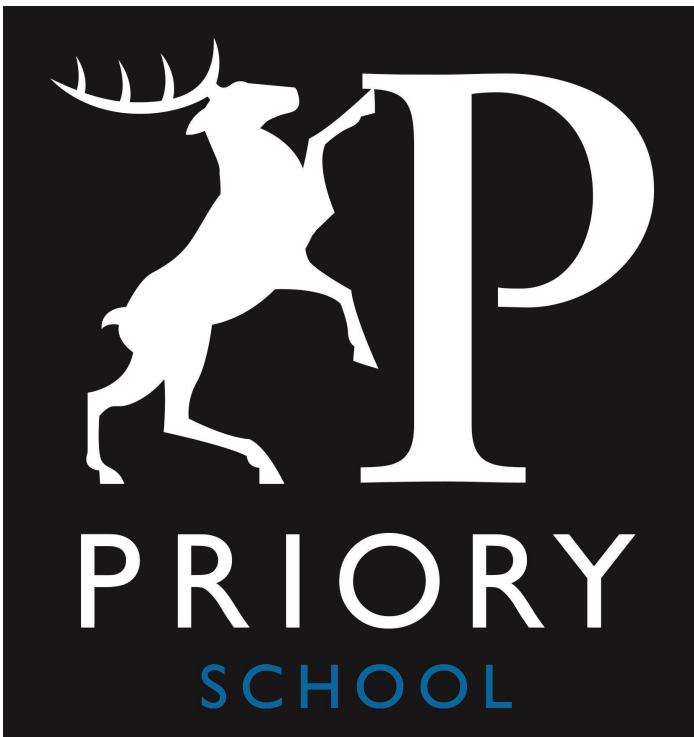
5

Getting non-specialist teachers on board is critical to embedding Citizenship. Providing curriculum guidance and support is one way to do this.

6

Preparing your Citizenship curriculum and teaching materials ahead of the school year might seem like a daunting task. In the long run, though, it pays off.



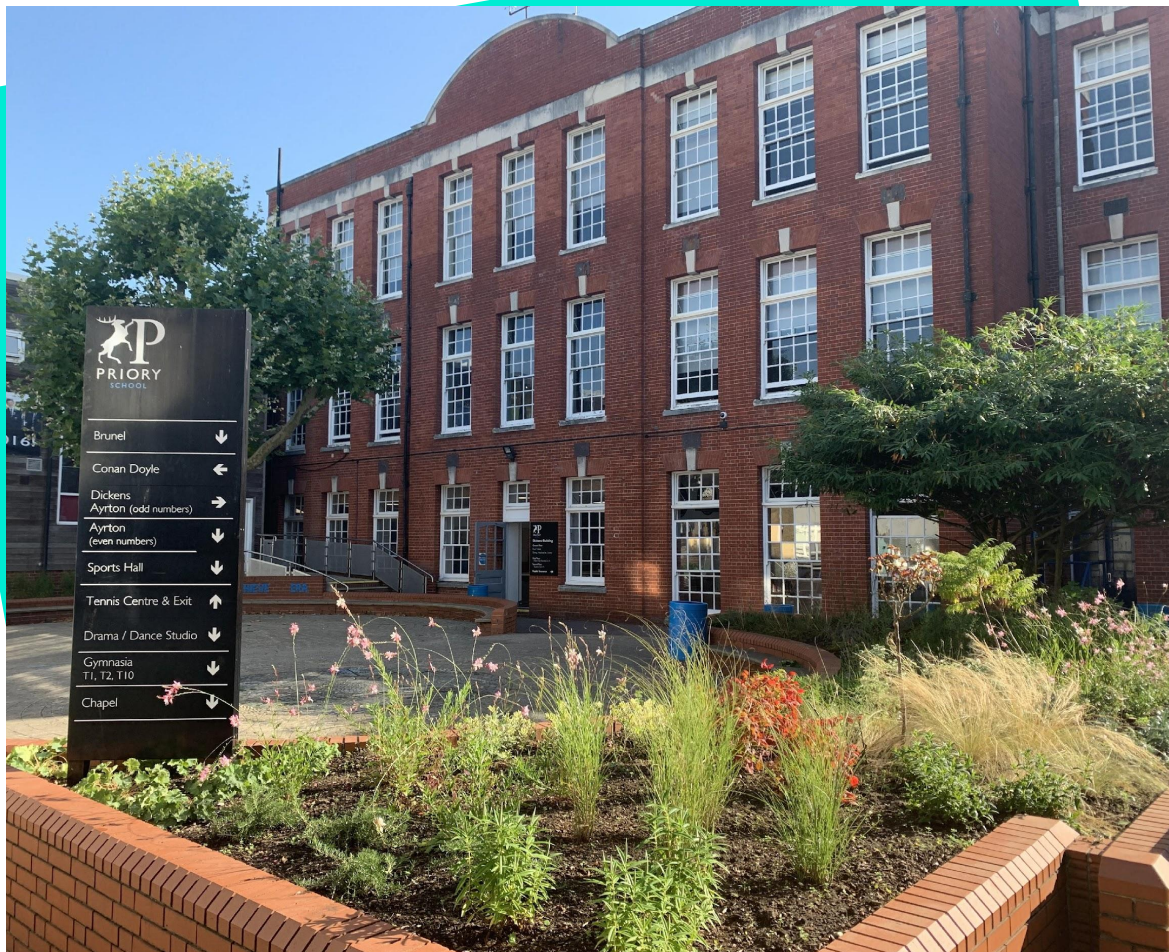


Coordinating Citizenship across a multi-academy trust



Introducing the school

Priory School in Portsmouth joined BET in 2014. The school sits on the border of several local neighbourhoods which range from being at the median point of deprivation levels to the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods in the country. The school has 1,250 students across years 7-11, the numbers with SEN and EAL are slightly above the national average, whilst the number of students eligible for free school meals over the last 6 years is substantially above the national average (35% compared to 28%). 60% of students achieve level 4 and above in maths and English. Priory School has had a long history of promoting Citizenship, which is taught across key stages 3 and 4 and offered as a GCSE option.



A vision of ‘game-changing’ citizenship across the Trust

The Bohunt Education Trust (BET) is a family of eight schools and two sixth forms in the South of England. The Trust employs 1,300 staff and has over 11,000 students and is classed as a medium-sized multi-academy trust. Its ethos is, ‘enjoy respect achieve’, which is promoted through a commitment to developing students as ‘game-changers’. As part of this game-changer curriculum, BET maintains a rich programme of outdoor education, including international trips, camps and the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, which has over 850 students registered, recording over 9,000 hours of voluntary service. Across the Trust over 90% of students achieve level 4 and above in maths and English and over 95% students achieved grade C and above at A level.

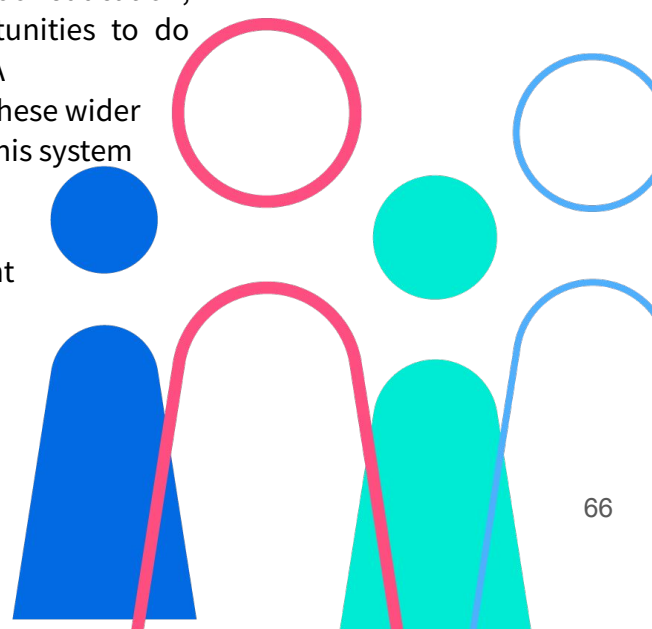
The Director of Education at BET has an overview of the curriculum, assessment and student support across the Trust. He works with a team of Subject Directors, who are employed as teachers in a BET school and spend two days a week developing the curriculum across the Trust. This includes writing common curricula, developing a common assessment framework, and monitoring the quality of provision with heads of department in each school. Staff across the Trust from class teachers to senior managers recognised BET’s ‘openness’ to build on strengths in different schools to support developments across all schools, so these Subject Directors work closely with Heads of Department to disseminate good practice and develop consistency. The Headteacher at Priory described this as the recruitment of a ‘Cabinet of talents’ to find the best people to lead each subject across the Trust.

For several years Citizenship and RE have had Subject Coordinators working across the Trust to develop curriculum and assessment frameworks, but now a new post has been created to lead on Personal Development, combining oversight and performance management in these areas. This provides a more substantial curriculum focus for the ‘game-changer’ vision across BET, which the Director of Education summarises as: powerful ideas + empathy = action. The Headteacher at Priory echoed this sentiment and added that ‘we don’t create character but we allow it to emerge’.



In recent years the work taking place across the Trust has enabled its schools to become more explicit and concrete about how this game-changer vision and Enjoyment, Respect and Achievement (ERA) ethos connect in concrete ways to the curriculum. For example, ‘game-changer’ content refers to curriculum content that goes beyond the basic requirements (either national curriculum or exam specification) and this is mapped across the school to ensure all subjects include challenging material and diverse role models of people who have made significant impacts within each subject. Corridors and display boards feature game-changers to foreground the relationship between people, disciplinary knowledge and progress. Similarly, the ethos is reflected in activities across ERA weeks to model the breadth of experiences and attainment valued by the Trust.

The Trust maintains a broad notion of the curriculum as the totality of experiences offered by the school, with an emphasis on outdoor education, expeditions, Duke of Edinburgh Awards and other opportunities to do something different and out of the ordinary. In Priory, the ERA week involved over 50 organisations and partners providing these wider experiences. These opportunities are tracked so that, when this system is fully implemented (and recovered from the disruptions of Covid), every student will also have a game-changer report to record a much richer record of the experiences of each student and their wider achievements, in addition to their exam achievements.



A common citizenship and RE curriculum

The big picture

The Director of Education cites Knud Illeris' model of learning which is about striking a balance between learning content, relationships and motivation. He argues that Citizenship speaks powerfully to all of those elements. For example, much of the curriculum aims to build students' capacity to engage with contemporary citizenship challenges, where the content is recognised as important and where young people are motivated to know more, such as the rise of the extreme right, the climate crisis, and the immediate threats associated with county lines gangs. It also potentially transforms the relationships between staff and students, with the former acting as facilitators for students to develop their own agency. This holds out the possibility of creating a 'halo effect', where engagement, relationships and enjoyment in Citizenship may well have a wider impact on students' feelings towards school and their teachers.

First and foremost, the Trust sees this curriculum commitment as an essential part of preparing students for life. But, pragmatically, there is a recognition that this kind of provision also resonates with the narrower policy agenda from Ofsted in relation to personal development, cultural capital and SMSC, and so such developments feel like they can work with the grain of the policy framework. For the headteacher at Priory this is also part of the school's support for children's mental health and well-being – being out in the world, doing real things, pushing at personal boundaries is important, especially in the transition back from Covid disruptions.

Every student across BET has at least an hour a week on their timetable committed to Citizenship and RE. Each school has a Head of Department coordinating this programme and across the Trust this has been coordinated by Subject Leaders in each subject. They coordinate the curriculum so that some units deal with Citizenship and RE separately and others combine the two. This curriculum space is seen as vital for enabling students to think about how to create change and to work with others to explore diverse opinions and beliefs related to contemporary issues. This curriculum provides a crucial opportunity for students to engage in action to create change – to learn through the experience of becoming game-changers. As such it provides a distinctive and concrete opportunity to realise the vision of the Trust. The headteacher at Priory felt the curriculum



element was essential in ensuring that values and ethos moved from being implicit across the Trust to being clear and explicit, underpinned by rigorous and deliberately planned teaching to establish a solid foundation for understanding what it means to be a ‘game-changer’.

Teachers we spoke to reported that the game-changer theme resonated strongly with students and the new core curriculum motivated and engaged students. Several teachers used examples from their own teaching to explain how the classroom study of game-changers helped to make the school ethos more concrete. They mentioned case studies that are commonly taught (Martin Luther King, Malala, Greta Thunberg) and explained that calling them all game-changers helped the students to think about connections between them. These teachers also added students from the school, for example those participating in the School Strikes for Climate, as game-changers to make the connection even more clearly between active citizenship and the school ethos. This also has the potential to enhance engagement, as students see themselves literally reflected in the curriculum.



As the profile of Citizenship has grown as a means to promote the vision and ethos of the Trust, a new role of Director of Personal Development has been created to create a position of comparable status to other curriculum Directors. This role will help to pull together some of the wider strands of provision, for example the school runs an award programme for environmental action, and elements of its PSHE programme are also relevant to developing as citizens. Once the curriculum is in place and being monitored, this role can pull together these wider elements into a coherent account, so that both staff and students can make the connections between disparate school experiences and relate them all to the core challenge of developing game-changer citizens.

This commitment to modelling how to be a game-changer and encouraging young people to engage in active citizenship also means the schools have to revisit the rules around appropriate student behaviour. As an example, when students expressed a willingness to participate in the School Strikes for Climate Change, the staff in Priory negotiated an agreement that students would nominate representatives to attend events outside of school on their behalf, to minimise disruption to the school day and ensure they could work with children and their families to ensure they attended safely. Taking children’s agency seriously means school leaders have to negotiate with students to co-construct solutions.



A common citizenship and RE curriculum

The detail

The curriculum plan was devised to run across the Trust and has been rolled out in two phases, first key stage 3 and then key stage 4 a year later. The curriculum was designed to build on the Citizenship curriculum and the four locally agreed syllabi for RE. After reviewing those foundational documents, teachers then met to review what they wanted to focus on in-depth and what they wanted all students to have encountered by the time they leave the school. The Subject Coordinator for Citizenship recognised that some compromise would be required to devise a curriculum that met everyone's needs and allowed the diverse provision across Trust schools to flourish. This meant thinking about what was essential in her own established schemes of work and thinking about how that could be re-worked into new units. For example, core material on equality legislation has been re-embedded in a new unit on crime and punishment in year 10, where core Citizenship knowledge is established as the prelude to considering how various religious traditions perceive justice in relation to contemporary issues.

The optional structure also leaves enough flexibility for schools to design units that reflect their own context. It also enables Priory to continue with its GCSE Citizenship, and to ensure that key stage 3 provides enough of a foundation for GCSE study. The core key stage 4 units also have to work as complementary content to run alongside the GCSE, without undue repetition. This is similar in those schools offering GCSE RE, so the content has been discussed between heads of department to ensure the common core provides enough of a foundation for all students, without repeating material covered in the optional GCSEs.

The curriculum itself includes some topics that have been redeveloped and expanded following discussions and feedback from students. For example, key stage 4 students in Priory felt the school could have done more to teach about violence against women and students were also involved in the production of an Anti-racist Teaching Toolkit produced by the Citizenship Coordinator for Portsmouth City Council. Teachers also spoke about recognising that students are often 'experts in the room' in relation to Citizenship and RE and try to incorporate student perspectives and knowledge appropriately.

The core curriculum plan is accompanied by lesson plans, teaching resources, and extra reading for staff and students to build knowledge around the topics. The core units are all assessed through centrally written assessment tasks, to enable schools to compare their attainment and progress. Whilst teachers know they should generally draw on the core curriculum, there is also an understanding that contemporary issues sometimes take priority. For example, when Russia invaded Ukraine, teachers in Priory suspended the curriculum temporarily to ensure students had the opportunity to learn about what was happening and what it meant. This built on established curriculum material relating to media literacy and was connected to whole staff training to support teachers to engage in productive conversations with students when they raise the issue. Teachers we spoke to felt that they had licence to adapt lessons to suit their classes, and that the materials provided give them a good foundation to build on for their own classes.



	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Autumn (1)	Introduction to RE & Citizenship	Option#1 E.g. Human Rights (Cit)	Holocaust (RE)	Option#2	Political Literacy (Cit)
Autumn (2)	Christianity (RE)	Prejudice & Discrimination (Cit)	Holocaust (Cit) inc. modern genocide; FBVs	Crime & Punishment (Cit)	Option#4
Spring (1)	Christianity (RE)	Depth Study decided by schools (RE)	Depth Study of Islam (RE)	Depth Study of Christianity (RE)	Depth Study of Humanism (RE)
Spring (2)	Gamechangers (Cit) inc. one religious figure	Depth Study decided by schools (RE)	Depth Study of Islam (RE)	Depth Study of Christianity (RE)	Depth Study of Humanism (RE)
Summer (1)	Depth Study decided by schools (RE)	Media Literacy (Cit)	Value of Money (Cit) inc. religion and charity	Religious Philosophy & God (RE)	Role of Media (Cit)
Summer (2)	Depth Study decided by schools (RE)	Religion in Media (Cit)	Social Action (Cit)	Option#3	
		Health & Well-being	Medical Ethics		

Key

Core Citizenship

Core RE

Core Other

School Options

Staff development

A key role for the new Subject Director will be to support staff in schools, especially where there are no subject specialists for Citizenship. There are three Trust CPD days each year and one of the explicit aims of these is to nurture relationships and networking to support colleagues. Originally, because Citizenship was only explicitly taught in Priory School, the Head of Citizenship had no obvious network to join, but over the years a network of PSHE, Citizenship and RE teachers has emerged to foster greater collaboration.

Building these relationships across the Trust has enabled the profile of Citizenship to grow, both through discussing shared concerns related to these curriculum areas and promoting the distinctive contribution of Citizenship to the Trust aims. Relationships are also key in ensuring that the various levels of curriculum management / coordination work well. One Head of Department in a school other than Priory said she already works closely with the two Subject Coordinators for Citizenship and RE, and is very welcoming of the new role of Subject Director being introduced. For her, this provides a supportive environment where she knows she can draw on expert advice from colleagues who are always approachable.

The teams of teachers contributing to this core provision are quite large, with many teachers only teaching a few lessons per week in addition to their main subject specialism. This often includes teachers who have 'spare hours' on their timetable, although many humanities specialists also contribute to the core curriculum and see this as complementary to their main subject expertise. In Bohunt School there are 27 teachers, and in Priory School there are 22 teachers contributing to the teaching of the core curriculum. The Curriculum Leaders in each school coordinate these colleagues through monthly meetings, which include CPD opportunities, book-looks, and discussion of lesson drop-ins and mock 'deep dives' to ensure provision is reviewed and moderated. Subject Directors and Curriculum Leaders also offer mentoring and coaching to colleagues.

Lessons learned

1

Get the 'why' sorted first, so that the rest follows more coherently.

2

If dealing with colleagues who do not understand the case for Citizenship, it's also useful to ask why would we not take Citizenship seriously, given all the challenges young people confront? How can schooling enable 16 year olds to move on if they have not been equipped to deal with contemporary challenges?

3

Once people understand the need to build young people's capacity for citizenship, the explicit curriculum should be seen as the spine that supports a diverse range of learning opportunities across the life of the school, it helps to make the values and vision more real.

4

Value Citizenship as an opportunity for students to build their own sense of themselves in the broader world, and to think about their own role in improving things. Building a sense of agency is crucial to enabling young people to feel positive about transitioning into the world of work and citizenship.

5

See your students as 'experts in the room' and as examples to others. Students are motivated to learn about their peers and to make connections between school-based game-changers and others who have changed the world. It is also transformational to recognise students as having knowledge and experiences that surpass those of their teachers – whether that be through their lived experiences as citizens or members of religious communities.

6

Recognise the valuable contribution of Citizenship to nurture positive relationships between students and staff, where the teacher takes on a more explicit role of enabler and facilitator.

7

Be brave about creating a classroom culture where students can discuss controversial issues respectfully and teach the language and ideas required to handle the sensitivities arising. This means an element of controlled risk-taking, for example, seeing examples of prejudice in discussions as opportunities for reflection and learning rather than infringements.

8

Build on the positives, every school has strengths to build on, and Citizenship has to be adapted to fit your context.

9

Don't be shy about your achievements. Good Citizenship provision generates plenty of opportunities to raise the profile of the school, so make sure school leaders know about achievements and discuss how to publicise this through the local press and newsletters to parents.

10

Formalise opportunities for diverse teams of teachers to come together to ensure proper coordination and quality enhancement work.



ACT



ACT is the subject association for all those engaged in leading, teaching and supporting high quality Citizenship education in schools and colleges.

teachingcitizenship.org.uk

info@teachingcitizenship.org.uk

