

Nine Principles of Effective Citizenship Teaching

ACT has developed a set of nine quality principles that inform our curriculum development and wider work to support high quality Citizenship teaching. These have been developed with teachers and experts, to ensure we design curricula that considers: the needs of pupils; the requirements of the national curriculum/GCSE specifications in terms of knowledge and skills; established Citizenship pedagogy; and with flexibility to adjust to address the contemporary and changing nature of issues used to exemplify and teach key concepts in the subject.

Principle 1. Consider the contexts and backgrounds of all pupils and any issues that will be particularly sensitive or controversial for them. For example, how diversity is promoted in teaching and represented in materials and case studies; and establishing a safe and open learning environment to discuss sensitive topical issues and considering the needs of pupils who may be affected by such issues.

Principle 2. Establish what pupils know, understand and can do and use information about pupils to plan rigorous and challenging citizenship teaching and learning that meets national policy requirements and is appropriate in pitch and challenge for pupils. National requirements and standards for citizenship are established through the DfE programme of study for citizenship at key stages 1 and 2; the National Curriculum programmes of study for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 and/or; the subject criteria for GCSE Citizenship Studies.

Principle 3. Focus teaching and learning on developing pupils' understanding of citizenship concepts, knowledge, understanding and skills and their use and application of these, as the essential foundations of high quality citizenship education. Citizenship concepts include politics, democracy, government, law, justice, rights and responsibilities, participation, community, equality, identities, diversity, media literacy, digital citizenship, economic and financial understanding. Citizenship skills include critical thinking, research, enquiry, evaluating information, tackling controversial issues, oracy, discussion and debate, advocacy, influencing, campaigning and other forms of citizenship action, collaboration and teamwork, problem solving and critical reflection.

Principle 4. Use a range of types of teaching and learning activities that promote deep learning in relation to citizenship concepts and skills including active citizenship. These should include different types of written work including extended writing; different types of oral work including informal discussions and formal debates; a range of opportunities for pupils to participate in deep and critical thinking; and collaboration with others in active citizenship. Active citizenship involves taking forward planned courses of informed and responsible action to address issues of concerns within the school and wider community aimed at making a contribution to democratic and public life.

Principle 5. Make use of topical and controversial issues and debates to bring citizenship teaching to life in a safe and impartial learning environment. This involves developing skills to explore, discuss, and critically evaluate citizenship issues and debates from different viewpoints. When political issues are explored, content includes a range of viewpoints over time. Care is taken to avoid

bias, maintain impartiality and promote and uphold democratic values and human rights. (See ACT's guidance on maintaining impartiality)

Principle 6. Provide opportunities for pupils to take part in individual and group work, both in and beyond the classroom, where appropriate with members of the local and wider community.

Effective citizenship education includes providing opportunities for active learning (e.g. inquiry, research, critical thinking and collaboration) rather than simply teacher directed learning) and active citizenship, where pupils explore issues and take action with others involving opportunities to meet and work with people in the wider community.

Principle 7. Look for appropriate opportunities to make connections between citizenship and other curriculum subjects and wider curriculum activities and be sure to establish clear citizenship objectives and outcomes where such connections are made. For example where appropriate to develop links with other subjects such as History, RE or English or the RSHE framework or the DFE fundamental British Values.

Principle 8. Set high expectations in citizenship with clear learning intentions and success criteria, as the basis of good teacher assessment. For example, being clear about what pupils will learn and the standards expected of them to be successful.

Principle 9. Create a range of ways to recognise, celebrate and share pupils' achievements within the school, with parents and the wider community. For example, where appropriate promoting recognition of student achievement in citizenship. This might include a reference to ACT's ACTIVE Citizenship Award Scheme.