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# Making sense of citizenship

A CPD Handbook

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# Making sense of citizenship

*“We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life.”*

**Crick report, 1998**

Education for citizenship aims to provide young people with the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values that will help them to:

- play an effective and active role in society in relation to their local, national and international communities
- become informed citizens aware of their rights, responsibilities and duties
- realise that they can have influence and make a difference in their communities.

It involves young people in active and participative learning in a range of settings, including in classrooms, in the life of the school and the college and in the wider community.

## Chapter 1

# Spelling it out

What you understand by citizenship will determine the attitude you take towards it and how you try to incorporate it into your professional practice.

It is important from the very beginning, therefore, to develop a clear understanding of what citizenship is – both as an individual and at an institutional level - and how it impacts on young people.

The aim of this first chapter is to help you to clarify and answer some of the generic questions that apply to citizenship education, wherever it takes place.

Questions covered include:

- **What is citizenship?**
- **Why is it important?**
- **Where does it occur?**
- **What is it for?**
- **How is it learned?**
- **What makes it distinctive?**

Issues raised in this chapter are looked at in more detail in subsequent sections of the Handbook.

The chapter is relevant to anyone involved in teaching, leading or promoting citizenship to young people, whether in the formal or informal education sector.

# What is citizenship?

## KEY ISSUES

What is citizenship?

What does it mean to be a citizen?

How you understand citizenship affects your attitude towards it and the relevance it has for you in your professional practice.

It is important at the outset, therefore, to have a clear understanding of what is meant by the terms 'citizenship' and 'citizen', and how they are used in education.

## What does it mean to be a citizen?

A citizen is a **member of a political community or state**.

How you become a citizen depends upon a number of factors, such as your place of birth, family ties, period of residence in a country and so on.

Are people in Britain citizens or subjects? Under the British constitution we are citizens who are subject to parliament – technically, to the 'Queen-in-Parliament'. So it is probably easiest to think of us as a combination of both.

Under the terms of the Maastricht treaty, we are also citizens of the European Union.

## What is citizenship?

The term 'citizenship' has several different meanings:

### • A legal and political status

In its simplest meaning, 'citizenship' is used to refer to the status of being a citizen – that is, to being a member of a particular political community or state.

Citizenship in this sense brings with it certain rights and responsibilities that are defined in law, such as the right to vote, the responsibility to pay tax and so on. It is sometimes referred to as **nationality**, and is what is meant when someone talks about 'applying for', 'getting', or being 'refused' citizenship.

### • Involvement in public life and affairs

The term 'citizenship' is also used to refer to involvement in public life and affairs – that is, to the behaviour and actions of a citizen. It is sometimes known as **active citizenship**. Citizenship in this sense is applied to a wide range of activities - from voting in elections and standing for political office to simply taking an interest in current affairs and public policy issues. It refers not only to rights and responsibilities laid down in the law, but to general forms of behaviour – social and moral – which societies expect of their citizens. What these rights and responsibilities, and forms of behaviour should be is an area of ongoing public debate, with people holding a range of views.

**• An educational activity**

Finally, 'citizenship' is used to refer to an educational activity – that is, to the process of helping people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens. Citizenship in this sense is also known as **citizenship education** or **education for citizenship**. It encompasses all forms of education – from informal education in the home or through youth work to more formal types of education provided in schools, colleges, universities, training organisations and the workplace. At the formal end of the spectrum, it gives its name both to a distinct subject in the National Curriculum and to a general area of study leading to an academic qualification - both of which, confusingly, are sometimes spelled with a small and sometimes a capital 'C'!

In this Handbook we are primarily concerned with citizenship as an educational process. However, as is the common practice, we shall continue to use the term 'citizenship' interchangeably with 'citizenship education' and 'education for citizenship'.

## Improving practice

1. How do the rights and responsibilities a person has as a citizen differ from those that come with being, say, a family member or a friend? Try to think of some examples of each.
2. In your view, what forms of behaviour should we expect of someone who is a citizen of this country, additional to those laid down in the law? Is it fair to ask schools to encourage these forms of behaviour? If so, how can they do it?

# Why is citizenship important?

## KEY ISSUES

Why teach citizenship?  
How does it benefit young people?  
Who else does it benefit?

## Why teach citizenship?

The principle justification for citizenship education derives from the nature of **democracy**.

Democracies need **active, informed and responsible citizens** – citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process.

These capacities do not develop unaided. They have to be learned. While a certain amount of citizenship may be picked up through ordinary experience in the home or at work, it can never in itself be sufficient to equip citizens for the sort of active role required of them in today's complex and diverse society.

If citizens are to become genuinely involved in public life and affairs, a more explicit approach to citizenship education is required. An approach which is:

- **pervasive** not limited to schools, but an integral part of all education for young people
- **inclusive** an entitlement for all young people regardless of their ability or background
- **lifelong** continuing throughout life.

*"We should not, must not, dare not, be complacent about the health and future of British democracy. Unless we become a nation of engaged citizens, our democracy is not secure."*

**Lord Chancellor (1998)**

## How does it benefit young people?

Citizenship benefits young people by giving them a **voice**. Young people are citizens in their own right. They may not all be old enough to vote in elections or sit on juries, but in almost every other way they have the same rights and duties as older citizens. They have a legitimate stake in society and are entitled to have a say in how it is run.

Citizenship also benefits young people by helping them to develop the **expertise** and **experience** needed to claim their proper rights, understand their responsibilities and have an influence on what goes on in their communities, preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life.

*"Citizenship is an opportunity for me to explore my social and political views something young people have been deprived of in the past."*

**David, Youthcomm**

## Who else does it benefit?

Citizenship also brings benefits for schools and other organisations and society at large.

For **schools and other organisations**, it helps to produce motivated and responsible learners, who relate positively to each other, to staff and to the surrounding community.

For **society**, it helps to create an active and responsible citizenry, willing to participate in the life of the nation and the wider world and play its part in the democratic process.

## Improving practice

1. To what extent do you think citizenship education is able to make a difference to:
  - a) voter turnout? b) street crime? c) anti-social behaviour? d) attitudes towards politics? e) race relations? f) civic renewal?
2. Should citizenship education be expected to solve social problems? If not, what is its purpose?
3. Which aspects of citizenship do you think are the least likely to be picked up in the home or at work and need to be taught explicitly? How do you suggest they can be taught? What sorts of experience can a school offer that is not generally available in the home or the family?
4. Imagine you are recruiting young people for a new citizenship course or project. What would you say to promote it – for example, on a poster or in a leaflet or prospectus?

# Where does citizenship occur?

## KEY ISSUES

When does citizenship education begin?  
Where can it be taught?  
How are the different experiences linked?

## When does citizenship education begin?

Citizenship education is a **lifelong** process.

Citizenship begins in the home and the child's immediate surroundings, with questions about self-identity and relationships, making choices, and ideas of fairness and right and wrong. It continues to develop as the child's surroundings and horizons expand at home, in schools, with friends and in local communities.

## Where can it be taught?

As children grow older they can be introduced to more explicit types of citizenship education in other institutions – in particular, through schooling, but also in other settings:

### • Citizenship in the early years

Citizenship education is expected to make a contribution to children's early development and learning. What this entails is set out in the section in the **Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage** concerned with personal, social and emotional development.

### • Citizenship in primary schools

While not a statutory requirement, citizenship teaching has become an important part of the curriculum in primary schools. At primary level, citizenship is taught alongside and makes an important contribution to the promotion of pupils' personal and social development, including health and well-being.

Programmes of study described in the **non-statutory guidelines** for PSHE and Citizenship cover the knowledge, understanding and skills to be taught in key stages 1 and 2 in four 'strands':

- Developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities
- Preparing to play an active role as citizens
- Developing a healthy, safer lifestyle
- Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people.

Schemes of work for citizenship in key stages 1 and 2 are available at:

**[www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/ks1-2citizenship](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/ks1-2citizenship)**

**• Citizenship in secondary schools**

At secondary level, citizenship education is a statutory subject for 11 to 16 year-olds. The statutory requirements are set out in the **National Curriculum** programmes of study in three 'strands'

- Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens
- Developing skills of enquiry and communication
- Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Apart from the absence of an 8 level scale of achievement, citizenship is treated exactly the same as other National Curriculum subjects at key stages 3 and 4, including:

- annual reports to parents
- formal assessment at the end of key stage 3
- an optional GCSE qualification
- Ofsted inspection.

Schemes of work for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 are available at

**[www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship)**  
**[www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/ks4citizenship](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/ks4citizenship)**

**• Citizenship in other settings**

Citizenship education, though not always labelled as such, has for a long time been a mainstay of youth and community work, encouraging young people to play an active part in the life of their communities, through initiatives such as:

- youth conferences, forums and councils
- peer education • intergenerational work
- participation projects • community regeneration
- designing and developing youth facilities
- campaigns on national and international issues.

Increasingly, citizenship is also becoming a vital aspect of the education of young people in the formal post-16 sector in sixth forms, tertiary and further education colleges, and in vocational training – for example, through:

- enrichment activities • accredited courses
- conferences and whole-day events • tutorial sessions
- student councils and forums
- representation on governing bodies and committees
- college campaigns and community action
- citizenship content in vocational courses.

QCA guidance on citizenship in the post-16 sector is available at

**[www.qca.org.uk/ages14-19/subjects/post16index/html](http://www.qca.org.uk/ages14-19/subjects/post16index/html)**

# How are the different experiences linked?

Wherever it occurs, citizenship education has the same distinctive aims and purposes - if not always the same emphasis. Citizenship experiences need to be connected and built upon as young people progress through their education.

For this to happen, it is important you are aware of the whole range of opportunities young people have for citizenship learning today and are prepared, wherever possible, to collaborate with other professionals in different phases or sectors of education.

## Improving practice

1. Do you think that some aspects of citizenship are taught more naturally and easily in certain educational settings than others? If so, which and where?
2. In your current practice, to what extent do you build on the work of or collaborate with practitioners from other phases or sectors of education?
3. Arrange a visit to observe citizenship practice in a different phase or sector of education or invite a fellow practitioner from a different phase to come to talk to you about their work.

# What is citizenship for?

## KEY ISSUES

What is the aim of citizenship education?  
 What are its essential elements?  
 How are the different elements connected?

## What is the aim of citizenship education?

Wherever it occurs, citizenship education has the same basic aims and purposes. It is education for citizenship – that is, education which aims to help people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens.

More specifically, it aims to **prepare them for life as citizens of a democracy**.

Different characteristics are required by citizens in different types of political system. The characteristics required of people living as free and equal citizens in a democratic society differ significantly from those of people living under, say, a totalitarian regime.

Democracies depend upon citizens who, among other things, are:

- **aware** of their rights and responsibilities as citizens
- **informed** about the social and political world
- **concerned** about the welfare of others
- **articulate** in their opinions and arguments
- **capable** of having an influence on the world.
- **active** in their communities.
- **responsible** in how they act as citizens

Citizenship education is not about trying to fit everyone into the same mould – creating the ‘model’, or ‘good’ citizen. Its aim is to empower citizens to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their lives and the life of their communities.

## What are its essential elements?

Citizenship education involves a wide range of different elements of learning, including:

- **Knowledge and understanding**  
 e.g., about topics such as laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights, diversity, money and the economy, sustainable development and world as a global community – and concepts, such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law

- **Skills and aptitudes**

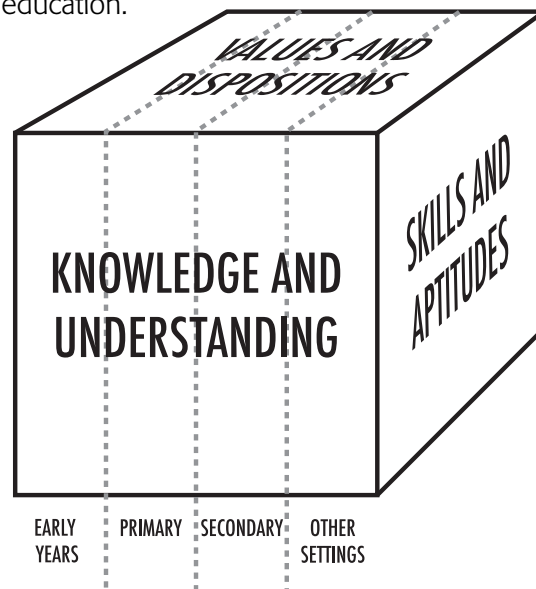
e.g., critical thinking, analysing information, expressing opinions, taking part in discussions and debates, negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action

- **Values and dispositions**

e.g., respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view, and a willingness to listen to, work with and stand up for others.

## How are the different elements connected?

This cube helps to explain the interrelationship between the essential elements in citizenship education and the need to include all of them in a developmental way in every stage of a young person's education.



It is artificial to try to separate out the learning of skills from knowledge, knowledge from values and so on. In practice, they are generally learned simultaneously rather than in isolation,

e.g., in giving a talk to a council official on the results of a survey, young people are likely to be learning about the workings of local government and developing the skills of public presentations at the same time.

## Improving practice

1. Choose one aspect of citizenship learning - e.g., laws and rules – and try to think of appropriate activities through which it might be approached at different stages in a young person's education.
2. Think about some examples of the following activities and try to identify the different kinds of citizenship learning that might lead out of them:
  - a) a debate about immigration
  - b) a whole-day event on human rights
  - c) a mock election
  - d) a visit to a magistrates court.

# How is citizenship learned?

## KEY ISSUES

What is the most effective form of learning in citizenship?

Where does citizenship learning take place?

How do you make it explicit?

## What is the most effective form of learning in citizenship?

The most effective form of learning in citizenship education is:

- **active** – emphasizes learning by doing
- **interactive** – uses discussion and debate
- **relevant** – focuses on real-life issues facing young people and society
- **critical** – encourages young people to think for themselves
- **collaborative** – employs group-work and co-operative learning
- **participative** – gives young people a say in their own learning.

Learning of this sort needs a certain kind of **climate** in which to flourish. It needs an environment that is non-threatening, in which young people can express their opinions freely and without embarrassment and use their initiative without undue fear of failure.

Such a climate takes time to develop and is built up gradually.

## Where does citizenship learning take place?

Citizenship learning takes place in **three** distinct aspects of the life of an educational institution – through its taught curriculum, its ethos and culture, and its links with the wider community.

They are sometimes known as the ‘three Cs’ of citizenship education: **Curriculum**, **Culture** and **Community**.

### 1. Taught curriculum

First, citizenship learning takes place through the taught, or formal, curriculum of an institution, in the form of either:

- a discrete subject, course, or activity
- an element in other subjects, courses or activities
- a combination of these.

## 2. Ethos and culture

Second, citizenship is learned through the ethos or culture of an institution – that is, through the values on which it operates and the way in which its daily business is organised. It is most effective when it takes place in an ethos which values young people and encourages them to take an active part in the life of the organisation, through:

- having a say in their learning – e.g., initiating projects
- playing a part in decision-making – e.g., student forums
- taking on positions of responsibility – e.g., peer mediation

## 3. Wider community

Third, citizenship is learned through opportunities for involvement in the local community and the wider world, for example:

- school linking and exchanges
- intergenerational projects
- peer education
- developing local facilities
- engaging with politicians, police and community leaders
- campaigns and fund-raising.

# How do you make it explicit?

If young people are to develop a broad and balanced view of what it means to be a citizen, it is important that these three different opportunities for citizenship learning are made explicit and are consistent in the messages they give.

It is particularly important in schools preparing for inspection. Inspectors look for breadth and balance in citizenship programmes and expect the contributions of different aspects of school life to be identified in written policies.

One way to draw these together is by building them into the **assessment** framework, with young people recording and commenting on their involvement in the life of the organisation and its links with the community as well as on their formal learning.

Another way is by drawing attention to the range of citizenship opportunities available in an institution or project in **promotional material**, such as course-books, prospectuses or citizenship ‘manifestos’.

# Improving practice

1. How far do you think the prevailing ethos in your institution reflects the aims and principles of citizenship in terms of daily practice?
2. What kinds of citizenship learning do you think are best developed through:
  - a) taught curricula? b) ethos and culture? c) community links?
3. Analyse a project you have been involved in or have observed in terms of the criteria for effective citizenship learning listed at the top of the opposite page. How well does the project stand up to this sort of scrutiny?
4. Imagine you are running a workshop for colleagues on effective learning in citizenship. What form would your workshop take and how would you run it?

# What makes citizenship distinctive?

## KEY ISSUES

Where does citizenship overlap with other subjects?

Why is it important to distinguish between them?

What is distinctive about citizenship education?

## Where does citizenship overlap with other subjects?

Many of the themes explored in citizenship education commonly occur in other areas of education,

e.g., drug and alcohol education work in PSHE, communication skills in Key Skills, and employment issues in Connexions work.

Similarly, there is considerable overlap between the forms of learning used in citizenship and in other subjects,

e.g., active learning, group work and discussion are common throughout the curriculum in both the formal and informal sector.

## Why is it important to distinguish between them?

It is important to be aware that just because a certain theme or form of learning occurs elsewhere doesn't necessarily make that activity a **citizenship** activity.

Unless you are able to distinguish between citizenship and other subjects:

- there is a danger that citizenship will be subsumed in other activities and you may not be able to guarantee young people their entitlement to citizenship learning
- you will be unable to make citizenship learning explicit, which is essential if young people are to develop a broad and balanced view of what being a citizen involves and a pre-requisite for schools preparing for inspection
- you will not be able to progress in your understanding of citizenship issues or how they may be made accessible to young people.

# What is distinctive about citizenship education?

Citizenship education can be distinguished by its content, focus and approach to learning.

## 1. Distinctive content

There is a central core of learning, factual and conceptual, that is unique to citizenship education and is not properly addressed in other subjects, including:

- criminal and civil law • government and politics
- electoral systems • taxation and the economy
- role of the EU, the Commonwealth and the UN
- concepts such as democracy, justice and the rule of law.

## 2. Distinctive focus

Citizenship education focuses on everyday issues that concern young people as **citizens** – that is, as members of society with legal rights and responsibilities, e.g., such as education and health care, welfare benefits, public transport, policing, immigration, international relations and the environment.

They are to be distinguished from issues that concern young people as **private individuals** – that is, issues which are personal or relate only to their family members or friends,

e.g., applying for a job is a personal issue, the minimum wage is a citizenship one; drinking is a personal issue, the law on alcohol use is a citizenship one; what you look for in a friend is a personal issue, their political opinion is a citizenship one.

## 3. Distinctive approach

Citizenship learning develops through **active involvement**. Young people learn what it means to be a citizen through participation in discussions and debates in the classroom, in the life of the school or college and in the wider community. They are given opportunities both to develop their learning and to put it into practice in '**real life**' situations.

### Citizenship issues are:

- **real** – actually affect people's lives
- **topical** – current today
- **ultimately moral** – relate to what people think is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant in society
- **sometimes sensitive** – can affect people at a personal level, especially when family or friends are involved
- **often controversial** - people disagree and hold strong opinions about them.

## Improving practice

1. Consider the following themes:
  - a) bullying b) personal safety c) sex and relationships
  - d) eating disorders e) mental health.

For each one, think of issues that concern young people as citizens (rather than as private individuals).

2. Devise an exercise that can be used to help young people or colleagues distinguish between citizenship issues and issues which are of a personal nature.

# What citizenship education is and is not

## Citizenship education IS NOT

- Optional for students, teachers or schools
- About the indoctrination of young people
- About teachers following a particular political agenda
- To be confused with personal social and health education (PSHE) or the National Healthy Schools initiative
- To be subsumed into other parts of, or a 'bolt-on' to the curriculum
- Just about feelings, values, school ethos or circle time
- Just about volunteering, charity work and doing 'good deeds'
- Solely about what goes on in schools

# Citizenship education SHOULD BE

- An entitlement for all young people
- Relevant to the everyday concerns and experiences of young people
- About helping young people to think for themselves
- Progressive and developmental
- Active, enjoyable and stimulating
- Rigorous and challenging
- A real curriculum subject with a clear aim and a distinctive core which includes a defined knowledge and understanding component
- Co-ordinated and taught by skilled teachers who have specialist knowledge and the necessary skills, approaches and confidence
- About contributing to raising school standards and student achievement
- An essential part of the school curriculum linking curriculum, school culture and wider community
- Of benefit to young people, teachers, schools and their wider communities
- About contributing to creating more effective partnerships between schools and their wider communities
- A lifelong process.