



# Citizenship

Programme of study for key stage 4

(This is an extract from The National Curriculum 2007)

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## Curriculum aims

Learning and undertaking activities in citizenship contribute to achievement of the curriculum aims for all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

## The importance of citizenship

Education for citizenship equips young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life. Citizenship encourages them to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and to engage in discussion and debate. Students learn about their rights, responsibilities, duties and freedoms, and about laws, justice and democracy. They learn to take part in decision-making and different forms of action. They play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active and global citizens.

Citizenship encourages respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities. It equips students to engage critically with and explore diverse ideas, beliefs, cultures and identities and the values we share as citizens in the UK. Students begin to understand how society has changed and is changing in the UK, Europe and the wider world.

Citizenship addresses issues relating to social justice, human rights, community cohesion and global interdependence, and encourages students to challenge injustice, inequalities and discrimination. It helps young people to develop their critical skills, consider a wide range of political, social, ethical and moral problems, and explore opinions and ideas other than their own. They evaluate information, make informed judgements and reflect on the consequences of their actions now and in the future. They learn to argue a case on behalf of others as well as themselves and speak out on issues of concern.

*continued overleaf*

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**The importance of citizenship:** This reflects the three principles of effective citizenship education set out by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools. These are that citizenship should develop social and moral responsibility, community involvement and political literacy.

Citizenship equips students with the knowledge and skills needed for effective and democratic participation. It helps students to become informed, critical, active citizens who have the confidence and conviction to work collaboratively, take action and try to make a difference in their communities and the wider world.

## 1 Key concepts

There are a number of key concepts that underpin the study of citizenship. Students need to understand these concepts in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding.

### 1.1 Democracy and justice

- a Participating actively in different kinds of decision-making and voting in order to influence public life.
- b Weighing up what is fair and unfair in different situations, understanding that justice is fundamental to a democratic society and exploring the role of law in maintaining order and resolving conflict.
- c Considering how democracy, justice, diversity, toleration, respect and freedom are valued by people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions within a changing democratic society.
- d Understanding and exploring the roles of citizens and parliament in holding government and those in power to account.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Democracy and justice:** Students develop their understanding of the political and justice systems in the UK. They contrast government in the UK with other forms of government beyond the UK and consider the role of citizens within them.

They explore freedom as part of democracy; fairness and the rule of law as part of justice; power and authority; and accountability. They should understand that accountability happens at many levels, ranging from a responsible opposition in parliament challenging, testing and scrutinising what government is doing, to citizens in local communities challenging decisions that affect them.

Students should learn about the need to balance competing and conflicting demands and understand that in a democracy not everyone gets what they want. They should also learn that justice can mean treating everyone the same or treating people differently.

Linking teaching about democracy, elections and voting with the student council provides a way for students to apply their learning to real decision-making situations. Active participation provides opportunities to learn about the important role of negotiation and persuasion within a democracy.

## 1.2 Rights and responsibilities

- a Exploring different kinds of rights and obligations and how these affect both individuals and communities.
- b Understanding that individuals, organisations and governments have responsibilities to ensure that rights are balanced, supported and protected.
- c Investigating ways in which rights can compete and conflict, and understanding that hard decisions have to be made to try to balance these.

## 1.3 Identities and diversity: living together in the UK

- a Appreciating that identities are complex, can change over time and are informed by different understandings of what it means to be a citizen in the UK.
- b Exploring the diverse national, regional, ethnic and religious cultures, groups and communities in the UK and the connections between them.
- c Considering the interconnections between the UK and the rest of Europe and the wider world.
- d Exploring community cohesion and the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

# Participating actively in decision-making and voting

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Rights and responsibilities:** There are different kinds of rights, obligations and responsibilities – political, legal, human, social, civic and moral. Students should explore contested areas surrounding rights and responsibilities, for example the checks and balances needed in relation to freedom of speech in the context of threats from extremism and terrorism. Links between ‘rights and responsibilities’ and ‘democracy and justice’ include the shared responsibility we all have to support and promote democratic values.

**Identities and diversity: living together in the UK:** This includes the multiple identities that may be held by groups and communities in a diverse society, and the ways in which these identities are affected by changes in society. For example, students could learn about: how migration has shaped communities; common and shared identities and what unifies groups and communities; how poverty affects life chances; and how life in the UK today has been shaped by, and continues to be shaped by, political, social, economic and cultural changes. The historical context for such changes should be considered where appropriate.

All students, regardless of their legal or residential status, should explore and develop their understanding of what it means to be a citizen in the UK today.

**Community cohesion:** Citizenship offers opportunities for schools to address their statutory duty to promote community cohesion.

## 2 Key processes

These are the essential skills and processes in citizenship that students need to learn to make progress.

### 2.1 Critical thinking and enquiry

Students should be able to:

- a question and reflect on different ideas, opinions, assumptions, beliefs and values when exploring topical and controversial issues and problems
- b research, plan and undertake enquiries into issues and problems, using a range of information, sources and methods
- c interpret and analyse critically sources used, identifying different values, ideas and viewpoints and recognising bias
- d evaluate different viewpoints, exploring connections and relationships between viewpoints and actions in different contexts (from local to global).

### 2.2 Advocacy and representation

Students should be able to:

- a evaluate critically different ideas and viewpoints including those with which they do not necessarily agree
- b explain their viewpoint, drawing conclusions from what they have learnt through research, discussion and actions, including formal debates and votes
- c present a convincing argument that takes account of, and represents, different viewpoints, to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Critical thinking and enquiry:** Using real case studies to explore issues and problems can help to develop skills of critical thinking, enquiry, debate and advocacy. Students should interrogate evidence, develop judgements based on that evidence, and explore, question and reflect on their own ideas as well as those of others.

**Topical and controversial issues and problems:** Political, social and ethical issues and problems can be sensitive and can lead to disagreement. They should not be avoided, but need to be handled so that students develop skills in discussing and debating citizenship issues and considering points of view that are not necessarily their own. Setting ground rules and using distancing techniques can help to manage the discussion of such issues.

**Advocacy and representation:** Developing skills of advocacy and representation provides opportunities for students to build on the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing from the English programme of study. In the context of citizenship, they learn to take account of different points of view and the various ways in which people express themselves. They need regular opportunities to practise communicating with different audiences within and beyond the school community, including those in positions of power, to try to influence and persuade them about ways of making a difference to political and social issues.

## 2.3 Taking informed and responsible action

Students should be able to:

- a explore creative approaches to taking action on problems and issues to achieve intended purposes
- b research, initiate and plan action to address citizenship issues, working individually and with others
- c negotiate, decide on and take action to try to influence others, bring about change or resist unwanted change, managing time and resources appropriately
- d assess critically the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future, and make recommendations to others for further action
- e reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt from the intended and unintended consequences of action, and the contributions of others as well as themselves.

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Taking informed and responsible action:** When taking informed and responsible action, students develop and practise their skills, while applying citizenship knowledge and understanding. Actions could include: presenting a case to others about a concern; conducting a consultation, vote or election; organising a meeting, event or forum to raise awareness and debate issues; representing the views of others at a meeting or event; creating, reviewing or revisiting an organisational policy; contributing to local community policies; lobbying and communicating views publicly via a website, campaign or display; setting up an action group or network; training others in democratic skills such as advocacy, campaigning or leadership.

**Take action:** Action should be informed by research and investigation into a political, social or ethical issue or problem. Understanding what constitutes citizenship actions can help students to develop political literacy. They should have the opportunity to select issues and problems that matter to them and to recognise that having an influence in the school or a community group is as relevant as having an influence at national or international levels and uses the same kinds of skills.

### 3 Range and content

This section outlines the breadth of the subject on which teachers should draw when teaching the key concepts and key processes. Citizenship focuses on the political and social dimensions of living together in the UK and recognises the influence of the historical context. Citizenship helps students make sense of the world today and equips them for the challenges and changes facing communities in the future.

The study of citizenship should include:

- a political, legal and human rights and freedoms in a range of contexts from local to global
- b the roles and operation of civil and criminal law and the justice system
- c how laws are made and shaped by people and processes, including the work of parliament, government and the courts
- d actions citizens can take in democratic and electoral processes to influence decisions locally, nationally and beyond
- e the operation of parliamentary democracy within the UK and of other forms of government, both democratic and non-democratic, beyond the UK
- f the development of, and struggle for, different kinds of rights and freedoms (speech, opinion, association and the vote) in the UK

#### EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Human rights:** Human rights are part of national and international law. Students should explore the roles of the United Nations and the European Union in securing human rights and learn that International Humanitarian Law aims to provide protection for victims of armed conflict and children caught up in fighting.

**The justice system:** This includes institutions, such as the police, youth offending teams, courts, lawyers, prisons and the probation service, and the range of sanctions available.

**Democratic and electoral processes:** This includes voting, the importance of consultation, membership of pressure groups, the role of the media and other ways of influencing decision-making.

**The operation of parliamentary democracy within the UK:** This includes an understanding of the role of political parties, different forms of voting and the system of elections, the roles of government and opposition, and cabinet decision-making. Recent changes to democracy include the devolution of power to the Scottish Parliament and the national assemblies in Northern Ireland and Wales.

**Other forms of government:** The study of forms of government other than parliamentary democracy can help students understand and evaluate the UK system. Examples can be selected from the present day or the recent past from the rest of Europe and the wider world. This topic encourages consideration of the ways in which both democratic and non-democratic power and authority operate.

**The development of, and struggle for, different kinds of rights and freedoms:** This includes considering the historical context of rights and freedoms when exploring living together in the UK. For example, looking at the struggle some men and women went through to gain the right to vote in general elections will help students understand the importance of voting and how informed action can bring about change in a democratic society.

- g how information is used in public debate and policy formation, including information from the media and from pressure and interest groups
- h the impact and consequences of individual and collective actions on communities, including the work of the voluntary sector
- i policies and practices for sustainable development and their impact on the environment
- j the economy in relation to citizenship, including decisions about the collection and allocation of public money
- k the rights and responsibilities of consumers, employers and employees
- l the origins and implications of diversity and the changing nature of society in the UK, including the perspectives and values that are shared or common, and the impact of migration and integration on identities, groups and communities
- m the UK's role in the world, including in Europe, the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations
- n the challenges facing the global community, including international disagreements and conflict, and debates about inequalities, sustainability and use of the world's resources.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**The media:** This includes broadcast media, print media and ICT as a means of disseminating information. Students should examine the extent to which the media reflect, distort and create opinion; the use that politicians make of the media in communicating with the public; and the use of the media by other groups wishing to influence public opinion and those in power.

**Policies and practices for sustainable development:** This includes how the policies of local and national government and of organisations can ensure that future generations can meet their needs, and the ways in which individuals and groups can influence these policies through action.

**The economy in relation to citizenship:** This includes considering the difficult decisions made by those in power when setting priorities, and raising and spending public money, for example balancing funding of education, health and welfare for all, with fair taxation and a healthy UK economy. Students should consider the role of government in ensuring that business can flourish and citizens can prosper in a free and fair economy.

**Employers and employees:** This includes the role of the individual in the economy and the right to representation in the workplace.

**Origins and implications of diversity and the changing nature of society in the UK:** The UK is a constantly changing society to which groups from all over the world have migrated over the centuries. Students need to know about the historical contexts for some of these changes in order to better understand life in the UK today. They should also explore different kinds of communities living together in the UK and issues of community cohesion and integration.

**The European Union:** This includes the functions of the European Union, the reasons for membership, voting in European elections, the role of MEPs, and different viewpoints on the relationship between the European Union and governments of member states.

**The Commonwealth:** This includes discussing the development, membership and purpose of the Commonwealth.

**The United Nations:** This includes investigating the effectiveness of the United Nations in supporting human rights and addressing inequalities, particularly in the context of topical events affecting the international and/or global community.



## 4 Curriculum opportunities

During the key stage students should be offered the following opportunities that are integral to their learning and enhance their engagement with the concepts, processes and content of the subject.

The curriculum should provide opportunities for students to:

- a debate, in groups and whole-class discussions, topical and controversial issues, including those of concern to young people and their communities
- b develop citizenship knowledge and understanding while using and applying citizenship skills
- c work individually and in groups, taking on different roles and responsibilities
- d participate in both school-based and community-based citizenship activities and reflect on their participation
- e participate in different forms of individual and collective action, including decision-making and campaigning
- f work with a range of community partners and organisations to address issues and problems in communities
- g take into account legal, moral, economic, environmental, historical and social dimensions of different political problems and issues
- h take into account a range of contexts, such as school, neighbourhood, local, regional, national, European, international and global, as relevant to different topics
- i use and interpret different media and ICT both as sources of information and as a means of communicating ideas
- j make links between citizenship and work in other subjects and areas of the curriculum.

**Campaigning:** Campaigning is an important example of a community-based citizenship activity. Students learn about democratic processes and how to influence those in power from being involved in existing campaigns and from running their own. They learn how to participate positively in public life in ways that are safe, responsible and within the law.

**Community partners and organisations:** These could include local and national voluntary organisations and public and private bodies, such as the police, magistrates and the courts, local interest groups and employers, as well as local councillors, MPs, MEPs, journalists and campaigners.

**Media and ICT:** This includes: using different media and ICT to communicate ideas, raise awareness, lobby or campaign on issues; using and interpreting a wide range of sources of information during the course of enquiries and research; and learning how different media inform and shape opinion. Students need to evaluate the extent to which a balanced or partial view of events and issues is presented.

**Make links:** This includes: making links with work on the media in English and ICT; work on diversity and inclusion in history and RE; and work on the environment and sustainability in geography and science.



**Encourages students  
to challenge **injustice,**  
**inequalities and**  
**discrimination****