

Section 1: What Is Citizenship?

Chapter 1: Spelling It Out

Introduction

“Citizenship is more than a subject. If taught well and tailored to local needs, its skills and values will enhance democratic life for all of us, both rights and responsibilities, beginning in school and radiating out.”

Bernard Crick, *National Curriculum Citizenship, 1999*

What you understand by citizenship education 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 education 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.

It is relevant to anyone involved in teaching, leading or promoting citizenship education, whether in the formal or informal education sector.

Contents include:

- What is citizenship?
- Why is citizenship important?
- Where does citizenship occur?
- What is citizenship for?
- How is citizenship learned?
- What makes citizenship distinctive?
- What citizenship education is and is not

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



What is citizenship?

KEY ISSUES

What does it mean to be a citizen?

What is citizenship?

FOCUS

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 (1993), British citizens are also citizens of the European Union (EU).

How you understand citizenship affects your attitude towards it and the relevance it has for your everyday professional practice. It is important at the outset, therefore, to have a clear understanding of what is meant by terms like 'citizen' and 'citizenship', 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 different factors, for example place of birth, family ties or period of residence in a country.

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 taking an interest in politics and current affairs. It refers not only to rights and responsibilities laid down in the law, but also to general forms of behaviour – social and moral – which societies expect of their citizens. What these rights, responsibilities and forms of behaviour should be is an area of on-going 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 for 11 to 16 year-olds 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. Following common practice, we use the term 'citizenship' interchangeably with 'citizenship education' and 'education for citizenship'.

IMPROVING PRACTICE

- 1** What does it mean to you to be a citizen? What has influenced your understanding of citizenship? To what extent has your understanding been affected by your educational experience?
- 2** 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? Think of some examples.
- 3** What forms of behaviour should we expect of someone who is a citizen of this country in addition to those laid down in the law? Is it fair to ask schools to encourage these forms of behaviour? If so, what can they do to encourage them?



Why is citizenship important?

KEY ISSUES

Why teach citizenship?

How does it benefit young people?

Who else does it benefit?

Why teach citizenship?

The principal 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 – this approach should be:

- **inclusive** – an entitlement for all young people regardless of their ability or background
- **pervasive** – not limited to schools, but an integral part of all education for young people
- **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 education benefits young people by helping to address the outcomes for well-being in the *Every Child Matters* programme.

It helps them to develop **self-confidence** and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges such as bullying and discrimination.

It gives them a **voice** – in the life of their schools, in their communities and in society at large.

It enables them to **make a positive contribution** – by developing the expertise and experience needed to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities, and 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,
Citizenship News

Who else does it benefit?

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

For schools and other educational 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.

“Citizenship is becoming a cornerstone subject in our education system – and rightly so. After its introduction only a few years ago we have seen schools and students embrace the subject unlike perhaps any other. It is a gateway to a more inclusive society.”

Stephen Twigg,
Former Education Minister

IMPROVING PRACTICE

- 1 To what extent do you think citizenship education is able to make a difference to:
 - a) voter turnout?
 - b) crime rates?
 - c) attitudes towards politics?
 - d) race relations?
 - e) charitable giving?
 - f) our sense of national identity?
 - g) the health of the economy?

Is it right to expect citizenship education to affect these things? Why or why not?
- 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 these 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 education course or project. What would you say to promote it, for example, on a poster, in a leaflet or in a prospectus?



Where does citizenship occur?

KEY ISSUES

When does citizenship education begin?

Where can it be taught?

When does citizenship education begin?

Citizenship education is a lifelong process. It begins implicitly in the home and the immediate neighbourhood – with questions about identity and relationships, making choices and ideas of fairness and of right and wrong.

Where can it be taught?

As their horizons expand, children can be introduced to explicit forms of citizenship education in more formal settings:

1 Citizenship in the early years

Citizenship education contributes to several of the areas of learning set out in the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* – in particular, to:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication, language and literacy
- knowledge and understanding of the world.

2 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 education is taught alongside and makes an important contribution to the promotion of pupils' personal and social development, including health and well-being.

The *Framework for PSHE and citizenship at Key Stages 1 and 2* sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills recommended for teaching in four 'strands' (see Appendices 1 and 2 on pages 217 and 219):

- 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 key stages 1 and 2 are available at:
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

3 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 eight-level scale of achievement, citizenship education is treated exactly the same as other National Curriculum subjects at key stages 3 and 4, including:

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



Schemes of work for key stages 3 and 4 are available at:
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk

4 Citizenship in other settings

Citizenship education – though not always labelled as such – has long 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 education is also becoming an important aspect of education 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.



Guidance for providers of post-16 citizenship programmes is available in **Play Your Part: Post-16 citizenship** at www.qca.org/uk/citizenship/post16 and **Make It Happen: effective practice in post-16 citizenship** at www.post16citizenship.org/materials

IMPROVING PRACTICE

- 1 Are some aspects of citizenship taught more easily in certain educational settings than others? If so, which and why?
- 2 In your own practice, to what extent do you build on the work of or collaborate with practitioners from other phases or sectors of education? What could you do to build a greater element of continuity into young people's citizenship experiences?
- 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 talk to you about their work or talk to young people about their prior citizenship experiences.

What is citizenship for?

KEY ISSUES

What is the aim of citizenship education?

What are its essential elements?

How are the different elements connected?

REMEMBER

Citizenship education is not about trying to fit everyone into the same mould, or creating the 'model', or 'good' citizen. It is about enabling citizens to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and their communities.

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.**

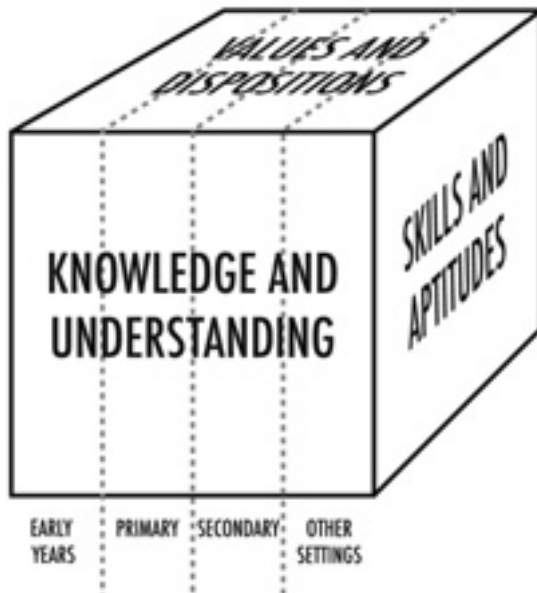
What are its essential elements?

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 about 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. For example, in presenting and explaining the findings of a survey to local council officials, young people will be building up their knowledge of local government and its functions at the same time as honing their skills of presentation.

IMPROVING PRACTICE

- 1 **Choose one aspect of citizenship learning – for example, laws and rules – and try to think of different activities through which it might be approached at different stages in a young person's education.**
- 2 **What different kinds of citizenship learning do you think might come out of:**
 - 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 – emphasises 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 requires a certain kind of climate in which to flourish – 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 areas of the life of an educational institution: through its taught curriculum, its culture and ethos, and its links with the wider community. They are increasingly 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:

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

2 Culture and ethos

Second, citizenship is learned through the culture or ethos of the institution – that is, through the values on which the institution operates and the manner in which it goes about its daily business. It is most effective when it takes place in a culture that 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, generating discussion questions, self-assessment
- playing a part in decision-making – e.g. student forums, school and/or student councils
- taking on positions of responsibility – e.g. classroom monitor, peer mediator, school councillor.

3 Wider community

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

- school linking and exchanges
- intergenerational projects
- peer education
- developing local facilities
- talking to politicians, police and community leaders
- campaigns and fundraising.



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 different opportunities for citizenship learning are made explicit and are consistent in the messages they give out.

It is particularly important for the inspection process. Ofsted looks for breadth and balance in citizenship programmes and expects 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 process, 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 through 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 education in terms of daily practice?**
- 2 **What different kinds of citizenship learning do you think are best developed through:**
 - a) taught curricula?
 - b) culture and ethos?
 - c) community links?
- 3 **Choose a citizenship project you have been involved in or have observed and evaluate it in terms of the criteria for effective citizenship learning listed here. How well does the project you have chosen stand up to this sort of scrutiny?**

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 occur in other areas of education, for example, drug/alcohol education in personal, social and health education (PSHE), communication in key skills, and employment issues in careers education.

There is also considerable overlap between the forms of learning used in citizenship and in other subjects, for example active learning, group work and discussion are common throughout the curriculum in both the formal and informal sector.

“What I can say is that a school providing good citizenship education is also doing well in terms of the **Every Child Matters** agenda of making a contribution.”

David Bell, Chief Inspector of Schools, 2005

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 education and other subjects:

- there is a danger that citizenship will be subsumed in other activities and young people won't receive 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 inspection
- you will make little 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 is distinguished by its content, focus and approach to learning.

1 Distinctive content

There is a central core of learning – factual and conceptual – not addressed in other school 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 topical everyday issues that concern young people as citizens – that is, as members of society with legal rights and responsibilities, e.g. education, health care, welfare benefits, public transport, policing, immigration, international relations and the environment.

These are to be distinguished from issues that concern young people as private individuals – that is, issues which are personal or relate only to family 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 to learning

Citizenship learning develops through active involvement. Young people learn what it means to be a citizen through discussions and debates in the classroom, and participation 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
- 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
- ultimately moral – relate to what people think is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant in society.

FOCUS

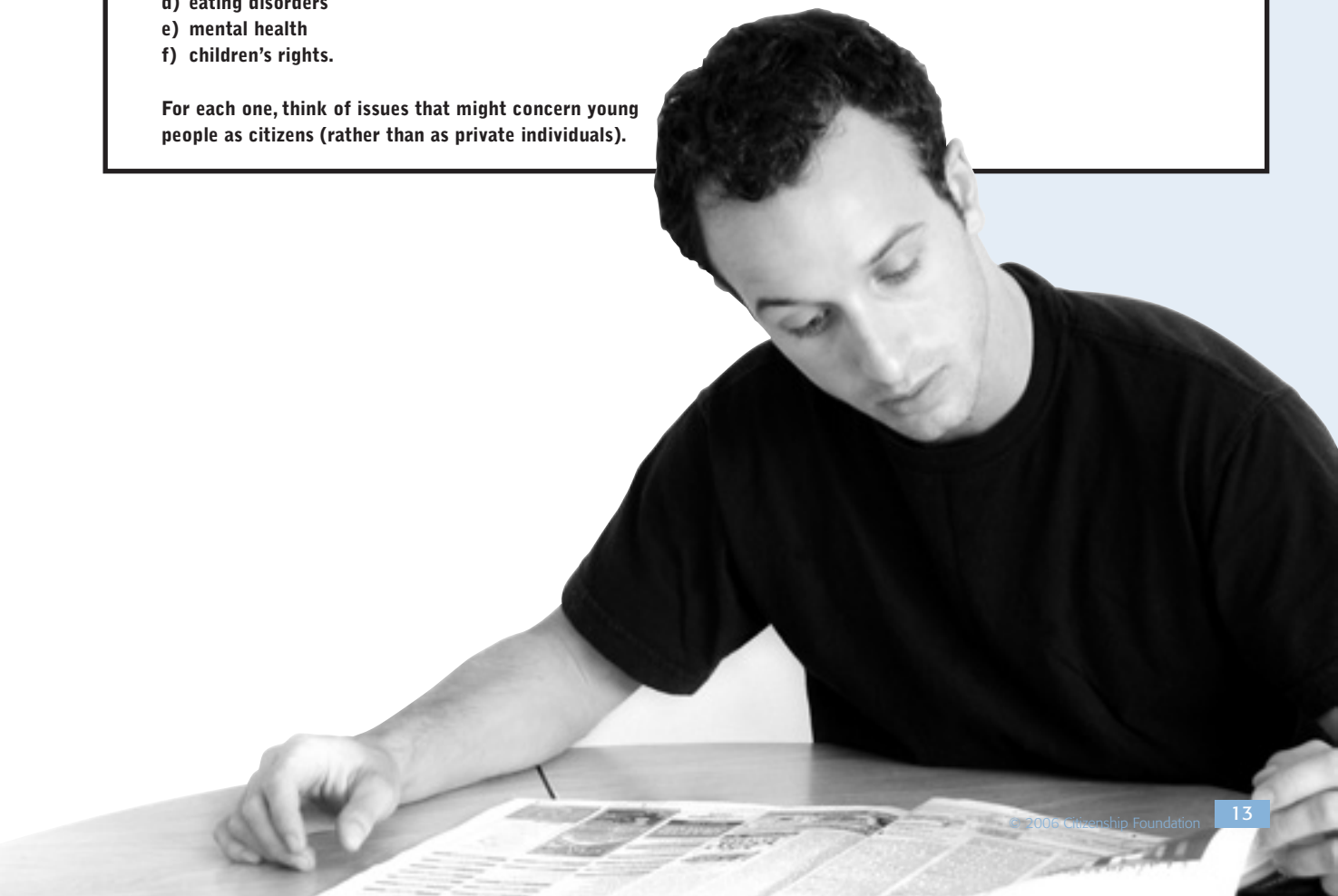
The ACiS (Active Citizenship in Schools) project talks about making citizenship education

REAL = Relevant, Engaged, Active Learning.

IMPROVING PRACTICE**1 Consider the following themes:**

- a) bullying
- b) personal safety
- c) sex and relationships
- d) eating disorders
- e) mental health
- f) children's rights.

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

2 How would you explain the difference between life as a citizen and life as a private individual to young people?**3 Devise a training exercise to help colleagues recognise what is distinctive about citizenship education.**

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 IS:

- 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, which links the curriculum, school culture and the 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 learning process.