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House of Commons

Education and Skills Committee

Citizenship Education: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report of Session 2006–07

**Second Special Report of Session
2006–07**

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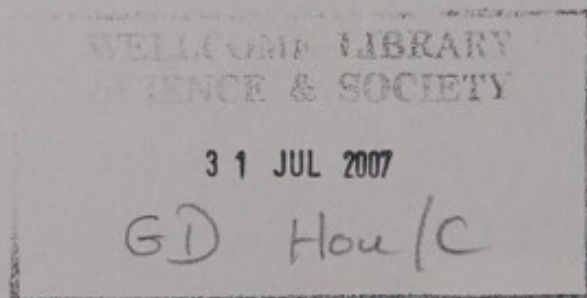
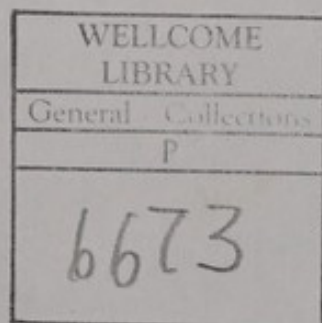
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Second Special Report

1. The Committee published its Second Report of Session 2006–07 (Citizenship Education) on 8 March 2007.¹ The Government's response was received on 30 April 2007, and is published as Appendix 1 to this Report.

Appendix 1

Education and Skills Select Committee Report on Citizenship Education: The Government's Response

The Select Committee's recommendations are in bold text.

The Government's response is in plain text.

Some of the recommendations and responses have been grouped.

1. As has been argued by many during the course of our inquiry, citizenship education is about more than knowledge—it is a skill which can be developed and applied only through active participation. At their best, good citizenship education programmes clearly involve whole school action—including engagement with the local, national and global communities, and the exploration of new, more participative forms of school or college management.

The Government welcomes the recognition given by the Committee to the importance and value of active participation. This reinforces the commitment in *Youth Matters: Next Steps* to the principles of active citizenship and the benefits that both young people and their local communities can derive from this sort of activity.

The Government's endorsement of the Russell Commission report on a national framework for youth action and engagement has seen the establishment of the "v" project to implement the recommendations, and the commitment of up to £150 million of public and private funding to provide quality volunteering opportunities for young people.

In the context of citizenship education, the DfES will continue to encourage schools to adopt the *Active Citizens in Schools* programme, which provides resources and materials for them to establish active participation schemes that link to the citizenship curriculum. It has also embarked upon a 2 year pilot to establish formal peer mentoring schemes in secondary schools. This will see many pupils taking their first steps in active participation by supporting their peers through a range of issues that they have to face. The evaluation of the pilot, due to be published in March 2008, will provide information to enable schools to make informed decisions about implementing similar schemes.

2. It is too early to say with any degree of confidence whether citizenship education is producing the wide range of impacts originally hoped for. Initial evidence from small-scale studies and the experience of individual institutions is promising but on its own

1 Second Report from the Education and Skills Committee, Session 2006–07, Citizenship Education, HC 147.

not enough. A large-scale study is being undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research to look specifically at this issue. This project needs continued strong support from the Government and a sustained involvement and progress reports from Ofsted.

The Department will continue to fund the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) lead Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study. This study began in 2001 and is tracking a cohort of young people from age 11 to 18, who entered secondary school in September 2002 and became the first students to have a statutory entitlement to citizenship education. So far, the study has published four annual reports, with a fifth report due this summer. Its findings will continue to inform policy decisions.

In addition, Ofsted will continue to monitor citizenship education through focussed visits to a sample of schools.

3. As far as we are aware, there is currently no research underway to examine the links between citizenship education and general attainment; we recommend that the DfES should remedy this.

The Government recognises that Citizenship education has a range of positive impacts, which may include improved educational attainment.

In July 2006 the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) published a report called *Exploring the link between pupil participation and pupil attainment at school level*. The analysis revealed links between pupil attainment and participation in the school and wider community, in extra curricular activities, and political participation.

It is difficult to prove conclusively a link between citizenship education and general attainment, since schools that are pre-disposed to provide good citizenship education are also likely to provide other types of support for pupils, which contribute to educational attainment.

The NFER lead Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study will continue to measure and evaluate the extent to which effective practice in citizenship education develops in schools.

4. The Government has indicated that it accepts Sir Keith Ajegbo's recommendation for the development of a fourth strand of the citizenship curriculum. We support his proposals that many different aspects of British social, cultural and indeed political history should be used as points of entry in the citizenship curriculum to engage students in discussing the nature of citizenship and its responsibility in 21st century Britain.

The Government welcomes the Committee's support for the inclusion of 'Identity and Diversity: Living Together in the UK' into the secondary curriculum for citizenship education. We have asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) to include this new element into the revised programmes of study for citizenship education on which they are currently consulting as part of the broader secondary curriculum review. The new programmes of study will be available to schools from September 2007 for teaching from September 2008.

5. Such coverage should rightly touch on what is distinctive in the inheritance and experience of contemporary Britain and the values of our society today. But it should not be taken to imply an endorsement of any single explanation of British values or history. Indeed, it should emphasise the way in which those values connect to universal human rights, and recognise that critical and divergent perspectives, as well as the potential to have alternative and different layers of identity, are a central part of what contemporary Britishness is.

The Government agrees with Sir Keith Ajegbo's view that we should not prescribe a single version of British history or values. However, the Government's view, which is reflected in the revised secondary curriculum programmes of study, is that in the UK, we share certain values such as freedom, respect and understanding within a just and democratic society.

It is important that schools are able to discuss these and other values, the role they play in shaping identities and how they can link into a wider discussion about universal human rights. This is not about prescription, but rather about engaging young people in open discussions about identity and what it means in live in the UK.

6. We recommend that the National College of School Leadership be more closely involved in engaging with these changes and in incorporating the challenges of citizenship education in its training programmes and other initiatives.

The Government recognises the importance of engaging school leaders and managers in improving the quality and provision of citizenship education.

The DfES is working with the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) and Ofsted to run a seminar for school leaders to explore successful methods of citizenship provision and the possible role of consultant leaders as champions for citizenship within the NCSL.

DfES is also working with the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) and NCSL to highlight with school leaders the 'whole school' benefits of citizenship education and the NCSL and the TDA are currently developing plans around further support for school leaders in the crucial area of extended services in schools.

7. The issue of identities and belonging can be challenging and sensitive for students and teachers alike; meaningful and productive discussions are more likely to take place if teachers have appropriate training in this area.

As the Government takes forward the recommendations of the Ajegbo report, it will be crucial that it develops concrete plans as to how it will equip those teachers and lecturers to deal with the teaching of these often challenging issues on the ground.

As part of the revised curriculum for citizenship education, we expect schools to tackle sensitive issues through meaningful and productive discussions with young people. As Sir Keith Ajegbo notes, many teachers around the country are already comfortable addressing issues of identity and diversity in schools, but we acknowledge that some teachers will need additional support.

There will be subject-specific support for schools to deliver the revised secondary curriculum, which will be made available from autumn 2007 through the Subject

Associations and will include face to face training events and web based guidance, building on examples of best practice.

We will adapt the citizenship continuing professional development programme to reflect the new curriculum. This programme is supported by a financial bursary for teachers taking up the offer and gives teachers practical support in the delivery of the programmes of study. There is also guidance on the teaching of controversial issues in the citizenship CPD handbook *Making Sense of Citizenship*. Two free copies of this handbook were sent to all secondary schools in England.

In addition the Historical Association, with support from the DfES, has recently published a report that explores the opportunities, constraints and effective practice in education for teaching emotive or sensitive issues. The premise of the report is that there is widespread recognition that the way many past events are perceived and understood can stir emotions and controversy within and across communities.

8. We recommend that far more use is made of the opportunities provided by activities outside the classroom—as well as discrete events such as Holocaust Memorial Day or this year's commemorations of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade—to stimulate this.

The Government is committed to supporting schools in providing high quality learning outside the classroom experiences across the curriculum through the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto Partnership launched in November 2006. To deliver the aims of the manifesto, the DfES is taking a range of measures including the development of a new 'Out and About' package of training and guidance that will support teachers in delivering high quality, safely managed, low paperwork visits and events. There will also be a new, independent Learning Outside the Classroom Council that will bring together providers from the public, private and voluntary sectors, to help co-ordinate the wide range of programmes and activities that already exist and to deliver the wider aims of the manifesto.

Many schools already use discrete events outside the classroom to enhance teaching and learning within citizenship education. However, the choice of activities is for schools to determine according to local needs and school priorities. The DfES reminds schools about key dates in the calendar through electronic updates, via Teachers TV and magazine and suggests ways that they might support teaching and learning.

9. The imperative now is to ensure that patchiness is not allowed to remain, that high quality provision becomes the norm, and that progress is accelerated. This will require action from those on the ground, but also needs strong support from the DfES and Ministers.

10. There is an enduring risk that in a minority of cases, schools could be adopting a passive approach to citizenship education, believing no action needs to be taken as they are doing it anyway. The DfES has a role to play here in driving home the message that what is important is a systematic and explicit—as well as comprehensive—approach to citizenship education.

DfES Ministers and Government as a whole remain firmly committed to improving the quality of citizenship education. We are paying close attention to monitoring reports from

QCA and Ofsted and funding the NFER Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study to inform future policy.

We are training over 200 new specialist citizenship teachers every year and developing the skills of existing teachers through a continuing professional development programme, with 600 places available in both 2006–07 and 2007–08. DfES has also published a dedicated handbook for citizenship education entitled *Making Sense of Citizenship*, provided two free copies to all secondary schools in England and supported a national dissemination effort to provide training on its use.

DfES continues to fund The Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT), which was established in 2003 and continues to provide a focus for professional development amongst teachers and advice, training and support for schools.

The QCA is developing a new full GCSE in citizenship studies to compliment the existing short course GCSE (which is the fastest growing GCSE in schools), which will be available by 2009 and a new A level qualification, which will be available from 2008.

These actions represent a significant investment of time and effort in the development of citizenship education.

11. We believe it is very important that faith schools recognise their specific responsibility to make space in their studies for the discussion of what citizenship means in a diverse and pluralist 21st century Britain and to examine openly the differences and differing views that come with this, in the context of mutual respect and human rights, and that it requires a more explicit approach than simply asserting that an overall ethos of citizenship permeates the school and its curriculum.

Schools with a religious designation must teach citizenship according to the statutory programmes of study. This is inspected by Ofsted in the normal way. While the Government recognises that there will be circumstances where issues in citizenship education touch on or deal directly with issues of faith and belief which may relate to the religious commitment of specific pupils, Ofsted has told us that faith schools are generally well equipped to deal with the sensitivities involved in such discussions.

We know that the providers of maintained faith schools take the requirements of maintained status seriously and that they are committed to promoting integration and mutual respect. The new duty on all maintained schools to promote community cohesion makes explicit in legislation the contribution that many faith schools already make to enable their pupils to learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds. We are also working closely with the faith providers to agree a shared vision statement on the contribution of faith schools to the school system and to society.

12. Most witnesses agreed that solely cross-curricular approaches to citizenship education are likely to be insufficient—as one of our witnesses pointed out, “everywhere often can be nowhere”. Ofsted makes this clear in their subject reports, but stops short of prescribing one particular delivery model. We understand schools’ concerns about where time is to be found in the curriculum. The case for more overt prescription in terms of models of provision has not yet been made, but this does not preclude sending a clear message to schools about what is working best on the ground,

and why. Ofsted should continue to monitor closely the development of citizenship studies in schools and particularly in the light of the implementation of the Ajegbo recommendations and their resource and teaching implications.

13. In respect of the active, participative dimensions of citizenship education, and adopting a "whole school" approach, we think there is a greater role for the DfES to play in disseminating best practice examples and case-studies. This should capitalise on the experience of those schools which have found space in the curriculum for creating "active" citizenship opportunities, and those which have allowed young people a real say in institutional management. The links with *Every Child Matters*' focus on designing services around the needs of young people, with their input, should be stressed.

The Government believes that it is schools themselves who are best placed to decide how to deliver citizenship education for their pupils. Different schools will have different approaches and while there is evidence that citizenship is taught best through discrete provision with dedicated curriculum time, with strong leadership from a committed head teacher or dedicated specialist teacher, a cross curricular approach can be equally effective.

The Association of Citizenship Teaching (ACT) exemplifies and disseminates best practice within the subject area, by publishing case studies from schools in its journal *Teaching Citizenship*, highlighting best practice on its website and actively promoting such work at its local and national events, through workshops and by encouraging teachers to share their experiences, resources and activities. ACT also publishes exemplar lessons and activities about active participation on its website for teachers to download. These were designed along with partners in the field, for example the English Secondary Students Association.

Ofsted monitors citizenship education as part of its subject survey programme and visits up to 30 secondary schools each year. Additionally, in whole school inspections Ofsted inspectors are asked to check that statutory requirements are met, using citizenship as a possible case study. In addition, the citizenship education self evaluation tool for secondary schools, developed by the DfES in association with ACT for use by the National College for School Leadership, has proven to be very helpful to inspectors as well as schools in identifying gaps in provision and planning for improvement.

14. We warmly welcome the Government's practical support for school councils to date, including through the funding it provides to School Councils UK for the provision of materials and other development work. There is scope for information about schools with effective, innovative councils to be made more widely known. As in other respects concerning the sharing of best practice on citizenship education, supporting organisations (including the DfES) have a fine balance to maintain between the potential merits of offering "replicable models" to assist schools who have perhaps made little progress to date, and the potential risk of implying "one size fits all" approaches that may be entirely inappropriate in certain contexts. It would be undesirable to give the impression that a certain "model" could just be adopted and implemented in a school, giving end-users (students) little say in the design of the council. This needs to be stressed alongside any support materials or exemplars that are offered. It is important to situate councils within the wider citizenship education

programme, and to ensure participation and ownership among the whole school population—not just an elite group.

15. Subject to the findings of the Institute of Education review, we recommend that the Government makes school councils compulsory. The Government should, however, resist the temptation to define tightly what form they should take—as this is likely to add little and may even be counter-productive.

16. The Government should look at how training for students can best be supported to give them the skills to participate fully.

The Government values the impact that the existence of a good school council can have on the school as a whole and on the pupils as individuals.

School Councils UK, with support and funding from the DfES, has established an online network which allows schools and their councils to talk to each other and share good practice. This sophisticated on-line tool provides an opportunity for schools to find examples of good practice, both close to their own location as well as nationally. In addition, the site provides free downloadable resources to help schools improve the effectiveness of their councils.

We believe that it is important that schools have the flexibility to decide how they engage pupils in the ways which best suit their needs. Schools are obliged to have regard to guidance issued by the DfES on pupil participation and in 2004 we issued *Working Together, Giving children and young people a say*, which suggests ways in which schools can involve pupils in decision making.

The School Councils UK handbook for students exists as an excellent training resource for members of school councils, providing them with guidance and encouragement to help them understand their role.

The DfES has commissioned Professor Geoff Whitty and Emma Wisby at the Institute of Education to conduct a review of school councils. We expect the report to be published in early summer and will await its findings before making any changes to the requirements surrounding school councils.

17. The DfES needs to issue further guidance to local authorities about citizenship education.

The Government recognises the need to further engage local authorities in good citizenship education and particularly in the benefits of active citizenship for communities. We will be working to strengthen our network of local authority advisers in the coming year, through more regular communication and dissemination of relevant materials and guidance.

In addition to the *Working Together, Giving children and young people a say* guidance mentioned above, we have made available copies of the citizenship CPD handbook *Making Sense of Citizenship*, which has been used successfully by local authorities to share best practice amongst their schools, and QCA schemes of work.

18. One area of considerable agreement in the evidence we have received has been the need to disaggregate PSHE and citizenship education at the conceptual level, even if it often makes sense for citizenship education and PSHE to be delivered in tandem, particularly at the primary stage. Schools do best when they see citizenship as a separate subject.

The Government believes that it is appropriate for PSHE and citizenship to be taught as part of a joint framework in primary schools, where many of the issues, skills and processes within the two subjects are shared. They are, however, recognised as subjects in their own right.

The school self-evaluation tool for PSHE and citizenship in primary schools (produced by Association for Citizenship Teaching and funded by the DfES) helps school leaders to chart the development of PSHE and citizenship as individual subject areas, while appreciating where links between the two can be beneficial and tie in with other programmes, such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL).

At secondary level, there are clear distinctions within the curriculum between PSHE and citizenship, defined by their programmes of study.

We have recently set up a new subject association for PSHE to raise its status, quality and impact within schools. Along with the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT), the new PSHE subject association will seek to highlight the importance of disaggregating the two subjects in teachers' minds. The two associations plan to hold a joint event later this year, to help teachers distinguish between the two subject experiences, particularly those who are responsible for delivering both subjects.

19. Since we took evidence, the DfES has confirmed that it will continue to provide funding for the post-16 citizenship support programme. We welcome this commitment and hope that DfES will look at how further developments, including the Ajegbo recommendations, can be integrated into this programme.

The Quality Improvement Agency, which assumed responsibility for the Post-16 citizenship Support Programme in April 2006, will ensure that it continues to communicate current citizenship issues (including diversity) and promote best practice in how they might be addressed within institutions. The programme has played a leading role in promoting young people's understanding of and positive attitudes towards diversity. It is well-placed to help post-16 learners build upon the enhanced focus on diversity within the National Curriculum, following the recommendations of Sir Keith Ajegbo's review.

20. What is currently absent at the national level is a truly lifelong citizenship education strategy—which joins up primary, secondary, tertiary, adult education and training. Worthwhile activity is happening in all these phases of education yet it is hard to see these activities—particularly those in further, higher and adult education—as belonging to a coherent programme, with common aims and purposes. It will be vital that the lifelong strategy is developed in co-operation with other Government departments active in the citizenship arena—and in particular, the Home Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs.

Collaboration forms a key part of our approach to citizenship education policy. For example, the Post-16 Citizenship Support Programme provided best practice models which informed the creation of the Adult Learning for Active Citizenship network. We maintain close links at official level across and between Departments and meet regularly with key partners outside of government.

We recognise the need for more coherence and will continue to work to forge new links and to strengthen existing working relationships with other Government Departments.

21. In the medium term there is a very strong case for increasing -substantially the number of Initial Teacher Training (ITT) places for those who want to specialise in citizenship education. In the short term, no further cuts in the annual number of places available should be made. These actions would send a strong signal about the seriousness with which citizenship education is viewed. In tandem, there needs to be a campaign to encourage schools and colleges to employ ITT graduates in citizenship posts. This campaign needs to convey the expectation that all secondary schools should have a fully trained citizenship teacher in post. Consideration should be given to what incentives and support need to be offered so that schools are willing and able to fulfil this expectation.

Since the introduction of citizenship education in 2002, we have made around 1000 initial teacher training places available and, in the current year, there are over 200. There are already over 60 Advanced Skills Teachers in citizenship who spend 20% of their time working with other schools to improve their provision, which includes giving advice to other teachers less experienced in the subject.

We will be working in the coming year to highlight the importance and benefits of citizenship education to head teachers and the value of having a specialist trained citizenship teacher in the school. If demand for citizenship teachers increases, the DfES will respond accordingly using the teacher supply model to consider the consequence of increasing the number of ITT places available in citizenship. Two of the important factors that provide input to the model are the level of demand in particular subjects and anticipated pupil numbers in the survey period. During the next few years secondary rolls are expected to fall significantly and training places for all subjects will need to be allocated accordingly.

22. We welcome the expansion of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) citizenship certificate programme, which responds to a clear need from within the existing school workforce, and seems to indicate the start of a more co-ordinated, national strategy. Our main concern is that the level of skill and knowledge that can be gained through the equivalent of five days' training is in no way comparable to that likely to be gained in the course of a full-year ITT course. A primarily CPD based approach would not be considered as appropriate for teachers of other statutory secondary subjects (such as maths) and we cannot see why it should be so in the case of citizenship. While CPD is crucial, it should not be allowed to serve as the main developmental route for citizenship education.

The continuing professional development certificate (CPD) in citizenship education is neither designed nor intended to be a replacement for initial teacher training (ITT). As

stated in previous answers, we are training more than 200 new specialist teachers each year through our ITT programmes. However, given that citizenship is a recently introduced subject, in many cases it is being delivered by skilled teachers already in the workforce that have taken on citizenship as a new responsibility since 2002. These professionals are already equipped with the skills to plan and deliver high quality lessons and in many cases have relevant experience of the subject matter, through a background in a related subject, for example history, geography or social sciences.

The CPD programme, run centrally by the DfES in partnership with higher education institutions across the country, non-government organisations, the Learning and Skills Network and local authorities, requires teachers to meet the standards for teaching citizenship in schools, with a particular focus on imparting knowledge and understanding of the subject area. The 5 day course is also supported by self study, undertaken by the participants in their own time and CPD handbook *Making Sense of Citizenship*. We are making available 600 places a year available in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

The DfES does not routinely provide central funding for teachers' professional development, as extra funding is now made available directly to schools, which enables them to take decisions about what professional development best meets their and their teachers' needs. As citizenship education is a recently introduced subject, this extra training been made available to teachers as additional support for those new to the subject area.

23. We have received evidence of some effective practice in primary schools—for example, in Hampshire. We are nevertheless concerned that trainee primary teachers following the PGCE route may not have the opportunity to cover citizenship education in adequate depth, given the intensiveness of the course and the number of other areas which have to be covered. If this is indeed the case, there is a risk that new teachers entering the profession are starting out with only limited awareness of what it means and what it can offer. More generally, there is a risk that an opportunity to make citizenship education an integral part of the curriculum in all primary schools is being missed. The DfES, working with the Training and Development Agency and Ofsted (which inspects teacher training), needs to assess the priority currently being given to citizenship education on primary PGCE courses, and to consider whether any remedial action is needed in this regard.

There is no prescribed curriculum for initial teacher training (ITT) that sets out how much time must be spent on each subject within a primary ITT course. The current requirements for ITT require providers to ensure that their courses are designed to enable their trainees to demonstrate they have met all the standards for qualified teacher status (QTS). Regarding subject knowledge, the revised standards for QTS will require trainees to:

- Have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects/curriculum areas and related pedagogy to enable them to teach effectively across the age and ability range for which they are trained; and
- Know and understand the relevant statutory and non-statutory curricula, frameworks, including those provided through the National Strategies, for their subjects/curriculum areas, and other relevant initiatives applicable to the age and ability range for which they are trained.

The TDA works closely with Ofsted in developing the quality and appropriateness of ITT and will continue to collaborate on this and other issues.

The TDA funds the Citizenship Subject Resource Network www.citized.info which is designed for use by ITT trainers and trainees and provides conferences, seminars, workshops, research papers and practical resources for teaching citizenship. This contains a primary strand which has over 400 resources and a dissemination strategy is in place to ensure take up of this website by trainers and trainees. The TDA also funds an ITT professional resource network (IPRN) in diversity: www.multiverse.ac.uk which again contains resources relevant to primary initial teacher training.

24. We would welcome a clear statement from the National College for School Leadership on what it is currently doing to ensure heads are sufficiently aware of citizenship's whole school implications, and specifically through its 'leading from the middle' and 'National Professional Qualification for Headship' training courses.

The NCSL is fully aware of the importance and implications of citizenship education and has regard to citizenship in all its programmes and activities. The College undertakes a continuous process to update programmes and to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Currently, there is a review being undertaken of the National Professional Qualification for Headship, which involves extensive consultation, with a range of stakeholders, including Sir Keith Ajegbo. The revised programme is planned for 2008.

The DfES continues to work closely with Sir Keith Ajegbo to disseminate his experience of adopting a whole school approach to citizenship. Until last year, Sir Keith was head teacher of Deptford Green School and his expertise in this area will be invaluable in convincing school leaders of the benefits citizenship can bring, not just in the classroom, but to the whole school.

We anticipate working closely with the NCSL on this work. Next month a group of head teachers and their citizenship teachers are being brought together to ensure that best practice is shared most effectively.

25. Currently, there is little concrete evidence about the consistency or scale of teaching on issues—such as homosexuality or abortion—which are considered problematic or controversial by some. Schools should be positively encouraged and supported in looking at ways to incorporate such discussion both into their lessons and other out-of-lesson citizenship activities as part of the acknowledgement and acceptance of diversity and difference. The DfES needs to make this expectation clear—and look at the support and guidance it provides to enable teachers to meet it.

The Government is clear that schools should not shy away from teaching about, or encouraging debate on, issues which might be seen as controversial or sensitive. Debate and discussion of such issues can be stimulating and add value to pupils' learning.

There is guidance for teachers on the teaching of "controversial" issues in the citizenship CPD handbook *Making Sense of Citizenship* and further guidance is available on the QCA website. The specific issues of homosexuality and abortion are issues covered by DfES guidance issued to head teachers, chairs of governors and local authorities.

26. Balancing the need to ensure faster progress with the need to avoid overt prescription, thus risking stifling innovation and local appropriateness, is very difficult. Too prescriptive an approach on citizenship education could result in schools and other settings being formulaic and box-ticking, but Government should look seriously at how QCA and others speed development. As we have noted throughout this report, we see a much greater role for the DfES—along with partner agencies—in terms of sharing best practice on what other schools have found to work; of particular use would be access to whole-school “case studies” explaining the approach that other institutions have taken, and the reasons they have pursued that approach.

The Government recognises the value of sharing best practice and providing access to case studies showcasing effective citizenship education. DfES provides practitioners with up to date information and resources through a regular email newsletter.

The Association of Citizenship Teaching (ACT) exemplifies and disseminates best practice within the subject area, by publishing case studies from schools in its journal *Teaching Citizenship*, highlighting best practice on its website and actively promoting such work at its local and national events, through workshops and by encouraging teachers to share their experiences, resources and activities. ACT also publishes exemplar lessons and activities about active participation on its website for teachers to download.

27. Several Government departments have legitimate interests in citizenship education, broadly defined. However, it is not always clear that they are working to the same ends, nor that they are working in a truly collaborative way. Rather than just issuing a commitment to work together, we ask the Government to tell us what practical steps it intends to take to ensure greater co-ordination between the departments with responsibilities in this area—and in particular, between the DfES, Home Office, the Department for Constitutional Affairs and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. We would also like the Government to undertake a review to explicitly identify areas of overlap and complementarity in existing policies across departments.

The Government recognises that there are areas of citizenship education which hold an interest for more than one Government department. The DfES has organised cross-Government seminars for practitioners, focusing on areas of particular interest, for example the joint DfES/Home Office seminar *Working Together for a Common Purpose: The Role of Community Involvement within Citizenship Education for Young People*.

We will undertake to examine the effectiveness of relationships with other Government Departments and will consider the possibility of a cross-departmental group, if the need for one is identified, and will seek to hold more cross-Government seminars on issues of cross-cutting interest.

28. At the time of its introduction, citizenship education enjoyed strong personal support from Ministers. This was crucial to its establishment and acceptance as a discipline. Four years, however, have passed since then and we are concerned about the potential for a waning of interest at a stage when much of the hard work in terms of implementation still remains to be done. To some, citizenship education's aims, objectives and methods remain opaque, and difficult to grasp. There is a need for a

clear public narrative on what citizenship education is setting out to achieve, and why it is considered important.

29. We consider that the level and consistency of Ministerial attention to citizenship education needs to be increased—and that Ministers need to be publicly seen to be engaged in this agenda. One way of doing this would be to revisit the decision to remove Ministerial representation from the citizenship education working party. Such a move would send out an unambiguous message regarding the seriousness with which citizenship is taken, at the highest levels.

Ministers remain resolutely committed to citizenship education, as evidenced by the programme of work being undertaken in this area described during this response.

Sir Keith Ajegbo has recently completed a significant review of citizenship in the curriculum and has helped to define a new role for citizenship education in schools. Ministers are continuing to work closely with Sir Keith to take forward his recommendations.

The Government appreciates the many and wide-ranging benefits that citizenship education can bring to schools and to individuals and Ministers remain dedicated to realising those benefits in all schools.

We welcome this Report from the Select Committee, which will further raise the profile of citizenship education and highlight its importance for schools.

30. As well as providing development opportunities, a change in the rules to allow schools to obtain a primary specialism in citizenship would send a powerful signal that citizenship education is considered important and a “serious option” rather than an add-on to an already crowded curriculum. The primary objection given to date has been a lack of adequate assessment tools to measure progress in citizenship. The QCA has recently produced guidelines for assessment at Key Stage 3—so it is clear that methods for measuring citizenship attainment, even for those schools that choose not to offer the half-GCSE, are developing. It is now up to the Government to work with the QCA to ensure that similar assessment guidelines are developed for Key Stage 4, with the presumption that as soon as suitable arrangements are in place schools will be allowed to apply for primary specialisms in citizenship education.

Schools applying to become Specialist Humanities Colleges are required to set targets in three humanities-based specialist subjects one of which is a main subject. From September 2007 schools will be able to select citizenship as a main subject from a pool of: citizenship, English, geography or history. They will continue to select two other subjects from: citizenship, classical civilisation/latin/greek, drama, English, geography, history or religious education.

The DfES, in consultation with stakeholders, is currently reviewing the specialist target setting requirements. New Guidance is likely to be published in May 2007 and will reflect proposed changes to Humanities Colleges selecting citizenship as one of their options.

Existing specialist schools will be able to switch their main target setting subject to citizenship from this date.

