

# Programme of study: Citizenship (Key stage 4)

## 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, understanding and skills 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 and responsibilities, duties and freedoms, laws and justice, and democratic institutions. They learn to take part in decision-making and different forms of action and how to play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society.

Citizenship encourages respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities. It also equips students to be able to engage critically with and explore diverse values, beliefs, cultures and identities and the values we share as citizens in the UK. Students begin to understand how society is changing in the UK, Europe and the wider world. Citizenship addresses issues relating to social justice, human rights and global community, and encourages students to challenge injustice, inequalities and discrimination. It helps young people to develop their critical skills and to consider a wide range of political, social, ethical and moral problems and explore opinions other than their own. They learn to evaluate information, make informed judgements and reflect on the

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

consequences of their actions now and in the future. They can argue a case on behalf of others as well as themselves and speak out on issues of concern.

Citizenship equips students with the knowledge and skills 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.

## 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.

### Democracy and justice

- Actively participating in different kinds of decision-making and voting in order to influence public life.
- Understanding that justice is fundamental to a democratic society and laws and rules are applied to try to ensure everyone is treated fairly.
- Understanding that justice, diversity, toleration, respect and freedom are valued by people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions within a changing democratic society.
- Understanding that government is held to account for its actions by parliament and by citizens.

### Rights and responsibilities

- Exploring political, legal and human rights and how these affect both individuals and communities.
- Understanding that individuals and organisations have responsibilities to ensure rights are supported and protected.
- Understanding that rights can compete, and conflict and hard decisions are made to try to balance these.

### **Democracy and justice**

At key stage 4 students continue to develop their understanding of the political system in the UK and the role of citizens within it. Students contrast government in the UK, with other forms of government and the role of citizens within them, beyond the UK.

Students explore freedom as part of democracy; fairness as part of justice; power and authority; and accountability. Accountability happens at many levels. For example, in parliament the role of a responsible opposition is to challenge, test and scrutinise what government is doing.

Students will learn about the need to balance competing and conflicting demands and that in a democracy not everyone gets what they want. They also learn that sometimes justice means treating everyone the same, sometimes it means treating people differently.

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

### **Rights and responsibilities**

Within a democracy, citizens have rights and responsibilities. There are different kinds of rights and different kinds of responsibilities (political, legal, human and moral). There are also contested areas surrounding rights. For example, the checks and balances needed in relation to freedom of speech to address threats from extremism and terrorism. At key stage 4 students should make links between the concepts of 'rights and responsibilities' and 'democracy and justice'. For example the responsibility we all have to support and promote democratic values.

## **Identities and diversity: Living together in the UK**

- Appreciating that people living together in the UK have individual, group and national identities, which can change over time and are informed by a person's understanding of what it means to be a citizen.
- Understanding connections between the diverse cultures and communities in the UK.
- Understanding connections between the UK and the rest of Europe and the wider world.
- Exploring the different forces that bring about change in communities over time.

## **Critical thinking**

- Engaging with opinions, ideas, beliefs and values, and understanding and responding to the main issues.
- Challenging opinions, actions, assumptions or policies on grounds of ethics, evidence or argument.
- Developing own views, taking account of a range of cultural, ethical and moral contexts and views other than their own.

## **Identities and diversity: Living together in the UK**

This includes the multiple identities that may be held by members of an ethnically and religiously diverse society, and the ways in which identities are affected by change in society overtime. For example how migration has shaped communities; how poverty affects life chances. This also includes how life in the UK today has been shaped by and continues to be shaped by political, social, economic and cultural change. 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.

At key stage 4 students consider the action that has been, or could be taken, to improve conditions of life for different groups. Sometimes it is important to consider the historical context for such changes and how this relates to the values and traditions of the UK.

# Key processes

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

## Critical thinking and enquiry

Students should be able to:

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

## Taking informed and responsible action

Students should be able to:

- work individually and with others to identify citizenship issues within the school and wider community and initiate a plan of action to address them
- negotiate, decide on and take action to try to influence others, make change or resist unwanted change, managing time and resources appropriately
- critically assess the impact of their actions on communities and the wider world, now and in the future, and make recommendations to others for further action
- reflect on the progress they have made, evaluating what they have learnt from the intended and unintended consequences, and the contributions of others as well as themselves to the project.

## Advocacy and representation

Students should be able to:

- critically evaluate different ideas and viewpoints including those they do not necessarily agree with
- explain their viewpoint, drawing conclusions from what they have learnt through research, discussion and actions, including formal debates and votes

### **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. This includes students interrogating evidence, developing judgements based on that evidence and exploring, questioning and reflecting on their own opinions and values as well as those of others.

### **Issues and problems**

These are topical political, social and ethical issues and problems, which can be controversial and sensitive and can lead to disagreement. They should not be avoided but handled so that students develop skills to discuss and debate citizenship issues and consider points of view that are not necessarily their own. Ground rules and the use of distancing techniques are some of the ways to manage the discussion of such issues.

### **Taking informed and responsible action**

When taking informed and responsible action, students will 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 view 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, leadership.

### **Identify citizenship issues**

The action should be informed by research and investigation into a political, social or ethical issue or problem. Students should have the opportunity to select issues and problems that matter to them.

### **Take action**

Understanding what kinds of actions constitute citizenship actions can help develop political literacy. Students can recognise that having an influence in the school or a community group is as relevant as having influence at national or international levels and utilises the same kinds of skills.

### **Advocacy and representation**

Developing skills of advocacy and representation will provide 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, students need regular opportunities to practise communicating with different audiences within and beyond the school community, and with those in positions of power, to try to influence and persuade them about ways of making a difference to political and social issues.

- construct a convincing argument, justifying their point of view and representing the views of others, to try to persuade others to think again, change or support them.

# 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:

- political, legal and [human rights](#) and freedoms, and responsibilities of citizens
- the role and operation of [civil and criminal law](#) and [the justice system](#)
- how laws are made and shaped by people and process, including the work of parliament, government and the courts
- the roles citizens take in [democratic and electoral processes](#) to influence decisions
- [key features of parliamentary democracy and government](#) and of [other forms of government](#) within and beyond the UK
- [the development of, and struggle for, different kinds of rights and freedoms](#) (speech, opinion, association and the vote) in the UK
- the [role of the media](#) in informing and influencing public opinion and how information is used in public debate and policy formation
- the impact and consequences of individual and collective actions on communities and the environment, and [the role of policies for sustainable development](#)
- strategies for handling local, national, international and global disagreements and conflicts and the role of pressure and interest groups
- [the needs of communities in the UK](#) and the extent to which these are met through public services, business and the voluntary sector
- [the economy in relation to citizenship](#) including decisions about the collection and allocation of public money
- the rights and responsibilities of consumers, [employers and employees](#)
- the [origins and implications of diversity in the UK](#), including the shared values, diversity of beliefs, cultures, identities and traditions, and the changing nature of UK society

## Human rights

Human rights are enshrined in national and international law. The role of the United Nations and the European Union in securing human rights is explored. At key stage 4, students also learn that International Humanitarian Law aims to provide protection for victims of armed conflict and children caught up in fighting.

## Civil and criminal law

This includes the difference between criminal and civil law. Topical case studies will help students understand the difference.

## The justice system

This includes the different institutions such as police, youth offending teams, courts, lawyers, prisons, the probation service and the range of sanctions available.

## Democratic and electoral processes

These processes include voting, the importance of consultation, membership of pressure groups, the role of the media and other ways of influencing decision-making.

## Key features of parliamentary democracy and government

This includes an understanding of the role of political parties, the first past the post system of elections, the role of government and opposition, and cabinet decision-making. Recent changes to democracy are explored for example, 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 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 teaching about living together in the UK. For example, looking at the struggle for some men and women to gain the right to vote in general elections will help develop understanding of the importance of voting and how informed action can bring about change in a democratic society.

## Role of the media

This includes broadcast as well as print media, and also the increasing use of ICT as a means of dissemination of information. Students will examine the extent to which the media reflect, distort or 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 opinion.

- the impact of migration to, from and within the UK, on settlement, places and communities
- the UK's role and interconnections with [the European Union](#) and the rest of Europe, [the Commonwealth](#), [the United Nations](#) and the world as a global community and the political, economic, environmental and social implications of this.

#### **The role of policies for sustainable development**

This includes how 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.

#### **The needs of communities in the UK**

This includes accessible welfare for all and why needs change, for example in response to economic factors, migration, globalisation.

#### **The economy in relation to citizenship**

This includes considering the difficult decisions made by those in power when raising and spending public money, for example balancing sufficient funding of education, health and welfare for all with fair taxation and a healthy UK economy. Students also 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 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. At key stage 4, students also explore different kinds of communities living together in the UK and issues of cohesion and integration.

#### **The European Union**

This includes the functions of the EU, the reasons for membership, voting in European elections and the role of MEPs, and the various viewpoints on the relationship between the EU and governments of member states.

#### **The Commonwealth**

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

#### **The United Nations**

This includes discussing the role and operation of the UN, particularly in the context of topical events affecting the international and/or global community.



# 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:

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

## **Community-based citizenship activities**

Community-based activities encourage students to work with people beyond the school community to address real issues and decisions.

## **Campaigning**

Campaigning is an important example of a community-based citizenship activity. Although care needs to be taken to remove risks, students can learn about democratic processes from being involved in existing campaigns and from running their own.

## **Community partners and organisations**

These could include local and national voluntary organisations and public and private bodies, for example the police, magistrates and the courts, local councillors, local interest groups, MPs, MEPs, journalists, campaigners and employers.

## **Historical**

This includes considering the historical contexts of citizenship issues and problems.

## **Media and ICT**

This includes 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. There are opportunities to link with other parts of the curriculum, including English and ICT.

## **Make links**

Links include 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.