Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement

Corrected oral evidence: Citizenship: Ofsted

Wednesday 1 November 2017
10.40 am

Listen to the meeting

Members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (The Chairman); Baroness Barker; Lord Blunkett; Lord Harries of Pentregarth; Baroness Lister of Burtersett; Baroness Newlove; Baroness Redfern; Lord Rowe-Beddoe; Lord Verjee.

Evidence Session No. 9 Heard in Public Questions 79 - 87

Witnesses

I: Sean Harford, National Director for Education, Ofsted; Scott Harrison, Former Ofsted Specialist Adviser for Citizenship; Ryan Mason, Assistant Head Teacher, Addey and Stanhope School, Lewisham.
Examination of witnesses

Sean Harford, Scott Harrison and Ryan Mason.

Q79 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much for coming along. We are very grateful to you for giving up your time to help us today. I have to read you the normal police caution, which is that a list of Members’ interests that are relevant to the inquiry has been sent to you and is available. This session is open to the public and is being recorded for BBC Parliament. A verbatim transcript will be taken of the evidence and will be put on the Committee’s website. A few days after this session, you will be sent a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy. It would be helpful if you could advise us of any corrections as quickly as possible. If, after this evidence session, you wish to clarify or amplify any points made during your evidence, or have any additional points to make, you are most welcome to submit supplementary evidence to us. Could I ask each of you to briefly introduce yourselves?

**Sean Harford:** I am one of Her Majesty’s inspectors and the national director for education for Ofsted.

**Ryan Mason:** I am curriculum lead for humanities and head of citizenship at Addey and Stanhope School, and a member of ACT.

**Scott Harrison:** I was an HMI when citizenship was introduced and had the responsibility for citizenship at that time. I retired from the Civil Service in 2000. I am now chair of trustees of the Association for Citizenship Teaching and a school governor.

Q80 **The Chairman:** Thank you very much. Could I open up with an overarching question? What is citizenship education attempting to achieve? What does Ofsted look for in citizenship education? What else should it look for?

**Sean Harford:** The national curriculum is clear on what it is trying to achieve. In the broadest terms, it is trying to make sure that we have young people who grow up to be decent citizens of the country and the world. When we inspect citizenship, we look to see that schools are building a curriculum that encompasses the things that are going to contribute to that. One of the major contributions across the curriculum is in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of young people, and looking to see how a school would do that. Clearly, it is up to the school how they would go about doing that, and there is no prescription as such, but we would look, through inspection, to see how the school is doing that and how successful they are in doing that. That manifests itself in a number of different ways, including the personal development and behaviour of the pupils, their response to each other and, more recently, their response to the fundamental British values agenda. All those things combined are where we would draw our evidence from.

**Ryan Mason:** For me, citizenship education is about trying to encourage engaged citizens and ensuring that the students we are teaching today want to take part in society and in democracy, not in a tokenistic way of
just going to vote but wanting to change things, advocate an opinion, get involved in things in the community and care about things that are going to have an impact on their lives. In my school that means the police, the media, politics, this building here. It is about ensuring that students are fully aware of all the different things that have an impact on them. Every time I start a year 7 lesson at the start of the year 7 curriculum, I start with how politics impacts on them. We go through the entire list—it is about an hour long—of how their life is impacted by politics and how citizenship education is going to impact on them, and allow them to understand all the different ways in which politics will have an impact on their life.

The question on what Ofsted is looking for is quite difficult to answer, because Ofsted has not released a report specifically on citizenship education since 2013. A lot of Ofsted reports do not necessarily mention citizenship. They look at social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects or British values. Sometimes citizenship can get lost—a later question looks at this—in the overarching topics of British values and SMSC where people get all the different things mixed up. I am not entirely certain what Ofsted is looking for.

Scott Harrison: ACT’s vision for every child and young person is to become confident and empowered to make a difference in the world around them as active and informed citizens. You have heard our chief executive explain that well, and that is the view that I hold. We have a vision for young people to be enabled to take part in society and to be well informed, active and responsible. As for what Ofsted looks for, I can only give you a perspective from the past when it was my brief, and that may be better taken as part of a later question.

The Chairman: You touched on an issue that this Committee has come across quite a lot, which is that the citizenship part of education has drifted off, although not entirely, but has become de-emphasised compared to personal behaviour and aspects of that. That is what I think you were hinting at. Would you like to amplify your thoughts a bit more on that?

Ryan Mason: I do not know if it is confusion, but new things get sent out, such as fundamental British values, and citizenship can be the vehicle to deliver those things, but sometimes when schools are inspected, fundamental British values and SMSC overarch and take over citizenship.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett: Ryan, you have said you are not sure what Ofsted is looking for. What do you think it should be looking for? What do you think the criteria are by which your teaching of citizenship should be judged?

Ryan Mason: As with every other subject within the national curriculum, you have to start with the teacher having strong subject knowledge and the ability to teach to A-level in a way that is acceptable for students. There is also a need to look at the engagement of the students, at where
the school is in the heart of the community, at what the school is doing for that community, at how those students are using what they are learning within the classroom and going out into the community to take that forward. That was one of the key things that really attracted me to the subject. I continue to push that now in my role. I try to get my students to go out and do things with the knowledge they have gained within the classroom. I would want Ofsted to look at that.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett: That is very helpful.

Q81 Lord Blunkett: I would like to pick up on the reference to the report in 2013. As I understand it, the evidence base for that was taken in 2009. I am not at all clear where Ofsted currently gets its data from, bearing in mind that the national curriculum is not applied directly in many schools but it is a national curriculum subject. How is the data being collected? If it were English, maths, science, history, geography or language, and there was no regular report from the Ofsted inspections of schools on citizenship, or it was somehow included in a broader comment rather than citizenship itself, we would be outraged. I am just trying to get a picture of where the data is coming from, how it is being reported and why Ofsted is not treating it as it does other national curriculum subjects.

Sean Harford: We need to clarify that the report that Lord Blunkett is referring to was part of what we used to call our triennial survey programme, which covered all subjects of the national curriculum. We no longer do those reports in any of our subjects. Frankly, this is due to resourcing constraints. In the 2013 report, there were probably a few other national curriculum subjects in the last couple of years of their triennial surveys that reported up to 2014-15. Since then we have not done any other national curriculum subject surveys. It is not treated any differently in that respect.

We get our data from our routine inspections. In addition, we are currently doing a curriculum survey, which will look across the curriculum, including citizenship, at the richness, depth and breadth of the curriculum and how the subjects take part in that. That is where we get our current work for the curriculum. You are right that that focus on individual subjects has been lost, and that is a direct result of funding.

Lord Blunkett: To follow up, and maybe the other two contributors would like to comment as well, I appreciate that you are the messenger so you are not being shot for something that you are not responsible for determining, but is this not making it extremely difficult to collate data on a national basis to give a full picture of what is taking place? Given the spasmodic nature of the reports on citizenship from individual school visits, are we in a fairly powerless position?

Sean Harford: It is wrong to say that this is spasmodic, in that every school report will look through a lens, as Ryan said, of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It will look at the promotion of fundamental British values. It will look at whether subjects stick out as being particularly well or particularly badly provided for. We can retrieve
that from the inspection reports that we publish for every school across the country roughly every five years; more frequently for some, less frequently for others.

One thing that plays into that is that we no longer routinely go into outstanding schools because of the regulations on that. We will not be seeing the vast majority of those schools and how they do that particularly well. That is a regulation that may be worth looking at. I do not think it is as bleak as that analysis may portray, but I take the point that that kind of look in depth at a single subject is not done now and may be missed.

Scott Harrison: Could I just say something about how this evolved? When citizenship was introduced as a subject, Ofsted was largely still an organisation with a subject-based workforce. I was recruited as a historian in 1990, and most HMIs were recruited on a subject basis. When Ofsted came in, its inspections at first were mainly the old Section 10 subject-based inspections, I think it is fair to say, but when they moved away to Section 5s, a team was established that had a subject brief and a subject specialist. I had the resource of a stratified sample of schools, 30 a year over three years, plus good practice examples, which gave us a pretty good evidence base of 100 schools upon which we could write our first report, Towards Consensus?, and our second report, Citizenship Established?—a good evidence base across mainly secondary schools.

We also inspected ITT and looked at the DfE citizenship CPD training for staff and sampled that. The Department for Education commissioned us to inspect 16-to-19 provision, and we did a sample of colleges, workforce providers and others. Times were different and my departure from Ofsted—this is coincidental; I retired as a civil servant, as I said—was at a time when Ofsted changed its approach to subjects and the subject team that I was responsible for was dissolved. Sean has given you the reason for that: resources.

I have to say in answer to Lord Blunkett’s question that I go into schools now looking at different subjects, but if I go back, say, to the 2013 science report, which was the last one, they were great subject reports. I re-read the citizenship ones, and I am a bit biased but they were great reports, and it is a loss that we do not have them any more.

Baroness Redfern: You have just touched on the good evidence base, Scott. How might you describe the evolution of citizenship education in England since it was first made a statutory component of the national curriculum?

Scott Harrison: Briefly, at the start expectations were high. The circumstances were propitious because there was policy behind citizenship. The QCA, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and its predecessor were very powerful groups in supporting schools’ curriculum development. It no longer exists, of course. The teacher training establishments, the NGOs and strong pump-priming from the department
set off citizenship quite well, but there were very great difficulties in introducing a new subject. I would cite five: confusion, complacency, inertia, other priorities, and hostility. The weaknesses in citizenship in the early years were because, in these propitious circumstances, those elements had to be overcome. Schools took the bull by the horns, and by the time citizenship was established we were saying that over half the schools had good provision. By the 2013 report, we were saying that two-thirds of schools had good provision and some had outstanding provision, but that report was already seeing a fall-back in the final year. That can be seen in the data on the numbers of students doing the GCSE, falling teacher training places and the lack of prioritisation by the Government.

Good work that had been done such as Assessing Pupils’ Progress, a massive project to exemplify the standards in citizenship, was there and ready to go. Unfortunately, in my opinion, the Minister of the day decided that none of that work should be published, so it was archived. All these messages to schools, including a slimmer national curriculum and other pressures, has meant that from 2012-13 the subject has fallen back and does not have the same status or drive as it had in those early years of development.

**Sean Harford:** The history that Scott sets out is quite accurate. A number of initiatives that have come on since that 2002 opening—community cohesion, the fundamental British values agenda, Prevent—have tended to get pushed into this area. Of course, when you push those things in, other things may well get squeezed out. It is fair comment, and if you look at the entries for the GCSE over the last few years for the subject of citizenship education you can see a significant drop-off. I think they have halved in the last four years to around 18,000, currently. That could be an indicator of schools’ focus and commitment to that subject.

**Q83 Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** What does Ofsted look for in terms of British values? Are schools currently doing well at promoting fundamental British values? What distinguishes the best schools from the rest?

**Sean Harford:** We look at how schools are promoting the key values set out and defined by government. It was helpful that they were set out in the 2015 document: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and tolerance. We will look to see how schools go about promoting those values to their pupils.

The vast majority of schools are doing well in this area. However, we have concerns about a very small minority of schools in the independent sector of the independent-sector schools that we look at; it is not, as you may well know, the full cohort of independent schools—it is about 1,000 to 1,100 of the non-association independent schools. A small number, about 40 or 45, have been identified as providing inadequately and failing the independent schools standard for promoting fundamental British values. They are predominantly from the faith sectors. Clearly, that is of concern, because where that is most acute they tend to be in communities or serving communities that are quite insular anyway, so,
ironically, they probably need more promotion of fundamental British values as set out than other places where there is more connection with the wider community.

In summary, it is mostly pretty good, but with concern, and quite acute concern, about a very small minority of schools.

**Ryan Mason:** What is going to distinguish the best schools from the rest is using the citizenship curriculum to go through those fundamental British values. When they were released, it was interesting to me, and to colleagues who deliver citizenship in other schools, that everything that was mentioned we were already delivering through our curriculum. In some places, delivery is by means of drop-down days and one-off initiatives. I have friends who work in other schools and they have said they have covered it in a day and have looked at fundamental British values and “all the students know what they are”. For me, that would not distinguish that school as the best.

It should be done through the curriculum. There should be schemes of work examining the rule of law and democracy; what a democracy is; and the differences in different governmental forms, such as theocracies and dictatorships and comparing them to democracies. That also gives the students the theory and they are not just one-off tokenistic things, as can happen in some places.

Ofsted guidance on British values mentions—please correct me if I am wrong—“acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values”. In some schools, the engagement can be a one-off thing; it needs to be built into the curriculum.

**Sean Harford:** We need to be clear that the Government have defined them and set out what they are. This is not Ofsted.

**Ryan Mason:** I know that.

**Scott Harrison:** May I add one small point about the guidance? I was talking about the feeling in schools that citizenship is perceived as less important than it was in those early years. The guidance says, “include in suitable parts of the curriculum—as appropriate for the age of pupils—material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law works in Britain, in contrast to other forms of government in other countries”. That is a little example. The document in no way mentions citizenship explicitly. It is like it came from another department that did not even know that citizenship had been a national curriculum subject and was already being done in schools. For what I would call the citizenship community, which ACT represents, it is very disappointing that a major initiative does not harness what schools are already doing and acknowledge them.

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth:** Would you like to tease out a little more the kinds of failures that these 40 to 45 schools are exhibiting. Presumably, they are all to do with sexuality and gender issues, are they?
Sean Harford: Not all, but there are faith schools that find it difficult to consider appropriately the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. We have been working on this recently and I have had a series of meetings with Jewish community leaders and representatives of Jewish schools. We find that orthodox maintained schools are more than able to provide a curriculum that does just that. However, a number of independent orthodox Jewish schools—nobody in those communities is saying that one is more orthodox than another—seem unable to do that. We have suggested that those schools talk to each other to help each other to see how they are doing it, because clearly it is possible for orthodox schools to do it, and we think it is really important that schools learn from each other to be able to comply with the law while giving their children a good education.

Lord Rowe-Beddoe: Can we move to the contribution of schools in the question of community cohesion? We understand that it is no longer an explicit duty of Ofsted to examine this. What does that mean in practice? Do you think it should be reintroduced? Is community cohesion now being undervalued?

Sean Harford: I do not think it needs to be reintroduced. One of the concerns with the approach to community cohesion, as introduced some years ago, was that it required schools to work with and demonstrate that they were connecting with communities in the school, in the locality, at regional, national and, indeed, international level. We started to see schools making links with other schools just to tick a box that they were meeting the requirement. That is an inherent issue when requirements are introduced and schools feel that they need to do it just to meet them, when it needs to be embedded solidly in the curriculum. As Ryan said, it needs to be dealt with seriously through subjects. There could be a discussion about whether that needs to be in the box of citizenship as a subject or whether that can be delivered through other subjects such as history, RS in a more cross-curricular way. We want to see that it is embedded in an effective way through the curriculum, and that requirement was not really doing that.

As to whether it is falling away or not, which was your question, I do not think it is. We report through our routine inspections, and it was picked up earlier that that is mainly through fundamental British values, through SMSC and through the way that schools decide to address and deliver citizenship. The combination of those things inculcates a respect for the need for cohesion in communities. I do not think it has fallen away in the way that could be perceived, because the requirement has been taken away.

Lord Rowe-Beddoe: Because it is not a requirement, how do you measure that it is being taught as part of the general curriculum?

Sean Harford: That is one reason why the curriculum work that we are doing at the moment is so important. Ofsted is revisiting this after some years. It sounds stark, and lack of interest is not the right expression, but Ofsted’s focus on the curriculum has not been as sharp as it might have
been in the last few years. The reason why we need to do this work, and we have been doing it, and the new chief inspector has been so keen on doing it, is because the structure of the curriculum has changed enormously over the last few years. The compulsion to do certain subjects has been taken away. Academies do not need to follow the national curriculum, and neither do free schools. The structures that made schools do those things have been taken away. It is a really fertile time to look at the curriculum and all aspects of a deep and rich curriculum, a broad and balanced curriculum, not just citizenship and community cohesion.

_Ryan Mason:_ Are they already sufficiently covered when a school has good citizenship teaching? If a school has good citizenship teaching, community cohesion will happen. My year 8s have done a lot of work with the Jimmy Mizen Foundation. I do not know if anyone is aware of that foundation. Last year, we organised a conference at which the local police, our local MP Vicky Foxcroft, our head teacher Jan Shapiro, and lots of other local people tried to look at all the different issues that there are in our local community of Deptford, and tried to work out different ways to do that. We are having a follow-up conference this year. Community cohesion as a subject lends itself to allowing you to work with the community. Citizenship teachers are usually one-person departments, and we are very good at looking at what there is out in the community for us to work with and to bring in to help us make things happen.

_Lord Blunkett:_ I understand that the Cabinet Office has announced that there is going to be a National Democracy Week next July to coincide with the beginnings of the enfranchisement of half our population 100 years ago. How do you see schools being able to contribute in the way you have just described to make that a meaningful exercise?

_Ryan Mason:_ I am not sure how it is going to happen. It would be fantastic for people to be able to celebrate what happened in 1918 and do things, but the curriculum time that we have is probably not going to allow people to do it. At key stages 3, 11 to 14—if schools are doing year 7 to year 9 as the key stage 3 curriculum—we will have time to look at females getting the vote, but once you get to key stage 4 things are so rigid: “We have to cover this, this, this and this to get to where the GCSE is”. So I do not think we will be able to.

_Sean Harford:_ That is a key point. We are seeing more and more schools contract key stage 3 to two years and give an extra year to key stage 4, which is effectively GCSE study. That has meant that young people are choosing their GCSE options at the end of year 8, at the age of 13, and inevitably subjects are being squeezed and dropped. Of course, citizenship is compulsory at key stage 4, but so is RS and PE and a number of other things, and schools have ways of delivering that that sometimes leads to the kinds of things that Ryan mentioned, such as drop-down days.

To answer Lord Blunkett’s question, the implementation of weeks to look at specific things can be really helpful. There has been some excellent
work on things like Black History Month across the country, but putting it in into a box of one week a year can lead to the kind of tick-box approach that we talked about earlier.

**The Chairman:** Across the piece, how are examples of good practice and exciting things spread? How is good news spread? Do you hear what other schools have been doing? Are there ways that you find out?

**Ryan Mason:** I am quite lucky in the local community, because I have Deptford Green School down the road, which has a very strong citizenship department. It was the beacon school for that. I speak to my colleague Charlotte Carson at Deptford Green. I have people who I trained with, and I know people who have trained under the person that I trained with, but apart from that it is very difficult to get things, unless I speak to ACT, which helps me quite a bit by telling me, “This is going on. You can speak to this person”. We are doing some TeachMeets very soon where we can meet up with people, but it is difficult if you do not have that help to find out.

**Sean Harford:** On what I said earlier about independent faith schools and there being a particular issue in a small number, I would like to put on record that there are excellent examples in that community, too. I have a quote here from the Jamiatul-Ilm Wal-Huda school in Lancashire. The inspection report picked up in particular that, “Pupils have very recently completed a joint project with pupils from a school in a rural part of Cumbria. Such work gives pupils a broad understanding of the range of people and contexts in modern Britain. Aspects such as democracy and the rule of law are taught formally and ... emphasised in the daily life of the school”. We can see that there is good and great practice and that it is an outstanding school overall. People can pick up on where things are being done well. It is not necessarily, “We will do that“, but it might be, “We will pick up the phone and talk to that school and maybe see what they are doing”.

**Q85 Lord Verjee:** We have covered a lot of this already. To what extent has the focus on citizenship education become overlaid by a number of related but very different agendas? We have talked about fundamental British values. We have not really talked about Prevent and community cohesion. Is there too much dilution and confusion and lack of clarity? Do we need more clarity in citizenship education?

**Scott Harrison:** Your question leads us down the right track. There is confusion. It does seem to be one thing after another and it would be good to see some joined-up thinking.

**Ryan Mason:** I agree with Scott.

**Sean Harford:** There are always pressures when government initiatives are brought in for all the right reasons. You mentioned Prevent. Sometimes it has been translated as a way of shutting down discourse. The whole Prevent agenda is about opening up discourse and should, where it is done well, allow young people to discuss those very things in
the context of democracy and of modern Britain. If that is done well, it absolutely can support all those things that Ryan set out earlier. Where things are diffuse—this goes back to the cross-curricular approach—how thoroughly and rigorously they are delivered can get lost in the tracking of them. That manifests itself most acutely in primary school, frankly, where the themed approach to a lot of work can mask the fact that particular subjects are not being covered in the way they might. There is a danger there. You need a knowledgeable professional to be a citizenship lead, as Ryan is, to be able to track, monitor and make sure that it is being delivered in a way that is effective.

**Q86 Baroness Barker:** I am not sure if you saw any of the previous sessions of this Committee, but at the opening session in which we discussed issues with the officials from several government departments, by far the main source of evidence and data about citizenship was Ofsted. There were many references to Ofsted. That gives your answers a particular importance for us in our work. Do you have evidence of there being parts of citizenship education that are less well delivered in schools? In particular, would you care to talk about the issue that was raised with us by some of the academics, which is that there has been a move away from community-based understanding of the world in which one is a citizen towards a greater emphasis on personal behaviour, tutoring and that sort of thing?

**Sean Harford:** The one area where we see much less work is in understanding—this sounds very basic—how community and society around you do things for you, such as knowing how your services are delivered to you, knowing that if you need housing you would not go to your MP but to your councillor, where responsibilities lie. These are simple but very important things, especially in vulnerable communities. That is probably not done as well as it might be. We rarely see that coming out in reports. It tends to be about community cohesion, the acceptance of others and learning about Parliament and what have you. That would be an area.

We need to remember, though, that a lot of people look at Ofsted and say, “Why is it not failing more schools and why are they not coming out with lower grades as a result?” The overall effect of the judgment that we make about a school has to be a balance of all things. Yesterday in the Education Select Committee the idea of careers was brought up quite forcefully by a Member. No, it might not always be done exactly as you would wish it to be done, but it is a balance of all the things a school does that relates to its overall effectiveness. It needs to be that way, otherwise it really would get down to a tick box, a list, of things that you do for Ofsted, and we really need to avoid that.

**Scott Harrison:** Standing back from Ofsted’s evidence base, because I cannot speak for that any more, I work in a number of schools as an educational consultant and, as I said, I am a chair of trustees. My view is that the weakest aspect of citizenship is not so much covering what was the national curriculum but depth. If I told you that we are going to teach atoms in science in one lesson or the Tudors in history in another, you
would say that that could not possibly be adequate, but many schools will have in PHSE or in their tutorial programme a lesson or a couple of lessons on democracy or on the law. Students cannot begin to get into what citizenship should be about to the extent that they know their role in arguing about the current issues of the day and thinking about the work of Parliament. We are in an age where there is more shouting and less political discourse and where students need to be empowered to know about issues in depth, but this is not available to them. I would say that the issue is richness and depth. The concomitant of that is more engaging citizenship is missing. You will find that schools are doing the coverage but not the depth.

**Ryan Mason:** From the perspective of my school, I am in a very lucky position where my head teacher values the subject quite a bit and has given me not a lot of time but more time than most of the colleagues who I know. I have one hour a week at key stage 3 and three hours over two weeks at key stage 4 to deliver the subject, so I am in a very lucky position. Schools are less good at delivering the active element as the students become older, and this is starting to happen to me now with the new GCSE. In the old-style GCSE, there is a requirement for them to go out and do an active citizenship campaign, and two in the Edexcel one. In the new GCSE specs, there is a requirement for the students to do something, but it is has very little weight in the overall GCSE, so less time is given to that.

In the past, I have had students doing campaigns about the Investigatory Powers Act and campaigns about Black Lives Matter. I have had lots of different campaigns where students have been outside Parliament campaigning and getting out and trying to do things. The new spec has restricted that. The element that schools are going to be less good at delivering now, although the students are getting the theory, is the active aspect of us getting them out. I know the subject itself should inspire kids to go out and do it themselves, but sometimes it is very difficult because you have to show them how to do it first before they can go on and continue to do it. That is going to be the weaker element of it.

**Sean Harford:** That is right in some respects, but the issue here—and this goes back to the chief inspector’s recent commentary on the curriculum—is that schools need to be looking beyond what is meeting the GCSE specification. If schools think that youngsters learn better and are more able and more knowledgeable as a result of the kinds of things you have said, presumably they would put the time in to do it and do it in that way. If they do not think that is how youngsters learn and improve their knowledge, presumably that would be an inefficient way of doing things. I understand what you mean and I understand that teachers are always under pressure, and as a teacher I felt exactly the same pressure to deliver within a specification, but if you believe that a method of learning is the best way of doing something, surely you would do it because that is the most effective way of doing it.
**Ryan Mason:** I believe that is the best way of doing it, but when you are hampered by the content you have to deliver and get through, it becomes very difficult to do the active part of it, which is the bit that the kids love the most.

**Lord Blunkett:** If all head teachers were really good and knew how to do it, we would not need Ofsted.

**The Chairman:** We have not touched on the National Citizen Service. Could you fill us in on how your school has seen that developing and how it has played a role across the piece in the issues that we are discussing?

**Ryan Mason:** We have had quite a good relationship with the National Citizen Service. The National Citizen Service uses our school as a base for delivery over the summer. We also have them coming in, doing assemblies and speaking to our students and recruiting students to do it over the summer. We have actively encouraged it into the school, but we have only had it for the last two years, so I am not entirely certain of its overall impact and effect.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** I take the point about GCSEs, but I got the sense from your reply, Sean, at the beginning of this round that you were not really putting the emphasis on the kind of active citizenship that Ryan is talking about. If schools feel that Ofsted does not really value it, perhaps this makes it more difficult. I really like what you say about going out in the community, but some of the evidence that we have had talked about schools as sites of democracy themselves. To what extent can the way schools are run also help develop young people as citizens?

**Ryan Mason:** We have a school council. Last year, the young mayor of Lewisham came from my school. Our school promotes democracy. Each form class, of which there are 20, has two representatives who are going to represent students at school council. We have debating clubs, essay competitions; we have everything to try to encourage students to understand what democracy is as well as the citizenship education they get. As I said, my head teacher really believes in giving students a voice and allowing them to see what will happen when their voice is given.

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** We were going to ask when Ofsted was planning on the next investigation into the state of citizenship education, but from what you have said, if I have understood you correctly, there are no longer subject reviews as such and it does not sound as though there will ever be. If that is the case, I would like to ask two related questions. The first is: why did England not participate in the last IEA study? Could it do so in the future as one way of trying to monitor what is happening with citizenship education?

The other more general question is to you all. The Crick report recommended the formation of a standing all-party commission on education for citizenship to monitor provision in schools and colleges. If citizenship is getting lost in the Ofsted role—and I think that is what we have heard from other evidence as well—is there a case for promoting
this idea of a standing all-party commission to do some of that monitoring?

**Sean Harford:** I would argue that it is not getting lost. As I set out earlier, we no longer do those triennial surveys, partly because we were not noticing the impact of them over time. Quite often if you looked back—and I am not talking specifically about citizenship—those subject surveys tended to say very similar things every three years, and you need to look at where you put resource and see impact. I do not think it is getting lost as such, although, of course, if you did a word search for the word “citizenship” across all our reports, it would not come back that frequently, but if you did the same for French, or whatever, you would find a similar thing. I think that is the case.

I do not know about the IEA particularly. It is not for us to do it, it is a government thing, but it might well be helpful to implement the Crick report recommendation in order to oversee this. I would not want the Committee to go away thinking that Ofsted does not care about it or that we do not consider it, because we absolutely do consider it. I know that this comes back to, “That is just SMSC or Prevent or FBV”, but we look at the combination of all those things and what is going on in history and in RS. It is up to schools to work out how they deliver it. Ryan’s school has gone down a certain route. Others will go down different routes. You need to look at the impact of doing that rather than saying, “This is the right route and that is the wrong route”.

**The Chairman:** We have come to the end of our hour.

**Scott Harrison:** In policy terms, the main thing about Crick was that it talked about political apathy. Times have changed, the need is greater, and I would urge you to do all you can to monitor citizenship, and our association will support you however it can.

**The Chairman:** Ryan, since I cut you off, you may have the very last word.

**Ryan Mason:** An all-party group would be a very good idea, because sometimes citizenship gets lost in history and RS. It would be good for a group of people to look at it across different political ideologies to see what is happening in the subject.

**The Chairman:** Thank you all very much for coming along. We have benefited greatly from your expertise. Thank you very much.