1. Introduction

1.1 The Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT) is the professional subject association for all teachers and educators engaged in Citizenship education. ACT was founded by Professor Sir Bernard Crick in 2001, following the Government’s decision to make Citizenship a statutory subject within the National Curriculum for schools in England. It is a membership organisation and registered charity.

1.2 ACT’s vision is for a strong and vibrant democracy enhanced by young people who are educated with the Citizenship knowledge, understanding, skills and experience they need to play an effective role as active citizens; and who, together, can take action to create a more equal, fair and just society for all. ACT’s focus is on supporting teachers and the teaching of Citizenship through provision of professional networks, training and CPD, a national teaching conference, a journal ‘Teaching Citizenship’, teaching resources and information on the association’s website (www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk). Funded project work and consultancy also contribute to meeting ACT’s core objectives. ACT’s work is shaped by a committed Council of Teachers who are unpaid volunteers, and is governed by a Board of Trustees.

1.3 To help inform this submission, ACT consulted widely with teachers and educators using an online survey designed to elicit responses to those parts of the Committee’s enquiry that relate to Citizenship education. In particular, ACT’s evidence addresses parts of questions 2, 4, 6 and 12 and the fullest response is given in relation to question 5. Of the 148 survey responses received, most were from teachers in England working in schools and colleges for 11-18 year olds and 72% describe themselves as Citizenship teachers. A small number of responses were received from teachers in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. ACT also organised focus groups in four secondary schools in England during July 2017, with pupils in key stages 3 and 4 and one group of post 16 students.

1.4 This submission is supported by the Political Studies Association Specialist Group on Young People’s Politics.

2. The role and aims of Citizenship

Q5 What should be the role of education in teaching and encouraging good citizenship? At what stages, from primary school through to university, should it be (a) available, and (b) compulsory?

2.1 A vibrant and healthy democracy in which every citizen feels their voice matters and they can play an active part in decision-making and public life needs young people who have had the benefit of effective Citizenship education. Democracy is precious and Citizenship education is vital in helping people to understand and participate within it: education in Citizenship is simply too important to be left to chance. General education through the school and National Curriculum must prepare children for life and work in the 21st Century and this cannot be achieved without an entitlement for every child to Citizenship education. Citizenship is a necessary subject in the National Curriculum.

2.2 In the last ten years, policy makers have held to a broad consensus that Citizenship is an important aim of education in England whether that be in the context of the knowledge-led, subject focused curriculum of 2014 or the aims led, concept and skills focused curriculum of 2008.

1 The survey ran during August and was also distributed by members of the Political Literacy Oversight Group, The Politics Project, the Political Studies Association, The Crick Centre for Political Understanding, Active Citizens FE, the Citizenship Foundation, Bite the Ballot and Step Up To Serve.
'The National Curriculum has three statutory aims. It should enable all young people to become successful learners, confident individual and responsible citizens.' (National Curriculum, 2008)

'The national curriculum provides pupils with an introduction to the essential knowledge that they need to be educated citizens.' (National Curriculum, Department for Education, 2014)

2.3 However, this broad consensus has been undermined by other aspects of policy. As a consequence, the extent to which these aims are realised through the school curriculum as a whole and specifically through the teaching of Citizenship as a National Curriculum subject is questionable. (Jerome, L, 2017). In particular, the shift away from a broad and balanced curriculum to focus on a narrow ‘core academic curriculum’ has undermined Citizenship teaching. Moreover, the freedoms associated with being an academy or free school means that England no longer has a truly National Curriculum. The reality is that Citizenship has become marginalised despite the apparent continuity in curriculum policy - that it continues, rightly, as a statutory National subject at key stages 3 and 4. The ACT survey conducted for this Committee showed that whilst 90% see Citizenship as an important priority and 85% said their Head or Principal was supportive of Citizenship education, just 47% felt it was actually made a priority in their own school or college.

2.4 Teachers agree that Citizenship has a wide-ranging and important contribution to general education. In the ACT survey, 80% of respondents agreed that Citizenship should be a statutory National Curriculum subject at key stage 2 to 4 (age 7 to 16) with 54% at key stage 1 (age 5 to 7). Two thirds of respondents said it should also be part of 16-19 provision. The survey also shows 89% agree that the goal of Citizenship is to give young people opportunities to be active in their community and 87% said it promotes social cohesion in society. A high proportion of teachers, 86%, support teaching British values through Citizenship education even though many (44%) remain sceptical about the way these have been defined. ACT’s view is that it would be more appropriate to express the fundamental British values as democratic values in the context of Citizenship education.

Recommendations:

I. The role of Citizenship education must be clarified so the aims of the subject are widely understood and include a strong emphasis on democratic values.

II. Citizenship should be a statutory entitlement for ALL pupils in ALL school types (with no exemptions), in addition to Citizenship remaining a statutory National Curriculum subject for pupils aged 11 to 16 with programmes of study.

III. In addition Citizenship should be made statutory in key stages 1 and 2 for pupils aged 5 to 11 and included as a component of 16-19 study programmes to ensure continuity and progression in the subject.

3. Citizenship curriculum and qualifications

**Q5 Should there be more emphasis on political participation, both inside and outside classes? How effective is current teaching? Do the curriculum and the qualifications that are currently offered need amending?**

3.1 High-quality and effective Citizenship education is found in schools that have several key characteristics:

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- Citizenship is a priority, strongly embedded in the curriculum
- there are Citizenship trained teachers who lead and coordinate teaching
- specialists are supported by the Senior Leadership team
- Citizenship as a subject is part of a whole-school approach, manifested in the culture and ethos of the school and in the school’s relations with the wider community.

The DfE-funded Longitudinal Study of Citizenship directed by the NFER from 2001-2010\(^4\) also showed that pupil outcomes in Citizenship improve where there is regular time for Citizenship lessons planned and taught by trained Citizenship teachers to allow for depth of study and progression in learning and attainment.

3.2 When Citizenship is planned and taught well the impact and benefit to students becomes clear. A Year 12 student who participated in a focus group at a school in Kent commented, ‘Citizenship is important as it increases understanding of the world around us....We need to become critical thinkers and find good sources of information. Citizenship helps us do this. Topics like democracy, voting and educating us on real news, not myths, around refugees etc. is really important.’ A Year 8 student at the same school said, ‘We would never get these topics elsewhere in the curriculum ...Citizenship helps you prepare for the world more than other subjects, it is real life stuff we learn’. At a school in Portsmouth, a Year 10 student commented, ‘It is equally important as Maths, English and Science’. Another said that Citizenship ‘expands your knowledge of what is happening in society and helps us to understand how the government works’; and that ‘Citizenship teaches you a lot about responsibility, and we value how we got to the point we have in our society, for example through equality laws.’

3.3 The 2014 changes to the National Curriculum led to an unfortunate narrowing of the subject curriculum for Citizenship. Key aspects of subject content were removed leaving the emphasis on national institutions. This was at the expense of learning about: local democracy; public services and NGOs; freedom of speech; the role of the media in holding those in power to account and shaping and informing public opinion; human rights and equalities; diversity and change in society, including the role of migration; and practical experiences of active citizenship and democratic participation.

3.4 In the ACT survey 88% agreed active citizenship to give students a real experience of participation in politics at school and in the wider community is essential to effective Citizenship education. Schools can do this in a range of ways if there is sufficient curriculum time available, with the involvement of different members of the wider community and giving their pupils a say in choosing the issues and action they undertake. For example, active citizenship can involve students in different forms of campaigning, organising public meetings or exhibitions to raise awareness of issues, running social enterprise activities, participating in local decision-making within and beyond the school or college through student councils or parliaments and other youth forums. Recent research has demonstrated that the positive impact of active citizenship in school continues into young adulthood, in relation to people’s attitudes towards, and their actual levels of, political participation (Keating & Janmaat, 2016)\(^5\).

3.5 The narrowing of the curriculum has coincided with a worrying decline in the numbers of Citizenship teachers. Since 2010, DfE workforce statistics show that numbers of Citizenship

\(^4\) https://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/cels/
teachers and the amount of teaching time given to the subject has halved. The number of those training as specialist Citizenship teachers has fallen from 243 in 2010 to just 54 in 2016 according to DfE figures. Consequently, in schools where the subject is taught there is a reliance on non-specialist teachers, who do not have the Citizenship subject knowledge or pedagogical repertoire to interpret the minimal teaching requirements in the National Curriculum and plan a coherent and meaningful Citizenship curriculum. This is unacceptable for any curriculum subject.

3.6 Effective Citizenship teaching requires a well planned curriculum and sufficient lesson time. The Ofsted subject monitoring report for Citizenship 2013 highlighted the need to develop and deepen learning of key concepts and knowledge through well-planned Citizenship provision and that schools that rely on teaching Citizenship through other subjects often have ‘less effective provision’; and that insufficient teacher subject knowledge leads to ‘limited and superficial learning’. The ACT survey showed 60% of teachers have less than an hour a week in which to teach the subject at key stage 3 (age 11 to 14) and key stage 4 (age 14 to 16) and about a quarter of these have less than 30 minutes a week. More than half, (54%) agreed the current National Curriculum programmes of study at key stages 3 and 4 do not provide sufficient breadth and depth of study. Similar numbers, 53%, say the primary Citizenship programmes of study also need improving. In fact the DfE non-statutory framework for primary Citizenship has not been updated since 2001 when it was first published, leaving a disjoint between primary and secondary Citizenship education.

Citizenship Qualifications

3.7 As with any subject, it is important to recognise students’ attainment and achievement in Citizenship. Some schools choose to do this through qualifications in Citizenship Studies because they believe it gives public recognition and status to the subject and helps with understanding among parents, pupils, employers and the wider community. National Qualifications in Citizenship Studies have existed for almost 20 years with the first A level introduced in 1998 and GCSE in 2001.

3.8 Recent changes to qualifications mean that the A level Citizenship Studies will no longer be available to students from 2018. GCSEs in Citizenship Studies are now focused on the development of knowledge, with assessments as end-of-course examinations rather than a combination of teacher assessment and examination. The active citizenship projects undertaken by students as part of the qualification is now just 15% of the overall marks, down from 60%. ACT is talking with teachers about these changes. Some have expressed concern about the lack of support and guidance from Awarding Organisations in teaching the new qualifications.

3.9 The number of students achieving GCSE Citizenship Studies peaked in 2009 at just over 96,000 but in 2017 was at just over 18,500. GCSE Citizenship Studies has been negatively affected by a number of factors including the removal of short course GCSEs (worth half a full GCSE) from school performance tables, and by the drive to focus on Ebacc subjects. In practice this means many students do not get the option of studying Citizenship at GCSE or they are forced to choose between Citizenship, Ebacc subjects they have not already taken as requirement by the school, and other non-Ebacc subjects such as RE, music or art. Whilst, technically, Citizenship is a statutory subject at key stage 4 in state-maintained secondary schools and this means all students

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7 http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-01-26/61973
in this phase should receive Citizenship education, the reality is that provision for the subject is often linked to the offer of qualifications.

3.10 The current policy not to redevelop A level Citizenship Studies means the subject has no formal recognition in general education beyond GCSE. Students are denied the opportunity to progress to an advanced level of study in Citizenship and there is no pathway to the study of Political and Social Sciences at University. Other developments such as Citizenship versions of the Extended Project Qualification could be explored to provide alternative routes to recognise attainment beyond GCSE.

Recommendations:
IV. The DfE should strengthen National Curriculum Citizenship by including knowledge and understanding of citizen action and participation in active citizenship. Any revision should also address the breadth of study and missing content.
V. Citizenship Studies should be available as GCSE and A level qualifications and the Extended Project Qualification should be developed to include Citizenship projects to encourage a wider range of students to have their learning recognised in the subject.
VI. GCSE Citizenship Studies should be added to the list of qualifications included for humanities in the Ebacc.
VII. The DfE should monitor the impact of qualification reforms on take up of the subject and publish information through the explicit inclusion of GCSE Citizenship Studies in their statistics.

4. What else is needed to support Citizenship?
Q6. Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens? Should they include a greater political element?
Q12. Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?

Strengthening practice and effective evaluation of Citizenship

4.1 The Expert Subject Advisory Group for Citizenship that was established by the DfE rightly points to the need to evaluate the state of Citizenship in schools and better exemplify and disseminate effective Citizenship practice. When Citizenship was introduced in schools in 2002 DfE Ministers were keen to evaluate its effectiveness and build a robust evidence base to improve policy and practice. They commissioned NFER to undertake the Longitudinal Study (CELS) from 2001 to 2010, ensured England’s participation in the two IEA international studies of civic and citizenship education (CIVED in 1999 and ICCS in 2009) so as to compare progress with other countries and encouraged Ofsted to carry out regular subject reviews of Citizenship. However, since 2010 that evidence base for Citizenship has been allowed to wither on the vine. There has been no follow up to CELS, England did not participate in the latest IEA study (ICCS16) and Ofsted have ceased subject reviews. In fact Ofsted rarely comment on Citizenship at all in inspection reports even where a school has a curriculum for Citizenship that contributes to key elements of the inspection framework. They are also failing to report on non-compliance with the statutory National Curriculum. The ACT membership voted to support the recommendations in the Expert Group’s National Action Plan – ‘Citizenship for All’. ACT members agree that government and Ofsted are key partners along with Citizenship organisations in working to evaluate and improve the quality and standard of Citizenship education in more schools. There is an urgent need to build

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9 Credit based units from Laser Learning Award on 'Active Citizenship in the Local Community' have just been published.
10 [https://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/the-international-civic-and-citizenship-education-study-iccs/]
a clear, coherent national picture of Citizenship education following the recent curriculum and qualification reforms through research and evaluation data.

4.2 The approach to Citizenship education in England was informed by reviewing best practice at European and international level. As one of the last countries in Europe to introduce Citizenship as part of the school curriculum there was much to learn from global networks and practice in other countries. Prior to and following 2002, DfE Ministers encouraged England’s active involvement in citizenship networks in Europe involving the Council of Europe, European Commission and Eurydice as well as globally through the British Council and IEA studies. From 2002 to 2010, England was viewed internationally as one of the leading exponents of effective Citizenship education and countries were keen to learn from our experience. However, since 2010 Citizenship practice in other countries has begun to outstrip ours, particularly in the Nordic countries including Finland, and Austria to name a few. This has coincided with DfE disengagement from European and global Citizenship education networks and evaluations leading to a missed opportunity to continue to measure our practice against other countries and contribute to and learn from such networks.

**Citizenship and National Citizen Service**

4.3 Opportunities for Citizenship education beyond general education should be encouraged so that young people continue to practise and learn Citizenship and active citizenship in new contexts. The Government’s flagship youth programme, National Citizen Service, is a case in point where links can be made between general education and the youth programmes. However, to date, connections are not well made and opportunities to develop meaningful action are being missed. The ACT survey showed 56% of respondents said their pupils do not participate in NCS and 75% said there was no connection between the NCS and the teaching of Citizenship in their school or college.

4.4 In 2013 ACT was commissioned by NCS trust to develop exemplar teaching materials and a student social action tool kit. These were updated and republished in 2016 to align with the reformed curriculum. However, the materials have not been widely published or disseminated and initial plans to encourage NCS providers to work with the materials and make links with Citizenship teachers when they visit schools do not appear to have been implemented. Planned DfE guidance to schools and colleges on National Citizen Service, should include clear links to the curriculum subject of Citizenship and the ACT materials and although this is expected, it has not yet been published.

**Making Citizenship visible in education policy**

4.5 Currently a number of government departments are putting efforts and resources into public policy that supports Citizenship education and active citizenship. The Home Office funded ACT to work with schools on Citizenship curriculum projects to develop anti-extremism education through its Prevent innovation fund; the Cabinet Office funds work to educate young people about democracy and voting; the Office for Civil Society at the Department of Culture Media and Sport funds social action, National Citizen Service and new training for Community Organisers; DFID has funded the Global Learning Programme including global citizenship.

4.6 The Department for Education have not provided any significant support for Citizenship education or Citizenship teacher training and development since 2008, although just recently the

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11 https://www.coe.int/en/web/edc/home
12 http://iccs.iea.nl/
DfE has funded a small project to promote British values through classroom debate resources for teachers which links with Citizenship, History and RE, and this project is being undertaken by ACT.

4.7 The absence of a clear communication policy to schools about Citizenship, in particular following the reform of the National Curriculum in 2014, is a problem. For example, it led some schools to assume that the rumoured removal of the subject must have happened and, three years on, some still do not know that Citizenship remains in the National Curriculum or has a GCSE. Consequently some schools have simply stopped teaching the subject.

4.8 The DfE could and should do more to clearly signal to all schools that Citizenship is an important curriculum subject with a clear contribution to make to the wider education agendas, for instance by making references to Citizenship in Ministerial speeches. They could emphasise that Citizenship provides the curriculum location, content and knowledge for exploring British values, Prevent and anti-extremist education. They could also acknowledge that Citizenship lessons provide the space to engage with students on a wide range of topical and controversial issues, as well as supporting greater social cohesion, equality and social justice. Trained and experienced Citizenship teachers are adept at handling such topics and issues. They should be valued as education leaders and experts who can work with other members of staff who lack the confidence or expertise.

Recommendations:

VII. The government need to be seen to be valuing and promoting Citizenship education in all schools and colleges. A DfE Minister and a Senior Civil servant should be given the remit to develop coherent policy and communication for Citizenship education and Citizenship teacher training and development, as well as to coordinate with other government departments working on citizenship policy.

VIII. The DfE should ensure that there is a strong and robust evidence base for Citizenship education which can be used to develop and maintain effective policy and practice. This evidence base should include commissioning evaluation and research and involve active participation in Citizenship education networks at the European and international level.

IX. The Expert Subject Advisory Group’s National Action Plan ‘Citizenship for all’ should be supported by the DfE to ensure the quality of citizenship provision in schools is improved, more Citizenship teachers are trained, adequate teaching resources are available, links are made to NCS, and quality is monitored and reported through regular inspection and evaluation by Ofsted.

X. The DfE should promote Citizenship initial teacher education as a ‘priority’ subject and demonstrate that Citizenship and Citizenship specialist expertise is valued by including the subject in the National and Specialist Leaders of Education and Teaching Schools programmes.

5. Other issues

Q2. Could citizenship ceremonies or events throughout the educational process play a role?

Q4. What are your views on changes to the franchise for national or local elections, including lowering the voting age? Should changes be made to the voting process or the voting registration process?

Q12. Can you give examples of initiatives and role models that have helped promote a positive vision of British Citizenship within a tolerant and cohesive society?
**Votes at 16, voter registration and graduation ceremonies**

5.1 The ACT survey also asked questions related to other aspects of the Committees enquiry. If the franchise is extended, then clearly Citizenship education will become a critical route to ensuring younger voters are informed about their new political rights. The survey findings include:

- 93% agreed voter registration should be automatic for all eligible citizens
- 83% agree Schools should promote voter registration as part of Citizenship education
- 69% agree that 16 and 17 year olds should be given the right to vote in elections
- 50% agree that Graduation Ceremonies should be used to recognise Citizenship achievements.

**Citizenship ceremonies**

5.2 Manchester University has been working with the Citizenship department at Altrincham Girls’ Grammar School to explore with pupils notions of how British identity is experienced by new citizens. The university interviewed new entrant citizens about their experiences of becoming British citizens and the reasons why they chose to become citizens. It developed Case studies and a framework of activities to use with pupils as part of Citizenship education. The pilot materials have been used successfully and are being further developed.

**School and College Case studies**

5.3 ACT is happy to provide further information as case studies or for Committee visits to schools providing high quality Citizenship in primary, secondary and post-16 education.

*8 September 2017*