1. What does citizenship and civic engagement mean in the 21st century? Why does it matter, and how does it relate to questions of identity?

This is a very broad question for this sort of submission. My focus in this submission is on citizenship and civic engagement in schools. I would guide the committee to the contents of the Crick Report (http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/4385/1/crickreport1998.pdf) of 1998. Whilst rather old now, the findings of that report remain pertinent.

In particular, paragraph 1.1: “We unanimously advise the Secretary of State that citizenship and the teaching of democracy, construed in a broad sense that we will define, is so important both for schools and the life of the nation that there must be a statutory requirement on schools to ensure that it is part of the entitlement of all pupils. It can no longer sensibly be left as uncoordinated local initiatives which vary greatly in number, content and method. This is an inadequate basis for animating the idea of a common citizenship with democratic values.”

And paragraph 1.5: “We aim at no less than a change in the political culture of this country both nationally and locally: for people to think of themselves as active citizens, willing, able and equipped to have an influence in public life and with the critical capacities to weigh evidence before speaking and acting; to build on and to extend radically to young people the best in existing traditions of community involvement and public service, and to make them individually confident in finding new forms of involvement and action among themselves. There are worrying levels of apathy, ignorance and cynicism about public life. These, unless tackled at every level, could well diminish the hoped-for benefits both of constitutional reform and of the changing nature of the welfare state. To quote from a speech by the Lord Chancellor earlier this year (on which we end this report): ‘We should not, must not, dare not, be complacent about the health and future of British democracy.”

2. Citizenship is partly about membership and belonging. Are there ways we could strengthen people’s identity as citizens, whether they are citizens by birth or naturalisation? Could citizenship ceremonies or events throughout the educational process play a role? Should pride in being or becoming British be encouraged?

The introduction of the Academies Act 2010 took many state schools out of the remit of the National Curriculum (and therefore outside the requirement to teach Citizenship) requiring only that they implement a curriculum that is broad and balanced (Academies Act 2010, Section 1).

The UK Government’s supposed commitment to civic education is therefore questionable. The UK Government has taken strides in other areas to ensure that curricula in non-maintained schools include specific topics by virtue of being a condition in the master funding agreements. For example, all academies must “provide for the teaching of evolution”. Further, all academies must actively promote: “fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs” (DFE2014:19). I raise this to highlight ways in which civic education (including an exploration of what is meant by “British
identity”) might be made a mandatory part of the curriculum for all state schools. Yet thus far, the UK Government has not availed itself of this opportunity with regard to citizenship education.


3. Civic engagement can be seen as both a responsibility and a right of citizenship. Beyond the existing legal framework, should citizens have additional formal rights and responsibilities? How do you see the relationship between the two? Should they have the force of law individually or be presented as reciprocal duties between citizen and state? How should they be monitored and/or enforced?

No comment.

4. Do current laws encourage active political engagement? 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?

No comment but see comments above regarding Citizenship education.

5. 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? Should there be any exemptions? 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?

As recommended in the Crick report, Citizenship education should be compulsory. It may be that the subject is ill-understood. I taught Citizenship at Key Stages 3 and 4. To give you some flavour of aims in teaching in this area, allow me to explain some of the topics I taught:

- **Council tax**: what it is, what does it pay for? Who makes those decisions.
- **Budget**: how does Government balance the budget? What are some of the competing areas requesting money (e.g. Health, Military etc)? What is “national debt”? Where does the State get money from?
- **Voting**: How to vote (with a mock election including a ballot box and polling station). How to understand manifestos. What do different parties say. Why is voting important. Debate on whether voting should be compulsory. Debate on whether voting age should be lowered. Who you vote for (i.e. MP), how a government is formed and what your MP does.
- **Living in a diverse Britain**: Equality Act 2010 and repercussions for illegal acts (e.g. wedding cake case, risk of grievance procedure if in employment etc). Difficulties of reconciling competing rights: free speech vs anti-racism laws. Looking at legal case studies to understand the legal landscape. Role models from Diversity Role Models came in to discuss lived experiences of being LGBT and anti-homophobic bullying.
- **Global issues**: foreign aid; fair trade vs free trade; role of NATO, EFTA, EU. What the EU does; debate on Brexit.
Consistent with teachers’ legal obligations to teach in a non-biased way, teaching in this area should be presented in a manner that encourages debate rather than directive teaching, to the extent appropriate. For example, free trade vs fair trade: competing claims, pros and cons of each, coming to conclusions but understanding that there are rarely black and white answers.

A key component of Citizenship education before it was amended by the previous government (under Michael Gove MP, then Secretary of State for Education) was the projects element. In principle, imagine that a class of young people is asked to:

- Work in groups
- Choose a topic for social change (locally, nationally or internationally)
- Come up with a plan for how to effect change, which could include increasing awareness of the topic amongst peers
- Research different sides of the debate to understand why people may not agree with them
- Execute that plan
- Interview people in authority (e.g. teachers, MPs, people in industry) to gain advice and obtain their views
- Reflect on their project

To give you some examples of topics undertaken by my students:

- Campaign for compulsory education amongst all Year 7s in their school on basic animal welfare (cats, dogs, rabbits etc).
- Petition for better lighting at local playground.
- Credit-card size cards with students’ rights in the event of being stopped and searched
- Writing to MP and other people in authority with influence as part of a campaign for votes at 16
- Persuading school canteen to stock more fair trade products
- Anti-bullying programme that includes a buddy system for Year 7 students

I want to stress, none of these were my idea. All of the topics had to be researched to understand why people may not agree with them (e.g. for the fair trade project, an understanding of costs of items such as bananas).

There are a number of benefits to young people:

- Across a range of projects, students become more aware of the civic and political landscape in which they live: local councillors, MPs, how laws are made etc.
- Across a range of projects, students develop skills in civic participation.
- Students develop skills in team work, strategic thinking, working to a timetable and (where applicable) a budget (if given by the school); reflecting on what went well and where they can improve.

These projects have nearly disappeared from the educational landscape. They no longer form part of the Citizenship GCSE and schools are increasingly pressured towards grade-yielding activities. Some youth groups and extraordinary teachers continue this mantle, but the reality is that few young people now will have opportunities within school to participate in such projects.
I absolutely suggest that you consider how such projects might be brought back within compulsory schooling in State schools.

6. Do voluntary citizenship programmes such as the National Citizen Service do a good job of creating active citizens? Are they the right length? Should they be compulsory, and if so, when? Should they include a greater political element? Should they lead to a more public citizenship ceremony? Are they good value for money? What other routes exist for creating active citizens?
No comment.

7. How can society support civic engagement? What responsibility should central government, devolved and local governments, third sector organisations and the individual have for encouraging civic engagement? What can the Government and Parliament do to support civil society initiatives to increase civic engagement?
No comment.

8. What are the values that all of us who live in Britain should share and support? Can you identify any threats to these values, which affect the citizenship of, for instance, women or various minority groups? If so, how can their citizenship be strengthened?

LGBT rights are particularly at threat. The committee may wish to review submissions (or specifically request evidence from):

- Stonewall
- Diversity Role Models
- The Proud Trust

on the impact of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying amongst young people.

9. Why do so many communities and groups feel “left behind”? Are there any specific factors which act as barriers to active citizenship faced by different communities or groups - white, BME, young, old, rural, urban? How might these barriers be overcome?

No comment.

10. How do you see the relationship between citizenship and civic engagement on the one hand and social cohesion and integration on the other? What effect does the level of diversity in schools and workplaces have on integration in society as a whole? How can diversity and integration be increased concurrently?

No comment.

11. How important are levels of English proficiency for first and second generation immigrants and what could be done to increase them, including through support for ESOL classes? Are there particular barriers faced by newcomers to Britain? Could the naturalisation process, including the citizenship test, be improved and if so, how?
No comment directly on this question; but an observation that Citizenship education in schools should not be reliant purely on an ability to write well. The information and learning should be more accessible precisely because the benefit of the subject is for all; not the academically-minded few.

12. 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?

The Proud Trust in Manchester helps to organise citizenship days in which young people can undertake campaign projects, as referenced above.

8 September 2017