

*Education for Citizenship in England,
Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales*

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CONTENTS

Page	Part One: Introduction The Context The Participants The Process The Convenors
Page	Part Two: Key Findings Language Teachers Schools and the wider community Pupils
Page	Part Three: Recommendations General England Northern Ireland Scotland Wales

APPENDIX

- Position Papers (May 2000)
- i. Education for Citizenship in England
 - ii. Education for Citizenship in Northern Ireland
 - iii. Education for Citizenship in Scotland
 - iv. Education for Citizenship in Wales

Participant List

Part One: Introduction

The Context

“It is to be hoped that the conference will explore and elaborate prevailing aspirations that 'education for citizenship' should help young people to have a regard for themselves and for others; to develop the abilities needed to empower them to participate effectively in the life of their families, their communities and the society in which they live and work; to be able to identify and assess the values which underlie their own behaviour and that of others; to be able to take responsibility for their beliefs and actions; to appreciate such moral values as honesty, justice and concern for others, and to be committed to applying these values in their own lives and promoting them in the life of society.”

Dr William Gatherer
Trustee, Gordon Cook Foundation
May 2000

The *Education for Citizenship 2000* conference aimed to bring together educators, policy makers and curriculum planners engaged in the field of 'education for citizenship' in different parts of the United Kingdom. It was felt that they would benefit from sharing their understanding of the concept of citizenship and the various means by which citizenship education was being developed in each of the four jurisdictions. Bringing together these participants would also help deepen everyone's understanding of the complex and sensitive issues involved in education for citizenship, and the conference aimed to produce reflections and guidance that would be of value to all.

The conference (the first of its kind) would also work towards facilitating communication and co-operation among the political, administrative, and academic leadership in the four major educational systems in the UK. In addition, it would encourage participants to develop their own roles as proactive leaders in the promotion of education for citizenship within their own spheres of influence.

The Participants

Drawn from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the participants comprised a cross-section of representatives from the four educational systems. There was also representation from the Republic of Ireland. The selection process for the conference was largely the responsibility of individual co-ordinators in each of the four countries, who handpicked delegates who could contribute significantly to the debate, and would have the ability to implement the recommendations in practice. The co-ordinators were Jan Newton (Citizenship Foundation) and John Potter (CSV) for England, Alan Smith (University of Ulster) for Northern Ireland, Stewart Jardine (Educational Consultant) for Scotland and David Black (Educational Consultant) for Wales.

The Process

Prior to the conference, papers were sent to all participants detailing the position of each of the four nations at May 2000 in relation to education for citizenship. These papers, compiled by the organisers from each home nation, were for the purpose of informing participants of current activities, and acting as a prompt for discussion. Precises of these position papers can be found in the Appendix of this report.

The conference opened with a keynote address by Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, followed by an introduction from each of the home nations. A mix of panel, plenary and small group sessions followed which culminated in each home nation group surfacing what, for them, had been the three most significant issues that had arisen during the course of the conference (see Part Two).

The Convenors

The **Gordon Cook Foundation** is dedicated to the advancement and promotion of all aspects of education which are likely to promote ‘character development’ and ‘citizenship’. It has no affiliation to any religious, political or social organisation or movement. In recent years, the Foundation has adopted the term *Values Education* to denote the wide range of educational activity it seeks to support.

The **Institute for Global Ethics UK Trust** achieved charitable status in 1995 and is dedicated to “promoting ethical fitness¹ through public discourse and practical action”. The UK Trust is the British entity of the Institute for Global Ethics, an independent, non-profit research and educational membership organisation, which was founded in 1990. The Institute focuses its activities in three main areas – values and citizenship education, organisational ethics, and public policy.

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Part Two: Key Findings

Language

From the very start of the conference and throughout all proceedings, reference was made to the complexity of language when speaking about education for citizenship, and reference was made to the feeling of hesitancy in using terms that can be misinterpreted. The term ‘citizenship’ is a difficult and emotive concept, and is not often used in everyday language as it can conjure up negative images, and alienate people.

However, it can be said that at this point in the history of the UK, there is something very self-conscious about what it means, for example, to be English, or Welsh, or an ethnic minority within one of the four jurisdictions. These issues are very important, if difficult to approach, and it was felt by some participants that if the subject was called something else, these important issues could be lost. It was suggested that the concept of education for citizenship can help to build a programme that asks hard questions and raises difficult issues, and that this concept can be seen to be more important than the term itself.

In answer to the question of producing pupils who are ‘failed citizens’, it was pointed out that teachers are looking at pupil’s understanding of the civic, social and political dimensions of society, rather than attempting to save pupils from ‘failing life’. It was felt that there were tensions and affiliations at play over the use of the term ‘citizenship’ and it was suggested that these could be overcome if we could agree principles for a common understanding of education for citizenship.

“The conversations and discussions we have had about semantics are not so important within a national context.”

Teachers

One of the issues most frequently commented on was how the introduction of citizenship education will be received and implemented by teachers.

The discussions at the conference surfaced a number of important ideas for the successful implementation of education for citizenship through the support and encouragement of citizenship teachers. It was generally agreed that there needs to be:-

- clear and focussed attention on the major implications for teacher training
- well-packaged and well-presented resources which can help to build teachers’ confidence and self-esteem
- a professionally-produced guide to all the different resources available to citizenship teachers
- a structured network across the United Kingdom within which teachers can share good practice and provide guidance for each other

The general conclusion of participants indicated that by being too top-heavy, too imposed from above, teachers would turn away from citizenship education. It was agreed that for teachers to feel that they had ownership of the subject, citizenship education would need to be taken on board by them at an early stage.

Schools and the wider community

“Citizenship is not just a subject in the curriculum, but also a set of values and attitudes. It requires a change in the culture of many schools and involves linking schools with their wider communities.”

The ethos of the whole school is critical if citizenship education is to be of value, and perceived as credible by the wider community. Questions were raised as to what exactly is the appropriate climate, and how can such a climate be supported. The following answers were suggested:-

- There needs to be a change in attitudes and behaviour not just of the pupils, but also of teachers, parents and members of the wider community also; i.e. attention should to be focused on whole school approaches to citizenship education.
- Schools need to appreciate that they should make the most effective use of wider community involvement, recognising the wealth of experience there is available.
- It is important to acknowledge the ongoing work and research of the voluntary sector. The role of the voluntary sector in education is growing, and schools can tap into an array of support, from resources to training.

Pupils

Conversations which took place during the conference focused on the effect education for citizenship will have on pupils, and why it is so important that young people are included in, instead of excluded from, the consultation process. Young people are the major stakeholders in their own education. Education is successful when it starts with their own concerns, as education for citizenship aims to do.

Our expectations of young people need to be realistic; we cannot simply impose adult systems and expect them to be accepted. Citizenship education should provide avenues for young people to explore their own ways of interacting with the political system, and addressing societal issues with their contemporaries.

The issue of accreditation and assessment of pupils was tied in with the language used to describe those who pass and fail in the subject. It was questioned whether or not assessment might lead to the notion of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ citizens. It was suggested that other ways of celebrating this learning achievement should be investigated, perhaps through processes which could directly involve young people.

Section Three: Recommendations

General

“There are common issues and challenges across the UK, but equally within each country there are unique issues”

Consensus was reached on a number of issues where there were overlapping concerns between the four countries.

All of the countries expressed deep concerns about training and resources. Significantly, all felt that there must be development of resources and appropriate initial teacher training – together with ongoing development of staff – for citizenship education to be delivered successfully and confidently.

By bringing together the four nations it has been possible to appreciate the challenges faced, and the lack of shared information and knowledge between systems. There needs to be coherence, and collated information of good practice which is accessible across the whole of the UK. It was felt that a barrier to this being achieved was that, seemingly, no-one was in a position to take responsibility for overseeing the four jurisdictions. It was felt that, if at all possible, there should be a UK perspective on education for citizenship, which also looked at the relationship between the UK and the Republic of Ireland, and with Europe.

England

“This is an important subject for all four countries and we applaud the approach of bringing them together. There has been a great deal of learning.”

The concerns of the English group were focused on pragmatic issues, which were seen as essential in making citizenship education ‘work’. These issues ranged from the actual delivery of citizenship education in the curriculum to the need for a much bigger input from government as to how schools should implement it. There was also apprehension about how citizenship can be introduced into the syllabus, without being marginalized by competing subjects in an already overcrowded curriculum.

There was also uncertainty about the availability of resources and the sharing of good practice. It was suggested that one solution might be a resource centre for teachers and others involved in education for citizenship. It was also pointed out that many resources already exist beyond the classroom, and that stronger links need to be built with youth groups and members of the wider community.

It was noted that Professor Bernard Crick had suggested the formation of an Association for Citizenship Teachers, and this conference had shown how useful such an organisation would be in helping form networks.

Northern Ireland

“I have been teaching for 20 years, and I have never been to a conference where the four nations and the republic have been represented. The quality of the debate has been enhanced.”

It was agreed that the effect of the conference on the participants had influenced the group from Northern Ireland to develop a broader consultation process, and it was agreed that this conference should be followed by an awareness-raising session. The commitment to making education for citizenship a success resulted in the view that rushing ahead with implementation, before thorough consultation, would ultimately lead to failure. It was decided that the aim should not be to impose education for citizenship quickly, but to work over a 5-10 year period within which schools can become involved on a voluntary basis. The number of schools involved should increase as good practice and enthusiasm is passed from school to school.

It was suggested that the Northern Ireland education system asks itself “what would be the process and structures that would allow Northern Ireland to have a much fuller discussion about citizenship, involving a network of partnerships within our society.”

It was also noted that the lack of resources are a significant issue, and there needs to be a clear commitment to the money, time and expertise needed to produce suitable materials. Although there could be some commonality in the resources across the UK, Northern Ireland will need specific sections which address the most difficult issues.

Scotland

“The influence from the other three countries has been exceptional, we have learnt a great deal.”

The Scottish curriculum framework document was ready to go out for consultation, and it was realised that this was an opportunity to show how much education for citizenship was valued in the methods used to carry out the process. To this end it was agreed to involve young people and the wider community in the process. In addition partnerships between formal national bodies, local schools and communities should be seen as an opportunity, and be encouraged. The hearts and minds of teachers might be won by sharing examples of schools where citizenship education is already making an impact, so that teachers can appreciate how important it is for themselves, for their pupils and for society.

The Scottish participants also agreed to use the Gordon Cook Foundation website as a means of keeping this newly formed network in communication with each other. It could also act as the basis that draws together the many different initiatives already doing good work in the area.

Wales

“This conference has allowed a group of people from Wales to get together for the first time to discuss these issues from a Welsh perspective.”

It was felt that education for citizenship lacked the sharper political edge of the other nations, as it seems there is not the traditional dialogue that the other three seem to have been having. It was decided that networks need to be developed, and dialogue needs to be promoted, between all those supporting education for citizenship in Wales. This should include statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, teachers and pupils.

The major issue for Wales is that there is already a distinctive framework for PSE. It was agreed that there should be an audit of what is already in place, so that the next step builds carefully on existing good practice and develops those areas which are weaker and need to be addressed first. This is a non-threatening and positive way forward, and would contribute to PSE being successful with staff and pupils.

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APPENDIX

Education for Citizenship in England (May 2000)

Conservative and progressive arguments in the education debate within England have recently come together to strengthen the case for formal civic education. It is hoped that young people can be introduced both to their rights and responsibilities, can understand the role and significance of the law in society, and can treasure and act upon the important values which underpin our democracies.

In November 1999 education for citizenship was formally included in the revised national curriculum for England. In primary schools it will be a non-statutory part of a new framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship from September 2000 onwards. Citizenship will become a statutory entitlement for all young people (aged 11-16) in secondary schools in September 2002.

Citizenship is complemented by the framework for PSHE at key stages 3 and 4. The Crick Report identified three interrelated strands that should run through all education for citizenship:

- *Political literacy* - Pupils learning about the institutions, issues, problems and practices of our democracy and how citizens can make themselves effective in public life, locally, regionally and nationally, through skills and values as well as knowledge – this can be termed political literacy, which encompasses more than political knowledge alone.
- *Community involvement* - Pupils learning how to become helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their neighbourhood and communities, including learning through community involvement and service.
- *Social and moral responsibility* - Pupils learning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour, both in and beyond the classroom, towards those in authority and towards each other.

QCA, in consultation with teachers, local authorities, professional associations and voluntary sector organisations, has produced a Non-Statutory Guidance paper to help steer teachers through the implications of the introduction of citizenship education. In addition, Jacqui Smith, Minister for Education, chairs a DfEE Ministerial Working Party on Citizenship Education. The task of the group is to provide advice and support on the implementation of citizenship education. Sub-groups are currently addressing: accreditation and assessment, teacher training, community involvement and teaching resources. The working party is also in consultation with OfSTED

Notes

1. DfEE/QCA 22 Sept 1998 (London)
2. The National Curriculum Handbook for secondary teachers in England (1999), available from QCA Publications, order reference QCA/99/458 (tel:01787 884288)
3. These notes are based directly on extracts from QCA's Initial Guidance for Schools (April 2000). See KS 3 & 4 page 4 ff.

Education for Citizenship in Northern Ireland

The education system in Northern Ireland is relatively small. Statutory education encompasses approximately 350,000 children. The majority of Catholic and Protestant children attend separate schools, with approximately 4% of pupils attending 'integrated schools'. The system is administered by a Department of Education and five local authorities (known as Education and Library Boards).

Educational developments have evolved within a volatile and changing political context, with the declaration of cease-fires by paramilitary groups in 1994 creating the opportunity for the political dialogue that led eventually to the Belfast Agreement in April 1998. The Agreement is an attempt to move society away from a 'culture of violence' through the establishment of new democratic institutions. At policy level this commitment is emerging through the reports of government working groups set up to consider the implications of the Agreement for future developments in education.

This has led to a number of developments taking place at the level of curriculum policy. A review of the Northern Ireland curriculum is underway, coordinated by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). Consultation on the first stage of the curriculum review takes place between April and June 2000. The next stage will involve the establishment of working groups to review programmes of study for subjects, leading to a second consultation process between April and June 2001. This means that any formal decision to include citizenship in the statutory curriculum could take effect in schools from September 2002.

At present explicit reference to issues related to democratic citizenship within subject areas of the timetabled curriculum is limited. The opportunities for education for democratic citizenship within the curriculum are diffused and reside within course structure areas such as History, Politics and Sociology. There is potential for the development of more explicit approaches to education for democratic citizenship through the cross-curricular theme Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), which is specific to the Northern Ireland curriculum.

In recent years there has been a significant growth in the number of citizenship projects, and partnerships with NGOs are being established for the development of materials and resources to support school. Implications for teacher training and professional development are also being considered.

The **Republic of Ireland** undertook a pilot project (1993-96) that led to the introduction of a new curriculum programme in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) in all second level schools from September 1997. CSPE is a course in citizenship based on human rights and social responsibilities. It aims to develop active citizens who have a sense of belonging to the local, national, European and global communities. The course incorporates seven key concepts (democracy, rights and responsibilities, human dignity, interdependence, development, law and stewardship) and is taught through four units of study (The Individual and Citizenship; The Community; The State; Ireland and the World).

Education for Citizenship in Scotland (May 2000)

The role of school and pre-school education in equipping young people for 'effective citizenship' has become increasingly explicit in Scottish curriculum documentation in recent years. The advent of the Scottish Parliament has encouraged a fresh focus on the importance of people living in Scotland being able to understand and participate in democratic processes.

In a consultative paper on *The School Curriculum and the Culture of Scotland* [pub.1999], the Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum [Scottish CCC] examined briefly some key features of education for citizenship, seen as encompassing, but going beyond, understanding of political structures and processes. The paper's main conclusion was that *the concept of education for citizenship should be debated and explored further and its place in the curriculum defined.*

In Autumn 1999, the Scottish Executive Education Department [SEED] invited Scottish CCC to undertake a review of education for citizenship from 3 to 18. In response, the Scottish CCC established a Review Group, chaired by one of its members, Professor Pamela Munn from the University of Edinburgh, and with membership drawn from education ['formal' and 'informal'], HMI Inspectorate, local government and the wider community. The Review Group's report is due to be finalised for consideration by the Scottish CCC in June 2000.

With Council's approval, it is intended that the report will be published as a 'paper for discussion and consultation' early in the Autumn 2000 term. Further development of the paper will be informed by the consultations and by the outcomes of work on the 'mapping' of existing practice against the framework of ideas developed by the Review Group. Eventually, it is envisaged that a national framework paper will be published, with Ministerial endorsement, accompanied by some associated guidance material.

Alongside the Scottish CCC project outlined above, there is an expanding range of other, related areas of activity. Two of these are noted very briefly here to give a flavour of work underway:

- Community Learning Scotland [CLS] is engaging in a range of activities in support of 'active citizenship', including the establishment of the Scottish Centre for Active Citizenship, a parallel consideration of education for citizenship from the perspective of community education and the establishment of a Scottish Youth Parliament.
- The Scottish Executive's Action Programme for Youth has planned a Youth Summit for 19 June 2000 in Motherwell. A key part of this will involve 'e-consultation' and 'teledemocracy', developments which have links, for example, with ongoing work on the National Grid for Learning.

Education for Citizenship in Wales

When the National Curriculum was first implemented and the supporting cross curricula themes were developed, Wales chose 'community understanding' as a theme as opposed to 'citizenship'. Since 'citizenship' is an ideologically contested concept it was felt that community understanding embraced citizenship in a way that citizenship did not embrace community. Subsequently, following the 1996 Education Act the elements of this theme have now been included within the framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE).

The White Paper *Building Excellent Schools Together* (BEST) 1997 emphasises the importance of life skills and the need to become valuable members of the community. It is important to recognise the contribution that PSE makes as an essential element in a balanced and holistic education which equips children and young people to be more personally effective, healthy and responsible in society. The teaching of PSE, as demonstrated in the good practice seen in many schools, can encourage not only positive attitudes to society but also a greater participation in the community and the democratic process.

In the school context PSE comprises all that a school undertakes to promote the personal and social development of its pupils. This includes all the classroom-based experiences and other areas of school experience which are features of the ethos and community life of the school. For this reason PSE demands more than a discrete timetabled slot. A whole school approach is needed which incorporates a range of experiences that promote both the social well being of young people and a sense of self-worth.

In Wales, as stated previously, citizenship is embraced by the community aspect of PSE. Pupils are members of a number of mutually inclusive communities and can only make sense of their own existence and immediate community by reference to other larger communities. Initially they will need to understand the nature of their communities in Wales and beyond and the roles, relationships, conflict and inequalities that affect the quality of their lives. To this end they will need to explore rights and responsibilities in a democratic society under the rule of law. They should be encouraged and equipped to demonstrate commitment to community life by means of participation, service and action which promotes community well being. Finally, we need to cultivate in young people a political 'literacy' which enables them to make effective decisions and judgements in the world of political and legal systems.

The National Assembly for Wales has approved a framework for PSE in order to empower pupils to be active, informed and responsible citizens aware of their rights and committed to the practices of participative democracy and the challenges of being a citizen of Wales and the world.