# Citizenship Education in England: The Making of a New Subject

**David Kerr**

**Inhalt**



## Introduction

Citizenship education has never been far from the top of the political and educational agenda in England. This paper addresses the latest policy review of citizenship education, that undertaken by the Advisory Group on Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (hereafter referred to as the Crick Group) (Crick 1998). The Crick Group was established, in 1997, with a remit to accomplish two tasks to: set out a working definition of citizenship education and make recommendations as to how it could be approached in schools. The work undertaken by the Crick Group has led to an istoric shift in educational policy making. Citizenship has been introduced, for the first time ever, as a compulsory component of the school curriculum in England. It is a new foundation subject for pupils age 11 to 16, from September 2002, and part of a non-statutory framework alongside personal, social and health education (PSHE) for pupils age 5 to 11 from September 2000 (DFEE/QCA 1999a and b).

The paper sets out to explain how this historic shift has come about. It begins by outlining briefly a number of lessons from past policy approaches to citizenship education in England. These lessons were absorbed successfully by the Crick Group. The paper goes on to explore how citizenship education is defined in the school curriculum in England and to describe some of the urrent activities designed to encourage the development of effective practice in this new subject area. Finally, a number of key challenges are identified which need to be tackled if the latest policy proposals for citizenship education are to lead to effective practice in schools and elsewhere in England.

## 1. Citizenship Education: Lessons from Past Policy Approaches

The history of approaches by policy makers to educating for citizenship in England is well-documented (Batho 1990; Brown 1991; Crick 2000; Heater 1991, 2001; Kerr 1999a, 1999b). There are a number of lessons that emerge from these past approaches. It is important to understand these lessons because they weighed heavily on the Crick Group, particularly the inability of past approaches to set out a clear definition of citizenship education - a necessary precondition to establishing a consensus on approach. The Crick Group absorbed the lessons from the failure of past policy approaches in its attempt to lay down stronger foundations for citizenship education in schools.

## 1.1 Lack of tradition of citizenship education in England

The first lesson to emerge from past policy approaches in the context of England is that there is no great tradition of explicit teaching of citizenship education in English schools or of voluntary and community service for young people. As a result, there is no consistent framework in which to posit discussion of this area and, thus, no solid knowledge and research base on which o make judgments about the effectiveness of practice. Many of the past approaches of policy makers have foundered because of a lack of consensus on definition and approach. This is despite general agreement that the development of citizenship education in English schools is important. Therefore, a major task of the Crick Group was to achieve an acceptable working definition of citizenship education.

## 1.2 The relationship between citizenship and citizenship education

The second lesson to emerge from past policy approaches is the complex relationship between citizenship and education for citizenship. Citizenship is a contested concept. Indeed, Davies (1999) has counted over 300 known definitions of democracy associated with citizenship education. At the heart of the contest are differing views about the function and organisation of society. The periodic redefinition of citizenship education is a by-product of a much larger, wide-ranging debate concerning the changing nature of citizenship in modern society and the role of education within that society.

Attempts to redefine citizenship and per se citizenship education are often borne out of perceived crises in society at large. The latest attempt to redefine citizenship education, undertaken by the Crick Group, is no exception to this rule. The current debate about society has been triggered by the rapid pace of change in the modern world. The pace of change is having significant influence on the nature of relationships in modern society at a number of levels, including within, between and across individuals, community groups, states, nations, regions and economic and political blocs. This period of unprecedented and seemingly relentless change has succeeded in shifting and straining the traditional, stable boundaries of citizenship in many societies. It has triggered a fundamental review across societies of the concepts and practices that underpin citizenship.

The review of citizenship has led academics and commentators to question whether a watershed has been reached, namely the end of modern, liberal democratic society and the onset of a less certain post modern world. They have begun to redefine the concept of citizenship in this post modern world (Kymlicka 1995; Callan 1997; Giddens 1998; Crick 2000; Beck 2000). This redefinition has concentrated on four particular aspects of citizenship, namely

- Rights and responsibilities
- Access
- Belonging
- Other identities

These dimensions are interrelated and have been dubbed by some commentators as the 'new dimensions' of citizenship (Jenson, Phillips 1996, Gagnon, Page 1999). They are viewed as the dimensions that are most in need of redefinition in modern society. The review has focused, in particular, on how these dimensions should respond to four particular challenges to citizenship in modern societies. These are the challenges associated with:

- Diversity - of living in increasingly socially and culturally diverse communities and societies
- Location - of the nation-state no longer being the 'traditional location' of citizenship and the possibility of other locations within and across countries, including notions of 'European', 'international', 'transnational' or 'cosmopolitan' citizenship
- Social rights - of changes in the social dimension of citizenship brought by the impact of an increasingly global economy
- Participation - of engagement and participation in democratic society at local, national and international levels

The attempts to redefine citizenship are important to understand for they have had a considerable knock-on effect on citizenship education. They have triggered and influenced debates about the definition and nature of citizenship education and the role to be played by schools, curricula and teachers. Reshaping citizenship has also meant reformulating citizenship education at the same time. The two go hand in hand. Interestingly, the debates about citizenship education in schools in England are a microcosm of the broader debates about citizenship in society.

## 1.3 Continuities in citizenship education policy in England

The third lesson to emerge from past policy approaches is the extent to which definitions of citizenship are very much a product of the spirit and concerns of the age. The definition of citizenship education put forward by the Crick Group deliberately has strong echoes with the past. The Group took into consideration the definitions of citizenship education put forward, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, by the then Conservative Government. The Conservative Government championed the individualism of the free market and placed an emphasis on the importance of civic obligation or 'active citizenship' (Hurd 1988; Macgregor 1990). The Conservative Government urged individuals to take up actively their civic responsibilities rather than leave it to the government to carry them out. It backed up the call with policies that encouraged greater private ownership and the privacy of consumer rights in all areas of life, including education.

The new Labour Government, which came to power in May 1997, championed a different approach to citizenship and citizenship education. This was a definition associated with the communitarian movement with a particular emphasis on 'civic morality'. This is part of the wider philosophy of 'new Labour' based on the civic responsibilities of the individual in partnership with the state. The Labour Government is urging individuals to act as caring people aware of the needs and views of others and motivated to contribute positively to wider society. This is part of what is commonly referred to as the 'Third Way' (Giddens 1998, 2000).

## 1.4 Renewed interest in citizenship education

The final lesson to emerge from past policy approaches is the renewed interest in citizenship education over the past two decades. This lesson was the one most keenly absorbed by the Crick Group. The renewed interest was instrumental in establishing the conditions for the Group's existence and the parameters for its work. It helped: to fuel the calls, within and across parties and groups in society, for citizenship education to be reconsidered as part of the 2000 review of the National Curriculum; to provide a clear indication of the major concerns in society that a redefined citizenship education must address, and to pave the way for the favourable reception of the Group's recommendations.

The explanation as to why the Group was set up lies in a complex interplay of factors, some deep-seated and others more immediate. Perhaps, above all, the main reason was that by the late 1990s there was broad support, from within and outside the education system, for a review of this area. The time was right. The conditions necessary to sustain a review were in place. There was growing concern, in particular, about the rapidly changing relationships between the individual and the government and the decline in traditional forms of civic cohesion: what has been termed a 'democratic deficit'. This was supported by increasing calls for action to address the worrying signs of alienation and cynicism among young people about public life and participation, leading to their possible disconnection and disengagement with it. Such signs are apparent in a number of industrialised nations across the world, though there is debate as to whether they are a natural feature of the life cycle - engagement increasing with age - or a more permanent phenomenon (Jowell, Park 1998; Wilkinson, Mulgan 1995; Putnam 2000).

The final catalyst for action was the existence of a strong political will. This had not always been present in past policy approaches, particularly in the early 1990s, and goes some way to explain their failure. The political will came not just from the new Secretary of State for Education and Employment, David Blunkett, a long-time supporter of the area, but also from the new Labour

Government supported by the other major parties. The political will, combined with growing public and professional calls for action, paved the way for the establishment of the Crick Group. How the Group defined citizenship education in relation to the school curriculum is considered in the next section of the paper.

## 2. Defining Citizenship Education in England

The Crick Group looked carefully at the lessons from past policy approaches in drawing up a definition of citizenship education and a framework for what it should look like in schools. The Group's final working definition was deliberately founded on the best of past approaches updated to meet the needs of modern democratic society (Crick 1998). The definition was centred on 'civic participation' and based on the 'civic republican' concept of citizenship. It provided a workable 'third way' between the competing 'liberal-individualist' and 'communitarian' concepts of citizenship. It was based on the three elements of citizenship - namely the civil, the political and the social - contained in T.H. Marshall's classic definition (Marshall 1950). The definition reinstated the second element - the political- which had been strangely silent in the Conservative government's 'active citizenship' in the early 1990s. It also placed considerable emphasis on the values and community action approaches, in line with the thrust of 'civic morality'. The Crick Group agreed that 'effective education for citizenship' consists of three strands interrelated but also distinct, which combine to make up such an education.

Firstly, social and moral responsibility, children learning from the very beginning self-confidence and socially and morally responsible behaviour both in and beyond the classroom, both towards those in authority and towards each other. It is essentially a pre-condition for the other two strands.

Secondly, community involvement, learning about and becoming helpfully involved in the life and concerns of their communities, including learning through community involvement and service to the community. This, of course, like the other two strands, is by no means limited to children's time in school.

Thirdly, political literacy, pupils learning about and how to make themselves effective in public life through knowledge, skills and values - updating the 1970s definition of political education and seeking a term that is wider than political knowledge alone. 'Public life' is used in its broadest sense to encompass realistic knowledge of and preparation for conflict resolution and decision-making, whether involving issues at local, national, European or global level.

The Group placed considerable stress on the outcomes of effective citizenship education should lead to, namely active and responsible participation. Interestingly, this is in line with what some commentators have called the 'missing element' in Marshall's trilogy, the participative (Janoski 1998). They argue that Marshall's definition takes participation as a given but that this is no longer sufficient in modern society. The combined effects of the rapid pace of modern life, the spread of the suburbs and the increasing domination of global companies have contributed to the sharp decline in civic culture since the 1950s. People have less time and motivation to contribute to community and democratic processes. Given this there is an urgent need to make explicit statements about the rights and responsibilities of participation if democratic traditions are to survive.

The emphasis in the definition and in the subsequent framework set down for schools is on creating a flexible but rigorous framework, which encourages schools to develop effective citizenship education which best suits their needs, contexts and strengths. The onus is very much on schools, in partnership with their local communities, to turn the aims and goals into meaningful citizenship education practice and experiences for all pupils. The Crick Group's work has led, following a period of public consultation, to the formal introduction of citizenship education in the school curriculum in England for pupils age 5 to 16, for the very first time. Citizenship is part of a non-statutory framework for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship at key stages 1 and 2 (pupils age 5 to 11) and a new statutory foundation subject at key stages 3 and 4 (pupils age 11 to 16). Schools have been legally required to deliver citizenship education at key stages 3 and 4 from September 2002.

Citizenship is intended to provide coherence in the ways in which pupils are helped to develop a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy. It will also help pupils to deal with difficult moral and social questions that arise in their lives and in society.

The new curriculum Order for Citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 is deliberately 'light touch' and has programmes of study for Citizenship and an attainment target based on three elements:

- *Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens*
- *Developing skills of enquiry and approach*
- *Developing skills of participation and responsible action*

The non-statutory framework for key stages 1 and 2 has the Citizenship element, defined as Preparing to Play an Active Role as Citizens, as one of four strands.

## 3. Developing Effective Practice in Citizenship Education in England

Policy makers have recognised that the report from the Crick Group and the new curriculum Order for Citizenship, by themselves, are not sufficient to encourage the development of effective citizenship education in schools and beyond, and that more needs to be done to take forward the Crick Group's work. Accordingly, developments have taken place in four main areas over the past four years, namely:

- Drawing up more detailed advice and guidance on Citizenship for schools and teachers
- Funding the production of resources to fill gaps, in relation to the Citizenship curriculum Order, identified by teachers
- Encouraging the growth of professional and training 'communities of practice' in Citizenship
- Setting up a stronger knowledge and research base for citizenship education

Each of these developments is looked at briefly in turn.

### 3.1 Detailed advice and guidance on Citizenship

The Department for Education and Skills (DFES), in conjunction with a number of leading government agencies, has put considerable effort into producing more detailed advice and guidance to help schools and teachers to unpack the 'light touch' Citizenship curriculum Order. The QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) have produced initial advice and guidance for Citizenship at key stages 3 and 4 and PSHE and Citizenship at Key Stages 1 and 2. This has been followed up with more detailed, separate, Schemes of Work for Citizenship at key stage 3 (pupils age 11 to 14), key stage 4 (pupils age 14 to 16) and one for key stages 1 and 2 (pupils age 5 to 11). These schemes have been drawn up in conjunction with teachers and based on their practice. Each scheme offers suggested teaching and learning activities around a series of topics, ideas for developing pupil participation, as well as a Teachers' Guide (see www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes). QCA has also recently produced exemplification of what assessment and reporting in Citizenship might look like in order to assist schools in reaching decisions about such issues (see www.qca.org.uk).

Meanwhile, OFSTED (The Office for Standards in Education) has produced a framework for the inspection of Citizenship in order to inform inspectors about what they should be inspecting in relation to Citizenship and to guide schools as to expected standards in this new subject (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). DFES has established a new dedicated Citizenship website with details of a wide range of resources and school case studies, as well as information for pupils, teachers, parents and school governors (see www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship)

### 3.2 Producing citizenship education resources

DFES has funded a series of curriculum development projects involving the leading non-government organizations (NGOs) working in citizenship education. These projects were designed specifically to fill the main gaps in the coverage of the new Citizenship curriculum Order in school as identified in surveys with practitioners and support organizations (Kerr et al. 2000). These resources are showcased on the new DFES citizenship website and through links to the leading NGOs.

### 3.3 Professional and training 'communities of practice' in Citizenship

It is vital, if citizenship education is to develop, that 'communities of practice' are created among teachers, schools and those involved in community activities and teacher training. Such communities enable overarching aims, values and concepts in citizenship education to be identified and articulated in ways that allow them to be owned and put into practice by teachers and others. A number of actions have been taken to foster the growth of these communities and to build a strong professional training and development framework for citizenship education.

New, one-year, initial teacher training courses in Citizenship have been set up by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) across the country. Those involved in running the courses have been brought together in a fledgling Citized network (see www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship). A new subject association, the Association for Citizenship Teaching (ACT), has been established. The association produces a termly journal and runs an annual conference (see www.teachingcitizenship.org.uk). DFES is currently funding a new grade of specialist teacher, the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST), across the country to ensure ASTs share their expertise in citizenship both in their school and with other schools and teachers in the local area. There are also a series of development projects underway to investigate what citizenship education should look like for students age 16 to 19 involved in education and training routes. This is vital given the statutory curriculum for citizenship in schools only goes up to age 16.

### 3.4 Knowledge and research base for citizenship education

Kerr (1999a) in the national case study of England, as part of the IEA Civic Education Study, drew attention to the 'huge gaps that currently exist in the knowledge and research base which underpins this area in England' (p.9). With citizenship education moving rapidly from a policy proposal to a real school subject there is a need to strengthen this base in order to identify, measure and evaluate the extent to which 'effective practice' in citizenship education develops in schools so that such practice can be promoted more widely. Accordingly, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to undertake a Longitudinal Study in citizenship education over eight years. This is tracking a cohort of young people who entered secondary school in September 2002 and, as such, are the first students to have a continuous statutory entitlement to citizenship education (see www.nfer.ac.uk).

The research design of the Longitudinal Study is based on four interrelated components:

- Four cross-sectional surveys of students, school leaders and teachers undertaken in school years 2001-2, 2003-4, 2005-6 and 2007-8, with the first survey acting as a pre-compulsory baseline.
- A longitudinal tracking survey of a whole year group of students in a representative sample of 100 schools, starting in Year 7 in 2002-3, and following them up in Year 9, Year 11 and then in Year 13 (or equivalent when they are aged 18).
- Twenty longitudinal school case studies - 10 schools drawn from schools participating in each of the longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys - that will be revisited at least once every two

years over the duration of the study.
- An ongoing literature review of key literature on theory, policy and practice in citizenship education, political socialisation and youth transitions to adulthood.

The overarching aim of the study is to assess the short-term and long-term effects of citizenship education on the knowledge, skills and attitudes and behaviour of students. The study promises to be of significance for citizenship education not only in England but in other countries across the world.

However, despite these considerable efforts a series of challenges, both practical and philosophical, remain to be overcome if the latest policy proposals for Citizenship in England are indeed to lead to effective citizenship education practice in schools and beyond. These challenges are considered in the final section of this paper.

## 4. Key Challenges for Citizenship

The Crick Group's final report contained a bold statement that the central aim of strengthening citizenship education is to effect:

*"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".*

If this expectation of the Group is to be realised, it is essential that citizenship education becomes a strong, evolving and lasting feature of the curriculum experience of all pupils in the 21st century. The challenges in accomplishing this are considerable and are not to be underestimated. The work of the policy makers, with considerable support from practitioners, in drawing up the new Citizenship curriculum Order marks the beginning rather than the end of the process. As Professor Bernard Crick was so fond of reminding the Crick Group 'the devil is in the detail'. While the detail of the new Order may be 'light touch' the devil element is anything but.

If citizenship education is to become firmly established in schools and beyond in the coming years then four fundamental challenges have to be faced. These are the curriculum, community, professional development and transformative challenges. They apply not just to England but wherever attempts are made to review and strengthen citizenship education (Torney-Purta et al. 1999; Hahn 1998; Kerr 1999c).

The first is the curriculum challenge: this is essentially an issue of definition and support. It is centred on the question of how and where citizenship education is best located in schools and how the development of effective practice can be supported and nurtured. It is inextricably tied up with the process of teaching and learning and the range of approaches, experiences and activities that relate to citizenship education. This challenge is uppermost at the moment as schools are getting to grips with delivering the new Citizenship Order.

There is a particular need to begin to explore what the philosophical and conceptual frameworks which underpin Citizenship actually mean for teachers and pupils in practice, as well as partners in the local community. It is about creating the means by which teachers and others reach an agreed or shared sense of what citizenship education is about as a subject rather than merely following a set of aims and statements set out in a curriculum document.

The second challenge is that of community. This is essentially an issue of involvement and partnership. Schools can only do so much. They could do more, and must be helped so to do. However, pupils' attitudes to active citizenship are influenced quite as much by schools as by many factors other than schooling: by family, the immediate environment, the media and the example of

those in public life. The challenge is how to involve parents, governors, community representatives and support agencies in citizenship education in meaningful partnership with schools. This entails getting them to understand what citizenship education is about and how they can actively contribute to it through careful dialogue with schools. Community involvement should not be merely a box which is ticked without due regard to how it contributes to pupils' curriculum experiences, it should be natural and not forced. In recent surveys pupils report limited opportunities to be involved actively with the various communities to which they belong. One of the support needs for schools identified is assistance in developing community links and community participation. This need is in terms of examples of good practice, guidelines and information concerning contacts.

The third challenge is that of professional development. This is an issue of learning and sharing. If citizenship education is to take route in England it requires the evolution of strong professional networks which can develop, share and promote effective practice in this new subject. This will not be easy. As a new subject in the school curriculum, Citizenship currently lacks the academic traditions, research and development base and collected wisdom of experience which underpin policy and practice in other established curriculum subjects. This is evident in the concerns expressed by teachers and schools about this area at present, which contain more questions than answers (Kerr et al. 2003).

The bold aim of the Crick Group will not be realized without the careful, assisted development of professional development for those involved in citizenship education. The process of curriculum development, research and evaluation work in Citizenship is at a start rather than an end. The Crick Group report and Citizenship curriculum Order provide a platform for developing citizenship education in schools and elsewhere. However, this platform needs to be underpinned and built on in the coming years by those with the experience, vision and resources to make a lasting contribution.

Finally, there is the transformative challenge. This is an issue of participation and engagement. Surprisingly, behind all activities of governments and big corporations, the world is still composed of individual human beings. The challenge here is two-fold: to understand our roles and responsibilities as individual citizens in a modern democratic society, but also to think about the consequences of our actions. It entails treating young people with respect and giving them meaningful fora in which their views can be aired and considered as part of the democratic process, whether in schools, in local communities or at national level. This is not easy to achieve in practice and research suggests that the experiences of involvement in 'active citizenship' for pupils is patchy with only a minority often involved in democratic decision-making in schools. However, it is vital that this challenge of participation is addressed. After all, it is the actions of the next generation of pupils that will be the acid test of whether the group's recommendations will have had any lasting impact.

However, there is a ray of hope in the findings from the recent IEA Civic Education Study. The study was two-phase and cross-national involving 28 countries, including England (Torney-Purta et al. 1999, 2001; Kerr et al. 2002). It gave voice to the views of over 90,000 14 year olds, their teachers and head teachers in the 28 countries on citizenship and education issues. The study found that schools and community organisations have untapped potential to positively influence the civic preparation of young people. Schools are part of the everyday experiences of young people. They throw up problems that matter to students and provide opportunities for them to take part in 'real' actions. This sense of school efficacy (of improving things in school) identified in the study may be as important a factor in future political behaviour as the broader sense of political efficacy (the relationship between citizens and national government.

## Conclusion

The Citizenship Advisory Group has worked hard to develop a definition, framework and approach to citizenship education which offers consensus, and to get citizenship education as an entitlement for all pupils in the revised National Curriculum. However, policy can only ever provide opportunities for change. Such opportunities must be grasped and acted upon. It is therefore

premature to speculate whether the Crick Group's efforts to strengthen citizenship education and 'change the political culture of this country' will prove successful. Though, an historic and promising start has been made we are entering new and largely unchartered territory.

How citizenship education fares will rest on how well the challenges of definition, involvement, learning and participation are met over the coming years. Revisiting past approaches suggests two conclusions may be drawn with certainty. First, that citizenship education will remain on the political and education agenda in the 21st century in England, and second, that there will be continuing debate about what is meant by effective citizenship education as definitions of citizenship continue to shift.

The real unknown is the extent to which the introduction of citizenship education into the curriculum in England will succeed in building the notion of 'efficacy' among young people: the notion that they, as individuals and in collaboration with others, can make a difference to what happens in their school, at home, in their local communities and in wider society. Only after a generation of pupils has experienced citizenship education in schools will we be able to form any judgment about this.

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