INTRODUCTION

Laws for our town:

- Everyone is allowed to go skateboarding in the park but it is your responsibility if you get hurt.
- Everyone can use the church, synagogue or mosque.
- You must pick up all your litter, keep in the speed limit, use seatbelts and look after our river.
- You must not smoke.
- If you break these rules you will be fined 500 euros.

The nine-year-olds who came up with these ‘laws’ were devising their own town for the future. They had to plan their town taking into consideration environmental issues and the needs of the community. As well as physically planning the town they had to think about how the town would be governed, the rights of its citizens and laws they would need. This required them to learn about basic rules and laws in their own community and to consider what it was they valued and wanted to protect in their new communities. Whilst this lesson has links to geography (the local area) and religious education (values) it was neither of these: it was a discrete or ‘stand-alone’ lesson on education for citizenship.

Education for citizenship is a new area of the curriculum and offers both challenges and opportunities for teachers.
WHAT IS EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP?

Education for citizenship (CE) is about preparing children for the responsibilities of adult life in a global society. In secondary schools it exists as a separate subject but in primary schools in England it is one of four strands within Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE). It is closely related to these other three areas but rather than focusing on the personal (e.g. welcoming refugee children into the school, or learning about healthy eating) the focus is on society, so that children might analyse different approaches in the media to refugees or might look at competing demands on the health service. Thus education for citizenship aims to help children make links between their own lives and the wider world and understand the part they can play both now and in the future as active citizens. Within the primary school CE aims to help children develop an understanding of the following key areas:

- topical issues (moral, social or cultural) and events;
- democracy and the role of the individual within this;
- why and how rules and laws are made;
- their community and the part they can play within this;
- the range of identities (ethnic, religious, regional) within the UK;
- human rights and responsibilities;
- how conflict can be resolved (in the community, in the wider world);
- the role of voluntary and pressure groups acting for change.

WHY DO WE NEED EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP?

The last decade has seen a movement across Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia for the inclusion of education for citizenship. This has arisen for a number of reasons. First, the increasingly diverse nature of many countries (including the UK) and the rise of racism and intolerance have pinpointed the need for children to understand multiple identities and the contribution of different ethnic groups to society. This includes an understanding of the harm caused by racism and a respect for cultural heritages different from their own.

Second, there has been a decline in the number of young people engaged in democratic processes, with many not bothering to vote in national or European elections. This is perhaps not surprising given that (in the UK) young people could previously leave school with no knowledge of voting, elections or how parliament works. This is not healthy for any democracy, and is not healthy for
young people themselves. Thus CE includes as central, learning about democratic processes – in school and at a local and national level.

Third, there is a realisation that we need to educate children to live in a global society where there are increasing social and environmental challenges. Primary children, interviewed in 2004, spoke of their concerns about environmental problems, crime, violence and social inequality on both a local and global scale and discussed the actions of politicians (Holden 2006). Research by Claire (2001) indicates how young children in inner-city London are aware of the effects of poverty and migration on their own lives, talking from experience about religious and racial intolerance and economic injustices. Schools have a duty to listen to these concerns, to clarify misconceptions and to help children understand the complexities of interdependence and globalisation.

Cogan and Derricott (2000), summarising an international survey into the characteristics of effective citizens of the twenty-first century, conclude that we will need people who can:

- work co-operatively with others;
- develop social justice principles to guide own actions;
- think in a critical and systemic way;
- appreciate and learn from cultural differences;
- evaluate problems in the wider community and global context;
- resolve conflicts non-violently;
- change lifestyles to protect the environment;
- recognise and defend human rights;
- dare to strive for a fairer future;
- participate in democratic politics.

You will see that their list is not about passive citizens who just ‘know about’ human rights or the environment, but is instead about pro-active people who defend the rights of others, who change their lifestyles to protect the environment and who actively participate in politics. This notion of the ‘active citizen’ is central to the current approach to CE.

Finally, in the UK, there have been calls for more adventurous and creative approaches within the primary curriculum, with more emphasis on speaking and listening and more opportunities for children to be involved in their school (e.g. Excellence and Enjoyment, DfES 2003). Education for citizenship can provide many of these opportunities.

**WHY IS ACTIVE LEARNING CENTRAL TO CITIZENSHIP?**

If one of the aims of citizenship education is to encourage children to be active participants then the methods we use must be interactive, encouraging debate and discussion. We cannot teach children to listen to others, to co-operate, to respect each other’s views and to value democracy if we operate classrooms where children are not respected and their concerns are not listened to. Didactic and passive methods will not make for lively and informed debate. Advice on the teaching of citizenship in England suggests an active-learning approach:

> It is vital that pupils are provided with structured opportunities to explore actively aspects, issues and events through school and community involvement, case studies and critical discussions that are challenging and relevant to their lives. It is difficult to conceive of pupils as active citizens if their experience of learning in citizenship education has been predominantly passive.

(QCA 1998: 37)
What does this look like for you as a teacher? It means trying to ensure that you help your children to:

- develop the confidence to voice their own opinions;
- develop their skills in recognising the views/experience of others;
- develop their skills in critical thinking and in forming arguments;
- develop their skills of co-operation and conflict resolution;
- trust in their creative powers;
- develop skills of democratic participation;
- gain experience of taking action for change.

(Clough and Holden 2002: 6)

All of the examples that are given in the rest of this unit have active learning at their core, and include the following kinds of activities:

- small group discussions followed by plenary sessions to clarify thinking;
- open-ended collaborative enquiries on topical and controversial issues;
- role-play and simulations;
- visits to the community or working with community members;
- participating in democratic processes of change (within the school or within the community).

Having established that CE needs to be active and participatory, we now need to look at where there are opportunities for this kind of approach. A session in maths where children move physically to represent how division works may be active learning but it is not citizenship. So citizenship is about active learning plus appropriate subject knowledge and we will now look at where opportunities for the citizenship content can be found.

WHERE CAN CITIZENSHIP BE TAUGHT?

CE can be covered in different ways:

- as a part of another curriculum subject;
- as part of PSHE;
- as a discrete or stand-alone subject;
- through the ethos of the school, whole school activities and events.

Citizenship as part of another curriculum subject

Perhaps the easiest way of incorporating citizenship in your teaching is to take your existing lesson plans or schemes of work and see how they can be adapted. Many teachers are surprised to find that they are covering some of the aspects already and that often only a few adjustments are required. It is often a case of looking out for the controversial, the topical or links to the present day.

The following tasks will help you to see how you might go about this.
These two tasks will have helped you appreciate that current curriculum topics or areas can be extended to include education for citizenship. A village school with a vertically grouped class of Reception and Years 1 and 2, took their topic of Toys and looked for global links and for opportunities to promote co-operation and conflict resolution. The citizenship elements included games from other countries (e.g. Ebele’s Favourite: A book of African games) and games which involved co-operation and sharing. Children used the big book ‘Play on the line’ about the right to play and collected toys to send to refugee children on the edge of the Sahara Desert (www.saharatoys.org.uk).

In another school, teachers have looked at their teaching of RE, history and geography over the course of a year and specifically included a citizenship lesson in each unit of work. Table 5.4.1 shows their thinking for Year 2 and Year 5.

This approach can be adopted with other subjects. Thus an English lesson on persuasive writing might be extended to include a study of different newspapers’ reporting of issues relating to asylum seekers. You could also extend your children’s speaking and listening skills by using real-life situations – for example asking the children to interview a community member or their local MP. This would involve making decisions on what topics to raise and what makes a good question. In science, children can look at different forms of energy and current controversies about which types of energy are safe. They can look at cloning, GM crops and other topical controversial issues such as global warming and pollution. There are many opportunities for children to take action themselves (recycling, reducing energy consumption) thus participating as active citizens. They can also learn about organisations which are working for change in the environmental field, such as Greenpeace.
Table 5.4.1  Citizenship links to the humanities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>RE theme:</td>
<td>CE links:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What does it mean to belong? Global diversity: children of the world Oxfam, Save the Children</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td></td>
<td>History theme:</td>
<td>CE links:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Children in Victorian times Children’s rights now and then: the right to play and to education UNICEF</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Geography theme:</td>
<td>CE themes:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Katie Morag’s Island Home Accessibility: making the island accessible to all visitors, including those with disabilities Katie Morag’s Island Home, visit from disability officer</td>
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<th>Year 5</th>
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<td>RE</td>
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<td></td>
<td>RE theme:</td>
<td>CE links:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td>How do beliefs influence action? Active citizenship: making the world a better place – locally and globally Charities working for change</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td></td>
<td>History theme:</td>
<td>CE links:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tudors Power and democracy: the rights of leaders, the death penalty then and now Amnesty International</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Geography theme:</td>
<td>CE themes:</td>
<td>Resources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Water – its effects on landscape and people The world’s water: rights and responsibilities (accessibility, conservation) ‘Waterliterate’ <a href="http://www.wateraid.org.uk">www.wateraid.org.uk</a></td>
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</table>

Citizenship as a discrete or stand-alone subject

Some schools have decided that certain areas of the citizenship curriculum are best covered as stand-alone lessons, particularly when it comes to teaching about democracy and the law as it is often difficult to find ways of incorporating these areas into current units of work. This approach is being increasingly adopted by secondary schools for the same reason.
A Year 4 class invited in their local MP after a unit on the community (as part of their citizenship work). They had spent a morning walking round their local city, visiting the council offices and the town hall and were aware of the importance of their MP representing their city in Parliament. Prior to the MP’s visit, the teacher had the children work in threes to come up with three questions for the MP. All the questions were put up on the whiteboard and the children voted for which they thought were the best questions and why. The task of asking the questions was divided among the children, whilst others were assigned to meet him and show him round the school. Other children informed the local press. Some of the questions that the children chose to put to the MP were:

- Why don’t we pay more to the people who give us food from other countries?
- Have you helped anyone in different countries?
- Why did the fight in Afghanistan start in the first place?
- Why don’t we have more recycling bins?
- What can you do about the traffic?
- Why do you go to Parliament?
- Do you care very much about your country?

In another school, the teacher was doing a unit of work on the local area in geography. She wanted to follow this up in discrete citizenship lessons to look at the local area in the future, drawing on the pupils’ aspirations for their community. As part of this she wanted to teach about the value of laws and rules in a community by getting the children to think about how their community of the future would be governed. This lesson is again one which follows active learning principles: there is opportunity for drawing, planning, speaking and listening, collaborative group work and empathy. There are opportunities for the teacher to assess these citizenship skills as the children engage with the task. The following was planned for two lessons.

The children’s laws at the opening of this unit come from this lesson. Further lesson plans for primary citizenship can be found in Clough and Holden (2002), from which this activity is adapted, and Claire (2004).
My town, my future

Purpose
• To plan a community for the future, based on current concerns.
• To consider the physical and social needs of a community.
• To help children understand the role of the law in protecting communities.

Preparation
You will need a large sheet of sugar paper for each group and felt-tip pens.

Procedure
Start the class thinking about what makes a good town and what facilities are needed in relation to their own town or city. Draw on knowledge from local study:
• What do we like about our town (city)?
• What would we choose to show visitors?
• Which areas need improving?
• What is currently being planned for our town?
• What do we need here that we don’t have?

Explain to the class that even now councillors and town planners are making decisions that will affect their town (or village or city) in a few years’ time, planning new estates, roads and services. Others (councillors, politicians) are making decisions about laws and regulations which will affect people’s way of life. For the purpose of this activity, children are to have the chance to plan a new town for twenty years hence or they can re-model their existing town. Money is not an issue but environmental issues must be considered.

Questions to consider:
• What facilities do young people need in a town or city?
• What do the elderly need?
• What about people with physical disabilities?
• What about the needs of other groups (e.g. newcomers, families)?

In addition to considering the needs of different groups, you can ask children to think about the transport system they want, meeting places, places of worship, schools etc.

After they have drawn the plans for their town, ask each group to agree on what laws they want in their community in order to protect people’s rights and have the town function effectively. What punishments or sanctions would there be for those who break these laws? When all groups have completed their towns and laws, pin them on the walls for all to see or ask each group to explain in turn why their new town would be a good place to live.

Plenary
• How have you taken into account the needs of different groups?
• In what ways was your town environmentally friendly?
• Would you like to live in these towns? Why?
• What rules or rights did people have?
• How were these enforced?
• How different are these to current laws?
Citizenship as part of PSHE

Many schools will deliver citizenship through PSHE but you need to take care if you adopt this approach to ensure that the citizenship element is properly covered. First take time to see how PSHE is being taught in your school.

PSHE can be delivered in a number of ways, some of which may appear invisible to the new teacher. For example, learning to share, line up quietly, look after children new to the school and even eating with a knife and fork would all be part of social and moral education. Moral issues may also be covered in assemblies and in RE, healthy eating may be part of science, and many stories in literacy will offer opportunities for discussion on sensitive issues. But perhaps the most commonly used vehicle for PSHE is circle time. You will probably be familiar with this but if not, do ask to sit in on a circle time session on your next visit to school. In this, children sit in a circle and take turns to give their opinion on a given topic, with the conversation often being controlled by use of a special object which children hold when it is their turn to speak (Mosley 1996). This can be an excellent forum for discussion of many social and moral issues but if it is to move beyond PSHE and relate to citizenship, it must move beyond the personal. Circle time on bullying in the playground, or relationships between friends, for example, would be PSHE rather than citizenship. It would become citizenship if the focus were a current topical issue or an issue affecting the wider community. Thus a circle time on keeping healthy at a personal level would be PSHE but a class debate on whether the government should pay for expensive new drugs or put the money into care of the elderly would be citizenship.

Some schools use thinking circles, based on the work of Fisher (2001), as a basis for discussing citizenship issues. This moves beyond circle time as it allows for more in-depth group conversations and models the processes of deliberative discussion. With this technique, the teacher presents a story or moral issue (current or past), after which children reflect individually on a number of key questions, discussing these in small groups and then as a class. Children are taught to look for evidence to back up their statements, to question others and to review their thinking.

If children are used to thinking circles for discussing moral dilemmas, then when an event happens in the news or a controversial issue arises, the children (and the teacher) know how to discuss it. Children used to looking at current events from a number of points of view are learning how to come to informed decisions. Children can also be encouraged to bring their own concerns to the thinking circle and to formulate their own questions. The skills learnt in a thinking circle can then be transferred to role-play and more formal debates.

Citizenship through the ethos of the school

Although this way of delivering citizenship comes last here, it is perhaps the most important. When you visit schools you can often get a feel straight away for the ethos of the school and this will very much relate to citizenship. In a school where there is a strong citizenship ethos you are likely to find that:

- the children are treated with respect;
- their work is displayed with care;
- they are given responsibility around the school;
- they have a voice in the running of the school (e.g. through the school council);
- they have played a part in making the school rules;
- they feel valued and listened to;
- the school has active links with the local community.
It is obviously very difficult for you as a new teacher to influence the ethos of a school but a good place to start is the school council.

**Task 5.4.4 School councils**

Ask if you can sit in on the school council. Observe how the meeting is run and how decisions are reported back and proposals carried forward. Is there a school council notice board or do the class representatives report back to their classes? When do council meetings take place? In children’s time or in school time? How are children elected onto the council? If possible talk to both school councillors and those who are not on the council to see what they think about it. Do they feel that their concerns are addressed effectively? Do they feel they have a voice?

There are many useful materials on effective school councils – both starting one up and improving existing ones. A good starting place is www.schoolscouncil.uk. If your school does not have a council, you might wish to start one (and older staff will often welcome a younger energetic person doing this!) but do take care to consult with staff and governors and make sure you have everyone’s support.

You can also take the principles of school councils into your classroom, ensuring that children can air their concerns and that they are addressed. You can create opportunities within your classroom to involve the children in setting the classroom rules, sharing responsibilities and displaying work.

Apart from school councils, many schools will hold whole school events which offer opportunities for citizenship links. For example, the school may raise money for Red Nose Day or for another charity. The important thing here is to be sure that the children understand why they are raising this money, what the charity is doing and in particular what the recipients of the funds are doing to help themselves. There is a danger with fund-raising for charity that children see themselves as the benefactors, bringing in old toys for ‘poor children’, rather than being helped to understand the reasons why these children may be poor and what is being done to alleviate their plight. When children are fully engaged with charities (and allowed to have a say in which charities they choose), they can be great advocates for change and feel that they are making a positive contribution. Many charities now provide background information written for children, on their work, for example www.oxfam.org.uk and www.savethechildren.org.uk.

Other whole school activities may involve children visiting the elderly, helping in the school grounds or befriending new children. All of these offer scope for going ‘behind the scenes’ to understand the situation. Thus a visit by children to the elderly to help with their Christmas party might also be an opportunity to look at funding for and care of the elderly. Befriending new children to the school can be a chance to look at why people move, migration in general and the support services available to newcomers. What is at the heart of all these approaches is an open mind, a creative approach to the curriculum and an awareness of the opportunities provided by citizenship education.

**HANDLING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

Whether you find yourself incorporating an aspect of citizenship into a history lesson or leading circle time on a sensitive issue like refugees, you are bound to encounter controversy. In fact it is often the controversial aspect of a curriculum subject that provides the citizenship element. Citizenship and controversy go hand in hand.
For this reason it is important for you to know where you stand. The original document which was the basis for the citizenship curriculum said that central to citizenship education was the need for children to debate topical and controversial issues in the classroom.

Controversial issues are important in themselves and to omit informing about and discussing them is to leave a wide and significant gap in the educational experience of young people. (QCA 1998: 6)

This can be a cause for concern for many teachers, especially those new to the profession. You may worry that your own contributions or those of children in your class may be biased and reflect strongly held opinions which may be difficult to manage. For this reason there is clear guidance to teachers on different strategies for managing debate in classrooms. QCA (1998) recommends three possible approaches:

- the neutral chair approach;
- the balanced approach;
- the stated commitment approach.

You may use a combination of these approaches as the need arises. You may remain neutral, letting children put the various viewpoints, you may give a view (not necessarily your own) to ensure a balance of opinions is heard, or you may give your own view as a means of encouraging pupils to agree or disagree. What is important is that pupils are ‘offered the experience of a genuinely free consideration of difficult issues’ (QCA 1998: 60) and that issues are analysed ‘according to an established set of criteria, which are open to scrutiny and publicly defensible’ (p. 61). In other words, it is up to your professional judgement which approach you take so long as there are clear ground rules established which the children know about and which are fair to all.

If discussing controversial issues is part and parcel of life in your classroom and if an established set of criteria are in place, then when ‘tricky’ issues surface (e.g. 9/11) both you and the children will know how to listen to different views, to debate and discuss, rather than being worried about how to approach such controversial topics.

**ASSESSMENT**

It is important that citizenship does not become a subject where we just assess children’s subject knowledge (e.g. about how parliament works or the rights of the child) as this would negate everything that has been said about the importance of developing the skills of enquiry, discussion and participation. At the current time QCA is working on exemplar materials to help teachers assess attainment in citizenship education so look out for advice on this.

Meanwhile Tables 5.4.2 and 5.4.3 illustrate the work of one teacher who is keen to develop ways to assess the skills of citizenship and to provide information for her Year 6 children to take to secondary school on transfer. Table 5.4.2 is for the teacher to use with individual pupils – you will see that the evidence comes from observing the child in group work rather than from written work. Table 5.4.3 is for the child to fill in (with guidance) to take to the secondary school so that their new teacher can know what they have covered and what their interests are. In this case it makes sense to combine information on both citizenship and PSHE on one form.
SUMMARY

Citizenship education is one of the challenges of the new century. It brings the past and present together, and it brings the current and the controversial into the classroom. It helps educate children who are informed, who are sensitive to the views of others and who can give their opinions based on evidence. Many teachers have welcomed this new initiative as it is a chance to go 'beyond the basics' and teach creatively about issues of importance to both children and teachers. As one PGCE primary student said when interviewed about teaching citizenship:

There’s teaching the stuff that you have to teach but there’s also educating children about life and about the real world and real issues and that’s something which I feel is really important, it’s close to my heart and something which I want to do.

Table 5.4.2 An assessment tool for use in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Area</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>OK</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of the issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contributes to the discussion</td>
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<td>Argues points logically</td>
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<td>Considers the values involved</td>
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<td>Listens to others</td>
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<td>Is prepared to change his/her mind</td>
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<td>Works in a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is prepared to compromise</td>
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Table 5.4.3  PSHCE information to go with Year 6 child to secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Comments from child</th>
<th>Comments from teacher/other adult</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positions of responsibility held:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement in the school and wider community (e.g. paired reading, people I help, clubs I'm involved in):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>PSHE programmes covered (e.g. bullying, drugs education, sex education):</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Citizenship education covered (e.g. work on human rights, fairtrade, democracy, organisations working for change):</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal reflections on my ability to contribute to whole school changes, make choices, stand up for what I think is right and cope with challenges:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Any issues that I feel strongly about (e.g. things happening locally or globally):</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With thanks to Karen Thomson, Cockington Primary School, Torquay and Gill Taylor, University of Exeter.

ANNOTATED FURTHER READING


Clough, N. and Holden, C. (2002) Education for Citizenship: Ideas into Action, London: RoutledgeFalmer. This book covers the 7–14 age range and has lesson plans which can be used directly in the classroom along with follow-up activities. Each chapter also summarises the latest thinking around particular themes, e.g. community, political literacy.

Young, M. and Commins, E. (2002) Global Citizenship: The Handbook for Primary Teaching, Cambridge: Chris Kington. As the title suggests, the emphasis is on global citizenship and the book has many useful ideas for teaching about other cultures and countries whether in separate citizenship lessons, through geography or through assemblies.

www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/. This website is excellent for all aspects of global citizenship with many teaching ideas.

www.citized.info. This website has been set up especially for trainee teachers and teachers new to citizenship. There are lesson plans, schemes of work and a newly established forum for NQTs to discuss citizenship teaching. There is a specific primary section.

REFERENCES