

Unit 17 School linking

About the unit

School linking provides pupils and teachers in both partner schools with valuable learning experiences. Pupils develop their skills of communication and enquiry, reflect on their attitudes towards other people and places, and challenge stereotypical views. They begin to consider their own roles and responsibilities as global citizens, as well as the roles and responsibilities of international communities and institutions such as the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the European Union.

Before involving pupils in a school linking project, teachers need to exchange information with their counterparts and discuss working arrangements and activities. From the outset, teachers must have clear and agreed aims and objectives for the link. Without this preparation, it is unlikely that the material sent or received will be relevant or that the link will be sustainable.

This is an ongoing unit, designed to take place throughout a year or key stage. The partnerships could be used as a forum for discussion and exchange of views on any of the issues covered during the citizenship programme. It can be used either to set up a new link or to introduce an established link to a new class.

Where the unit fits in

This unit addresses the following aspects of the key stage 3 citizenship programme of study:

Knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens

Pupils should be taught about:

- 1b the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- 1i the world as a global community, and the political, economic, environmental and social implications of this, and the role of the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations

Developing skills of enquiry and communication

Pupils should be taught to:

- 2a think about topical political, spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, problems and events by analysing information and its sources, including ICT-based sources
- 2c contribute to group and exploratory class discussions, and take part in debates

Developing skills of participation and responsible action

Pupils should be taught to:

- 3a use their imagination to consider other people's experiences and be able to think about, express and explain views that are not their own

This unit links with unit 4 'Britain – a diverse society?'.
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Expectations

At the end of this unit

most pupils: realise that cultures and experiences in other countries can be different from their own but not necessarily 'better' or 'worse'. Their understanding of people in different places is based on experience rather than stereotypes and/or prejudice. They are more aware of social, economic and political issues in a global context. They recognise the role of international communities such as the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

some pupils have not made so much progress and: have a simple understanding of people in different places and countries, developed through direct communication. They discuss the similarities and differences in everyday life they have found while communicating with pupils overseas, *eg school, family, concerns, ambitions*.

some pupils have progressed further and: discuss issues such as human rights, aid and fair trade, and recognise how countries are interdependent. They understand the role of communities and institutions such as the European Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations, and other international groups. They compare, contrast and draw some conclusions about how communities such as their own function and are interdependent with other communities.

Resources

Resources include:

- the Central Bureau, which provides guidelines on setting up links, as well as information on Comenius, DfES and DFID grants available to UK schools
- photo packs, available from your local Development Education Centre (DEC) or from other organisations, *eg Oxfam*. For further information on DECs contact the Development Education Association
- the education programmes of the Commonwealth Institute
- the Institute for Citizenship's *Speak out on European citizenship* online discussion site, with opportunities for pupils to talk about European citizenship

Many groups and organisations produce online resources that are relevant to citizenship. QCA has not printed these website addresses as it recognises that they can and do change, often at short notice. So that we can monitor and maintain a reliable and useful resource, the website addresses of the following organisations can be accessed through the key stage 3 citizenship scheme of work site at www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes

- Oneworld (*offers links to many other sites covering a wide variety of subjects*)
- Global Dimension (*a DFID site with access to resources and information on global issues*)
- Windows on the World (*a Central Bureau site; online database for schools and colleges including case studies for north–south school linking*)

NB: care should be taken when encouraging pupils to access websites

Literacy and language

References to the Key Stage 3 National Strategy *Framework for teaching English, Years 7, 8 and 9* (NSE) are given in brackets and are indicated in appropriate sections of this unit.

Through the activities in this unit pupils will be able to understand, use and spell correctly words relating to:

- linking, *eg country, development, international, diversity, stereotype, prejudice, community*

Speaking and listening – through the activities pupils learn to:

- ask and answer questions relevantly (year 7 S&L7, year 8 S&L5)

Writing – through the activities pupils learn to:

- prepare and present text with readers and purpose in mind (year 7 Wr1, year 8 Wr2)
- assemble ideas and use a range of presentational devices to disseminate them (year 7 Wr2, year 9 Wr4)

Links with other subjects

PSHE: 1b, 1c, 3b, 3d in the non-statutory guidelines

Geography: 1e, 2f, 3b, 3d, 3e in the programme of study; unit 12 'Images of a country', unit 16 'What is development?', unit 19 'Tourism – good or bad?', unit 20 'Comparing countries' in the scheme of work

ICT: 1a, 1b, 3b, 3c, 4a, 4b in the programme of study

RE: many schools have links with schools in different areas, communities or cultures as a result of interfaith requirements of their RE local agreed syllabuses

Pupils should learn:

Pupils:

Which school should we link with?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to relate to different people and places, and understand that many of us have connections overseas • about decision-making and expressing an opinion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a wall display – put up a map of the world, and ask pupils to stick on it pictures of friends and family they have living in different countries and/or places they have visited. Which country would they like to link with, and why? (Note that 60 per cent of British citizens have a relative living in another Commonwealth country.) • Ask the class how they would like to agree which school link they should go with. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talk confidently about places that are important to them • understand differences between places and countries and show respect for other people • through the discussion see and appreciate democracy in action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School linking is a long-term commitment. To establish and maintain a successful link, teachers need to ask themselves a number of different questions. <i>Which country will we link with, and why? Does the school already have some connection with a country overseas? Do we want to choose a country that has direct relevance to some of the students, or do we want to choose somewhere that would be completely new to them? How can pupils in both countries be involved in deciding on the nature of the link? How can we prepare pupils for the challenges of linking? How can we make sure we are meeting our partner school's needs as well as our own?</i> • Be aware that without appropriate supervision, work on stereotypes can reinforce them rather than break them down. • Make sure that pupils do not take sides in any discussion to the extent that they feel disgruntled when a country is decided upon. |
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Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**How can we communicate with our partner school?**

- that people in other countries can have a false impression of the UK, just as people in the UK can have a false impression of other countries
- about sharing information and the importance of reciprocity
- how to make decisions on what to include and what to leave out in a piece of writing, and how these decisions affect the message sent
- to prepare and present a text with readers and purpose in mind (NSE)
- Using a photo pack, either of the UK or of another country, discuss the images and how they might not tell the whole story. If pupils were going to design a photo pack to illustrate life in the UK, what images would they include? What impression would be given?
- Introduce the partner school. In groups, pupils should discuss what they already know about the country/place the school is in, and how they might find out more. What would they like to know? What similarities might there be between the two countries/places? How are they connected, *eg imports, history, religion, language?*
- Ask pupils to think about ways of communicating with the pupils at the partner school. What would be the best way? What does the other school think? How will pupils go about asking for information? Is there anything the partner school would like to know in return?
- In groups, pupils could write a letter/e-mail or record a message on a given topic, *eg 'A week at our school'*. Discuss the image pupils are presenting, and the impression the partner pupils might get from the letters/e-mails/recordings, as well as any impressions they might already have formed. Ask pupils to decide what else they could send, *eg picture maps of their routes to school, descriptions of their favourite places, or of their hopes and dreams for the future.*
- critically question images of a place and its people
- understand the importance of direct contact with individuals and of reciprocity
- show and value understanding of other people's experiences
- evaluate their own and others' work in terms of the effectiveness of their communication
- Teachers could extend this activity by asking pupils to design their own photo packs, which could then be sent to the link school. This activity is also used in unit 4 'Britain – a diverse society?'. Schools using both units will need to manage the use of this activity to avoid repetition.
- Be aware of, and realistic about, the limitations of e-mail and certain postal services. Some material is difficult to e-mail, while postage can be expensive. Teachers should also consider timing of school holidays when sending material. If pupils don't receive anything from the partner school, don't despair! Keep a copy of everything they send so they can use it in future work and, in the event of it not arriving, it can be re-sent.
- A discussion on reciprocity could be extended to cover aid/charity/exploitation.
- Communicating in groups avoids one individual not receiving a reply. It also focuses the work, as group work cannot become too personal.
- Link with NSE: year 7 Wr1, year 8 Wr2.

Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note

How successful was our initial contact with the partner school?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to present their findings in a clear and balanced way, and to evaluate their sources • to respond to enquiries appropriately and accurately, researching the replies to any questions they cannot answer automatically • to value change and development within themselves • to ask and answer questions relevantly (NSE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once replies have been received from the partner school ask pupils to read the replies and write down any answers to the class's questions, and any questions asked by the partner pupils. They could select and sort the information in a variety of ways, eg <i>create a display/book detailing similarities and differences between the schools/pupils; collate new words and definitions to make a dictionary</i>. Pupils think up new questions to ask in the next set of letters. • Do a before-and-after exercise with pupils to reflect on their perceptions and what they knew before they started the work with the partner school and what they think and know now. Look at values and attitudes as well as facts. • Discuss with the class and the partner school what the focus of the next phase of contact should be. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate with people both inside and outside the school to find out answers to the partner pupils' questions • learn to reflect on, and be open about, their changing attitudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing partner school replies should be an ongoing exercise. There will almost certainly be more than one round of correspondence between the two sets of pupils before a decision is reached on how the project can be extended. Many schools that have embarked on a correspondence link have successfully gone on to use the link in the context of curriculum study, where it really flourishes and becomes an important part of the life of the school. This review process should be ongoing as each phase of the link is completed. • Link with NSE: year 7 S&L7, year 8 S&L5. • Link with thinking skills: evaluation. |
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Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note**What does 'community' mean?**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • about the concept of community, and its importance as a social structure throughout the world • about the implications of living in a global community • to assemble ideas and use a range of presentational devices to disseminate them (NSE) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a brainstorming session on what is meant by the term 'community'. Consider a range of communities: class, school, local, regional, national, European, Commonwealth, global and religious. How does the class community connect to the partner school's community? Do any of the class's actions impact on them, or vice versa? • Ask pupils how they would present an accurate image of their community. Discuss the different methods they could use to do this, and then present the information to the partner school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are aware of their role within various communities, as well as their rights and responsibilities as global citizens • recognise the diversity of their communities |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This section links with introductory unit 1 'Citizenship – what's it all about?' • Pupils in the partner school should be working on a similar profile of their community, and the findings should be exchanged. • The success of this activity depends on the partner schools agreeing to carry it out in a way that is relevant to both, so good planning by teachers on each side of the link is important. Always allow plenty of time for the exchange of information, and be sensitive to your partner school and do not make unreasonable requests. • Link with geography: knowledge and understanding about places 3b, 3d; unit 12 'Images of a country', unit 20 'Comparing countries'. • Link with ICT: opportunity to develop ICT skills by presenting material to the partner school. • Link with RE: looking at the role of religion in developing and sustaining a sense of community, locally and globally. • Link with NSE: year 7 Wr2, year 9 Wr4. | | |

What can different communities learn from each other?

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to analyse data and present findings • that there is common ground between diverse cultures • that we can learn valuable lessons from other cultures • to think about the role they can play in effecting change in their own community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once the next communication has been received from the partner school, pupils should analyse the similarities and differences between their community and the partner school's, and present their findings. What can the two schools learn from each other? • In the light of what pupils have learnt about the partner school's community, as well as their own, ask them to think about an ideal community. What would its underlying principles and values be? What could they do to improve things within their own community? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make comparisons in a way that avoids use of the terms 'better' or 'worse' • understand that they have a role within various communities (local to global), and that their roles carry rights and responsibilities with them |
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Learning objectives

Pupils should learn:

Possible teaching activities**Learning outcomes**

Pupils:

Points to note

How can we share what we have learnt with other people?

- about the value of long-term planning and collaborative working in a project of this type
 - the importance of being actively involved in planning and decision-making
 - to appreciate the values of other cultures and be sensitive to them
- While pupils are waiting for letters from their partners, ask them to conduct surveys in the school and the local community on impressions of the partner country. What do people know about this country? How did they get this information/form their impressions? Consider both positive and negative things that could be said about the partner country, and discuss ways to present a balance of views. Teachers could also consider arranging a link celebration day/global day to share the experience of school linking with the school and the wider community.
- have the opportunity to be involved in school linking and recognise their involvement as active citizenship
 - use a variety of different methods of presentation, eg *videos, PowerPoint/desktop publishing programs*
 - present their knowledge and experiences to diverse audiences with confidence
- Link with ICT: presentation skills using PowerPoint.
 - For activities like this, it is essential that more than one member of staff is involved. Try to include as many colleagues as possible, and set up a team that is willing to take on some of the responsibilities for maintaining the school link. This will also stop the link falling apart if one key staff member leaves the school.
 - If appropriate, partner schools could jointly plan and celebrate a special day or event such as Commonwealth Day, held annually on the second Monday in March.
 - Extension activity: pupils could plan for a visit from the partner school. They could consider: What activities should be arranged? What impression of the UK will the partner pupils get? Consider how different cultures show hospitality. What can pupils do to make their partners welcome?