

Citizenship at key stage 3

Getting involved: extending opportunities for
pupil participation



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Introduction

This booklet offers ideas for citizenship activities to promote pupil participation. A number of activities are provided for teachers and pupils to choose from, and these can take place in the school or the wider community (or a mixture of the two). They enable pupils to develop skills of participation and responsible action (see 3a, 3b and 3c in the citizenship programme of study). Depending on the context and planning of the activities, they may also address aspects of knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens, and of developing skills of enquiry and communication. Many of the activities are also suitable for use at key stage 4.

The planning of the activities may require the use of tutorial time, or time in citizenship, PSHE or other subject lessons. Some activities can be delivered as off-timetable events, and others will require the involvement and cooperation of members of communities outside the school. In all cases, pupils should have opportunities to reflect on their involvement, and to identify what they have learnt and how it can be applied. Page 15 of the *Teacher's guide* contains a list of questions that pupils can use when reflecting on their participation. As they progress through the key stage, pupils' involvement in activities should allow them to take increasing responsibility and make progress in the development of knowledge, skills and understanding.

1 Developing a citizenship portfolio

Keeping a citizenship portfolio enables pupils to record their progress and achievements. It allows them to build on their experience at key stage 2, where some pupils may have started a citizenship logbook. The citizenship portfolio supports pupil self-assessment and provides evidence for both formative and summative assessment during, and at the end of, the key stage.

One approach could be to make entries in sections such as:

- the school community;
- the wider local community;
- the national/global community;
- personal targets.

It is helpful if pupils form small groups to support each other in reviewing progress and establishing action plans. The citizenship portfolio should be given a high profile by using the evidence of achievement it provides as part of class/school awards and assessment. It can prepare pupils for the development of a progress file, link the key stages, and support the transfer to voluntary post-16 participation.

2 Participating in the organisation of the school

Pupils contribute to decision-making in, and the running of, the school. A range of responsibilities is developed throughout the school for younger and older pupils alike, allowing them to progress in the development of skills and accept more responsibility as they do so.

The following are examples of these responsibilities:

- Pupils undertake activities such as reception duties, office support and acting as guides for visitors. They have a clear job description, and criteria against which they and others can assess their achievements in the role.
- Pupils contribute to the organisation of parents' evenings, presenting information, producing displays and organising speakers.
- Pupils are involved in the running of sports and other school activities. At different stages in their school career, they undertake roles such as organising groups and teams, acting as an umpire/referee (there are opportunities for gaining qualifications in these areas) and recording and presenting results.
- Pupils contribute, through group discussions and class and student councils, to policy development and review. This includes looking at behaviour, anti-bullying, equal opportunities and drug prevention policies, as well as policies on the curriculum. Citizenship and PSHE policies are particularly important in this context, as it is essential that content and approaches are relevant to pupils' needs and interests.

Student councils

The setting up or review of class and student councils is supported by unit 14 'Developing skills of democratic participation'. School Councils UK provides support for schools that are developing their student councils. Where a school has an existing student council, a team of pupils could investigate its effectiveness by:

- constructing questionnaires to interview student council representatives and members of tutor groups in all years;
- determining how frequently student council matters are discussed in tutor groups, and the extent to which representatives are accountable to their 'constituency';
- investigating pupil perceptions of the effectiveness of the student council;
- canvassing views on how to make the council more influential in the life of the school; and
- presenting their findings and recommending a course of action.

3 Working with peers

Pupils work with their peers, pupils from other schools and members of the wider community on activities that offer support, mutual learning and joint working, such as tutoring, mentoring and peer assessment. The following are possible examples:

- Year 7 pupils maintain links with their feeder primary schools and, through visits, letters or e-mails, provide information and answer the questions and concerns of pupils who will be joining the secondary school the following year. As year 8 pupils, they are involved in the induction of year 7 pupils, and in helping individuals or groups settle into the school. During the first term of transfer, dedicated time is put aside for short but regular meetings with their 'buddy', for example five minutes at the end of tutor time. Support can be provided by older pupils to ensure that relationships are developed positively.
- Within a form or year group, peer support groups are created both to support pupil self-assessment and for peer assessment, reviewing progress and setting targets. Teachers, other adults and pupils involved in assessment should work together in establishing assessment criteria to help them to judge progress and achievements.

- Pupils work with a partner school, which could be a special school, together producing resources for both schools such as books and timetables, or creating painted backdrops for school productions.
- Pupils spend a series of lunchtimes supporting primary school pupils studying certain aspects of science. As peer tutors, they gain increased understanding of, and confidence in, the science curriculum, and develop their communication and interpersonal skills.

4 A school or group event

Guidance on involving pupils in organising events is included in the *Teacher's guide*. Unit 16 'Celebrating human rights – citizenship activities for the whole school', unit 15 'Crime and safety awareness – a whole-school multi-agency approach' and review unit 19 'Assessing progress and recognising achievement at the end of key stage 3' also contain activities that involve pupils in planning and running events. Other possible examples include:

- **Mini-Olympics:** Pupils, together with community and sporting organisations, organise the event with primary school children. Pupils present a proposal for the event to senior management, and must agree to operate within an approved framework. Partnership with the local council, sports associations, etc enables pupils to experience at first hand the public services offered by local government, and to understand how voluntary groups can bring about social change (see points 1d and 1f in the citizenship programme of study).
- **Science activity days:** Pupils demonstrate to visitors from other schools or the wider community specific aspects of science, for example toys, devices and games that run on alternative energy, solar panels, pumps, wind generators. This activity may be supported by Neighbourhood Engineers from the community.
- **Fund-raising:** Each year group/tutor group researches local and national charities. Groups make presentations about specific charities, and there is a debate ending in a vote on which charity to raise funds for. Pupils discuss ideas for fundraising, apportion responsibilities and plan and organise events. This activity should build on pupils' experiences at key stage 2, where they are likely to have been involved in fund-raising. NB: whole-school planning should ensure that events are spread throughout the year and are developed as part of the overall school calendar.
- **'Our World Day':** A year council devises a programme for a school and community celebration. It consults with other members of the year group, and tasks are allocated.
- **Mock election:** This could be organised as a whole-day off-timetable event, or spread over a longer period of time, with the election event as a final whole-school activity. Materials to support the organisation of mock elections can be obtained from www.learn.co.uk/yvote
- **The Real Game (careers exploration programme):** Pupils work in groups of 15–20 to create a community. They participate in activities that simulate issues and aspects of life that their parents/carers and other adults encounter daily in the real world. Information from www.realgame.com

5 Environmental projects

These could include: clean-ups; the reclamation of land for conservation; improving the school grounds; setting up a sensory garden; recycling; an energy audit; community safety projects.

- Unit 18 ‘Developing your school grounds’ details how pupils can be involved in school grounds development.
- Pupils work with children from primary schools to produce a community exhibition supporting environmental awareness, or plans for refurbishing a playground area or undertaking a project related to local Agenda 21 issues.
- Campaigning/advocacy: This could be carried out at school, local, national or international level. Pupils identify an issue of concern to them, perhaps a sustainable development issue. They undertake research to inform their views, form partnerships with community groups or policy-makers, and take action on the issue. For example, pupils could campaign for improved measures to protect the safety of cyclists and pedestrians by: surveying pupil attitudes towards cycling to school; forming partnerships within the local community to press for safe cycle routes; organising promotional activities such as ‘cycle to school days’; designing leaflets and T-shirts; promoting cycling proficiency tests in local primary schools; investigating facilities/procedures for keeping cycles safe; creating links with pupils from other European countries to discuss environmental issues in an international context.

6 Wider community activities

These could include:

- **Intergenerational activities:** for example:
 - pupils and older people share their experiences and skills, through: pupils interviewing older people about their experiences and needs; inviting older people to give talks and discuss topics and issues of local, national or global concern; organising tea/lunch clubs, performances and celebrations; shared learning of a new skill such as photography; acting as partners in community projects; setting up partnerships between pupils and voluntary groups, national charities or residential homes; producing a book, video, multimedia pack or website containing stories of life in the local community from each decade;
 - pupils work alongside adults with disabilities, learning some of the difficulties they may encounter in undertaking tasks such as shopping. As a result, they work together to produce a report and deliver a presentation to the local council and/or shopkeepers. They use photographic, video or PowerPoint materials to stimulate discussion about improving access and support. A display could also be produced for the school.
- **Community arts events:** These could bring together art, music, dance, drama and textiles. Outcomes could include: the completion of a mural at a local partner school; a dance festival; a fabrics exhibition; an opera workshop; a concert reflecting the ethnic diversity of the local community. Projects such as these bring together a wide range of local people with a common interest in and enthusiasm for the arts.

- **Involvement in local community forums:** Pupils establish a youth forum, supported by council representatives. This enables them to discuss real local issues and contribute to decision-making about local priorities. It also allows the local authority to incorporate the views of young people into their planning. Pupils are able to address issues such as legal and human rights, and to research topical political, as well as interfaith, moral and social, issues.

Pupils could also:

- publish a newsletter on community issues;
- produce citizenship curriculum materials;
- organise a conference about young people's voice in the community.

7 Contributing to national government priorities at a local level

Pupils work with local implementers to contribute to the achievement of local targets as part of national government priorities. For example:

- Pupils work with their local Community Safety Team to address the aspects of the Community Safety Plan that relate to young people. They identify which aspects of the plan affect them, directly or indirectly, and select one to which they can contribute. For example, pupils investigate areas where there is vandalism, and recommend actions that could reduce it; or they research older people's perceptions of the threat posed by young people and suggest ways of reducing fear.
- Pupils work with their local Primary Care Trust/Health Authority to address local health targets, including those related to accidents, smoking and teenage pregnancy. Pupils act as consultants, researching the views and needs of other young people and advising on possible changes to services, facilities or campaigns.
- Pupils work with their local Drug Action Team/Drug and Alcohol Reference Group on projects to contribute to drug education targets for the area. They help to design materials for drug and alcohol education, and could also produce displays for the school and wider community, and publicise sources of help and support. By improving their own knowledge and communication skills, they are able to act as sources of accurate information for their peers in the community.

8 International activities

Pupils organise and participate in activities such as Model United Nations meetings (MUN, see www.una-uk.org) or model Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM, see www.commonwealth.org.uk). Such activities can be organised on a local, regional or national basis.

School linking

Unit 17 'School linking' provides details of how schools can establish links with other schools in this country or other countries, and outlines learning activities in the context of the citizenship programme of study.

About this publication

Who's it for? Teachers of citizenship at key stage 3, heads of departments, curriculum managers, ITT departments.

What's it about? This booklet offers ideas for citizenship activities to promote pupil participation. It forms part of the citizenship scheme of work at key stage 3.

Related material *The National Curriculum for England*

What's it for? To show how citizenship may be taught to key stage 3 pupils.

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Further information and guidance to support the teaching of citizenship is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship



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