



Citizens All? Children's Rights and Citizenship Education

- a report published by UNICEF UK

**Speech by John Lloyd (Citizenship Adviser at DfES)
at the launch on 12.04.05**

I am pleased to be here supporting the launch of this significant report which the Department welcomes. Two years on since the launch of Citizenship as a statutory subject in secondary schools in England the report is timely in that Unicef's findings are consistent with David Kerr's Longitudinal Study, HMCI's annual report and QCA monitoring. It is timely too in that it reminds us all of the importance and significance of children's rights, human rights, and participation in global citizenship, and the 8 key concepts set out in the recent DFID publication 'Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum', Global Citizenship, Diversity, Human Rights, Interdependence, Conflict Resolution, Social Justice, Values and perceptions and sustainable development.

This Global dimension is central to Equipping our children, young people and adults for life in a global society and work in a global economy as set out in the Department's international strategy 'Putting the World into a World-Class Education'. Knowing about human rights and, in particular the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is at the heart of this.

Unicef resources and events are really important in promoting children's rights and citizenship, a point well made in the report. It is a telling observation that in terms of value-added impact, English (and Scottish) teachers believe that citizenship has enriched the curriculum, positively influenced school ethos and encouraged their school to become more democratic.

Perhaps for schools in England Participation Guidance published in 2003 Working Together: Giving Children and Young People a say, which gives statutory guidance to Heads, governors, LEAs, parents, pupils and teachers on their responsibility to ensure greater involvement of pupils in the general life of the school and of the wider community, has had an impact. Guidance is intended to open opportunities for children and young people to become more active participants in their education, including the planning and the evaluation of their own learning. It offers advice on how to offer opportunities to develop their skills as active citizens and also supports Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

However, as Unicef rightly points out there is still much to be done in continuing to develop education for human rights and citizenship in Secondary Schools in particular and the inalienable right of children to survive, develop, be protected and be able to participate in decision making that concerns them. Indeed this is a central tenet of Every Child Matters which includes the five learning outcomes of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

As part of the Department's strategy to support the continuing development of Citizenship Education we have implemented a number of activities. DfES Regional Advisers have been very successful in developing support networks for teachers,

NGOs and ASTs in LEAs, providing training and organising regional good practice conferences. On a part time basis, their principle role this year is to support the development of the Certification of the Teaching of Citizenship. Such has been their success that there are now three additional Regional Advisers for PSHE.

There are around 65 AST posts in England which have been successful in sustaining and developing citizenship in their own and outreach schools. Many have taken on a broader role in developing citizenship alongside their LEA adviser for citizenship. There have been two conferences to support them and to share their good practice. The role of ASTs is central to the Government's Five Year Strategy for Education which was announced in the summer.

Making sense of Citizenship- a CPD Handbook was launched during September at a number of regional conferences. Published on-line initially, the now fully completed resource is about to be published. Written by the Citizenship Foundation for the Department this authoritative resource will support individual teachers as well as those participating in school-based INSET and centrally organised courses. It will also be of value to NGOs and those engaged in Higher Education (HEIs) PGCE Citizenship courses.

The Citizenship Self-evaluation tool originally developed as an on-line toolkit for the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) by BeCTA has now been produced, with the support of QCA and OfSTED, as booklet and published by ACT. The self-evaluation tool enables schools to chart their progress in developing citizenship and to identify the actions they can take to progress it. As we move to Self-evaluation as part of the New Relationship with Schools feedback from around the country suggests that schools are finding this to be a very useful resource.

Following the successful implementation of the certificate for the teaching of PSHE a pilot programme in three regional centres, the North West, West Midlands and London is being developed for Citizenship Education. Involving HEIs, NGOs and LEAs working collaboratively, the certification process will improve the effectiveness of teaching in primary, secondary, special schools and post 16 settings. Teachers participating will be required to meet the standards set out in the Teachers Standards Framework and specifically those required for the teaching of citizenship. The certification will be CATs accredited so that teachers can use this for the achievement of a higher degree.

Citizenship can now be included in applications by schools to become Humanities Specialist Colleges. In their school plan they will set targets in three humanities-based specialist subjects from: history, geography or English; and two other subjects from religious education, citizenship, classical civilisation, drama, humanities, history, geography or English. Key to this the vision for Humanities Colleges requires that schools *encourage students to learn about issues and to examine their own values and attitudes as individuals in a post-industrial, global and interdependent society, and foster an understanding of human values and different value systems, past and present, and of how society is organised, develops and changes, including the dynamics of long term change.* Six schools have achieved Specialist College status for Citizenship this year with more to follow.

As the report highlights there are plenty of opportunities for Unicef resources and activities to complement the work of schools and contribute to the continuing professional development of teachers. The Department would certainly support the

recommendations made in the report for Unicef staff to work with providers, teacher education programmes, share and disseminate good practice and keep the central focus of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in both the local and global context in the mindset of all teachers and especially those teaching citizenship throughout the UK.

I commend this report to you.