

Citizenship education

with children
aged 8 - 12 in the UK

Conceptual research findings
Empirical study

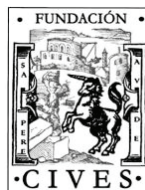
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Citizenship education with children aged 8 - 12 in UK

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Conceptual research findings

Introduction

The project “ENGAGE - Building together European learning material on Education for Citizenship” ambitions to create a European interactive, innovative, pedagogical and multilingual module on education for citizenship for kids aged 8-12 and educators.

This report aims to assess the national needs and expectations regarding education for citizenship curricula, both in terms of content and methodological approaches. It will be achieved through a theoretical study and the distribution of a questionnaire to a large group of teachers and experts of teacher training. The results of the analysis will be compared between all partners, in the consortium, and help identify the common needs of the participating countries.

The Department for Education (DfE) stipulates that at Key Stage 2 citizenship is non-statutory and schools are not required to teach or follow the suggested programme. Instead the rationale for providing a suggested programme is so that schools can plan a whole curriculum. Education for Citizenship is only made compulsory at Key Stage 3, or 11-14 year olds. Therefore according to our age range of 8-12 year olds only the top ages of 11 and 12 will definitely undertake formal learning on citizenship. Within the statutory guidance for citizenship ‘Europe’ is only mentioned once at key stage 4 and not at all at Key Stage 3.

Based upon the relationship and interaction of Education Citizenship with the National Curriculum it would be fair to conclude that as a topic it is not given high priority until Key Stage 3 and that the concept of ‘European Citizenship’ is not seriously addressed with only lip service being paid to it in Key Stage 4.

However Ofsted’s 2012 report, *Citizenship consolidated?* (2012), paints a different picture of citizenship’s relationship with the curriculum:

“In most of the primary schools visited, citizenship was a strong feature of the curriculum. Primary head teachers frequently viewed the subject as key to promoting their school’s shared values and a sense of community within the school. They identified citizenship as an important vehicle for successfully promoting pupils’ moral, social and cultural development.” (Ofsted 2012)

At a cursory glance and using these two juxtaposed positions it could be argued that despite the lack of importance placed on citizenship in primary education, teachers and leadership teams of schools recognise the importance of citizenship education and embed it within the curriculum despite the substantial pressures placed upon them from the National Curriculum. One of the key reasons for this may be that all primary school teachers are trained to teach the subject and therefore recognise its importance. This is in contrast to secondary school where it is seen as a specialist subject and therefore not core to all secondary school teacher training. Despite the jockeying of position for recognition its importance in schools in shaping societies views, identity and social cohesion has been recognised by both the national government and the EU. Such awareness has been catalysed by the decline in the participation in politics and civic engagement by young people in the later part of the 20th Century (Citizenship Foundation, 1997). Citizenship Education is seen as a ‘socially engaging’ area of curricular (Ross 2000) and as an influential mechanism by national government. The subject is compulsory for those aged 11-16, despite

this the recommendations of the UK governments committee of inquiry that it should be compulsory from 5 years old were rejected (Wilkins, 2000).

Devolution

Education, youth and children’s policy is devolved elsewhere in the UK. In Scotland there is the Learning and Justice Directorates, In Northern Ireland there is the Department of Education and in Wales there is the Department for Education and Skills.

Scotland has a number of curriculum areas including religious and moral education, social studies and health and wellbeing. These areas however are not intended to be timetabled but instead it is expected that specific subjects will ensure all of these areas are covered. Citizenship is non-statutory throughout the Scottish Curriculum, nor is it viewed as its own subject but seen as cross-curriculum. It is also expected that citizenship education is reflected and encouraged in the practices of school life, for example involving students in decision making at school. As citizenship education is not viewed as its own subject it is not an assessed qualification within schools.

The Department for Education and Skills in Wales defines citizenship education as part of the framework for Personal and Social Education (PSE) and is non-statutory.

However at the same time PSE is seen as statutory but embedded within a wider curriculum. Each of the subjects identified by the Welsh curriculum highlights where PSE can be included. Therefore although citizenship education itself isn’t statutory elements that are taught through the PSE framework within other subjects become statutory.

The Personal Social Education (PSE) framework includes the components of Active Citizenship and Education for Sustainable Development & Global Citizenship (ESDGC). This includes ‘political literacy’ with the concept of interdependence between ‘Wales, Europe and the World’ being key. This is however introduced in secondary school, well out of the age range of this study.

Northern Ireland’s Department of Education again takes a different approach. During key stage 2 there is an area called ‘Personal Development and Mutual Understanding’ (PD&MU). This area covers certain areas of early citizenship education. This encourages each child to lead independent, safe and healthy lives. It also encourages children to be ‘personally, emotionally and socially effective’.

At key stage 3 there is also an area called ‘Learning for Life and Work (LLW) this includes local and global citizenship and is statutory. This part of the curriculum helps prepare young people with the skills, knowledge and qualities required for life and work.

There are no National Standards or expectations specifically regarding citizenship education. However there are significant elements of citizenship learning within the Department for Education policies of ‘Every School a Good School’ and ‘Together Towards Improvement’ which indicate overarching standards. There is a GCSE in Learning for Life and Work which incorporates aspects of citizenship however this is again outside this projects age range.

Attitudes and practice

Young People's Attitudes and Practices towards Citizenship and Active Democracy

Keating et al (2010) undertook a comprehensive longitudinal study based on a sample of young people from Schools across England. The cohort was surveyed from year 7, again in year 9 and then again in year 11 and year 13. The primary aim of this study was to explore the effects of citizenship education on young people and to see what variables effected this.

The study found that the cohort that was being studied changed their pattern of attitudes and efficacy over time. From a positive perspective there was a significant increase in young people's political and civic participations that would likely be taken into adulthood. However on the other hand attitudes towards society and equality in general became less sympathetic with less strong attachments to communities, lower trust in politics and politicians and fluctuating levels of engagement.

The cohort studied had become less liberal and more conservative particularly in how they viewed refugees and immigrants. This is likely influenced by wider socio/political trends that also show a hardening attitude towards immigration and its controls, in light of the most recent general election UKIP a political party based on nationalism and anti-immigration gained the third highest amount of votes. At the same time attitudes towards criminal activity and jail sentences, the welfare system have also become more conservative. Conversely the same cohort had become significantly more supportive of human rights and women's rights.

Trust in social, civil and political institutions has remained high with age: the cohort has had high levels of trust in social and civil institutions, but distrust in politicians has increased. In 2009, 33 per cent of the cohort reported that they do not trust politicians 'at all' (up from 20 per cent in Year 7 at age 11).

As the cohort got older (outside of this project's main focus) the young people in the cohort became increasingly aware of the impact of policy on their lives. However despite this as they approached adulthood, where they would be able to engage in society as a voting citizen, they still only moderately felt that they could influence political and social institutions.

From a professional perspective of teachers a recent study captured the views of teachers who were just finishing their teacher training through the academic university pathway. The study by Wilkins et al (2009) compared the attitudes and views of British trainee teachers towards citizenship, and specifically European citizenship, with those of their counterparts in Turkey.

Overall in the UK the view of the EU and 'Europeanise' was positive and tended to be in disagreement with some of the negative views put forward by certain political parties and the media. However there were areas of contention such as 46% agreed that the EU reduced member countries' sovereignty, whilst 68% thought it increased people's freedom. Concerns about increased immigration (27% British students) seemed balanced against improvement in the economy (28%) and greater opportunities for movement around Europe in search of jobs (16%) and increased multicultural interaction (19%).

The above shows a complex view of European citizenship, which is not surprising considering the complexity of the topic. The research does show a degree of skepticism around the EU project and the idea of multiple identities (Dale and Robertson, 2009). It also, to a degree, reinforces the notion of a democratic deficit in EU political legitimacy (Schmidt, 2007).

The British student teachers in this study emphasised the importance of citizenship education helping students and teachers to build more equitable and mutually respecting relationships. This, it could be argued, could be a direct response to the long standing

Euro-skepticism that has been prevalent in the UK. This has particular significance considering the recent Conservative government agreeing to a referendum of the UK being part of the EU in 2007 and the rise in UKIP's popularity. Students in this study also emphasised the importance of Citizenship Education teaching children about global responsibility and enhancing pupils' understanding of Europe and countries other than their own.

Recommendations for citizenship education

The longitudinal study concluded a number of different recommendations. The first being that where possible have a specific discrete timetable slot for teaching of citizenship education for more than 45 minutes a week. If less was delivered then there would be the fear that little impact would be made during these lessons, as, there was often little difference between the citizenship outcomes for receiving 'a little' citizenship education and receiving none. This thankfully seems to be an already existing trend as Keating et al (2009) suggests many schools have already adopted this approach.

A further point recommended was external examination or certification of citizenship learning: modelling of the longitudinal data revealed that it was the availability of the GCSE citizenship course that had the strongest effect on the cohort's levels of 'received citizenship'. The worry with such an approach is that this will increase pressure on students, teachers and schools. In particular this may not be welcomed for children between the ages of 8-12. It would be difficult to supplement such learning with external, informal citizenship experiences.

Another recommendation is to ensure the support and training was available to teach citizenship. The CELS longitudinal study (2008) shows that support must be given not just from senior leaders in school but also local and national policy makers. The report showed that without such support citizenship education becomes marginalised from the curriculum and therefore marginalises in young people's learning and thinking.

Empirical study

The project „ENGAGE - Building together European learning material on Education for Citizenship“ aims to create a European interactive, innovative, pedagogical and multilingual module on education for citizenship for pupils aged 8-12 and their teachers. Our partnership brings together nine organisations in seven member States.

Citizenship education (CE) is a crucial component in supporting young people to become active citizens and encouraging youth engagement in democratic processes. Youth turnout at European elections has been on a sharp decline, sliding to 29% in 2009. At the same time in 2013, an estimated 32% of 18- to 24-year-olds voted in local elections, compared with 72% of those aged over 65.

Despite the importance of CE and the implications that it can have on society within the UK there is a strong ongoing debate regarding its relevance and academic rigour as a subject. An example of this is the current consultation of removing Citizenship as an AS or A Level, despite its popularity as a subject.

At the same time teachers working in primary and secondary schools often feel ill-equipped to deliver crucial parts of education such as citizenship.

Other socio-political factors that could either be influenced by or influence the future and shape of CE within the UK include the EU referendum, the focus on 'British values' within schools, possible reduction in the voting age to 16 and the requirements put on educational establishments to identify and combat extremism.

As part of project ENGAGE Volunteering Matters and Volunteurope undertook a survey to capture the views of those that are impacted by or input into CE. The survey aimed to establish what the current situation of CE is and what professionals feel could be done to enhance it.

Methodology

The survey was generated online using Survey Monkey software. The survey was divided into a number of distinct sections. The first, which was optional, asked for information about the respondents themselves. These questions included occupation and area of the country where they were from. The next section asked the respondents for value judgments, such as whether they felt CE is important, what the aim should be and their views on citizenship more generally.

The final section asked respondents to comment on the current content, methods and training within CE. They were also asked what they felt could be included in this section.

The questions were a mix of open ended and close ended questions and were devised in conjunction with the ENGAGE national consortium of CE. The survey was distributed widely throughout civil society and education systems.

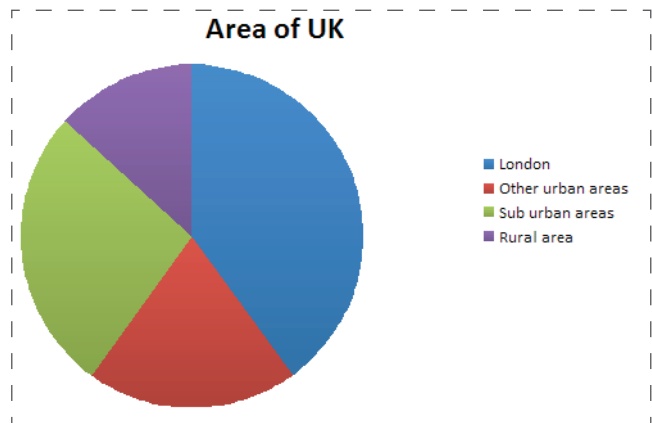
In particular the survey was distributed to primary and secondary schools. It is worth noting that the survey was also distributed in Scotland, the responses were therefore predicted to be quite different as Scotland operates under a different educational system and CE is implemented in a different manner. The survey also comes shortly after the Scottish Independent referendum which may have had an impact on responses.

Overall there were 30 valid responses to the survey. Although this was a lower response rate than was hoped for the responses were important in helping us to shape the curriculum and methodology that is being developed through the ENGAGE project. One of the reasons for a lower than expected response rate may have been the time of year that the survey was distributed. It was issued in the final term of the academic year and teachers and educators were likely under a lot of pressure due to the exam period. As such they

may not have had the time to respond to the survey

Of the 30 valid responses 22 worked within formal education systems. 15 of those worked as primary school teachers whilst 7 of those worked in secondary school.

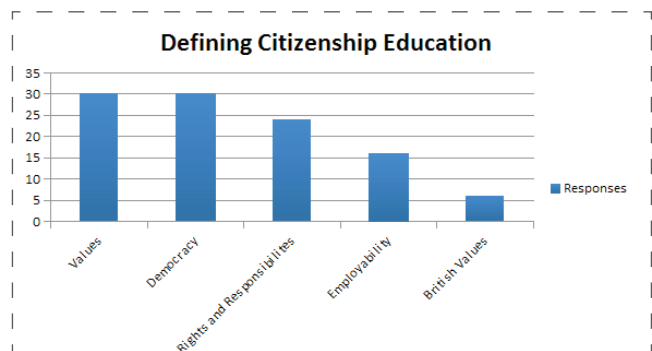
Of the other 8 responses, 3 worked in educational departments of local government, 3 worked within civil society (volunteering organisations) and 1 worked as a youth worker and was involved in CE in an informal setting.



18 respondents answered that they were from urban areas (12 from London with the other 6 from Birmingham, Leeds and Edinburgh). The other 12 respondents were from a range of sub urban and rural areas within England (not the UK or Great Britain).

No responses were received from Wales or Northern Ireland. Similarly there were no responses from the South-West of England or Scotland outside of Edinburgh. This combined with our low response rate makes it impossible to generalise our results across the whole of the UK it also highlights that we received responses from areas where Volunteering Matters and Volunteurope have a strong presence in the UK.

How would you define citizenship education?



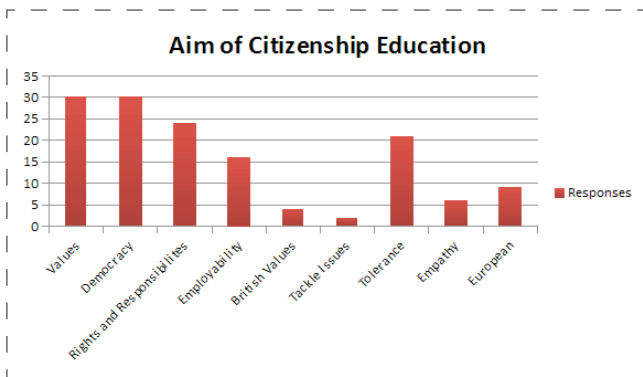
In 100% of the responses there was the concept of values and understanding the society that you live in. At the same time 100% of the answers include elements of democratic processes such as voting.

The concept of preparing children for employment was far less prevalent in responses. Only 53% of respondents explicitly stated that preparation for employment was CE.

80% of respondents identified helping children to understand rights and responsibilities as being CE.

Only 20% of respondents identified the new policy of 'British values' as being part of CE. Out of this 20%, 5 out of the 6 respondents that identified 'British values' as being part of the definition, were secondary school teachers.

What do you think should be the aim of citizenship education for 8-12 year olds?

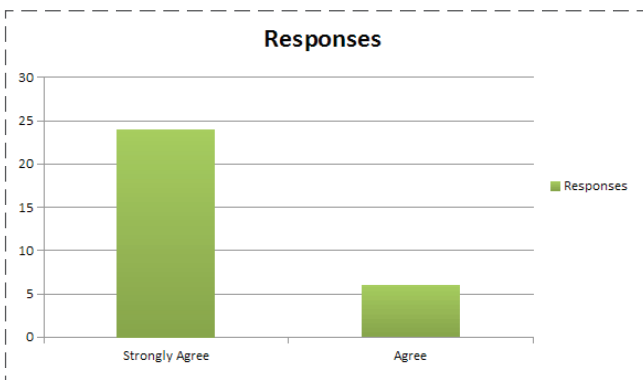


This question shared similar traits to the previous question; however there were a number of additional responses. 70% identified the importance of teaching tolerance and tackling discrimination. 20% of respondent felt the aim should include empathy or compassion.

7% of correspondents felt that it should be used to tackle the rise of populism or right wing views of intolerance, the answers differed but both discussed racism and islamophobia.

The number of respondents who felt that British values should be an aim of CE dropped from the previous question to only 13% Finally there was an emphasis on understanding European institutions which were not identified in the previous answers. 30% of correspondents felt that understanding European institutions should be one of the aims of CE.

Do you agree that citizenship education for 8-12 year olds is important?



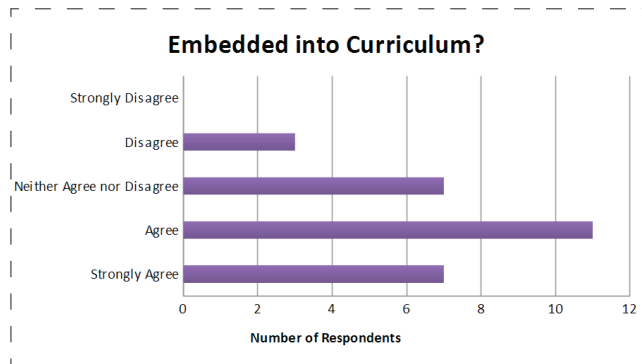
All valid responses were positive with either a 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' response.

3 out of the 6 respondents who chose 'Agree' all gave similar answers to why they were cautious and didn't choose 'Strongly Agree':

- 'Children should not be pushed to mature too quickly'
- 'It depends on what the curriculum involves- some topics might be advanced for some children'
- 'I agree in principle but we must me cautious and ensure the material and content is age appropriate'

From these responses we see that in principle everyone agrees that CE is important for this age group. However some professionals in this field feel the need for rigorous review of what is being taught and how it is being taught.

Do you agree that citizenship education should be embedded within the wider school curriculum rather than be a taught subject?



As shown in the above chart the question of whether it should be an individual taught subject or an individual subject is divisive. All of the 3 respondents that disagreed with the statement were secondary school teachers. When asked to give reasons for this the three responses were:

- "Teachers in secondary school are subject specific and should not be expected to teach a subject they are not an expert in"
- "There is already too much pressure on teachers without adding to the weight by asking them to teach another subject"
- "Teachers should be allowed to focus on their own subject"

This question had a far more balanced response to it than previous questions, with quite a high proportion of respondents stating they 'Neither Agree Nor Disagree'. Two people responded:

- 'It is an important subject and should be treated as such, however citizenship is part of everyday life and should be embedded in everything we do including education'
- 'A school environment should reflect the values of citizenship and therefore citizenship should be embedded throughout the education system. It is however important that certain knowledge and values are explored fully with allocated time to do so.'

When you think of citizenship, what comes to your mind? (please tick all that apply)

Global citizenship	100% of respondents ticked this box
National citizenship	90% of respondents ticked this box
European citizenship	86% of respondents ticked this box
Local citizenship	100% of respondents ticked this box
Political engagement	100% of respondents ticked this box
Active participation	90% of respondents ticked this box

Despite having an option to add to their answers in an 'other' box no respondents chose to.

Responses to this question either sat within continuous professional development (CPD) or initial teacher training (ITT). 93% of respondents responded with CPD as part of their answer. Whilst 66% of responses felt that CE should be trained for during ITT.

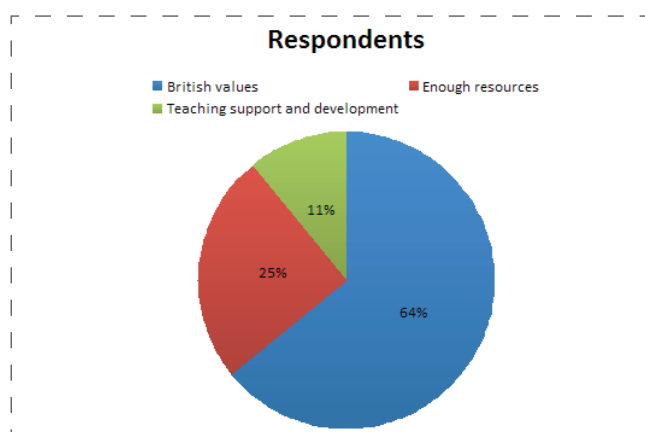
What are the current resources for teaching citizenship education to 8-12 year olds?

The responses to resources were more encouraging. All teachers and the youth worker felt that the current resources were adequate. Various responses included online free resources from The Citizenship Foundation, Teaching Citizenship and TES websites. The civil society responses focused more open third sector organisations including Oxfam, Save the Children and Barnardos.

What resources do you think are needed?

20% of respondents included materials for teaching British values in their answer. These 6 respondents were the same 6 respondents who identified British values within the definition of CE in the previous question.

40% of respondents answered that they felt that enough resources were available but that the curriculum could be reformed. The final 40% responded that there was enough resources in terms of materials but more resources were required for teaching support.



British Values

In November 2014, the Department for Education told all maintained schools, free schools and academies to promote 'British values'. British values are now assessed during Ofsted inspections and it has been made clear that schools will struggle to achieve a high grading without a evidence of British values. It is recommended that these values are embedded within pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

This policy was brought in as a result of Operation Trojan Horse, which found an organised attempt by a number of associated individuals to introduce an Islamist or Salafist ethos into several schools in Birmingham, England.

British Values according to the Department for Education are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty and mutual respect
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Such a policy has come under heavy scrutiny. There has been discussion around what makes these values inherently British when much of the democratic world also aspires to these values. At the same time there has been an argument that values cannot be assumed or ascribed to and that these values can only be adopted through

exploration and support from wider society.

There are even fears that the guidance is too open to misinterpretation and could play into the hands of a 'future right-wing government'.

The response to the questions, how would you define citizenship education? And, what do you think the aim of citizenship education? can be analysed in light of this policy

Of the 30 respondents only 20% recognised British values as being part of CE. This number drops even further when asked what they think the aim of CE should be; only 12% said British values whilst 100% identified values more generally.

This small scale set of responses indicate that professionals are not fully on-board with the ideology behind the British values policy. At the same time it also supports the idea that such values are not uniquely British but are instead universal. All respondents who identified British values as being an aim were secondary school teachers. This may indicate that teachers in secondary school are under particular pressure to deliver British values; such pressure is exacerbated by the new Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, which places a legal duty on schools to „prevent people from being drawn into terrorism“.

EU Referendum

The UK is set to have a referendum by the end of 2017 on whether or not to remain a member of the European Union.

There has also in recent years been a rise in Eurosceptic politics, such as the rise in popularity of UKIP whose main political position is leaving the EU. UKIP won nearly 4 million votes in the 2015 general election, nearly 13% of total votes.

This uneasy relationship with the EU, its governance and institutions is reflected within CE. Within the statutory guidance for CE from the Department of Education 'Europe' is only mentioned once at key stage 4 and not at all at Key Stage 3. Such a policy and statutory guidelines may well have had an influence on responses to certain questions in the survey. For example when asked about the current content 0% of respondents included knowledge of European institutions. However when asked about what content they think should be included 12 respondents included knowledge of European institutions. This disparity may well reflect the tension within society around European identity and independence.

Consultation of citizenship as an A level

AQA the only awarding body that offers CE at A Level has recently decided to stop offering the qualification from 2017 onwards. This means that students are unable to study Citizenship formally after year 9. At the same time the popularity of Citizenship at GCSE has increased from 12,000 students to 20,000 between 2014 and 2015 with a new GCSE planned to be released in the future.

The responses around training in this survey should be viewed in context of the above policy decision. For example when asked about whether CE should be embedded within a wider curriculum; 11 respondents agreed, 7 strongly agreed, 7 neither agreed nor disagreed and only 3 disagreed. Such responses appear to fall in line with the Governments view of whether we need to have CE as its own specialist subject.

At the same time when asked about what training was provided for CE there was a mixed response. There seems to be a very disjointed approach to preparing teachers for delivering CE. This is hardly surprising considering the consultations and decisions that have recently been made around the future of CE.

From the responses of the survey we can conclude that all respondents felt that CE is important for 8-12 year olds. This is true despite the fact that training appears to be either ad hoc or non-existent

in places. Nor does the Government feel that it is an important enough subject to make statutory within primary schools.

There are also encouraging signs around the European element of the project. There appears to be either a rejection or reluctant acceptance of the policy of British values in many responses, with a desire to teach more universal values.

The responses also show us that there is an appetite to include knowledge of European institutions and governance in CE. When asked about what comes to mind when they are asked about citizenship 86% identified with European citizenship. Despite this being the option with the lowest response rate it is still a positive statistic.

We also see from responses that materials and resources are not necessarily the problem. Instead an area that seems conflicted and in need of support is training and ongoing support. Materials, lesson plans and curriculum are important however if teachers feel neither confident nor prepared enough to use them then they are not useful.

As such the results of this, admittedly small scale study, shows that the project would benefit the UK the most if it focused on supporting teachers through workshops and training. Ideally training would be delivered at the ITT stage however such actions are beyond the ENGAGE project, instead supporting existing teacher may be a more achievable outcome for the project and CE.