



Liaison Committee

Corrected oral evidence: Citizenship and civic engagement—follow-up

Thursday 10 February 2022

2.05 pm

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Liaison Committee—members present: Lord Gardiner of Kimble (The Chair); Lord Collins of Highbury; Baroness Scott of Needham Market.

Citizenship and Civic Engagement Committee—members present: Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots (former Chair); Baroness Barker (former member); Lord Blunkett (former member); Baroness Eaton (former member).

Evidence Session No. 1

Virtual Proceeding

Questions 1 - 11

Witnesses

I: David Goodhart, Head of Demography, Immigration & Integration at Policy Exchange; Ashley Hodges, CEO, Young Citizens; Liz Moore, Chief Executive, Association for Citizenship Teaching.

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Examination of witnesses

David Goodhart, Ashley Hodges and Liz Moorse.

Q1 The Chair: Good afternoon and a very warm welcome to our witnesses. This is a meeting of the Liaison Committee and a follow-up for the Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Education. I would be very grateful if our witnesses would introduce themselves. Then I will hand over to the former Chair of the Select Committee, Lord Hodgson.

Liz Moorse: Good afternoon. I am the chief executive of the Association for Citizenship Teaching. We are the subject association for all teachers and educators involved in citizenship education.

Ashley Hodges: Good afternoon. I am the chief executive of Young Citizens, previously submitting evidence to the committee as the Citizenship Foundation, our registered name. We are a citizenship education and immersive experience charity working with primary up to young adults across the UK.

David Goodhart: I am head of the Demography Unit at Policy Exchange. I have written a couple of books that are broadly relevant to the subjects you have been looking at: *The Road to Somewhere* and *Head Hand Heart*. I am also a commissioner of the EHRC.

Q2 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots: Can I begin by thanking you all very much for coming today? Before I ask my question, I have to declare an interest. I am the author of a book called *Britain's Demographic Challenge*, in the course of which I referred to some of the work of the first report of the committee.

We do not have a lot of time. I will begin with a general question. We are focusing on three things: cross-government co-ordination in this area, citizenship education and the provision thereof, and improvements in the Life in the UK test. Could you begin, perhaps, by briefly explaining whether you think there have been any improvements in these areas since our report in 2018 and, if there have not been, why there have not been?

David Goodhart: I have to admit that I have not followed these particular aspects of the argument that closely. I read your report. I thought it was excellent in many respects.

Citizenship education is clearly not a priority for government at the moment. So long as we have a situation in which almost a third of students leave secondary education without a decent GCSE, it is unlikely that it is going to climb higher up the priority list. It is a shame that the great Bernard Crick initiative did not really come to very much.

I have to say that I slightly disagree with you. I know that you are very keen to separate citizenship education and the broader character education. One of the problems in all these areas is that we are talking about quite intangible things. We are also talking about things that do not have much of a lobby behind them. You are one of the lobbies, along with

the integration APPG. There are obviously various groups, but there is no consistent lobby to support these things, so it is very easy for government to step aside.

There is a lobby for character education, and there is also a lobby for citizenship education. If you combine the two, the two of you together would have much more clout. That may be imperfect but, given how little progress you have made on this, I would rather disagree with your attempts to keep them separate.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Thank you very much. Perhaps Liz Moorse might like to go next.

Liz Moorse: I would like to start off a little bit more positively, if I can. There is a dedicated body of teachers in this country who are committed to citizenship education. We are the subject association for citizenship and we work with hundreds of teachers and thousands of students across the country.

Very little has shifted in policy since the very early days of citizenship. It is still a national curriculum foundation subject. It has a legal status. It should be happening in schools, even though it is not happening as widely as we would like. The recent changes that we have seen in the ministerial team at the Department for Education have opened up a more positive environment for talking about citizenship and democracy education, and rightly so. The current Minister for Schools, who I believe is coming later, is meeting with many of our teachers and GCSE citizenship students in early March to talk about the subject and to hear their views.

There is definitely a huge amount of work to do. Recent research from Sheffield University and Sussex University, which surveyed several thousand teachers about the status of citizenship and political education, showed that about a third are regularly teaching this area of the curriculum. That is simply not good enough. Our teachers who are doing it are dedicated and passionate subject enthusiasts. They apply an intellectual rigour to the teaching that they undertake. They link intellectual and conceptual understanding of important topics in politics, law, rights and equality with action. Action is a brilliant way of engaging young people constructively and positively in democratic processes. It is something that we support through pedagogy, materials, training and CPD that we provide.

I think the situation is a bit more positive at the moment. There is a bit more of an atmosphere and environment that should support citizenship and democracy education. If we look across government, there is a range of policy areas where citizenship plays in specifically and clearly. The climate education strategy that the new Secretary of State launched at COP 26 is one of those. The Cabinet Office Defending Democracy programme is another area where citizenship education should be a key part of what they are doing. The DCMS media literacy strategy is another area where citizenship has a key role to play. The DCMS is very keen to

work with the DfE on how citizenship education contributes to that agenda. There are many other examples.

It highlights the need, I think, for very clear, cross-governmental co-ordination. It is something that we thoroughly support. It used to exist in a more concrete way. The DfE previously had a Minister dedicated to citizenship and a working party that met regularly to work with the ministerial team and civil servants to advise them. One of the calls we would make today is that the Schools Minister clearly reinstates his remit for citizenship education, that it is attached to his brief, and that we rebuild that idea of cross-governmental support to support this area.

Ashley Hodges: I would echo my colleague in that there is a lot that is positive happening out there. We see this every day working with thousands of schools, in our primary and secondary education programmes as well as our youth networks. However, it is largely driven by the voluntary sector.

The piece that we continue to see is that, with the Government's previous drop in priority to make sure that this is a priority in most schools, feedback from our network continues to say that it is very spotty. You see these brilliant pieces of practice, as Liz Moorese has said, where you have social action and young people taking part in active citizenship. They are gaining the knowledge as well as the practice. A huge number of teachers have come back to us, as have educators in other settings, saying that there is simply not enough support and provision available to them.

I would also argue with the point about how we pick potential personal development apart from citizenship education, because of the hard knowledge that you need as a part of citizenship education. As the organisation providing the SMSC quality mark, this is where we work with schools providing not only the language and the framework for schools to understand the role of citizenship education but the difference between that and, say, RE and PSHE. Again, the feedback is that there is a major conflation there that can confuse teachers if time is not taken to spell it out. It also leads to some trainee teachers who we have spoken to not being able to define citizenship education at all.

Q3 **Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts:** Thank you very much. One of the issues that we raised was the question of a cross-government champion. I take it, Liz Moorese, that you would recommend that.

Liz Moorese: Absolutely.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: I imagine you would recommend that, Ashley.

Ashley Hodges: Yes, very much so.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: And, David, you would not recommend that, or perhaps you would.

David Goodhart: I think you are on to something. I think a Minister for Citizenship and Integration would probably be appropriate.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Lord Blunkett, I think you wanted to take up this point.

Q4 **Lord Blunkett:** I will declare an interest. I am honorary president of ACT. I was a trustee of National Citizen Service, which is now a royal charter body, and the community interest company that is an offshoot of it.

Remarkably, given what we have seen during the past two years of the COVID epidemic, the Inter-Ministerial Group on Safe and Integrated Communities has not met since 2019. All of us would have expected that to have been a very useful adjunct to the practical measures that have been taken.

In the light of that, and the fact that a champion has not been approached, is there any way we can persuade government? I would like to test out with the three witnesses the persuasion or the arguments that they would put, refreshed after the two years we have just experienced.

David Goodhart: I think you make a very good point. The pandemic has in many ways reinforced the arguments of your committee in your report, often in rather a positive way. Despite all the rows we have had, a lot of the surveys show that most people continue to see the pandemic as having brought us together more than it has divided us. It also saw an absolutely massive surge in volunteering, both in a formal sense through the Government's scheme—I have done some vaccine volunteering myself—and through the informal hundreds of thousands of WhatsApp groups that have cropped up all over the country.

We should latch on to this and see whether we can capture this and sustain it. Perhaps this non-existent Minister should be called the Minister of Citizenship, Integration and Volunteering. We knew already that we were a high-volunteering country, but it really did kick into action.

This is a bit of a bugbear of mine, but why do we not have a single government portal for volunteering? There are all sorts of portals for volunteering, I know, but if there was one big one that the Government actually put some advertising money behind, it could become a thing and you would see it advertised on the Tube or at train stations. Of course, there is the whole issue of child protection checks with volunteering these days. That has to be made as absolutely unbureaucratic and as simple as possible.

The main point I wanted to make is that we had a surge of volunteering. Do not let it go. Try and keep it alive.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Liz Moore, a single government champion?

Liz Moorse: Absolutely. We would support that idea wholeheartedly, but we also believe that the DfE Minister for Schools should specifically have citizenship attached to his remit to help boost the work at the Department for Education. That is the driving force for the curriculum and what happens in schools. If we believe in a more inclusive democratic society, we need to start with our youngest people. We need to make sure that they have an equitable citizenship education that is inclusive and nurturing.

It is really important to recognise the work of young people during the COVID pandemic. Young people were hugely affected by the pandemic in their schooling and education, with the challenges of remote learning and so on. We have seen the very distinct effect that that has had on the most vulnerable children in society, yet we saw some fantastic examples of active citizenship. It was more than volunteering. It was genuine democratic action, which is really important. I think we need to distinguish between volunteering, doing good and serving others, and democratic action that is designed to make a better and more inclusive democratic society.

Ashley Hodges: I would echo Liz's sentiments here: yes, we need a cross-governmental champion but not one that comes with a sacrifice. It needs to be a priority in the DfE to see it as a priority in schools. If you are asking what the motivator for government is—I had a feeling that you might come on to this—there is the levelling-up agenda. We need to look at a strategy that hangs on the strength of communities, relationships and trust. There is a lack of citizenship education provision, and we are soon to release a study, with the Education and Training Foundation, looking at post-compulsory values and Prevent studies where there is a huge gap. If you are looking for what could be galvanising, that might be part of the answer.

Q5 **Baroness Eaton:** Good afternoon. Before I begin, I need to declare my interest as a Local Government Association vice-president, a past chairman and trustee of the charity Near Neighbours, and as a DL for West Yorkshire.

I am glad you mentioned the levelling-up agenda, because that is the area of my questioning. Could you elaborate on whether you think citizenship education and civic engagement is going to be helpful? How will it feed into the levelling-up agenda?

Ashley Hodges: Absolutely. In short, we want stronger communities. We want young people to be active. As pointed out, we have also seen a huge uptake through our charities offering the Make a Difference challenge at primary years. We saw young people taking on community and social action programmes.

These programmes are not taken up universally in schools, either at primary or the statutory age. If you look at the levelling-up agenda in strengthening local participation and engagement, and the fact that we are, if anything, looking at putting power back into the hands of people

locally, I think you will see a real struggle if we do not invest in this, because people do not have a basic education in how to engage or the confidence to engage with these institutions and with the Government, as they now offer these opportunities.

I would also say, as a trustee of a youth centre, that youth work is fantastic and community centres are fantastic. I am very proud of the work that we do in north Islington on it, but a tiny fraction of the population is reached by that. It really does need to be a mixed approach that includes formal education and formal schooling. I would say it should be very heavily from primary to university, which obviously has not been implemented from 2018.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Liz Moorse, would you like to say anything on this?

Liz Moorse: Absolutely. We desperately need to see education as part of the answer to addressing the inequalities in society. Citizenship plays into that very well, not least because citizenship contributes to literacy and numeracy. It helps to develop that in a real-world sense. It engages young people with their communities. It gives them a sense of agency and empowerment. We absolutely need to see that, and we need to see more of that in more schools.

David Goodhart: I have a more general point about levelling up. The White Paper was an important piece of work in many ways. With the accountability regime, for a start the Government really hold their own feet to the fire in a way that is implicit in the White Paper. The devolution aspect is very welcome.

Obviously, there are grotesque regional inequalities and huge problems. Lots of Governments have tried to address it in the past. One thing that is different this time round, apart from those two things I mentioned, is the whole way in which pride of place has been seen not just as a kind of add-on at the end of a long list of things you are going to do but as being pretty central. It is also being connected to this whole tricky issue of graduate retention. We are international outliers in the extent to which our undergraduates go to residential universities. It is something like 70% to 80%. A very large proportion never return. Many parts of the country lose their brightest and most ambitious kids to the big metropolitan centres.

Liz Moorse: If I may add a quick comment here, one issue is the lack of specific educational investment. We are part of a Fair Education Alliance initiative calling for greater investment in education. If we are to close the gap between the most vulnerable in society and those from richer households, we desperately need specific investment in this area, not least to address the problems that occurred during the COVID pandemic.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Carry on, David.

David Goodhart: To make the connection between your concerns as a committee and the White Paper, pride of place is the connection point. Pride of place connects to this issue of graduate retention.

There is an interesting little sidebar to that. I talked to Paul Ormerod, the economist, who is also the chair of the Rochdale Development Agency, who said that one of the interesting things from the point of view of ethnic-minority integration issues—I know that when we talk about integration that is not the only thing we are thinking about—is that with people from minority, usually Muslim, backgrounds in places such as Rochdale and Oldham, the brighter kids either do not leave at all or, when they do leave to go to university, come back because of the very strong family ties. Indirectly, that is helping with that other ethnic-minority integration issue.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Lord Blunkett, I know you wanted to raise something about statutory entitlement.

Q6 **Lord Blunkett:** We tangentially touched earlier on the statutory entitlement to citizenship education, which we recommended through primary into secondary, as age appropriate, placing emphasis on the development of what we would more broadly call social capital.

Could we explore for a couple of minutes the arguments that we might be able to deduce in persuading Robin Walker, whom Liz Moorse has already described as being at least sympathetic to the argument, that this would help to raise standards more broadly? There is evidence on that front, is there not?

Liz Moorse: There absolutely is. I think it is really important that we do hold this idea of primary citizenship education. The reality is that the primary curriculum for citizenship has not been updated since the day when David Blunkett was Secretary of State for Education. It was introduced in 2001. We have the same framework in place. It has had little promotion in recent times from the Department for Education, yet we know that if we prepare our youngest children well with education for citizenship and democracy, it leads to better outcomes further down the line in later school life.

We absolutely need to do something about this. A statutory entitlement to citizenship from primary through to post-16 is absolutely one that we would support. It needs investment, attention and ministerial leadership to make this happen. That is why we call on the Department for Education to name a Minister for Citizenship Education in the new Schools Minister.

Ashley Hodges: Again, I would agree. There is a very important point, which we know from education evidence elsewhere in research, that if we are talking about building skills, practice and habit, which is a part of citizenship—it is not just a knowledge-based subject—you have to start younger. We cannot start with young people when they are going to vote.

A very good comparison is the work that has been done on careers and employability. That is about moving towards a younger age group and making sure that it involves primary school students building these habits and skills.

In terms of uptake, without the DfE making this a priority, despite it being on offer and with the updates in 2019, we cannot help but look to the SMSC quality mark when we work with our primary schools and say, "Are you offering citizenship education?" Often, again, there is not even a vocabulary there and it is very confused with PHSE. Without the DfE's backing and without this being made a priority by the Minister, the uptake is not going to be there. Again, it will lead to primary school children not actually building the skills and having the habits for citizenship as they go into secondary school and beyond.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: David Goodhart, statutory entitlement or not?

David Goodhart: I am afraid that one slightly goes over my head.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Liz Moore, when you say "investment", do you mean people? Do you mean curriculum? Do you mean books, papers and course study? Do you mean teachers?

Liz Moore: Absolutely, people—teachers. We are so far off having a dedicated specialist citizenship teacher in every school at the moment. That is such a sad loss. Where they exist, they make a huge difference within that school, and we are so far off that. There has been underinvestment in and undervaluing of citizenship education for too long. We know the difference that it makes where those people are in place in schools. There has been no investment in citizenship by central government as a subject since 2008—absolutely none. There have been some opportunities for organisations like ours to apply for government grants and funding, but we have never managed to be successful.

Our charity has recently had some investment through the NCS CIC fund. That is allowing us to scale up. We have gone from two full-time equivalents to six. We have an amazing group of volunteer teachers or teaching ambassadors and a council of teachers who are volunteers whom we work with. But there is so much work that we need to do here. We are desperately building and doing the grass-roots work that we can, but we need that top-down, policy-driven investment. It means money, it means teacher training, it means CPD, and it means, when we get to it, Ofsted taking this subject seriously and evaluating it rigorously so that schools improve.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Baroness Barker, I know that you wanted to pick up the baton about PHSE and citizenship education.

Q7 **Baroness Barker:** What effect has Ofsted's decision to assess citizenship through PHSE rather than quality education had on teaching?

Liz Moorse: This is a bit mind-boggling because, if you read the Ofsted inspection handbook and framework, it is very clear that the framework is to look at the quality of education based on the national curriculum, which includes citizenship. But the reality and the experience of the teachers we have spoken to is far from that. Citizenship is not, therefore, being treated with the same fairness, rigour and equity as other national curriculum subjects.

That is damaging. On the one hand, it indicates that Ofsted has a preconceived idea of how schools should deliver this subject. That is not really its business. It is behind the curve on this. It is a situation where schools can decide how to plan and teach their curriculum. Many schools choose to teach citizenship as a discrete subject, but when they put that evidence in front of inspectors it seems to be dismissed. That is very disheartening for those teachers and it is undermining the value of the subject.

We absolutely have to challenge this. On what basis have they made this arbitrary decision to treat citizenship—a legal national curriculum foundation subject—differently? We cannot understand this at the moment. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this properly with Ofsted so that we can do something about it.

We welcome the fact that Ofsted says that, by inspecting through the personal development measure rather than the quality of education measure, it means that citizenship is potentially looked at on more regularly, but that should not excuse poor practice. We need to see the same quality and rigour applied to citizenship as to other subjects, and it undermines the status of the subject if we do not have that.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Ashley Hodges, what is your contribution on this?

Ashley Hodges: As I have said before, I would agree with that and that is what our teacher network says. When asking our teachers, and particularly a group of trainee teachers in the north-west, they said that in 53% of their schools citizenship is taught with PHSE or RSE, and 29% are not even sure where it happens. This is at statutory ages where they should be taught citizenship. As one teacher put it, "My current placement in school and previous placement lack any focused time spent on citizenship education in the curriculum, and they are taught last minute, often pushed by SLT. Teachers aren't confident about what this means and already have an overwhelming amount they are required to cram into dedicated lessons and sessions". Another said that it is cobbled together. Another said that if they were inspected tomorrow, based on what Liz said is very clearly outlined in the Ofsted inspection manual, they would absolutely fail.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: David Goodhart, do you want to add anything on this statutory question of PHSE?

David Goodhart: No. Again, I am the generalist here. I am not abreast of these debates, I am afraid.

Q8 **Lord Collins of Highbury:** On the same subject, what are the risks associated with the “narrowing of the curriculum and focus on core subjects”, which has been reported by the Department for Education?

Liz Moore: Since the COVID pandemic we have seen this exacerbated to some extent. When we look at the figures—we presented these to you in our evidence—there is broadly a stabilisation in the numbers of teachers and the amount of curriculum time being given to citizenship. It is broadly stable over the last three or four years, but that is stable at a low level. We need to pick up the pace here.

The COVID pandemic gave us opportunities to talk about the role of citizens and the relationship with government in a pandemic, in a crisis situation. It opened up some opportunities where schools take citizenship seriously and where there are citizenship teachers in place. In other schools it has been further marginalised, unfortunately. It is tragic that we still have stories through our network of teachers who have put their heart and soul into putting a curriculum in place, and then a new head teacher comes to the school and decides to review all that and perhaps unpick it all. That would not happen in other national curriculum subjects.

There is a different treatment going on here. I think we have to get back to basics. We need to reassert that citizenship is a national priority. It is part of our national curriculum. It deserves the same resources, attention, curriculum time and quality of teaching that every other subject deserves, because it makes such an important contribution.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: David Goodhart, do you have anything to add on this?

David Goodhart: No.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Ashley Hodges?

Ashley Hodges: I think the biggest risk is that, yes, there has been a narrowing. Speaking to our teachers in the post-COVID catch-up, they think that where you have young people, especially the most at risk and vulnerable, focusing on very important literacy and numeracy but losing out all opportunity for this wider development, that will only increase. You have young people leaving with their GCSEs and A-levels, but with a lack of understanding about how the wider world is working and the really complex challenges that they will be inheriting.

Liz Moore: I totally agree with what Ashley has just said there. I think it is really important that we see citizenship as contributing to those literacy and numeracy outcomes. They do not happen in a vacuum. Citizenship involves being informed, being media literate and making sense of real-world documents, information, the news and what is going on around you. That contributes to your literacy. It contributes to your

understanding of statistics and numbers in society, and how they are used and presented.

There are real opportunities to do some good work here. We need to see more of it happening.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: We have spent a lot of time in our earlier debates about theoretical and practical.

Q9 **Baroness Eaton:** Yes, I rather think you have more or less covered the answer to my question. Has support for the delivery of practical and theoretical citizenship improved at all since 2018? Do you have any good practice examples that you could share with us?

Liz Moorse: I mentioned that we have recently had some investment in our charity, Association for Citizenship Teaching. It was much needed. It has helped us scale up our work. We are building a comprehensive programme of CPD and teacher training support.

We find that the early stages of our work already show signs of green growth in that more teachers are coming to us for support. There is greater engagement with what we are doing. Of course, citizenship is a GCSE subject that needs to be taken seriously, studied for and prepared for with highly qualified and experienced teachers.

I think it comes back to our earlier point about the level of investment from the Department for Education. Ashley mentioned this as well. We are grass-roots organisations. We are working with limited resources. We are very grateful for the investment that we have. We will get things started, but it is not a replacement for strategic national policy priority, investment into the subject or investment into teacher training and CPD. We urgently need that to be reprioritised.

Ashley Hodges: We know that there are several fantastic areas of practice out there. Again, I would say that they are spotty, but when you find them through the schools that have engaged with us through the Make a Difference challenge, it comes to life when you see schools embracing it. It is usually cross-curricular in some form. We had a primary school tell us about how they actually see it as being inextricably linked as part of their community work. Things like presenting science learning to their local GP for the learning of patients is a perfect example of what citizenship can look like when it is embraced both in practice and in knowledge.

We helped to support a recent RSA report called *Citizens of Now*, which was about social action in schools and youth work, and training teachers up on this. Again, as Liz says, we are working as hard as we can. We are networks here to be harnessed instead of reinventing the infrastructure that is here with the coming plan to make sure that there are frameworks that can be scaled and locally fit for purpose. We have plenty of examples of best practice, but it is very ad hoc and not universal for every young person in this country.

Liz Moorse: We would be very happy to share some more specific examples with you later on. I know that we are time limited today. We have some fantastic curriculum models from different kinds of schools working in different kinds of contexts, from Darlington to Weymouth and across the country.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: That might be very helpful.

Lord Blunkett: It is really important, is it not—this is one of those “Today” programme questions—that we see citizenship teaching being taught really well and rigorously, and that where it is not it can lead to all kinds of mistakes by teachers who think they are doing it but they are doing it badly. There was an example earlier this week in the *Daily Mail*—I cross myself—in relation to teaching 10-year olds to write letters to the Prime Minister that was clearly inappropriate. I just wondered if you wanted to comment on that.

Liz Moorse: I only read the example recorded in the BBC report. The school was a primary school. It was looking at the role of leaders in an English lesson, which is a perfectly valid teaching approach. I know that it has been accused of allowing young students to pin their political colours to the mast. I do not think that was what was going on here, actually. I think it was trying to allow young children to talk about important issues of the day and to consider what a political leader is and raising questions—

Lord Blunkett: But rather ineptly.

Ashley Hodges: If I could just interject on this point about specialist teachers and the value they provide, again, it is about trying to make sure that every school has access to someone of that nature.

The piece that you will see is that when you do have specialist teachers, going back to the point about whether it should be an English teacher or cross-curricular, et cetera, they help to enhance the practice of other teachers. This is quite common in teaching, in pedagogy. When you have fantastic practitioners, they share that practice onwards. We know that the training that we provide with CPD and social action does not just stop with the teacher we train.

The same goes for citizenship and making sure that there are valuable ways in which it is being embedded elsewhere. That just leads back to the important point that there need to be citizenship specialists.

Liz Moorse: I absolutely agree and support what Ashley has said there. Sometimes the issue here is that, if you close down political conversations, that leads to greater anxiety and greater problems. We absolutely need those citizenship specialists in place, trained in teaching political, sensitive and controversial issues, to handle those situations correctly and appropriately, and age appropriately.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Lord Blunkett, you have the last word.

Lord Blunkett: No, I have had it.

Q10 **Baroness Barker:** One thing that we must probe is the decision to use NCS as a delivery mechanism for citizenship education in schools. We need to have your take on that, please.

Liz Moore: The new programme that I mentioned is, in part, to look at that pathway from citizenship education in schools through to ongoing social action and active citizenship. We have been working with the NCS Trust for a number of years on this. Citizenship teachers are very well placed to support and prepare young people for NCS, and to build the skills, knowledge and competencies that they need to fully participate in that programme.

I know that the NCS model is under review and is being adjusted at the moment to become more inclusive. We will be talking with colleagues at the NCS—I know that you are talking with the chief executive later—about how our work will dovetail in with what they are doing. But we very much see the citizenship teacher as being the right teacher in the school to facilitate this, to do the work that is needed, and to retain that idea of the NCS as a rite of passage and a fantastic and positive experience for young people progressing into adult life.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: David Goodhart, do you want to add anything on Ofsted, the National Citizen Service and the role of citizenship education?

David Goodhart: Again, I am perhaps in the wrong room today. I think the only real issue with NCS is whether it should be compulsory. I know this is a very old debate. What are the current numbers? They are not enormous. I think it is an extremely good programme. I know it has had its ups and downs. That was rather picked up on by David Cameron a few years ago.

Clearly, making it compulsory would be extremely expensive at a time like this when we have just added £500 billion to the national debt. It is perhaps not the best time to be talking about doing so. I think we should hang on to the idea that at some point in the future a national citizenship service scheme, particularly focused on mixing up people from different ethnicities and social classes, is an ideal for better times.

Ashley Hodges: We welcome the revised approach to the NCS in some forms. We also know that when the NCS was brought about it was focusing mainly on its own delivery. In education, working with young people and youth workers, there is no silver bullet. As an organisation providing more of the support programmes and resources to a different range of educators, we are really a catalyst and a bridging organisation. It is really important for us to have somewhere to send them on to. Within the NCS Trust and in the conversations we have had so far, we would welcome being a part of forming a really useful ecosystem that gives young people a variety of pathways and making sure that they

have that as an option. Whether or not it is compulsory may be a wider question for a different day.

Q11 Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: This week the Government published *Levelling Up*. It is 297 pages long and we can find no mention of citizenship education anywhere in it. Should it have been mentioned in this booklet? Does it play a role in that programme?

David Goodhart: No, I do not think it should have been, particularly. To be quite honest, I do not think you are going to win that argument on citizenship education. Like I say, a third of people leave school without a decent GCSE. It is not going to be the top of anyone's priority list.

There was obviously an education and skills section. Much of it was quite good. A lot has been happening in that area, particularly on boosting the so-called missing middle of technical skills. There are 55 education special areas. Not only do a third of kids leave secondary school without a decent GCSE, but only 65% of pupils leaving primary school have reached the expected level in reading and writing. They are aiming to get that up to 90%.

Citizenship education is not going to feature, given the priorities. To be honest, I am not here to tell you what to put at the top of your list, but how about making citizenship cheaper for people coming in from outside? It is absolutely scandalous that a family with two kids has to pay something like five grand to become British citizens.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: That is a different question.

Lord Blunkett: Can I very quickly follow up on what David has said? We did make recommendations on that, but it is separate. How can we implement levelling up if we do not engage people in the process, so that it is a bottom-up approach where we are doing it alongside and with people, not to them?

Liz Moore: Absolutely.

David Goodhart: Citizenship education is not the silver bullet for that. As you were just saying, David, citizenship education happens anyway in all sorts of other classes, possibly sometimes inappropriately. Surely—

Liz Moore: I think this is missing the point.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Let David finish.

David Goodhart: We discuss statistics in maths. Any teacher worth their salt will introduce arguments about probability in relation to COVID and so on. It happens. Look, I am not against citizenship education. I am just advising you that it is not going to be at the top of any Government's agenda for quite a while to come.

Ashley Hodges: I would have to disagree, if you read the policy as it has been laid out, in that it is about localising the building of community and—going back to your point—about pride of place. Lots of people have

pride of place in the sense of community, but it is too limited, and they do not understand the intersectional pathways of how to engage outward. Maybe citizenship education should have been mentioned explicitly, but there is also civic engagement more broadly and the idea that you need people to be given very explicit reasons for being enfranchised in society and not leaving education, whether it is just their engagement generally with youth work or whatever it might be that is disenfranchised. It is a big problem and it is only going to get worse without investment.

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbotts: Liz Moorse, you have 34 seconds.

Liz Moorse: It is a false polarisation to say academic achievement or citizenship and other things. Citizenship is an academic subject. It contributes to literacy and numeracy like many other subjects in the curriculum. It should be part of the levelling-up agenda, because it is about engaging young people and the population as a whole in society in communities in a stronger, healthier democratic society. We cannot have that without citizenship education.

David Goodhart: How many people do a GCSE in citizenship?

Liz Moorse: Over 20,000 a year.

David Goodhart: I would focus on getting that number up.

Liz Moorse: We are focused on getting that number up. It is one of our priorities. We have a fantastic GCSE network. We are meeting with them next week. It is growing, and we will continue to support that work.

The Chair: Thank you very much to all our witnesses for a very interesting dialogue.