Select Committee on Democracy and Digital Technologies

Corrected oral evidence: Democracy and Digital Technologies

Tuesday 11 February 2020

11.35 am

Watch the meeting

Members present: Lord Puttnam (The Chair); Lord Black of Brentwood; Lord German; Lord Harris of Haringey; Lord Holmes of Richmond; Baroness Kidron; Lord Knight of Weymouth; Lord Lipsey; Baroness McGregor-Smith; Baroness Morris of Yardley; Lord Scriven.

Evidence Session No. 12   Heard in Public   Questions 147 - 162

Witnesses

I: Liz Moorse, CEO, Association for Citizenship Teaching; Jonathan Baggaley, CEO, PSHE Association; Dr Bill Mitchell, Director of Policy, BCS, Chartered Institute for IT.

Examination of Witnesses

Liz Moorse, Jonathan Baggaley and Dr Bill Mitchell.

Q147 **The Chair:** Good morning. Before we start, I am required to read the following. It makes total sense, as you will see. As you know, this session is open to the public. A webcast of the session goes out live and is subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. A verbatim transcript will be taken of your evidence and put on the parliamentary website. You will have the opportunity to make minor corrections for the purposes of clarification or accuracy. If you would be good enough to introduce yourselves, we will go to the first question.

Dr Bill Mitchell: I am Director of Policy at BCS, which is the Chartered Institute for IT.

Liz Moorse: I am the Chief Executive of the Association for Citizenship Teaching.

Jonathan Baggaley: I am the Chief Executive of the PSHE Association, which is the national body for personal, social, health and economic education.

Q148 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** I thought I would start by seeing whether we have a definition of digital literacy. What do each of you understand by digital literacy? Given your backgrounds, could you comment on the school's role in helping young people to become digitally literate citizens.

Jonathan Baggaley: As we have heard, digital literacy carries a heavy load. It is used in multiple contexts to mean different things, everything from basic IT skills through to understanding the political economy of the internet and digital activism. These are all overlapping concepts, but it means it can be hard to unpick what we are talking about, who has responsibility and where the actions lie.

The most useful framework for me is one that we have borrowed from Gianfranco Polizzi, a researcher at LSE, who splits it into two parts. He talks about functional and critical digital literacy. With functional, he is talking about the basic digital skills, but also about an understanding of the properties or affordances of the internet. These are things like how information is easily replicable, can be viewed by millions of people and is searchable, and then an understanding of the pros and cons of that, and all the opportunities and risks that come with those properties. It is fair to say that a lot of the education to date has focused primarily on online safety and this kind of functional digital literacy.

The second part, critical digital literacy, splits into two. One is what we classically think of as media or information literacy — evaluating and analysing information, understanding meaning and the interrelationship between platforms and meaning.

The other bit that is particularly salient today is about understanding the political and economic dynamics of the internet, and understanding the

economic logic of platforms and internet companies, and the way in which the internet is served to us in digital technologies. As digital technologies are completely embedded in all aspects of our lives, both willingly and unwillingly, this is an increasingly important element in what we teach young people.

To make this concrete, last week Ofcom figures found that a quarter of young people are using smart speakers — Google Home or Alexa. How many of them are being educated about who they are talking to when they are talking to Alexa? Is it a friendly aunt or a big sister, or is it a profit-maximising corporation? This is interesting knowledge to have, but the bit that interests me from a PSHE perspective — PSHE is about how you make decisions and actions in the real world — is what impact that has on your behaviour. This then becomes digital literacy that is not simply about understanding information but your understanding of technologies and orientation towards them.

Liz Moorse: For us, digital literacy definitely links to political and democratic literacy. It is not separate. If we want citizens to be equipped to make sense of the world around them, and to unpick information that they are finding or are being presented with, in this current age you cannot be an active informed citizen without that digital literacy, that critical informed literacy, which helps you do those things. Knowledge, understanding and competencies are required.

This area is not well defined in the curriculum. The Government have made a shambolic mess of the relationships and sex education framework, and tried to shoehorn something in that probably does not belong. In citizenship, we look at the role of the media in society. In a democracy we want to encourage free speech, opinion and freedom of association, and we want citizens who are equipped to do those things. Particularly during elections, we need citizens to make sense of the electoral and political information they are being presented with, in order to make good decisions, to be part of the decision-making processes in a democracy and to be part of solving public problems. This is linked to political thinking, unpicking information and being able to make informed choices, actions and decisions.

Dr Bill Mitchell: I thought it would be most helpful to talk to the Committee about what is in the school curriculum at the moment. Since 2014, we have had the statutory computing curriculum. That does not include academy chains, but it is statutory none the less. The computing curriculum covers computer science, which is the scientific foundations of computation and information, and the engineering aspects of computation through information technology. A core component of the statutory curriculum is also digital literacy, but that has a very specific meaning within the school curriculum.

At Key Stage 1, for example, which is up to about age eight, the curriculum says, for digital literacy, "Children should be able to use technology to purposefully create, organise, store, manipulate and retrieve digital content". Later on, at the end of Key Stage 2, it says in

relation to digital literacy that children should be taught how to use technology "safely, respectfully and responsibly", and be able to "recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour".

The Chair: Can I interrupt you for a moment? Neither of those addresses digital literacy.

Dr Bill Mitchell: It depends what you mean by digital literacy. When you asked what we mean by digital literacy, I thought it would help to tell you what the school curriculum says.

The Chair: You are being helpful, but in a sense what you are offering is the stark contrast between what Liz has said and what you have just read from the curriculum, which is the nub of our problem here.

Liz Moorse: That is absolutely the nub of the problem. It is not well-specified in the current curriculum, neither is it well-specified in the new relationships and sex education curriculum. There is a massive gap here. In the current democratic crisis that most of us agreed is going on, in which we are not even sure that the Government are giving us information we can trust some of the time, this is absolutely diabolical. This is not a party-political issue. We need collective agreement that it is so important that every child has this type of education and that teachers need guidance on what it actually means and looks like. There is a complete absence of that currently.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: I do not disagree with that, but you represent some subjects that have been on the curriculum for a long time and some of which have not. The Government might not be clear and give guidance, but life goes on beyond the Government. Teachers do not just sit in their classrooms doing what the Government tell them five days a week. As subject associations, can you say a little bit — not too much, because I do not want to take up too much time — about what you have done to work with teachers to get digital literacy where you want it? I will tell you what I am worried about. Is there is a risk that your subject associations are also stuck or rooted in the national curriculum, so you become part of the obedience to the DfE rather than pushing an approach to the subject that might be helpful?

Liz Moorse: The opposite is true.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: Give us some examples.

Liz Moorse: The National Curriculum is so sparse now, there is nothing there, particularly for teachers who are not specialists on this issue.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: So what have you done as a subject association?

Liz Moorse: We have done some work — ironically or not, supported by the US embassy in London. We arranged a teacher exchange, sending 10 teachers to America to learn from some of the best experts there about how they have been approaching news, media and digital literacy in the

curriculum. Through that work, those teachers have come back inspired, wanting to share the learning that they have gained.

The US embassy in London has also kindly given us a small grant to sponsor our journal, *Teaching Citizenship*, so that we can send it to every secondary school in the country. That will capture some of the learning that those teachers gained through that exchange visit and some of the practices that they have been incorporating into their citizenship classes and lessons. It is our small attempt in the absence of a clear curriculum or any government support.

Our organisation has not had any government support for over 10 years. Citizenship as a subject has not had any government support for that time either. There is a complete lack of investment in it at the moment. We have done what we can with our limited resources. We are a staff of two people, working nationally and beyond, so there is such limited resource here. I will not say anything more about the irony of us getting sponsorship from the US embassy. The point is they have this as a clear priority. They want to challenge misinformation and support democracy. We are working with them because they have offered to work with us, and we are grateful for their support.

Baroness Morris of Yardley: Just to be clear, I was not being critical. I was just trying to see some green shoots that we might be able to work with. I take that point.

Liz Moorse: We have also tried going to some of the big tech companies. You heard from Angie from NewsWise this morning. There has been a bit of sponsorship for some primary-related work, but nothing for secondary. We are still open to discussions with tech companies to do something in secondary education, because it is frankly remiss that nothing is being done at the point at which children are becoming much more politically alert, active and involved in democratic processes and decisions.

The Chair: Bill, can I apologise? I did not mean to jump in on you. The point was that you read out those two pieces of the curriculum, and that represents our problem because, when we talk to the Department for Education, it confuses coding with digital literacy. The general view of this Committee is that that is a complete misconception. I want to flush out from you, first, whether you agree that it is a misconception and, secondly, how we get around this.

Dr Bill Mitchell: We argue that if you do not understand the science and engineering beneath how the technology works, you will be misled and susceptible to all kinds of strange things going on on the internet. As a starting point, it has to be a good thing that people understand the scientific and engineering principles behind all these things; otherwise, it is difficult to understand how you might or might not be manipulated by an algorithm. We argue, therefore, that it is a good thing that you are taught these things in terms of your digital citizenship, perhaps, rather than digital literacy.

One of the aspects of the definition within the DfE's curriculum, if you think about it hard enough, can actually give you quite a lot of freedom. For example, some schools we have talked to have said that they have been using the UKCCIS Education for a Connected World framework. That talks about all aspects of children's digital lives, including self-image, participation in online forums, managing information, things to do with privacy, things to do with online bullying and how to deal with relationships online. For an imaginative school that is prepared to seek out the right resources, the curriculum as it stands permits you to do all sorts of things if you want to, but it requires the schools to have the gumption to do that, and the access to the expertise and networks of support that will help them get the right resources so that they can do that.

Jonathan Baggaley: To build on that, I come back to this point about where the green shoots are. Whatever the national curriculum says, schools have a responsibility under the Education Act to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to prepare children and young people for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of adult life. Many schools are taking that seriously and recognising that young people entering school in September this year will be leaving school in something like 2032, which sounds incredibly futuristic. The year 2000 still sounds futuristic to me. Lots of schools are taking that responsibility seriously.

With PSHE, as a subject that has to respond to the reality of young people's lives today and in the future, we have long responded with materials and resources and, in the absence of a government programme of study until recently, we have provided the programme of study for PSHE. We have just put out a new version of that, which absolutely has digital literacy embedded in it. My worry with this is always the idea that we silo this issue somewhere else, wherever you are talking about the curriculum. In computing, it is absolutely about getting these functional skills. In citizenship, it is thinking about the impact of digital technology on opportunities for democracy and constraints.

PSHE is about health, relationships and your career, all of which are areas that digital technologies impact on daily. If you are teaching about sex and relationships but not about sexting, you are not preparing young people with the knowledge and skills they need, or reflecting the reality of the way in which people are engaging in relationships. Similarly, if you are teaching about pornography and only teaching that it is different from real sex, but not concurrently teaching that online pornography companies deploy the same techniques as other digital services to fine-tune the content that you are served, you are not doing it justice. For us as a subject association, it is about embedding it in the programme of study. We provide a tool called Life Online, which is again an attempt not to say, "Let's teach you a lesson on online safety", or "Let's teach you a lesson on data". Whatever you are thinking about, we want to think about the interplay with digital technologies and the knowledge and skills young people need.

Q149 **Lord Holmes of Richmond:** Good morning. Now we have cleared up the problem of definition, one key measure of success would be when, on a text message, you see Life Online written as "LOL". That would show how far we have come. What are the main barriers to schools in achieving this, and how can they be overcome?

Liz Moorse: The key barrier is that this area of education is not treated as important. It does not have the status, recognition, clarity or teaching expertise. Head teachers are very good at responding to rumour and speculation about what Ofsted might be looking for, but I am not sure how many head teachers have actually read the national curriculum recently. Probably a few need to. Although our friends at Ofsted have said that they want the curriculum to be more central to their future inspections, there is nobody currently at Ofsted who understands citizenship, democracy or probably digital literacy. How they are supposed to inspect for it, I am not sure. The barriers here are huge.

The frustration is that this is such a rich and exciting area. The internet, digital spaces, and the ability for children to engage with these technologies and use them creatively in learning — as citizens and in other ways to enhance their lives — and to make positive contributions to society are immense. Good schools should be capitalising on these opportunities. Some teachers are trying to do that, but it is not seen as a priority. There is no investment in it, and no specialist teacher training or CPD. Ofsted does not know what it is looking for. Need I go on?

Jonathan Baggaley: Liz has captured some of the barriers, particularly around prioritisation and investment. For us, one of the primary barriers historically has been the lack of a statutory status for PSHE. From September, most of PSHE — the relationship, sex and health parts — will be compulsory. While I agree with Liz that there is not necessarily the clarity we would like around digital literacy, there are things in the statutory guidance that schools will have to teach. From the statutory guidance, there are things such as: "How to be a discerning consumer of information online, including understanding that information, including that from search engines, is ranked, selected and targeted", "How advertising and information is targeted at them and how to be a discerning consumer of information online", and how to critically consider sources of information.

These are a few lines in some statutory guidance, but they are a hook. They are something for us to grasp and go to schools with to say, "This is what the Government have said broadly needs to be taught. How do we do that?" The good thing is that we know how. There are the pedagogies out there and the understanding. The challenges are embedding that in training and the scale problem. So much of this has to come from schools that are already engaged. There is something about making sure that schools see this as a key priority, and more could be done on that at the governmental level.

Dr Bill Mitchell: You also have to bear in mind the difficulty of resources. We have seen it with computing, which I know is not actually

about digital literacy but it does contain some of that. On average, across the country, secondary schools teach computing for 45 minutes a week. It has been a hard struggle to gain that traction on what is a statutory subject. Most teachers are teaching 60 hours a week. They are overwhelmed. It is difficult to recruit teachers into core subjects such as computing, so there are massive challenges to finding the time in the timetable and the resources to deliver them.

You also have to remember that schools are incentivised by examinations. They are a huge lever in what they are prepared to put resources into and will prioritise. In terms of influencing schools, I agree that Ofsted could do a lot, but one of the most helpful things would be to say, "Show us your plan. Show us where you are going to be in five years. We are not going to be critical of you right now, but in five years we are going to come back and see how you have progressed against the plan that you made and presented to us".

The Chair: Is the corollary of that, just to straighten this in my head, is that it is much tougher to examine PSHE than, say, computing studies?

Jonathan Baggaley: Yes. We do not want to see a GCSE in PSHE. The old joke we always tell is: would you marry someone who failed their GCSE at consent? These are subjects that are about the personal. The question then becomes how you assess. There are lots of assessment models. Assessment is critical in PSHE because, otherwise, how do you know anyone has learned anything? The mistake that is often made is thinking that there is no examination and therefore there is no need for assessment.

The challenge comes if assessment is the incentive and if the sense is that what is measured is valued. We know that is the case and that schools are incentivised in that way. The challenge we have to correct is to ensure that schools recognise that this is a subject that will not have exams around it, as the examination happens out in life. There are all sorts of other brilliant reasons to do this subject well, including that it is really interesting and kids love it.

Liz Moorse: It is a shame that we have to rely on either Ofsted or exams to show that something is important, frankly, but that is the kind of game we are in. Citizenship does have a GCSE. It is one of the few growing subjects, albeit small, with fewer than 20,000 candidates a year taking the qualification at the moment.

On the positive side, the GCSE has led to a higher status for the subject in the schools that use it, and to credibility with parents, governors and the children themselves, because they feel that they are getting something of value through that examination. That will not be the case in every school, but in many schools where the GCSE is being used it is helping to get a bit of leverage and public support for the subject, and making sure that something actually happens.

Going back to the timetabling point, unfortunately a GCSE subject is more likely to get a few extra lessons than a non-GCSE subject. That is the reality.

Q150 **Lord Scriven:** This is obviously a new area, particularly in terms of what is happening with digital literacy. It is new for teachers, schools and the academics researching it. Is there an evidence base, small or large, about what works and how to get good outcomes for this, even if there is time to teach it? Is there an issue with a lack of evidence base, meaning that people are shooting at a target that they are not aware of?

Liz Moorse: There is a lack of national evidence at the moment, but we are a member of the Council of Europe — dare I mention Europe — and I happen to be the UK's representative to the Council of Europe for democratic citizenship and human rights. One of the key issues we are constantly discussing across the 47 member states is that of digital, news and media literacy, because of the threat to democracy, if that is the way you perceive it.

There is some evidence about what works, but not necessarily here. I refer you to Finland, which has a well-established citizenship education curriculum and media literacy curriculum, which is because the Government take it seriously. The Finnish Government have worked for some decades to make sure that democracy education, citizenship and media literacy are part of every child's education. They have put resources into it and trained teachers. They work with NGOs and have a fact-checking organisation in which teachers, who are developing new curriculum resources and materials, are involved. It is taken seriously, and that is the big difference. It is not that this stuff cannot be done. It is not being done here at the moment, because it is not perceived as a priority.

Jonathan Baggaley: I would split that into the different elements of digital literacy I talked about earlier. Is there an evidence base for how we teach functional IT skills? I assume there is, but I do not know. Is there an evidence base for teaching some of the online safety principles? Yes, there is one emerging, but for teaching PSHE i.e. education that has an impact on the way you interact with the world and make decisions, and what supports autonomous decision-making—there is a wealth of evidence. We have been doing this since at least the 1970s. It draws on learning from other areas, including drugs and alcohol, and everything from road safety to health promotion. There is a huge set of theories and frameworks that can be brought to bear.

It then comes to critical digital literacy and — again, it is not my area — media literacy. Liz is talking to those points. There is much less evidence about the political economy of the internet. It is only now that evidence is emerging about what is going on. That is a focus for research. How do we teach about the economic logic of platforms in a relatively politically neutral way?

Dr Bill Mitchell: For an evidence base, you have to decide what outcomes you are aiming at from your education curriculum. If you are trying to create a more civilised society, where we can debate contentious issues in a civilised manner and reach a consensus through informed debate, that outcome would inform the kind of evidence you are looking for. I am not clear that any research has been done on that kind of outcome.

Q151 **Baroness McGregor-Smith:** One of my roles is as a non-executive director at the Department for Education, so it is interesting to hear what you are saying today. This is not a defence of the Department for Education but, as with so many things it is trying to do, I can see from its perspective why this does not necessarily sit right at the heart of what it is trying to do at the moment.

That being the case, and with the overwhelming level of priorities that it has, and which the teachers and the heads have, and the amount of money we are now putting into education, what else could we do? It is very easy to say that it is Ofsted, it is this and it is that. Fine, but what else could we do to help them? It is often incredibly easy to say what things they do not do, but for them it is about how you put that plan together. How do you teach not just the teachers and the heads but the parents? What do we do about the networks around every school? I am interested in that perspective.

Liz Moorse: It is quite sad that we are saying that the Department for Education cannot do anything here, because it absolutely can if it wants to.

Baroness McGregor-Smith: I did not say it could not. There is a huge level of things they are doing in a huge number of areas, and this is but one on a list of many.

Liz Moorse: Maybe instead of constantly academising schools, they could spend a little more time investing in teacher training and CPD, for example. It is about prioritising. We could look at the role of Parliament in this area. Parliament has an education service, which is very valued and offers lots of things to schools, free of charge. The remit of Parliament in this space is very important, both in an educational sense and more broadly.

I know citizenship teachers and I find it very frustrating that the House of Commons Library has to stop its work during an election. At the very point when citizens need high-quality information about policies, positions, statistics and what is going on, the House of Commons Library has to stop its work. That seems crazy. We desperately need good-quality information for citizens during election periods. We have tried to talk to the Electoral Reform Society and others about this to see what could be done because, at the moment, the quality of information is the problem.

It is the same in schools. When we were going through the election period, we worked with a lot of schools to run parallel elections. The idea

is that children go through exactly the same kind of democratic processes that the adult population is going through, and they hold a real vote. This is not a mock or pretend thing. They hold a real vote, go through electoral registration processes and have people responsible for running campaigns and counting the votes. This essentially parallels what happens in a real election. It is an important way of learning about the democratic process and it gives you the opportunity to look in detail at what different political parties are saying about different public policy areas. They get really involved in and excited about this. If the school does it well, it will go on to compare the results within their school to that of the local constituency and look at the similarities and differences. We need to encourage this sort of work.

I mentioned that we are a tiny education organisation. We are the recognised subject association for citizenship, but there no funding for us. We have to scrimp and save and beg and borrow, and we are lucky to have some people supporting us to keep us going at the moment. We need something else; maybe Parliament could play a role and look at the House of Commons Library, the education service and other aspects. We would happily work with them. We work very well with them at the moment. We could then create some momentum around this. Perhaps that is something for which we could all take responsibility.

Dr Bill Mitchell: One of the concrete things that can be done is to get children actively engaged in policy formulation. For example, when the White Paper on internet harms was being put together, we worked with DCMS to organise a survey of 6,500 schoolchildren from the ages of seven to 18. That helped to inform its thinking on the White Paper on internet harms. There are simple mechanisms whereby you can actively engage schoolchildren in supporting government departments in their thinking. That is a hugely powerful way of motivating those children to be much more interested in this subject and to help the schools get the parents and children involved. That is a very concrete thing I would recommend.

Q152 **Lord German:** You have identified DfE and Ofsted for obvious reasons. Is there a difference around the United Kingdom in the way all these subjects and this issue are dealt with?

Dr Bill Mitchell: There is huge variability across schools, as there is with all subjects.

Lord German: I meant between countries.

Dr Bill Mitchell: Yes, there is.

Liz Moorse: Absolutely there is. In the context of citizenship education, there is a different model of citizenship in each part of the United Kingdom and in the Republic of Ireland. ACT runs something called the Five Nations Network, which is a unique forum for bringing together teachers, policymakers and academics to talk about democracy and citizenship education together. Just over a week ago, we held our annual

conference, in Belfast, and it just so happened that media and digital literacy were very high on the agenda. Our friends from Finland came over to talk with us about their work. A fantastic head teacher and a lovely lady from the Ministry of Education in Finland came over and shared their work. The curriculum models are quite different and it is a devolved education situation, so how that translates into practice is different.

Lord German: I suppose the question I am asking is whether there are any lessons to be learned from each other.

Liz Moorse: There are, but sometimes the same issues come up. We find, when talking together at the Five Nations Network, that teachers might have a different curricular starting point, but they are facing the same challenges of status, recognition, specialist teaching and curriculum time. Those same challenges tend to arise. I point back to Finland though, which I have mentioned a few times. They have some answers that could help us here.

Q153 **The Chair:** This is a point in support of Baroness McGregor-Smith. I may wish I had not said this, but if Mrs Thatcher were sitting here now she might point out that Robert Baden-Powell did not go to the Ministry of Defence or Department for Education to start the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. Is there the possibility that civil society will begin to look at itself and work out that this is a massive issue and that we are looking to the wrong places for the answers?

Liz Moorse: There is a coming together of organisations at the moment. The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Foundation have been instrumental in helping to cement that. A group of 22 organisations worked together during the general election, all of which were small charities and civil society organisations, to try to support schools through that period and make sure that children were getting good information about how elections work, what policies are being put out there, et cetera. We can come together, but we need some funding to help us, because most of us are small, so we need something to help us get going.

Q154 **Lord Knight of Weymouth:** I think I know the answer, but how should this fit into the curriculum and timetable in England? We will start with England, given what has been said about devolution. You have talked about Finland; my reading is that they use a cross-curricular approach. Should we put this into a single subject?

Liz Moorse: They have a single-subject approach as well. They are clever in Finland about making sure their teachers are really well trained. You probably know that every teacher gets five years of training, and every teacher has master's-level qualifications in the subjects that they teach, so they have subject specialism. In the context of citizenship, they have a subject called social studies, but it also works in a cross-curricular fashion and that is because every teacher in a Finnish school understands

democracy education and citizenship education. That simply is not the case here at the moment.

The Department for Education's view that this stuff can somehow be dispersed across lots of different subjects is the hardest way to make this work, because every member of the school staff would need an understanding and a subject specialism in this area to make it work in the context of history, computing, PSHE or something else. It takes a lot of work and energy to do that, which is not the way our schools tend to work at the moment. We might hear from head teachers. A colleague who spoke to you before Christmas, a director at the Department for Education, quoted a head teacher who said that of course active citizenship is really important, but there is nothing in the curriculum called citizenship. Is it there or is it not? The only way to know is to ask the children if they understand the rule of law, if they understand democracy and if they know how Parliament works. If they cannot answer those questions, they are not getting any citizenship at all, even if that head teacher claims that they are.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: I am interested in hearing from Jonathan and Bill. In doing so, could you both address the danger that, if this is siloed into a particular place, which is not the EBacc and accountability system, in the end it becomes neglected and ignored?

Jonathan Baggaley: We represent different subjects, all of which clearly play a part in developing both parts of digital literacy, as does pretty much every subject in the curriculum. Yes, it needs to be cross-curricular, but we almost miss the point if we start talking about that, because it implies a separate thing that needs to be put into different subjects. This has to be embedded throughout, just as digital technologies are embedded in every aspect of our lives. While I sympathise with the Department for Education for seeing this as another thing on the list, part of the problem is seeing this as another thing on the list.

Baroness McGregor-Smith: I am sorry; I was not quoting them.

Jonathan Baggaley: No, but I get the sense that they are being asked how to leverage schools to combat the ills of disinformation, child sexual exploitation, county lines or other things linked to technology. Understanding how digital technologies are affecting our world, our lives and then the disciplines themselves, from physics to history to any other subject on the curriculum, is critical. Yes, you definitely need to timetable PSHE and citizenship separately; otherwise, as Liz said, how do you know whether young people are actually learning about these very specific subjects? You also need to enable teachers across the board to understand the changing world, how it affects their disciplines and the pedagogies necessary to give young people the knowledge and skills to navigate this world.

Dr Bill Mitchell: From what I have seen of the Finnish curriculum, it makes other subjects very much more interesting and rewarding for the children. If in mathematics they are shown how to manipulate data to

misrepresent information, it brings mathematics to life. If in English you look at how language can be used to distort the truth, again that helps to bring English to life and makes it more interesting to study.

Unfortunately, there was a very large training programme, I think in 2002, to try to introduce ICT into every subject in the UK. It was widely regarded as a complete failure, and that was a £200 million programme to try to train every teacher in ICT. Unfortunately, our track record is not great but, in principle, it feels that trying to embed this across other subjects would massively improve education as a whole, which presumably is what we want to do in schools.

Lord Knight of Weymouth: I have one very quick supplementary, because I know others want to come in. If we are thinking about extending pedagogy and different approaches across the curriculum as part of this, do we need to embed the use of technology more in the learning experience in schools? That is in the context of many schools banning mobile phones.

Liz Moorse: Absolutely we do. It goes without question. The idea that you completely ban mobile phones in schools is crazy, when it is a resource. Otherwise, you have to book the IT lab to do a bit of IT, unless you happen to be in a school that is in the luxurious position of having an iPad for every child. There are a few who know more about this than I do, but there are some of those. It becomes very difficult. We need to do this within the sensibilities of making sure children are safe, looking at the right things and not just using this as a diversionary tactic.

Dr Bill Mitchell: I agree that digital technology needs to be used to enhance all the subjects. As a small example, I talked to one English literature teacher who taught children *Romeo and Juliet* by getting them to summarise the plot in 10 tweets, in class. They were using their mobile phones to tweet the plot of *Romeo and Juliet*. Another teacher used "Halo" to get children performing *Hamlet*. They went online, got into their parts as avatars in the "Halo" game, then went through *Hamlet*.

Jonathan Baggaley: Yes and no — yes, but it has to be done really well. Do you want kids with their mobiles and 17 different apps, tracking them in different ways with different pressures for assessment and 17 different mental gyms that they have to jump through? However, we absolutely need to use technology in a way that is thoughtful and opens up these questions, teaching them how to critically engage and use it safely. But there are real risks that you end up opening the floodgates to technology that is less rich and exciting than the human experience of teachers. How do we augment that human interaction, rather than reduce it to kids sitting in front of screens, driven by AI?

Q155 **Baroness Morris of Yardley:** This is the core of it. It is a difficult issue. I am an optimist by nature on these things, but in this area there is quite a bit of me that is more pessimistic about whether it is doable. I do not yet have a clear picture of what it looks like when we get it right. Of course, PSHE and citizenship should be subjects by themselves. I agree,

but that is not what we are asking. They should be subjects by themselves for other reasons than digital technology. You have to take that out. Look at the Finland example; it was woven through everything.

Forget Ofsted; I do not think for a minute that getting Ofsted to inspect it is going to solve the problem. Do not say resources, because I know that resources are an issue, but what does the leadership of the school look like when we embed this across the curriculum? I am not sure that we know what to do pedagogically. That is my pessimism. I am not yet convinced that we have the knowledge and expertise in this area.

Take a good example from your area, which is done brilliantly — and the evidence is there—of reducing teenage pregnancies. PSHE did wonders with that, and we are now one of the best, rather than one of the worst, in Europe, but it was with lots of other things as well. It was not just the PSHE lesson that worked. Whatever the pedagogy was, we got it right.

I can be aspirational and try to be optimistic, but at the moment I am not convinced that we know enough about the pedagogy and where the leadership in schools should lie to get this right. It does not matter, as long as we are honest about it and set out a way to achieve it. I think the department has a huge job, because if defending democracy is not top of their list I am not sure what else is. Say a bit about that. We are looking forward and not blaming at the moment. What is the next step? How do we get this vision right? Make me optimistic about this again.

Jonathan Baggaley: I am always full of hope. There are two elements to your question. One is about how what we do in schools interacts with the rest of the system, which is what the teenage pregnancy strategy did so brilliantly. The second question is about how we empower school leaders, not just to take this seriously but to have the tools to do this and believe in it.

On the whole system piece, now that we have some kind of statutory entitlement for PSHE, the next question is how it interacts with the rest of the system. What can we learn from where we and other countries have done that well, on every aspect of the subject? That is the critical challenge, along with how we fit into that.

From a leadership perspective, we may not be 100 per cent there with the pedagogies, but we know a lot more than most head teachers are aware of. Therein lies a challenge: how do we ensure that they are aware of the simple things they could be doing in their schools to focus it? Then there is a further point of how we get them to prioritise, and maybe those two are linked. If we look at the whole system, rather than this being telling schools to do another thing, we say that schools are a critical part of our society. They can grab on to this, defend democracy and be a huge part of building a better society. That bit might be something that we can help them with, as long as they have the tools to do it. I do feel optimistic.

Liz Moorse: The pedagogy is critical here. There is no point in doing this stuff from a textbook. It would be completely ironic to build something called digital literacy, or critical digital literacy, and then force them to use textbooks, which seems to be becoming more prevalent again. We hear about golden time and lessons in silence, with no talking between students or between teachers and students. This is the antithesis of what we are engaging with here.

I also think that teachers, given the permission and support of their heads to experiment and try things out, are willing to do so. We have done some fantastic work with small groups of teachers on deliberative pedagogy, building the idea of what goes on in citizens' juries and other forms of democratic deliberation into classroom-suitable pedagogies and activities. It can be done, but how do you get the message out there?

That is where, unfortunately, we need some bigger resources and profile from our national Governments and departments. We cannot just do it alone, because we do not have the internal capacity to do that. Collectively, subject associations can do a lot. Maybe there is something here about us looking at each other, coming and working together on this as well, seeing what we can share across our different networks together.

Dr Bill Mitchell: One of the most positive things you can do is to give children a voice in the political process, so they are able to input into government their thoughts, views and what they passionately care about. There is no shortage of children who care about climate change at the moment, and they are very active online and through social media. Why can we not harness that energy and excitement and turn it into a positive force within our democracy?

Q156 **Lord Harris of Haringey:** First, I declare that I am a fellow of the British Computer Society. We have a conflict of evidence here, which I would like to explore. It is not a conflict between you, but we were told earlier by Michelle Dyson from the Department for Education that the "really big lever" to improve teaching in digital literacy was Ofsted. We have just been told by Liz that no one understands this at Ofsted. How is this new Ofsted framework going to improve the teaching of different parts of this topic and how could it be improved?

Dr Bill Mitchell: I suggest that one of the keys is to ensure that all the inspectors for Ofsted are given proper training in this subject, so that you have experts in all the different subject specialisms that are being taught. That used to be the case, and that needs to be revised and looked at again so that there are sufficient people in Ofsted with the right expertise in each of the different subject areas.

Liz Moorse: They are recruiting subject specialists at Ofsted at the moment. The advert that went out seemed to put citizenship, PSHE and RSE — relationship and sex education — together into one job description, whereas all the other subjects got their own person, so we have questioned that with our colleagues at Ofsted. We do not think a part-time subject specialist for such an important area of the curriculum

is sufficient. They must, at the very least, have somebody with real expertise in all those three areas.

That will go a little way, but the reality is that one person at Ofsted's HQ will not make a difference. As Bill has intimated, it is the training of all inspectors and particularly lead inspectors. If they do not have enough of a specialist understanding of these subjects, they will not know what to look for and the questions to ask. That can be addressed in training. It has been done in the past. In previous versions of Ofsted, subject specialist reports were produced regularly and we had more of a national picture about what was going on. We know it can be done, but it is not being done at the moment.

Jonathan Baggaley: In the framework itself there are things to welcome in this area. It does not specifically address digital literacy, but in the personal development judgment it talks about the curriculum and how wider work must support young people to develop resilience, confidence and independence, and help them know how to be physically and mentally healthy.

I argue that you cannot do without addressing the digital technologies involved. Similarly, the inspection guidance says that pupils should be equipped to be responsible, respectful and active citizens. There may be a disconnect between the guidance, framework and the ability to inspect on that and train inspectors to do that. For us as a subject association, we can take these things to those head teachers to get them engaged and behind it to say, whether or not Ofsted is inspecting on this, these things are being set out as important.

Q157 **Lord Harris of Haringey:** My takeaway from what the three of you have said is that, first, there has to be some real specialist understanding located at Ofsted headquarters. Secondly, every Ofsted inspector, or certainly lead inspector, needs enhanced understanding and training in this. Thirdly, it is still a useful trigger to apply pressure on head teachers. Is that measurable?

Liz Moorse: Ofsted is there to measure the impact of what schools are doing, so in theory yes of course it is measurable, but you need to know what you are looking for. If you do not understand what you are looking for, you will not know how to measure it.

Lord Harris of Haringey: They need help to know what to look for to measure it.

Liz Moorse: They do, and that comes back to the subject specialist knowledge and the training of inspectors. Actually, it is not difficult to create a set of questions for inspectors to use and then build an evidence base about the kinds of answers we are looking for. If you do a little analysis of the most recent Ofsted inspections, it is much harder now. Ofsted has done something to their website that makes it less transparent. You cannot use Google Advanced Search any more and pull out all the Ofsted inspection reports with PSHE, citizenship and

computing in. You used to be able to do that. It is harder for us to track what is being reported on at the moment, but we are trying. There are ways of us keeping tabs on what it is doing.

Lord Harris of Haringey: Was that a deliberate decision by Ofsted or something that happened by accident?

Liz Moorse: I have no idea, but it seems a bit interesting.

Dr Bill Mitchell: Whether or not you are a specialist in a subject area, you can ask a school the very innocent question: "How are you going to establish this subject over the next five years? Please can we see your plan? By the way, when we come back in five years, we want to see what progress you have made against your plan".

Schools then have to set their own criteria for what success looks like. It will focus the minds of senior leadership teams if they have written on a piece paper their own five-year plan to make the whole thing work, which they know someone is going to come and look at in five years.

Q158 **Lord Knight of Weymouth:** As I recall, Ofsted used to do system-wide subject inspections. They have gone away, but there is some talk of them coming back. Would you value a system-wide inspection in this area?

Liz Moorse: I would in the absence of anything else. I said before that it is sad that we have to rely on the external inspectorate to make things happen. Previously, we had a national curriculum that was valued; it was almost treasured. It was a national statement of what every child should learn in their general school education, and that was the key input. Now, we have to rely on somebody coming in and going, "You're not doing that. You should be doing more of this".

That seems a sad state of affairs but, in the absence of anything else, in the absence of an independent evaluation of education or school self-evaluation process, yes, we must have those subject specialist reports, and quite quickly. We cannot wait three or four years. We need them annually and regularly. We need their information to be transparent, so that those of us in subject associations can start to build a picture of what is going on and what is being reported on. That is something we cannot do, as I mentioned before.

Jonathan Baggaley: PSHE was last looked at in 2013, when 40 per cent of schools were found to be inadequate at delivering PSHE. We would value it being established in a couple of years what the impact of statutory changes has been. It would be great to have some data every year, but the flipside of that is the impact on school behaviour from the things that Ofsted does. Are there other ways of measuring that? We would certainly value it in two or three years' time.

Q159 **Baroness Kidron:** I want to go back to the teacher question. I am pretty sure I know roughly what your answer will be. Do teachers have access to the resources, information and training they need to teach these topics well? Actually, because you have all touched on it to some degree

already, I would encourage you in your answers to help us with the scale of what you might need. A previous witness said that there is £5 billion for broadband rollout; we must have £5 billion for digital literacy across the nation. Is it 20,000 policemen? Could you give us some sense of scale?

I would also love you to pick out the risks of not doing it. I am thinking in particular of a head teacher who I spoke to last week, who said that teachers are paralysed by their own lack of understanding of what they are now being asked to teach, to the point that one or two have lost their jobs for not knowing what county lines are or whether you should or should not be on TikTok. It would be useful for the Committee to think a little not only about what you would like to see but about the risk of not seeing that.

Dr Bill Mitchell: By analogy, if I look at what has been going on in computing, we have spent the best part of 10 years trying to provide resources to teachers, particularly across England. That requires an organisation of 30,000 people now, with the backing of large corporates, such as BT, Google and Microsoft. That has been the best part of an eight-year concerted effort. It has also had the backing of over 50 university computer science departments, and we still have a very long way to go. The Government have put £84 million into the National Centre for Computing Education, which is a fantastic investment but will still take a long time to materially affect what is going on nationally. That gives you an idea of what has had to go into computing to get us to where we are today.

Liz Moorse: That is fascinating, because there has been absolutely zero into citizenship—no money, nothing for teacher training, no bursaries and no investment by government. Every time there is an innovation fund, somehow citizenship is not on the list of priority subjects. It says a lot about what is going on at the moment, and that is very sad. There should be cross-party political support for this subject. It should not matter which side of the political spectrum you belong to. We live in a parliamentary democracy. Digital literacy is central to citizenship and citizenship education, so we must treasure and value it. The investment going into relationship and sex education at the moment is something like £6 million. If we had something like that, it would be a great start and a lot better than the zero we are currently looking at.

Jonathan Baggaley: When thinking about training all teachers, one of the challenges is the complexity of the teacher-training landscape. There are seven or eight different routes into teaching. Centralising those training resources and making sure the quality is there is a real challenge. It is great to see £6 million going into preparing teachers to teach relationship, sex and health education, but if we look at this as a longer-term investment we would need not just a larger sum than that but also to think about the scale of ambition. In a fragmented training landscape, there is a need to understand the landscape in the first place, know how to leverage and learn from it. That is part of the challenge.

On the risk of not doing this, how long do we have? I have been working in the online safety sphere since I was in social services in 2004, and it feels like we are a long way from where we were then in understanding how to respond to this from government, policing and different agencies. We are still a long way from where we should be, but a whole generation came up in a real wild-west period of the internet. We are not there now, but the risk remains of another generation coming through who are not equipped to navigate an increasingly complex digital world. That is the basic risk.

Q160 **Baroness Kidron:** I am interested, because Jonathan in particular mentioned the business model, which nobody is teaching. That is the big missing piece, but, in terms of where the responsibility lies, nobody has talked about the responsibility of platforms themselves and making it less of an urgent issue for teachers, kids and parents. Do you have a view on that?

Jonathan Baggaley: Clearly we are talking about schools, but none of this will touch the sides without a system-wide response, which includes the complexities of regulation of platforms. One of the challenges is that we cannot have a situation where we say nothing can be done until everything has been done.

Liz Moorse: One of the easy things that tech companies could help us with, and I mean the three of us here — maybe Bill has this sorted, because he is in this space — is digital CPD for teachers. We cannot get teachers out of school, old-style, for half a day's or a day's training. It is really difficult. We can run some very useful online sessions, using podcasts. We are using webinars, using a very simple online platform, but we would love some help from some tech companies to make that even better and more accessible, and improve our offer. They could easily work with us on that.

Baroness Kidron: Bill, can I pick up on what you said about £84 million and that long list with universities, et cetera? That is a huge resource and political effort. We are eight years in.

Dr Bill Mitchell: It was very much a grass-roots effort, driven by schoolteachers, parents and IT practitioners, who felt that their subject had been left out the school curriculum and it mattered hugely. It was a grass-roots effort, constantly collaborating in a positive way with DfE, a lot of other stakeholders and politicians. There was cross-party support that said that we have to bring computing into the curriculum; it matters for all our children.

Q161 **Baroness Kidron:** What could you say to the Committee about another lever that would make that work more effectively? It seems that you have the resources and attention, but we are still not quite getting the impact that we would all like, or are we?

Dr Bill Mitchell: The thing that persuaded the DfE to support us was that, first, every child has to be able to understand how the digital world works and thrive in it. Secondly, we are talking about an academic

discipline, which is based on principles, a body of knowledge, theories, methods and concepts, all of which are a core part of what every human being should know. That argument persuaded them that computing was something that should be taught, once we had demonstrated that we have 30,000 people who could help get it into schools.

Baroness Kidron: Adding their two bits to your bit is not the answer for digital literacy, crudely speaking.

Dr Bill Mitchell: The other bit that needs to be done goes back to what I was saying earlier. The outcome, in terms of the value for children, needs to be clear. How are they going to be more active as digital citizens and more engaged in the democratic process? How do we give them that value proposition, so that they believe that, by learning about digital literacy in schools, which sounds like digital democracy, they will be able to change the world, so that it is still there and worth living in when they grow up?

Liz Moorse: Or they learn that they cannot always change it in the way they would like. That is the reality of democracy. There are different viewpoints, opinions and forms of action that can be taken at different times. There is a lot of scope in this.

Q162 **The Chair:** I am afraid we have run out of time, but give one-sentence answers to this, if you would. You have all answered it in different ways. If this Committee could persuade Government to do just one thing to change the situation, as you see it, what would that be?

Liz Moorse: It would be a serious commitment, with some investment, to digital citizenship.

Jonathan Baggaley: A historic step was taken by making most of PSHE statutory. Here is an opportunity to use it as an exemplar for the rest of the curriculum and invest in the training and resources that will enable teachers to do the bit of digital literacy that PSHE can do.

Dr Bill Mitchell: Give schoolchildren a voice that is heard in Parliament.

The Chair: Get the Government on a plane to Helsinki.

Liz Moorse: The Department for Education was with us in Belfast, so I hope the lady who was there will take some of her learning back to other colleagues to help move this on. You never know.

The Chair: Thank you very much indeed. I have a small anecdote about Jonathan's point about the 2032 generation of kids coming through. In 1938, my parents invested in a set of Everyman's encyclopaedias. When I did my GCE, as it was in those days — in 1958, 20 years later — I referred to them avidly and nothing had changed. We do not live in that world anymore, sadly. Thank you very much indeed for being generous with your time.