

Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Holocaust Educational Trust

Following the oral evidence session held on Tuesday 1st December, there were areas of discussion that the Trust believed could be clarified or expanded upon. We hope that this will benefit the Education Select Committee in helping it develop its findings and recommendations.

The areas explored below are:

- That high quality Holocaust Education should be broad, complex and emotionally engaging;
- That the minimum age at which students should learn the bulk of the issues at the heart of the Holocaust is 13 years old (final year of Key Stage 3);
- That teachers and schools should be incentivised to participate in teacher training (provided by the Holocaust Educational Trust and others);
- That there is a deep and lasting impact on the students who participate in the Holocaust Educational Trust's *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project, (supported by the Department for Education).

1. High-quality Holocaust education: broad, complex and emotionally engaging

1a. During oral evidence it was raised that students should engage with complex issues surrounding the Holocaust, including collaboration and what happened after liberation. The Holocaust Educational Trust believes that high-quality Holocaust education should explore the Holocaust in all of its breadth and complexity. For clarity to the Committee:

- An effective programme of study should not be restricted to the period of the Second World War, but should contextualise the Holocaust through study of Europe's diverse pre-war Jewish communities, the long history of antisemitism, and pre-war persecution.
- It should address the full range of Jewish experiences during the Holocaust, including those of refugees to the UK and avoid depicting Jews as passive victims. Indeed, all involved – not only victims but also perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, **collaborators**, and those who resisted the Nazis – should be studied as individuals and communities rather than as incomprehensible statistics.
- Students should also gain an understanding of other groups targeted by the Nazis, including Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), Soviet PoWs, the disabled, political opponents, Jehovah's Witnesses and gay men; and should understand the distinctive nature of these groups' experiences both before and during the Second World War.

- Study should not end with 1945 but should consider the ambiguities of liberation and its aftermath, looking at the fates of survivors and perpetrators, and should explore Britain's relationship to the Holocaust.

1b. In addition to this, high-quality Holocaust education should emotionally engage students, encouraging them to consider the contemporary relevance and legacy of the Holocaust in today's world. To ensure that Holocaust education is delivered to a high standard, teachers need to be trained in both its history and pedagogy, and require sufficient time to ensure that students are able to fully grasp this complex history.

2. The minimum age at which the majority of the issues at the heart of the Holocaust should be taught is 13 years old

2a. During the oral evidence session there was discussion about the appropriate age and setting in which to teach the Holocaust. Prior to the establishment of the Holocaust Educational Trust, there was no formal Holocaust education in schools in the UK. Since 1991, as the result of an initiative by the Trust, the Holocaust was introduced and has subsequently maintained its place in the National Curriculum for History at Key Stage 3 (age 11-14), and this is where it should stay (please see Section 2 in our original submission for issues regarding the time available at this stage).

2b. In keeping with the principle of a spiral curriculum, some elements of the Holocaust can and should be taught at younger age levels and in other subject areas, however we consider 13 years to be the minimum age at which students are emotionally and intellectually mature enough to consider and discuss the bulk of the complex issues at the heart of the Holocaust. The Trust's cross-curricular teaching pack and scheme of work *Exploring the Holocaust* suggests topics that can be covered in subjects other than History, and we encourage teachers to consider how their existing Holocaust educational provision can enhance the whole-school approach, fulfilling the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development requirements.

3. Teacher Training: incentivise teachers and schools

3a. Teachers and schools should be incentivised to take up training opportunities. Holocaust education provision is not formally assessed, but if it were as part of a broader Ofsted framework, for example, this may encourage schools to engage with CPD opportunities offered by the Trust and others. Ultimately, there are clear benefits to schools imparting high-quality Holocaust education. Students may become more active citizens in their local community, for example, or develop a greater understanding of democracy, fulfilling the SMSC curriculum and the current Character Education agenda.

3b. The Holocaust Educational Trust is the leading provider of teacher training across the UK. We are embedded in schools and universities and we partner with international leaders in the field, including Yad Vashem and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

4. Lessons from Auschwitz Project: a deep and lasting impact

4a. The *Lessons from Auschwitz Project* has a deep and lasting impact on the young people who take part. They return from their visit to the camp empowered and passionate about continuing to share the legacy of the Holocaust, to share the story of the survivor they heard from before visiting, and to act as a witness to history. We regularly hear from people who participated in the programme five or even ten years earlier, who still remember their visit, and for whom the project continues to resonate. These young people, our Ambassadors, organise events in their schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and local communities and are our lifelong Ambassadors.

4b. During the oral evidence session, there were discussions regarding methods of how students were chosen to participate in the *Lessons from Auschwitz Project*. For clarity, once a school has secured places on the Project, the Holocaust Educational Trust asks teachers to nominate two students who would most benefit from taking part in the programme, based on guidelines provided by the Trust. Schools approach this difficult task through a variety of methods: many schools have processes in place such as essay competitions or conduct interviews; some choose students who may have proved difficult to engage in traditional education; some choose from prefects or 'head boy and girl' teams within the school. We are confident that a great deal of thought and time goes into the process within schools.

5. The Holocaust Educational Trust's recommendations to the Committee

5a. For your information, please find below a reminder of our recommendations to the Committee in our original written submission:

"We recommend that:

- The Holocaust continues to be studied first and foremost during Key Stage 3 History, as currently stated in the National Curriculum.
- Schools are encouraged to prioritise History as a subject, and standard recommendations on the amount of time required to teach the Holocaust in History should be introduced.
- The study of the Holocaust should be in the later stages of Key Stage 3, given the intellectual and emotional demands of the subject. Schools ought to be discouraged from compressing Key Stage 3 into two years.
- As schools across the country develop cross-curricular schemes of work to *complement* the teaching of the Holocaust in History, teachers from other subject areas, notably Religious Education, Citizenship and English should continue to be offered specialist training and support.
- The Government supports the Holocaust Educational Trust's mission to ensure that as many students as possible hear the first-hand testimony of

a Holocaust survivor – given that they will be the last generation who will have the opportunity to do so.

- The Government, through the DfE, continue to provide important funding for the Trust's flagship *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project.
- The Government continues to support research into teaching and learning about the Holocaust in schools (i.e. the UCL's recent report).
- The Government supports a long term strategy to invest in the Holocaust Educational Trust's Ambassador Programme, ensuring young people across the country who are committed to preserving the legacy of the Holocaust are further supported in doing so.

The Holocaust Educational Trust would like to invite the Education Select Committee see our work in action: to join us on our *Lessons from Auschwitz* Project, see Holocaust survivor testimony shared in a school or observe our specialist teacher training programme."

December 2015