



Initial teacher training for teachers of citizenship 2004/05

Overview report

Better
education
and care

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Executive summary

Citizenship became a statutory part of the National Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 in September 2002. Initial teacher training for citizenship teachers was introduced in the preceding year. The first qualified specialist citizenship teachers were therefore in a position to take up their posts to coincide with the introduction of the new National Curriculum requirements.

In recognition of the developing nature of citizenship as a new curriculum subject, Ofsted agreed with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) that inspection arrangements for 2003/04 and 2004/05 would be modified to take account of the potential difficulties faced by providers in finding sufficient suitable school placements. As a result, the inspections focused on the quality of training. A reduced sample of trainees was visited during the phase of the inspections focusing on trainees' teaching, with the outcomes contributing to judgements on training.

Seven postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) courses were inspected under these arrangements during 2004/05. Six of the courses provided training in citizenship alone and one in citizenship with history. One course provided a flexible training programme delivered through online distance learning. This overview report draws on evidence from these inspections. Its purposes are to report on the quality of training, identify issues for providers and policy makers and illustrate good practice at this early stage of the subject's development in schools and in initial teacher training.

The inspections found that four of the seven courses prepare trainees very well to teach citizenship; the others are satisfactory and improving rapidly. Although trainees' subject knowledge is good overall, the less effective courses pay insufficient attention to developing the breadth of knowledge required to teach citizenship as a National Curriculum subject. Web-based training is used very well in three of the courses to support trainees' subject knowledge development. It is difficult to provide trainees with post-16 experience in citizenship because it is rarely taught as a discrete subject to this age range.

The quality of centre-based training is never less than good. Tutors are expert practitioners who model good practice in citizenship teaching. School-based training is of more variable quality, and is often weaker when the schools provide limited opportunities to teach citizenship as a discrete subject. Course managers are increasing their understanding of the different ways in which partner schools approach the teaching of citizenship, but they rarely provide the supplementary training that would help to compensate for inadequacies in the school-based provision.

Trainees employ a wide variety of teaching strategies to support pupils' learning, but training in how to assess pupils' learning in citizenship is weaker than in other aspects of teaching. Consequently, trainees' competence in this

area is often underdeveloped. In general, trainees' evaluations of their lessons pay insufficient attention to what pupils have learned.

The courses recruit trainees of a high calibre with a range of experiences and skills. They make a valuable contribution to the corporate life of the schools in which they are placed, as well as accepting responsibility for helping to develop citizenship as a curriculum subject. There is a high demand for places on these courses. On completing the course most trainees find employment teaching citizenship or citizenship with another subject.

Key findings

- ❑ Four of the seven courses inspected prepare trainees very well to teach citizenship. The remainder are satisfactory and rapidly improving in the light of evaluation. The best courses recognise the need to prepare trainees for future subject leadership roles by expecting them to be autonomous learners and to take on a significant level of responsibility during their training. They are provided with a very wide range of opportunities to contribute to the corporate life of schools and further their own professional development. In many cases, they are having a positive influence on practice in schools.
- ❑ The design and content of the majority of courses is less variable than was evident in the inspections carried out in 2003/04, although different courses successfully approach citizenship from particular perspectives, such as human rights or global citizenship. In the most effective courses, central based training is comprehensive and coherent, with a clear rationale. Providers ensure that an appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of trainees' understanding of the citizenship National Curriculum and the inter-relationship of the three strands of the programme of study. In a minority of courses, insufficient attention is given to how to support and develop pupils' learning in enquiry and communication and participation and responsible action.
- ❑ Citizenship-specific web-based facilities are used very well in nearly half of the courses inspected. They enable tutors and trainees to offer and obtain support, share resources and discuss controversial issues relating to the teaching of citizenship. These resources play an important role in meeting trainees' subject knowledge needs in a curriculum area that is still being recognised and where there are fewer resources than for more established subjects.
- ❑ The quality of training in schools varies widely. Where citizenship is already well developed, or is developing rapidly, trainees usually receive very good support. However, trainees are sometimes placed in schools where they have little opportunity to teach citizenship or have mentors who are not well equipped to support them.
- ❑ The best providers ensure that course leaders hold sufficient detailed information on the way partnership schools approach the teaching of

citizenship and guide trainees to critically evaluate the provision in the schools where they are placed. Although knowledge about provision in the partner schools is increasing, few providers compensate for any inadequacies in the school-based training by providing trainees with additional experience.

- ❑ Assessment in citizenship is underdeveloped in school-based training. As a consequence, trainees often lack opportunities for formal assessment of pupils' learning. Only the best trainees use and adapt the monitoring and assessment procedures of their departments well, develop effective use of peer- and self-assessment or plan effectively for assessment and use it to inform future planning.
- ❑ Some of the courses aspire to give trainees post-16 citizenship experience. In practice, there are few opportunities, and these are mainly on courses in humanities subjects or the social sciences, such as politics, sociology, psychology, history or health and social care. Consequently, only a minority of trainees are able to identify citizenship objectives in their planning or deliver discrete citizenship at this level.
- ❑ There is a high demand for places and a strong need for trained specialists in schools. All the courses are oversubscribed and there are good prospects for employment. The majority of trainees seeking posts have found appointments teaching citizenship or citizenship with another subject.

Recommendations

The TDA should consider:

- raising the current ceiling on numbers to meet the national and geographical demand for training places
- working with providers to define the requirements that trainees on 11–18 courses need to acquire to teach post-16 citizenship effectively
- using the outcomes of inspection to identify and disseminate good practice in training to teach citizenship
- publicising the employability and career prospects for newly qualified teachers of citizenship.

Evaluation

Content and structure of the training

1. In four out of seven courses inspected, the citizenship National Curriculum underpins the content and there is a strong focus on the inter-relationship of the three strands of the programme of study. There is a logical structure for developing the trainees' understanding of citizenship through conceptualisation and development as a distinct subject and of its delivery in an individual, local and national context. The most effective courses develop trainees' understanding of the principles of citizenship by setting a clear curriculum context and investigating different models and approaches to citizenship in schools. An appropriate focus is placed on identifying the integrity of the subject within the curriculum relative to personal, social and health education (PSHE) and other subjects and the trainees are able to reflect in some depth on the distinctive nature of citizenship.
2. By contrast, the three less effective courses do not provide trainees with opportunities to consider key aspects of citizenship knowledge and understanding and how this might be applied to teaching it as a National Curriculum subject. Where citizenship is combined with another subject, the rationale for the course is unclear and initially there was confusion amongst the trainees over the status of citizenship in their training. The absence of a centrally taught programme in the flexible course leads to trainees not being equipped with sufficient subject knowledge in citizenship across the programme of study. However, the structure and content of all the courses are developing rapidly as a consequence of trainees' and mentors' critical evaluations, the issues raised in the training phase of the Ofsted inspections, and the tutors' self-review of the courses. This development is leading to significant improvements in important respects including course design, communications and support for trainees and mentors.
3. In the most effective courses, the content of the centrally-based training gives appropriate attention to the strand of 'knowledge and understanding about becoming informed citizens'. The strand of participation and responsible action is developed through an emphasis on active learning, particularly role play and discussion, although little recognition is given to the need to develop pupils' skills in these areas. Least attention is focused on the strand of enquiry and communication and opportunities are missed to make use of topical events in this context, especially to consider what written work might be expected of pupils as an outcome of enquiry.
4. In general, trainees have the resources that they need, acquiring key texts for themselves and obtaining material for teaching from a wide range of sources. In most courses good use is made of Ofsted publications, government and non-government websites and the CitizEd site. Trainees

use subject specific web-based facilities well, including much online sharing of resources, access to information and a discussion forum. For a minority of trainees, the level of support has been limited because of difficulties in gaining access to equipment at the university. The majority of mentors do not have access to the web-based facility which prevents course tutors making effective use of it for regular communication.

5. Written assignments are generally very well designed and make a significant contribution to developing trainees' understanding of citizenship. The best assignments help trainees to articulate their own citizenship vision and reflect on the importance of citizenship in a school and the diverse ways in which it is delivered. In order to extend the themes of planning, teaching, assessment and evaluation, they focus on pupils' progression and the transition between key stages in citizenship. They allow trainees not only to identify and explore key problems but also to pose solutions within the context of their main school placement. The best courses require trainees to complete a series of well-planned and directed tasks that help them to develop their practice by integrating wider whole-school strategies into their planning.
6. Course tutors are committed to improving the quality of school-based training and are working hard to establish strong networks of schools where there is an informed and enthusiastic approach to citizenship teaching. For example, one tutor has set up a university and LEA citizenship partnership forum to identify good quality practice in local schools. This has enabled the provider to extend the number of schools where PCGE trainees can experience a range of effective citizenship teaching and to consider a possible strategy for coordinated continuing professional development for teachers to support the progress of citizenship. The partnership also organises successful annual conferences to share best practice across the region. In another provider, an audit and evaluation of models of delivery in partner schools has been produced by trainees and mentors, which gives trainees a useful awareness of the context of teaching the subject before being placed in schools.
7. The courses recruit trainees of high calibre with a considerable range of life experiences and skills. The majority quickly take on responsibility for developing citizenship as a curriculum subject in a local and national context; for example, by leading subject specific sessions, planning and organising events and contributing to national conferences. The partner schools often rely on the knowledge and expertise of the trainees and provide them with a very wide range of opportunities to contribute to the corporate life of the school such as collapsed days, field trips, mock elections, debating clubs, fund-raising activities and school council work. The best trainees also plan for and further their own professional development. They view citizenship as having direct relevance to pupils' lives with strong links to other whole-school initiatives, such as inclusion, assessment for learning and *Every Child Matters*. They consider citizenship

to have the potential to effect change in schools beyond the classroom by involving them in work within the community and engaging pupils in democratic processes.

8. There is some evidence of the training having a positive influence on practice in schools. For example, one of the schools with reasonable existing provision is modifying their personal development course in order to focus more sharply on citizenship elements, and is now intending to use the short course GCSE for all pupils, starting in Year 9.

Effectiveness of training

9. The quality of centre-based training across all courses is good or better. University tutors are dedicated and expert practitioners in the field. Teaching sessions model good practice in citizenship by having a strong emphasis on inclusion, active and participative learning, student empowerment and cooperative approaches to teaching and learning. In the best sessions, the application of the skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action through the teaching of citizenship is effectively addressed through examples of classroom-based activities. Sessions have a strong theoretical research basis providing a thoughtful context within which to debate issues such as ethics, values and teaching controversial issues. They encompass the most up-to-date thinking in the subject and make frequent reference to publications, websites and resources.
10. Largely as a result of the central training, the subject knowledge of the trainees is generally good. They use their citizenship audits well, revisiting them regularly. Due to a lack of progressive and coherent subject specific training in many schools, trainees are required to take a high level of responsibility for their own subject development. The best trainees have been able to meet the challenge and have been proactive in negotiating training programmes, designing schemes of work, producing resources and organising whole-school citizenship events.
11. The quality of school-based training varies widely. Only one provider is able to place trainees in schools that are fully committed to the delivery of discrete citizenship. In some schools the citizenship curriculum is insufficiently developed and trainees have little experience of citizenship teaching. Most are allocated timetables which involve teaching citizenship in one of their placements, but some have few or no lessons in citizenship in the other placement. As a result, their overall experience is inconsistent. Some trainees are placed in schools where the timetable offered takes little account of their broader subject background and they are asked to teach too many other subjects for which they are not well prepared. The majority of schools deliver citizenship through PSHE or other subjects. Within this context, the best trainees make explicit how they address the standards for National Curriculum citizenship. Few trainees have the

opportunity to teach the GCSE short course in citizenship or to teach citizenship at post-16.

12. The subject specific training programmes provided by mentors are inadequate in many schools. Many mentors are uncertain of their own subject knowledge; for example, they confuse elements of PSHE and citizenship. They are unsure of how to move trainees on in specific areas of citizenship teaching and in tutorials they are more concerned with general teaching and classroom management than in discussing subject issues. For example, not much thought is given to developing skills of discussion, debate and role play, especially across different age ranges and abilities, and few can guide trainees on how to pitch their lessons at an acceptable level of learning for the subject. Consequently, trainees often involve pupils in activities without fully considering whether the activity is the best method of furthering learning in citizenship, and their lesson plans show little awareness of planning for progression in the pupils' achievement at different key stages.
13. A minority of trainees receive very good support in schools where citizenship is already well developed, or is developing rapidly. Some mentors see their role in the broadest sense and deal with subject knowledge development as well as supporting trainees in their preparation, teaching and reflection. Good use is made of formal mentor meetings, informal support, and other opportunities for comment including lesson observations, which are usually evaluative and set appropriate targets. In schools where citizenship is marginalised in the curriculum or where mentors' main responsibilities rest in other subject areas, trainees do not always receive the time and support to which they are entitled.
14. The weaknesses in the achievements of some trainees reflect the lack of emphasis placed on some elements of their preparation to teach in the central and school-based training. For example, most trainees have a good understanding of the theory of planning but have had limited opportunities to put this into practice. The best trainees plan lessons that are carefully linked to the citizenship programme of study as well as broader learning outcomes, while the plans contain appropriate learning objectives. Although trainees plan effectively to ensure lessons are interactive, they rarely allow enough time for reflection and discussion. Overall, trainees do not plan sufficiently for assessment, especially of written work. Few trainees recognise factors affecting pupils' learning or take account of different learning styles. Trainees generally have a good understanding of the needs of their pupils, particularly those with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language. However, they often fail to show how the information they record about these pupils helps them to teach lessons in which all pupils are able to learn effectively. Only the best trainees take sufficient account of higher achievers, especially in lessons where discussion, debate and presentation are involved.

15. Trainees use a wide variety of teaching strategies to support teaching and learning. They make good use of prioritising activities, card sorts, quizzes, spider diagrams, citizenship games and design activities; many trainees use approaches that are innovative. They have also developed good questioning skills, often asking open ended questions designed to provoke thought and debate. Trainees use stimulating and engaging materials and do not shy away from difficult or contentious topics, such as asylum seekers or the ethics of the war in Iraq. Starters and plenaries are used to good effect. They use information communication technology (ICT) regularly both for personal recording and in their teaching.
16. Trainees have limited opportunities for formal assessment of pupils' learning in citizenship. They use the monitoring and assessment procedures of their departments well although often within other subject areas. Few adapt these procedures or evaluate whether they are the most suitable for assessing progress in citizenship. Constructive feedback is given orally in lessons and some trainees are developing effective use of peer and self-assessment. A few are tackling the difficult issue of how to assess progress in enquiry and communication and participation. Written work is given a low priority and, when it is set, it is often pitched at a level below the capabilities of pupils in other subjects. Exercises such as gap filling and word searches are used by some trainees but their contribution to the pupils' achievement is rarely assessed.
17. There is a considerable variation in the depth of individual lesson evaluations. In general, the evaluations are restricted to teaching and pupils' attitudes, and pay insufficient attention to learning, sometimes reflecting a lack of clarity in the learning objectives. The evaluations also tend to focus on successful aspects of lessons, such as pupils' active involvement. For some trainees, lack of confidence in their ability to manage classes, combined with a lack of rigour in feedback from mentors, has prevented them from developing skills of reflective evaluation.

Meeting individual needs

18. Citizenship trainees are drawn from a broad range of subject backgrounds and bring a wide variety of skills and experience. The attention given to meeting the individual needs of trainees during the central training is mostly good. The interview process is rigorous and thorough. Trainees are also assigned pre-course activities, such as visiting primary or secondary schools and individualised subject knowledge tasks. A high level of support is provided during the course through frequent tutorials with tutors and individual action planning, where trainees record and review their professional development and targets. The tutors know the trainees well and during taught sessions are able to identify and use strengths which they have identified in trainees. They differentiate the training well, supporting weaker trainees with additional support. Individual needs are

also met through a strong peer support network, often strengthened by the use of online discussion forums.

19. In the effective courses, the individual needs of trainees in terms of subject knowledge are identified and successfully addressed. Tutors use a variety of methods to record areas for development, plan action and review progress. For example, one course issues trainees with a subject knowledge profile. It is exemplary in its design, containing a clear rationale and criteria for self-assessment set at four levels of achievement. The key concepts of each aspect of the knowledge and understanding of the citizenship National Curriculum are identified and a series of well-planned questions guide research. Trainees assess their knowledge against appropriate criteria and formulate a self-improvement plan. Suitable information on relevant websites, books and organisations is provided. In addition, the second part of the profile provides extremely helpful, concise summaries of basic information as reference points. The tutor monitors progress at three termly review points. Mentors also review progress systematically. Trainees use the profile as a working document and find it useful and reassuring. In order to address specific weaknesses in subject knowledge the tutor has modified the course by arranging further sessions.
20. All trainees have been given adequate opportunity to develop their ICT skills in school and through peer presentation sessions during their course.
21. The attention paid to meeting trainees' individual needs varies considerably in placement schools, where many trainees are less well supported in this respect than in centre-based training. The extent to which tutors take the individual needs of trainees into account when allocating placement schools depends on several factors. Tutors do not always have sufficient knowledge of the nature of citizenship provision or the quality of mentoring in schools and departments which are newly recruited to the partnership. Although placements may meet the needs of trainees according to geographical restraints and personal circumstances, they do not always provide the best opportunities to improve their teaching of citizenship. At present, few providers compensate for any inadequacies in the school based training by providing additional experience in different settings.
22. The most effective mentors provide a programme of weekly meetings and other informal contact well tailored to meet individual trainees' needs. However, some trainees do not receive the regular meetings to which they are entitled. Generally, lesson observations provide trainees with clear indications of what they need to address, sometimes in the form of challenging targets and linked to needs identified against the standards, although the quality is inconsistent.

23. The most effective practice occurs when there is a high level of coherence between central and school-based training. For example, trainees on one course benefit from well focussed tripartite meetings between mentors, tutors and trainees held at four key points in the year. They discuss and complete personal development forms which identify individual strengths and areas for development of the trainees. The details from the form completed at the end of the first placement are used effectively by mentors in establishing and setting up training in the second placement.

Assessment of trainees

24. All courses have thorough procedures in place to assess the progress of trainees against the standards. In most cases these are carried out conscientiously by the trainees and the trainers. However, there is considerable variability in the quality of assessment and the judgements made of trainees' progress. Lesson observations are regular and frequent but occasionally lack rigour, especially in terms of assessing pupils' learning. This reflects the lack of shared understanding amongst mentors of what constitutes a good citizenship lesson. Trainees use lively and engaging activities which interest the pupils and this often prompts very positive feedback. However, the progression of pupils' learning is often minimal and this is not given sufficient consideration in assessing the trainees' abilities. Assessment is more problematic when trainees have limited opportunities to deliver discrete citizenship. For example, on one course, all trainees are required to plan and deliver four discrete citizenship lessons; however, for some this is their only opportunity to teach citizenship other than trying to incorporate citizenship objectives in lessons that are essentially another subject or PSHE.
25. Tutors are aware of the difficulties and are trying to improve the consistency of judgements by issuing subject-specific criteria, extending mentor training and carrying out joint observations.
26. The written assignments and directed tasks are particularly important in developing and assessing the trainees' competence against the standards. For example, on one course, three subject specific assignments on key citizenship issues (planning a scheme of work, assessment and community action) have very clear criteria and are completed to a high standard. They are double marked and returned with constructive and helpful feedback. Two of the assignments have been published on the CitizEd website in order to disseminate good practice. The potential of assignments to contribute to the trainees' development and their assessment is not realised where the guidance on what is expected is unclear. On one course, the early assignments completed by trainees demonstrate a lack of support in planning and deficiencies in their understanding of the expected outcomes. The weakest assignments incorporate misconceptions and indicate that trainees have insufficient knowledge and understanding of what constitutes citizenship.

27. Despite the difficulties inherent in assessment, the trainees respond very positively. They are aware of the progress they are making and the need for further professional development.

Notes

1. In 2003/04, 206 places were allocated to 16 postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) courses in citizenship. While all these courses focused on subject specialist training for the 11–16 age range, half combined training to teach citizenship with training to teach another secondary subject, usually history. In 2004/05, only two providers continue to offer combined training.
2. Beginning in 2003/04, citizenship courses are included by Ofsted in the secondary initial teacher training inspection programme. All courses are inspected under the joint Ofsted/Teacher Training Agency (TTA) *Framework for the inspection of initial teacher training* ([HMI 548], Ofsted, 2002).
3. Where citizenship training was combined with training for another secondary subject, the citizenship component was the focus for inspection.