



Initial teacher training for teachers of citizenship 2003/04: overview report

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Introduction

1. 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.
2. In 2003/04, 206 places were allocated to 16 postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) courses. 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 will continue to offer combined training.
3. 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).
4. In recognition of the developing nature of citizenship as a new curriculum subject, Ofsted agreed with the TTA that inspection arrangements for 2003/04 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 standards phase of the inspections with the outcomes contributing to judgements on training. Although providers received oral reports and a written report, no grades were awarded and the written reports were not published. Where citizenship training was combined with training for another secondary subject, the citizenship component was the focus for inspection.
5. Five PGCE courses were inspected under these arrangements. Three of the courses provided training in citizenship alone, one in citizenship with history and one in citizenship with social sciences. 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.

Main findings

- Three of the five courses inspected prepare trainees well to meet the challenges of teaching a subject that is often misunderstood or poorly developed in schools. Trainees are already making a significant contribution to the planning and implementation of citizenship in their placement schools. Several of the schools are reviewing their approach to citizenship in the light of their work with trainees.
- The involvement of partner schools with initial teacher training tutors who are experts in citizenship education is having a positive impact on the development of citizenship as a curriculum subject. School-based trainers are developing a shared understanding of what constitutes high-quality citizenship provision and how best to teach the subject. Increasingly, tutors are being invited to provide professional development in citizenship for experienced school staff.
- All of the courses were oversubscribed. They recruit well-qualified trainees, many with higher degrees, from a wide range of subject specialisms. All trainees demonstrate an unusually high level of commitment to teaching citizenship. The developing nature of the subject provides trainees with considerable opportunities to contribute to the school community, to take on subject-related responsibilities and to further their own professional development.
- There are good prospects for employment. The majority of trainees seeking posts had found appointments, a high proportion of these teaching solely citizenship or citizenship with another subject. Some had been given management responsibilities related to implementing or improving the teaching of citizenship in their schools.
- Courses find it difficult to meet the requirements of *Qualifying to teach* when citizenship is combined with training in another secondary subject. The need to cover the requirements of two subjects, and the small numbers of trainees recruited to these courses, make it difficult for providers to design a programme with sufficient subject-specific training for citizenship. In the courses where citizenship is combined with another subject, it is very difficult for providers to allocate sufficient time specifically to citizenship to ensure that all trainees are able to demonstrate that they have met the Standards in this subject.
- Courses providing training in citizenship alone are generally well designed and provide a thorough grounding in citizenship education. Some, however, give insufficient time to the development of trainees' understanding of the National Curriculum and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) specifications. Most tutors are experts in particular aspects of citizenship and have a strong theoretical or research background. Since there is no shared understanding at present of what trainees need to know to teach citizenship effectively, tutors design courses to reflect their own particular perspective. This results in some inconsistencies between courses in approach to course design and content.

- All providers have difficulties in finding sufficient suitable school placements for trainees. As a result, the trainees' experience of teaching citizenship as a discrete subject is often limited. Most providers have been able to guarantee trainees at least one placement school where citizenship is well developed, but for one provider even this has not been possible. In schools where citizenship is poorly implemented, school-based training programmes lack a strong subject dimension, mentors are not subject specialists and there are insufficient opportunities for trainees to observe teachers who model good practice.

Recommendations

The TTA should consider:

- allocating numbers for citizenship to allow providers to offer viable standalone subject-specific training
- working with providers to define the body of subject knowledge that trainees need to acquire to teach citizenship effectively
- supporting citizenship tutors from initial teacher training in providing professional development for experienced staff in partner schools
- 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.

Content and structure of the training

6. The three courses offering training in citizenship alone are designed to enable the trainees to meet the Standards for Qualified Teacher Status in Key Stages 3 and 4. Each course emphasises particular aspects of citizenship education, in one case social justice, in another, moral and social development, and in the third, the relationship between citizenship and personal, social and health education and spiritual, moral and cultural education. Two of the courses are firmly grounded in the National Curriculum programme of study, but the third spends insufficient time on the inter-relationship of the three strands of citizenship, and how enquiry and communication, and participation and responsible action, can be addressed in the context of subject knowledge and understanding.
7. By contrast, the two courses where citizenship is combined with another secondary subject provide limited opportunities for trainees to demonstrate that they can meet the Standards in both key stages. In each course, insufficient time is devoted to citizenship in the centre-based training. Although the citizenship-specific sessions focus on key themes, they do not cover the full range of knowledge and skills necessary to teach the National Curriculum programme of study. There are significant gaps in content; for example, little attention is given to the characteristics of parliamentary and other forms of government, the significance of the media or the way in which the economy functions.
8. It is inevitable with a new school subject like citizenship that not all teachers supporting trainees will be expert practitioners. The most effective providers compensate for any such weaknesses in the knowledge and expertise of school-based trainers, for example by adjusting the content of their centre-based provision. They also address the difficulties of finding sufficient citizenship teaching for trainees by showing them how to teach citizenship effectively in schools where it is not taught as a discrete subject.
9. Providers are generally beginning to build up a good knowledge of the teaching of citizenship in their partner schools. One requires schools offering citizenship placements to complete a questionnaire that includes information on how they teach the subject. Another is developing a bank of information about the provision for citizenship and a careful check is maintained on the teaching timetables and experiences of trainees. As a result, such providers are now in a position to ensure that trainees have good opportunities to teach citizenship on at least one school placement.
10. To manage the school-based training more effectively, one provider has organised partner schools for citizenship into four clusters, each with attached college-based and school-based partnership tutors. This is proving to be highly constructive in creating an appropriate context for school-based training. It provides continuity for trainees and schools, ensures external specialist monitoring, moderation and support, and leads to professional development for trainers. In addition, trainers and trainees are developing a shared understanding of what constitutes high-quality citizenship provision in school and how best to

prepare trainees to teach the subject. Some schools have reviewed their approach to citizenship in the light of their work with trainees, and tutors are being invited increasingly to provide professional development related to citizenship for experienced school staff.

11. Assignments and tasks are generally designed carefully to develop trainees' knowledge and expertise. Many are well conceived and strongly developmental. They address important issues at the heart of the citizenship debate and engage trainees' interest. However, whether or not trainees are able to apply their theoretical understanding to their teaching depends on the opportunities afforded them on their placements. In a few cases, the potential of these assignments is only partially achieved; some are tackled in the abstract because trainees cannot practise and analyse what they had planned; and some lack breadth as mentors cannot provide informed advice.

Effectiveness of training

12. The quality of centre-based training is generally good, even when the time allocated to it is insufficient. Tutors face significant challenges in planning and teaching courses in this new subject area. Particularly impressive features of college-based training include: carefully planned team teaching which defines precise objectives for teaching citizenship and demonstrates how they would be achieved; a skilful combination of the extension of subject knowledge and professional expertise, the development of pedagogical and evaluative skills, and increasing knowledge of a wide range of resources and guidance; and the explicit modelling of participative teaching and learning. In some training sessions the teaching is inspirational. Good use is made of visual aids, including information and communication technology (ICT), to support teaching and learning. Most trainers model good practice, although tutors occasionally miss opportunities to involve trainees fully or to intervene and challenge trainees' responses, and a few sessions end without the reinforcement of key messages.
13. The quality of school-based training varies widely. Features of particularly effective school-based meetings between mentors and trainees include: a very careful review of progress of subject knowledge and skills development for citizenship; clear Standards-related targets with well-defined associated actions; and the inclusion of focused training, for example on behaviour management or on planning. Clearly articulated activities are agreed to focus planning on citizenship-specific objectives. Where training was weak, however, there was no clear programme, no agenda for meetings and a casual approach to recording outcomes, sometimes without reference to further action.
14. Training programmes in schools where citizenship is poorly developed inevitably lack a strong subject dimension and trainees do not receive the informed training common in other subjects. The professional tutor often has insufficient knowledge of the National Curriculum for citizenship and of matters relating to the staffing, resources, and leadership and management of the subject. Mentors come from a range of subject backgrounds. Those with sparse knowledge of citizenship defer to trainees and are not able to provide authoritative advice on citizenship matters from their own experience.

15. Effective providers have put in place a wide range of support for mentors. One sent letters of guidance to partner schools outlining the essential and desired requirements of a citizenship placement. Another provider sent its mentors a subject mentor pack containing all the relevant course documentation and useful guidance, including a proforma which indicates clearly what to look for in citizenship lessons and citizenship grade descriptors (pen portraits). Mentors also benefit from frequent and well-targeted visits from college-based tutors, and regular email and telephone contact with the citizenship co-ordinator, as well as opportunities for professional development. In addition, mentors and professional tutors are invited to join college-based sessions and to accompany college-based tutors to conferences, such as a recent conference on assessment in citizenship.
16. Overall, the training was effective in preparing trainees to teach National Curriculum citizenship. Where weaknesses occurred, notably in trainees' planning, and monitoring and assessment, they were the result of the difficulties that are currently endemic in teaching citizenship in schools.¹
17. Training is generally effective in developing trainees' subject knowledge. However, many are learning aspects of the citizenship programme of study from a basis of limited experience of teaching the subject. This is reflected in the trainees' planning which does not always recognise or exploit opportunities to develop the relationship between the different strands of the National Curriculum. Many lessons are planned in isolation, with little reference to progression in pupils' subject knowledge and skills development.
18. Trainees expect and demand a high level of participation from all pupils and plan lessons to ensure a lively pace. They use methods to promote active and independent learning and encourage collaborative work. Although stimulating and engaging, lessons do not always allow pupils time to develop their understanding of citizenship in sufficient depth. For example, few opportunities are provided for pupils to learn how to produce high-quality written work in the subject or to develop and extend skills of participation and communication.
19. All trainees recognise the importance of employing a range of assessment procedures and usually devise interesting and appropriate strategies, including peer and self-assessment. There is, however, a general weakness in trainees' understanding of how to monitor and assess pupils' progress. There is no shared agreement among trainers or teachers of what standards are to be expected of pupils in citizenship. This is exacerbated for some trainees by the difficulties they experience in identifying a series of citizenship lessons with the same class that they can teach and assess.

¹ See, for example, *National Curriculum Citizenship: planning and implementation 2002/03*, HMI 1606, Ofsted, 2003.

Meeting individual needs

20. Trainees on all courses come from a very wide range of subject backgrounds. Citizenship has given many of them the opportunity to enter the teaching profession which otherwise might have been denied because of their subject specialism. They are invariably highly committed to establishing citizenship in the curriculum and promoting its high status. They are well aware that they need to develop and extend their subject expertise.
21. Providers assess aspects of trainees' subject expertise and relevant prior experience as part of the interview process. Most issue helpful pre-course reading lists for successful applicants. One provider sends all successful candidates a feedback letter identifying specific areas for development and suggesting appropriate reading and support materials. Another sets a GCSE short course paper in citizenship at the start of the course, the results of which help to inform trainees and their tutors of their subject knowledge needs.
22. While subject knowledge audits are in place, the outcomes are not always used effectively to address deficiencies in trainees' subject knowledge. Even where there are procedures in place to track the enhancement of subject knowledge, school contexts can limit their effectiveness. For example, in one provider, a tutorial mentoring record, which incorporates a section in which the trainee and their mentor can record and review subject knowledge development, proved ineffective where trainees had no opportunity to teach discrete citizenship lessons.
23. Citizenship trainees often take a greater level of responsibility in their placement schools and are afforded more opportunities for their personal professional development than trainees in other subject areas. For example, one trainee extended her skills as a prospective citizenship co-ordinator by developing and analysing a school citizenship audit, planning and presenting staff training on citizenship and implementing a whole-school citizenship programme. In another school, the arrival of the trainee was the starting point for the school's development of a citizenship programme, with the trainee seen as the expert. Trainees often contribute to citizenship-focused school activities, including developing a citizenship competition for the whole school, staging an election within a year group, assisting the school council or organising visits to local community projects. The trainees' prospects for employment are good. The majority had found appointments teaching solely citizenship or citizenship with another subject. Some had been given management responsibilities related to implementing or improving the teaching of National Curriculum citizenship in their schools.

Assessment of trainees

24. All the courses benefit from the good generic assessment procedures already in place in the training provider. Consequently, assessment is effective in relation to general professional Standards such as classroom management. Due to the limited experience of teaching citizenship of many trainees, however, it is not

easy for trainers to come to an accurate judgement on their performance against the Standards in the subject at both Key Stages 3 and 4. It is particularly difficult for trainees to demonstrate that they meet the Standards in monitoring and assessment of pupil progress, in part because most schools have not yet established ways of assessing pupils' progress and attainment in citizenship.

25. Moreover, when trainees are required to teach a range of subjects on one of their placements, they do not generally receive accurate feedback focused on the Standards demonstrated in teaching citizenship, nor are any clearly defined subject-specific targets set as a basis for improvement.
26. All providers recognise the difficulties inherent in assessing the trainees' performance in citizenship. They are beginning to compensate by constructing additional mechanisms, for example through a series of joint observations followed by further discussions to standardise judgements which are then verified by a subject-specialist external examiner.