

**Education for citizenship:  
teaching about democracy and the law in primary initial teacher education.**

- *When can we fit it in?*
- *What about the parents?*
- *What should I include?*
- *Is it too difficult for primary age children?*
- *I'm not sure little kids are interested.*
- *I feel it's important but I don't know enough myself....*

The above comments/questions were made by undergraduate primary trainee teachers who were following a ten week course on Education for Citizenship. They were expressing their concerns before beginning the two sessions which specifically focussed on teaching about democracy and the law. Similar comments were made by both PGCE trainees taking a shorter course and experienced teachers following a 30 hour continuing professional development (CPD) programme. Teaching about democracy and the law seems to be the most problematic of the areas of the new framework for citizenship at key stages one and two: it is a new area for many primary teachers, there is little research on what works and there are few resources. I have chosen to focus on this area for this report in the hope that discussing the challenges and successes I have had with my own trainees (and teachers on CPD) will be useful to others.

My course with the undergraduate primary trainees is a 30 hour course, run over ten weeks i.e. ten three hour sessions. Other sessions cover the rationale behind education for citizenship, links with social and moral education, citizenship and the community, human rights, school councils and school parliaments and global citizenship. The two sessions on teaching about democracy and the law come near the end of the programme for the reasons mentioned above. As part of the programme, students are required to work in pairs to read and review an academic text. Each week a pair gives a ten minute presentation on one of the texts. This ensures that a variety of texts are read and shared and helps challenge their thinking. Recommended texts are listed in appendix 1. Another requirement is that students spend one of the ten sessions in school. This is to enable them to try out their own activities, which they prepare based on those they have experienced in the sessions or develop themselves. They usually work in twos or threes with either a class or group of children and have no problem finding schools. In fact- on the contrary- most teachers seem to welcome some input on citizenship and see it as an opportunity to learn about what is being done by others in this area. The feedback from the children (and other teachers) then provides data for their assignment.

Sessions with PGCE students are necessarily shorter. These students have one lecture on education for citizenship and then two mornings of workshops where they may choose four from a choice of about twenty workshops. These workshops address, for example, educating traveller children, meeting the needs of refugee children, education for human rights, gender issues in education, teaching about democracy and the law, circle time, global issues in the primary classroom. Were the trainees to opt for the workshop on democracy and the law, they would have a short theoretical input and then cover say two of the four activities done by the undergraduates. Thus the

input is still there, but condensed. The 30 hour CPD course allows the same coverage as the UG course, but as these are practising teachers the starting point is different. The teachers bring their own experience to the course and are able to explore in depth the implications for their own teaching and for school policy. Teachers may submit an assignment of their work in school as a result of the course which counts towards an M.Ed. This work at masters level is supported by TTA funding.

The two sessions on teaching about democracy and the law cover:

- the requirements of the national curriculum
- current thinking on the teaching of political literacy (including research based evidence of parents' views and children's understanding)
- teaching approaches, including the role of the teacher, active learning and ideas for the classroom
- planning to teach about democracy and the law

In the last session of the ten week course there is feedback and critical reflection on what was achieved in the classroom (with trainees bringing in examples of children's work) and discussion on how this work might be developed in the future.

Each of the above four areas will now be discussed in turn, indicating the kind of input given to the trainees and teachers. I will then discuss what I feel have been the challenges and successes of these courses and the implications for further development.

### **The requirements of the national curriculum**

The national curriculum guidelines on education for citizenship have been underpinned by what is often referred to as the Crick Report, namely Education for Citizenship and the Teaching of Democracy in Schools (QCA, 1998). This report clearly identifies three areas as central to education for citizenship:

- social and moral education
- community involvement
- political literacy.

It is the last area that concerns us here. With reference to this, it states that political literacy should be 'wider than political knowledge alone'. Pupils should learn 'about how to make themselves effective in public life' which is then defined 'in its broadest sense to encompass realistic knowledge of and preparation for conflict resolution and decision making related to the main economic and social problems of the day' (QCA, 1998, p13). It is then made explicit that while 'to tackle social issues in school problem by problem can be beneficial...it would not add up to an understanding of politics. For politics is the general process by which differences of values and interests are compromised or mediated through institutions in the general interest' (op cit, p20). The non-statutory guidelines for Key Stages 1 and 2 which were published the following year as part of the revised national curriculum, were based on this interpretation of political literacy. These guidelines state that Key Stage 1 pupils should be taught to take part 'in a simple debate about topical issues' and by Key Stage 2 we find four requirements which relate specifically to the teaching of democracy and the law. These are that pupils should be taught:

- to research, discuss and debate topical issues, problems and events
- why and how rules and laws are made and enforced, why different rules are needed in different situations and how to take part in making and changing rules
- what democracy is, and about the basic institutions that support it locally and nationally
- to recognise the role of voluntary, community and pressure groups (DfEE, QCA 1999).

These areas are new for many teachers and present considerable challenges. As Crick himself pointed out, 'a bad citizenship programme, a boring one based on something like learning the constitution, might do more harm than good' (Crick, TES 1998). Our role, then, is to ensure that teachers or trainees feel sufficiently informed about these areas and sufficiently confident in their skills to begin to teach about democracy, topical issues and the law.

### **Current thinking: primary children and political literacy**

I find it very useful to use my own research with trainees as they are able to question the data and hear about work in schools which are similar to those they have experienced on placements. I do, however, also draw on the research of others as this provides a broader perspective (especially in terms of ethnicity) than is available in the south-west.

With reference to other work, I mention that of Harwood who indicates how previous attempts to teach political literacy to children in the 8-13 age range have met with resistance from teachers. Researching into teachers' practice for the World Studies 8-13 project, he found that they ignored this aspect of the work and consistently rated political skills as unimportant (1984). This presents an opportunity for trainees to discuss why and how this might be. However, Stevens's research (1982) with primary school children indicates that from the age of seven onwards, they are 'able to take part intelligently in discussion about politics' and from nine, can discuss 'concepts of democracy, leadership and accountability of government' (p168). More recently, Claire's work (2001) with inner London schools illustrates the complexity of primary age children's thinking around issues that are always controversial and frequently political. Trainees are recommended to read this last text and I ensure that as part of the reviewing process (described above), two students review this book and report to the class on it.

I use two case studies from my own research to stimulate further discussion.

**Case study A** describes work in two Devon primary schools. The study aimed to ascertain the current state of play with regard to provision for citizenship education. Teachers' beliefs and practices were evaluated and contrasted with both parents' and children's perspectives in two very different primary schools, one in an area of severe socio-economic deprivation in a large city, and one a village school in mixed community of farmers and professionals. A total of 9 teachers, 27 parents and 54 children were interviewed and 9 lessons relating to citizenship were observed. The full findings are reported in Holden (2000, and forthcoming).

The teachers felt confident with social and moral education but when asked about the teaching of democracy, topical issues and the law, many concerns were voiced. Some felt that these issues had no place in primary schools and had little confidence in handling such topics. A few had more confidence, notably a Year 6 teacher who said she did not teach political literacy explicitly but did include reference to topical issues. She explained:

There is usually always something that comes up. Like with Britain since the 1930s - because it's just there..... persecution and prejudice..... And when I was doing Mesopotamia, the laws of Mesopotamia included corporal punishment and even worse the death penalty - so we went off into a whole side issue about that, because they knew about America, someone was on death row at the time.. There is always an aspect that comes out - even something like rivers, there is a whole ecological perspective, like do you change the course of a river, which was a recent one...

Observations of this teacher indicated how she used part of the literacy hour to discuss the importance of independent group work, with groups working within a framework of agreed rules. The children considered what happens when people cannot agree with negotiated rules and the teacher then broadened the discussion to include the consequences of governments which cannot agree and the need for compromise and negotiation. The discussion ranged from the teacher explaining that the United Nations 'are a peace keeping force in various parts for the world at the moment' to the children giving their own knowledge of world conflict (Ireland and 'somewhere near Greece'). She then related the solving of world conflict to the classroom and asked for suggestions as to how the problems in Year 6 of co-operating in the literacy hour could be resolved. The lesson continued with each group trying to work together, taking on board the class suggestions as to how this might be done. This is a concrete example of how one teacher addressed teaching about 'why and how rules and laws are made', relating the discussion to world issues and to the classroom.

My work with teachers and trainees has indicated that they are often concerned about 'what parents might think' if anything seen as 'political' is discussed. For this reason parents in both these schools were interviewed in small groups to ascertain their support for teaching about topical issues, democratic processes and the law. Some of the parents from the inner-city school were concerned that their children were too young to learn about current topical issues and thought that they would not be interested, but others admitted that they found such issues as the conflict in Kosovo difficult to explain and would welcome teachers spending time on this in school. As one mother said:

I'm a mother, you know, I didn't pay that much attention in history.... If there was someone else who was more able to explain why, it would be nice, because there's lots of questions they're asking.

Many from this inner-city school were vociferous in their views about the teaching of politics. Such an area was seen as 'boring' and 'stupid' with the danger that it might 'overload their brains'. One parent said she did not vote and did not think her daughter would. She did not want her learning about this in school: 'It's a waste of time'. Parents at the village school were much more likely to welcome the discussion

of topical events in the primary classroom, and although they supported teaching about democracy and the law, most felt this should wait until secondary school as they thought there was already too much pressure on the timetable. There was some concern about teacher bias when topical or political issues were discussed.

This study raises particular questions about how can we facilitate greater involvement with parents so that teachers can hear what is done in the home and parents can understand how citizenship education is approached in school. Many parents support what is happening in school but some do not, and we need to ensure that parents who do not exercise their democratic rights do not in turn disempower their children.

Trainees are often worried about how to approach parents and welcome debate on the role of parents, particularly with reference to citizenship education. I often find role plays of parents' evenings useful, where trainees are given a question (as if from a parent) to which they must respond. For example they might have to explain to a parent why a history lesson related immigration in the past to the plight of refugees today, or why their pupils have gone on-line to their MP about a current controversial issue. They might have to defend a discussion in circle time on racism or name calling. With teachers on CPD courses one can take this discussion further, asking them to consider:

- What are the views of the parents of the children in your class?
- How do you know?
- How might you find out?

Such discussions usually reveal how little we really know about the parents we work with, and how essential this is, especially with regard to education for citizenship where the values of the home will influence what children bring to the school.

**Case study B** again relates to work on citizenship, but takes a different focus, looking specifically at children's knowledge and understanding of political literacy. As part of a Socrates programme (EU funded) I took part in a study involving a total of 172 children from eight European countries. In each country, 24 seven and eleven year olds were asked about their knowledge and understanding of their own political systems and that of the EU. The British children were drawn from schools across the south west of England (including an urban inner city with a large ethnic minority population). In contrast to many of the children in other European countries, the British children had little idea that their country was part of the EU and did not see themselves as Europeans, although many had heard of the euro. Their knowledge of the UK parliamentary system was also limited, summed up by one who said 'there are elections when you vote'. Many children from both age groups thought the UK was run by the queen and Tony Blair, with two 7 year olds claiming that 'the prime minister lives with the queen' so he can 'help her'. An 11 year old explained: 'well the prime minister sorts everything out and he goes to all the debates ... and the queen is just ordering... well not ordering but just making sure everything is alright when it happens'. Two children thought Bush was the prime minister of the UK, whilst some could not name any political leaders. All said that they were not taught about these things in school apart from a special assembly if there was an election going on, but the older children were adamant that they ought to be taught these things as 'it affects our future'. Many thought this would be part of the curriculum in secondary school. (for a fuller report see Holden, 2003).

Discussion following this case study has revealed trainees' own ignorance about both the EU as a political institution and our own parliamentary processes. On the one hand, they feel children need to know more, on the other they lack the confidence in their own subject knowledge and appropriate teaching strategies. This case study provides a useful starting point for discussing with trainees what they think children need to know, and moreover what they think they need to know to teach them.

At this point I usually introduce them to the notion of a broader view of political literacy, one which acknowledges and includes 'the appeal of cultural politics' (Huckle 1996) such as animal welfare and other environmental issues. This introduces questions of what 'democratic processes' are, and what laws are for. Clough (1998) cites work with his own trainees on democracy and the law where 70% agreed that sometimes citizens are 'right to break the law to protect the environment' (p71). The Crick report (op cit) endorses this broader view of political literacy and recommends that teachers equip pupils with 'the political skills needed to change laws in a peaceful and responsible manner' (p10) with regard to both local and national issues. On the other hand Talbot and Tate (1997) recommend that children be taught values which include respecting 'the rule of law and encouraging others to do so'. Such recommendations indicate the complexity of teaching about conflicting rights, the law and the role of peaceful protest in a democracy. As a result trainees need to think about their own views but also need clear guidelines on their own role in the classroom and on appropriate teaching approaches so that they can help children arrive at a basic and fair understanding of democratic processes, justice and the law.

### **Teaching approaches**

There are two important issues here- understanding the role of the teacher and understanding active learning. Both are particularly pertinent to teaching about democracy as in order to educate children to think and to participate, one must use interactive participatory methods of teaching. It seems self evident that a democratic classroom is a pre-requisite for teaching about democracy, but this is often easier said than done, especially for student teachers who may worry about classroom control if they take on board active learning methodologies and about their own role in debates on sensitive, topical or political issues.

#### *The role of the teacher*

For trainees, the starting point I find most useful is the guidance in the Crick report (op cit) on the role of the teacher. This refers to the teaching of controversial issues but is equally applicable to the teaching of political literacy. The report recognises the need for balance and careful measures of neutrality on the part of the teacher, whilst acknowledging that there may be some occasions when the teacher needs to assert a commitment to a value position. At other times the teacher may need to intervene if class discussion has not been sufficient to counter the expression of an anti-social viewpoint (for example a racist opinion) with the effect that individuals in the class are left exposed and vulnerable. The three approaches recommended are:

- the neutral chair approach
- the balanced approach
- the stated commitment approach

Teachers may use a combination of these approaches as the need arises. They may remain neutral, letting children put the various viewpoints, they may give a view (not necessarily their own) to ensure a balance of opinions is heard, or they may give their own view as a means of encouraging pupils to agree or disagree. What is important is that pupils are ‘offered the experience of a genuinely free consideration of difficult issues’ (p60) and that issues are analysed ‘according to an established set of criteria, which are open to scrutiny and publicly defensible’ (p61). In other words, teachers may use a combination of these three approaches with confidence, and may establish with their class a way of working on topical and political issues.

*b) active learning*

Trainees will have already had a great deal of input on teaching methods and will be familiar with the terms ‘active learning’ but this always seems worth re-iterating in relation to education for citizenship. In Clough and Holden (2002) we have summarised the rationale for active learning thus:

Citizenship education requires children to:

- Develop confidence to voice own opinions;
  - Develop skills in recognising the views / experience of other individuals and groups;
  - Develop skills in critical thinking and in forming arguments;
  - Develop skills of co-operation and conflict resolution;
  - Trust in their creative powers;
  - Develop skills of democratic participation;
  - Gain experience of taking action for change;
- (Clough and Holden, 2002, p6)

I find that the most useful way of getting trainees to understand the fundamental links between active learning and education for citizenship is to get them to do certain activities which have been written for children and then discuss how the doing of these developed their skills and understanding. This also helps them to realise the depth of their own subject knowledge and what more they need to know.

I often use the activity in appendix 2: Current issues: put it to the cabinet, as a first activity. It has been written for children aged 8-13 but works equally well with trainees. In this the teacher asks children some ‘starter’ questions about parliament and MPs, then goes on to look at the cabinet and their responsibilities, before asking children to select from a variety of newspaper cuttings to put questions to a cabinet minister who is on-line. I usually ask trainees to come to the session with four of their own newspaper articles on something that relates to democracy, the law or politics. In itself this ensures that trainees spend some time reading the paper – not always something they do! The time spent discussing why they have chosen their particular items is valuable in itself and produces heated discussions as to what is important and why. Articles trainees have brought in recent sessions have covered international issues such as the conflict over Iraq and aid to Ethiopia, national issues such as asylum seekers and funding for schools, and extracts from local papers such as the closure of a local chicken factory. All of these had in common government support (or lack of) and were thus deemed ‘political’. In each case the trainees were able to see ways in which just one newspaper article could link with work on persuasive

writing and to further investigations (eg the situation faced by children of asylum seekers, factory farming of chickens). ICT links were evident as the activity asks children to send an email message to the minister responsible for the issues raised in the chosen article, using a website specifically set up for this purpose. Links were also made with history, geography and science. Most importantly, trainees were asked at the end of the session to think about their own subject knowledge in terms of knowing about 'democratic processes and the institutions that support it' (DfEE, QCA 1999) and had to identify what they thought they needed to know and where they might find that information.

The above activity takes as its starting point our government and current political issues. If trainees do not appear to have a sound understanding of the key concepts underpinning democracy then activity 3 is useful: this simply gives nine statements about democracy and asks participants to put them in a diamond ranking. The activity provides information at the same time as encouraging discussion on any points of confusion.

In order to broaden the focus, I find the activity in appendix 4, Political action: campaigning for change, works well. This focuses on a real situation- the protest by young people over the building of a new road to provide relief for the overstretched A30 route between Honiton and Exeter in 1997. It emphasises to trainees the value of using authentic contexts and shows how such an issue is also about democracy, politics and the law. It also demonstrates the importance of listening to others' points of view, weighing up the evidence and arriving at a consensus.

In Clough and Holden (2002) this activity appears as a role play for children where they are given one of eight roles (eg the road builders, the local residents, the protestors, the department of transport, teachers at the local school) and asked to act out this role, defending their position when the press visits. This can result in tables being moved to create tunnels, chairs being piled high to represent bulldozers and so forth. While trainees enjoy such role plays, they are often concerned about management of behaviour if they were to try to teach in this way. I have thus adapted the activity for trainees so that it is more controlled: each group is given a writing frame rather than being asked to act out their part. Trainees feel more confident with such an approach and it has the added benefit of asking participants to consider the views of others which they do not always do if in role. It also helps to emphasise that living in a democracy is about compromise and consensus, not about shouting the loudest.

This activity introduces trainees to teaching about the law, in that they can discuss which of the people were acting inside the law and which were breaking the law. They can also discuss what happens when we break the law and why we have laws. But, as with teaching about democracy, there is also a need to teach about the 'nitty-gritty' of who is who and who does what. Again, this can be a daunting task as it can appear very 'dry' and information heavy. Appendix 5 describes an activity where children do a very simple sorting activity, matching people responsible for justice and the law to a description of their job (eg judge, probation officer) and then go on to work on mock trials. Trainees are always re-assured by this activity as they can match the people to their jobs very easily, and they find the mock trials humorous and accessible. Once they have tried such an idea, they find it easy to think of their own.

The one described here, Gold. E. Locks v Babe. E. Bear, led them to make up their own such as The Wolf v Red Riding Hood and to then look at real trials from history which could be re-enacted or just examined as case studies of how the law works and has changed over time.

Other activities which I have found useful with trainees are those focused on knowing their rights and knowing the law. Materials from UNICEF, Oxfam and Save the Children are useful here as are the growing number of text books aimed at the secondary citizenship market (see appendix 1). Websites too, provide an ever increasing supply of materials which relate to the teaching of democracy and political literacy. Trainees find these particularly valuable and cheap!

### **Planning to teach about democracy and the law**

In all cases the activities with trainees are concluded with discussions about what they have learnt, the skills they have used in undertaking the activities and the areas of citizenship education we have covered. Trainees (like children) often cling to the idea that we only learn when writing, and because the activities involve little writing but much talk, they are often surprised at how much learning has taken place. This needs to be made explicit, as does the link between active learning and education for citizenship.

After the activities trainees work in groups to plan the work they are going to take into schools. They look at the QCA schemes of work, examine resource packs currently available and bring in materials from websites. They then adapt the activities we have done or make their own and take these into school. At the same time they must ensure that their own subject knowledge on the issue they are covering is sufficient. A recent group of PGCE students identified the following opportunities for teaching about democracy and the law:

- Taking a forthcoming lesson on RE where the focus is the ten commandments, discuss which of these are still important today and why. Link to how laws are made today and by whom.
- Extend a topic on Victorians to include sessions on justice and the law. This could include punishments at the time (eg transportation for stealing vegetables) and changes to the law.
- As part of a local study, extend this to include a visit to Bodmin gaol. Who is in the gaol? Why are they there? What do they do there? Who pays?
- Use the opportunity provided by forthcoming local elections, when the school hall is used for voting, to explain what they are about and show children the ballot boxes, voting slips etc
- Use a thinking circle to allow children to discuss the invasion on Iraq. Get children to use specific websites to find out more. Keep a bulletin board for items in the news which explain what is happening now in Iraq.
- Look at accounts of the countryside march- plan writing frames for each group of people who had an interest in it and ask children to represent these groups, completing the frames and stating their case at a central meeting.

Feedback from both trainees and teachers from their work in schools is nearly always positive. Trainees are often surprised by the level of children's thinking and their ability to discuss what can be quite complex issues. They are also surprised at how much children enjoy the work. Difficulties for both trainees and teachers centre on the demands of the rest of the curriculum (in terms of time) and support from other teachers. They report that it can be difficult to convince other staff of the value of this kind of work. Some staff see existing work in PSHE as being sufficient to cover citizenship and require convincing that teaching about democracy and the law is necessary, possible and even enjoyable!

In summary, the feedback from trainees and teachers after their work in schools and in their written assignments has convinced me of the importance of ensuring that the teaching of democracy and the law is covered in every course on citizenship education. This is a new area for most of our trainees and one which deserves sufficient time to allow them to get to grips with their own knowledge and appropriate active learning methodologies. The benefits are two fold: the trainees themselves become more politically aware as a result of their own learning and the children they teach become better informed. If education for citizenship is to meet its aim of creating a generation of informed, politically literate and active young people, then the challenge is for those in education at all levels – policy makers, teacher educators and teachers - to give education for citizenship the time and support it deserves.

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Talbot, M. and Tate, N. (1997) 'Shared values in a pluralist society?' in R. Smith, and P. Standish (eds) *Teaching Right and Wrong: Moral Education in the Balance*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham.

## **Appendix 1 teaching about democracy and the law:**

### **Recommended reading**

Buckingham, D. (2000) *The Making of Citizens: Young People, News and Politics*, London: Routledge.

Cogan, J. and Derricott, R. (2000) *Citizenship for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: An International Perspective on Education*, London: Kogan Paul.

Claire, H. (2001) *Not Aliens: Primary School Children and the Citizenship/PSHE Curriculum*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

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Crick, B. (2000) *Essays on Citizenship*. London: Continuum.

Harber, C. (ed) (1998) *Voices for Democracy*, Nottingham: Education Now.

Osler, A. (ed) (2000) *Citizenship and Democracy in Schools: diversity, identity, equality*, Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.

Parekh, B. (2000) *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory*, London: Macmillan Press.

### **Useful websites**

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) for resources from Amnesty International

[www.antislavery.org](http://www.antislavery.org) for many good materials which relate to controversial, political issues

[www.citfou.org.uk](http://www.citfou.org.uk) Citizenship Foundation provides case studies and competitions for students:

[www.comicrelief.com/education](http://www.comicrelief.com/education) for a variety of lesson plans on topical issues and a children's interactive site

[www.citizen.org.uk](http://www.citizen.org.uk) Institute for Citizenship provides resources and training

[www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/citizenship) for news, resources, other website links related to citizenship

[www.hansardsociety.org.uk](http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk) Hansard Society aims to educate about parliament and government, provides materials for schools to run mock elections:

[www.explore.parliament.uk](http://www.explore.parliament.uk) for teachers' resources and activities for students (both primary and secondary) on all aspects of parliament.

[www.number-10.gov.uk/](http://www.number-10.gov.uk/) is a young person's guide to Downing Street and British politics. Students can put questions to a minister and decide what they would do if they were prime minister.

[www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/) is aimed at children 6-16, is interactive and has many resources and links to useful sites.

[www.learn.co.uk/topical/](http://www.learn.co.uk/topical/) for up to date topical and political issues for children to debate

## **Appendix 2:**

### **Current issues: put it to the cabinet**

#### Purpose

- To help pupils understand how Parliament works
- To demonstrate the work of cabinet ministers and their departments
- To link the work of government to current events

#### Preparation

You will need information about Parliament (see [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk)) and newspaper cuttings relating to such issues as health, transport, education, international news.

#### Procedure

Whole class: initial brainstorm:

What is Parliament? Who is our prime minister? What is an M.P.? How many are there? Who is our M.P.? What does he/she do?

Give out information as needed (e.g. there are currently 657 M.Ps, the main work of Parliament is to make laws, debate current affairs and examine the work of the government and proposals from the EU). Then ask what the difference is between Parliament and the government. Explain that while Parliament is composed of all elected MPs, the government is made up from the political party which won the last election and its most senior members are the cabinet. This is like the senior management of the school. Just as a school has a head of maths, head of history etc, the cabinet has people responsible for different areas. There are about 24 cabinet members. Ask pupils to think of five possible areas they could be in charge of.

Collect their ideas and explain that some of the departments are:

- education and skills
- home affairs
- environment, food and rural affairs
- health
- culture, media and sport
- defence
- international development
- transport

Do they know who any of the current ministers for these departments are? Explain that ministers often only stay in their post for four years and that they are informed by civil servants who may work for a lifetime in one department.

In groups, pupils should examine newspaper cuttings about current issues and decide which government department would need to deal with each one. They select which they think is the most pressing issue and write a short statement to the cabinet minister responsible requesting action or money.

*Plenary:* groups report back

- Which issues did you think were important? Why?
- Of all the issues in the papers, which is most important in the long term?

- What kind of arguments might persuade a cabinet minister to take action?
- Can governments solve all problems? Why? Why not?

Pupils can then use the website [www.number-10.gov.uk](http://www.number-10.gov.uk) and put questions to the cabinet minister currently on line

*This activity is taken from Clough, N. and Holden, C (2002) Education for Citizenship: Ideas into Action. London, RoutledgeFalmer. There are other ideas for teaching about democracy and the law in chapters four and six of this book.*

### **Appendix 3: Democracy**

The following activity can be used with trainees to demonstrate that democracy involves much more than majority rule. Participants should be asked to rank the statements in a diamond formation, putting the statement they think is most important at the top, followed by the next two most important, then three statements in the middle, then two and finally one at the bottom. They then discuss the reasons for their selection.

#### *A core definition*

The word democracy has many meanings, but in the modern world it means that the ultimate authority in political affairs rightfully belongs to citizens. This is because the government has been elected by the majority of the adults governed. It is based on the view that most human beings are responsible, that their views deserve recognition and that they have a right to choose their government.

#### *A matter of degree*

In any democracy there are debates about who can vote and old democracies like the UK have 'undemocratic' features, for example, a hereditary monarch as Head of State.

#### *Freely given consent*

If a government is to be elected by the people of the country, the people must have what is called 'freely given consent'. This means adults may vote for the party of their choice without fear of violence or threats. It also means there must be freedom of speech for the press.

#### *Participation*

Participation in a democracy is essential as otherwise individuals may become disinterested. We regard a country as democratic if all adults are able to vote, regardless of race, gender, religion, or property.

#### *Parliamentary democracy*

The parliamentary system of government is followed in Britain. The voters elect members of parliament (MPs). These members in turn, elect a prime minister who chooses ministers for his cabinet from the MPs.

#### *Democracy and the press*

It is especially difficult to define the role of the press in a democratic society. Ideally, a free press should be responsible to truth, balanced, fair, and careful to distinguish between reports of fact and statements of political opinion. However, this does not

always happen as newspapers can try to sway people's opinions by what they choose to print.

#### *Checks and balances*

In representative democracy, government is checked in many ways- for example there may be two elected assemblies or national and regional governments.

#### *Pressure groups.*

Another important way of checking government is by forming pressure groups to protect interests and causes- whether in the workplace (for example, trade unions) or as concerned citizens (for example, the RSPCA).

#### *Arguments against democracy*

Some people argue that most human beings are not intelligent enough to choose who should govern and that good government is so complex that only a few people are capable of doing it. But if this is the case, who will control the government?

*This activity is adapted from Clough, N. and Holden, C (2002) Education for Citizenship: Ideas into Action. London, RoutledgeFalmer.*

## **Appendix 4**

### **Political action: campaigning for change**

#### *Purpose*

- To help pupils appreciate that there are many different ways of campaigning for change, both inside and outside the law
- To help pupils learn about different courses of action that people have taken in relation to local issues
- To teach the skills of listening and advocacy

#### *Preparation*

You will need the enclosed background information about the building of the A30 Honiton bypass and writing frames for each group of people.

#### *Procedure*

With the whole class, have an initial discussion about some of the controversial campaigns that are current (e.g. fox hunting, GM crops, or a current local issue). Brainstorm ways that people may make their feelings heard about such issues (letters to press, to MPs, protests etc) and establish that there are many different ways of expressing opinions, some of which may be legal and some of which may involve breaking the law.

Explain that today they are going to look at a real example where people took different forms of political action. Give the class the background to the building of the Honiton bypass (see below). Explain that it made the national news because not everyone agreed with the decisions of the government to build the road. Many people campaigned both for and against the new road and a group of mainly young people took political action in their own way.

Divide the class into groups representing;

- the sheriff and local police
- local residents
- the animals
- the protestors
- the road builders
- children and teachers of the nearby primary school
- the department of transport and the environment

Each group has a writing frame detailing who they are. This asks them to think about their own point of view, consider the views of others and make a recommendation as to what should be done. Explain that they have 15-20 minutes to complete this, in readiness for the visiting press (played by the teacher or course leader). Each group chooses a spokesperson, then the visiting 'press' arrives to question each group in turn. The press can at this point either accept all the views and depart, thus ending the session, or can turn the discussion into a more active debate, encouraging pupils to defend or argue their case more vociferously. It could end in a vote or could be dramatised for presentation to a wider audience.

#### *Plenary*

- How did it feel to have to represent a certain group (especially if their opinions differed from yours)?
- What must you consider in order to make a good case?
- In what way did the values of the different groups vary?
- Did anyone change his/her mind as a result of hearing another point of view?
- Which groups were acting outside of the law? Was this right?
- What would you do if a similar situation arose in your area?

#### **Background information:**

During the academic year of 1996-97 children in a small primary school in a Devon village found that they had a new community living on their doorstep - a community of protestors against the building of a new high road through 'Fair Mile' to provide relief for the overstretched A30 route between Honiton and Exeter. A teacher in the school commented

*'The impact of traffic on the road had worsened in the past few years. The pressure was felt throughout the year, not just in the summer months. There had been bad accidents and people had been killed. At the same time it was a beautiful location. Nearly all the local people wanted a new road but not through or near their village. Farmers were anxious about their land. There was a fear that the new road would attract more traffic. The protest was not violent. There was no damage to property. Locals were impressed that the protestors were prepared to put their lives on the line. But they were seen as outsiders'.*

After much media interest and a delay of several weeks, the protestors were removed peacefully and the road was built. The protestors moved on to other sites where they campaigned for the environment in a similar way and Swampy, their spokesperson, became, for a short time, a well known figure.

NB; each of the writing frames below would take up a page of A4, with the three statements spread out to allow space for writing.

*The sheriff and local police*

It is your duty to carry out the law which means you must move the protestors who are obstructing the road builders. You don't want to use violence, so you need to persuade them to leave their trees and tunnels peacefully, explaining that they are trespassing and this is against the law. You need to put a good case to the press so that they will help persuade the protestors to move.

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*Local residents*

Some of you are for the road and some against, although you all agree that the current road is very congested. One of you had a good friend killed in an accident on the current road and you want the new road built. Another of you wants the road built but to take another route so that this stretch of woodland is preserved. Another thinks the new wider road will only attract more traffic. You have to see if you can agree a case to put to the press.

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*The animals (primary children only)*

*You are aware of what is happening - you have seen the bulldozers and you know what this means. You are worried about losing your habitat, your hedges, trees, streams and open fields. If you move to a new area you will be harassed by other animals who live there. Can you make a case on TV? Can you alert viewers to what is happening?*

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*The protestors*

You feel strongly that too much of Britain is being covered in concrete, that there are too many roads and that some beautiful places are being destroyed. You feel that animals have rights as well as humans. You are living in tunnels you have dug across the pathway that the bulldozers are clearing. You don't feel that writing letters to politicians or newspapers does any good and you are prepared to risk your lives to

save this piece of woodland. You believe that press coverage will help your cause.

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*The road builders*

Your job is to build roads and you want to get on with what you have been paid to do. Some of you support the new road as you feel that there has been a public consultation and people have had a chance to make their views heard, so the road should be built. Others are worried about the protestors being hurt if there is a violent confrontation and have some sympathy for their view. What should you say to the press?

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*The teachers of the nearby school*

You are aware of what is going on and feel that the children in your school ought to be informed about controversial and political local issues. You have decided to let your pupils do a project on the new road, interviewing parents, the local sheriff and others. However you are worried that parents and the media may disapprove. The press is interested in what you are doing and is coming to find out more. What will you say?

We have done this work because ...

We understand that some people might worry about this because...

But all in all we feel that ...

*The department of transport and the environment*

You have carried out all the correct procedures. There has been an inquiry into the building of the road, objections have been listened to and some amendments to the original plans made. The scheme has been costed and you wish it to go ahead. You feel annoyed that some people have decided they are 'above the law' and have put their own lives at risk as well as those of the police. You are also annoyed about the costs to taxpayer caused by this protest. You wish the matter to be resolved quickly. What will you tell the press?

We would like to argue that...

We understand it will be difficult for...

Therefore we think the best solution would be...

*This activity is adapted from Clough, N. and Holden, C (2002) Education for Citizenship: Ideas into Action. London, RoutledgeFalmer.*

## **Appendix 5**

### **Understanding the law: porridge and prison**

*Purpose:*

- To encourage pupils to think about laws and why we have them;
- To provide information about the roles of people involved in the justice system;
- To help children understand how courts work;
- To foster creative thinking, discussion and co-operative working;

*Preparation*

You will need:

- Sets of 'Whose job is it?' (see below)
- A copy of Goldilocks and the Three Bears

*Procedure*

Have an initial discussion on what it means to break the law. Collect some examples. What might happen to people who break the law? Who decides if they are guilty or not guilty?

Then give out the set of cards (below) to each group of about 3 children and explain that they must match each person against their role. This should only take each group about 5 minutes, after which check their understanding. In particular check their understanding of 'sentence', 'guilty, not guilty' and 'verdict'. Ensure that all words new to the class are recorded, with definitions.

Where do people who are accused of breaking the law go to put their case? Move on to discuss courtrooms and what happens there. What courtrooms or court cases have they seen on TV? Explain that they are going to look at a 'famous' criminal case to

help understand how we weigh up evidence and how courts work. The case for today is:

*'Babe E. Bear v Gold. E. Locks:*

*Gold E. Locks is charged with bad manners. She entered Bear's home uninvited, ate Babe E. Bear's porridge, broke his chair and slept in his bed.*

Explain that, as in real courts, there will be a prosecution and a defence. The prosecution team has to argue that the accused (Gold. E. Locks) has done wrong and call witnesses to prove this, one of whom is Babe E. Bear. The defence team has to defend the accused. If she is found guilty, they will argue that there were reasons for what she did and she is now sorry.

Ask for volunteers for the various roles before you read the story, so each person listens to the relevant evidence to help them make their case in court:

- the two police officers who caught Ms Locks
- the prosecuting team of lawyers- presenting the case for Babe E. Bear
- the defence team of lawyers- defending Ms Locks
- the witnesses for the defence: Babe E. Bear, Mr Bear, Mrs Bear
- the witnesses for the prosecution: Mr and Mrs Locks

Those who do not wish to have a role can just listen and give their opinions afterwards on the mock trial, or they can become the jury if you want to introduce the concept of trial by jury (in which case the teacher should play the part of a judge rather than a magistrate).

Read the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears (or recap on what happened- remember not all children will have had this as part of their infant reading). Allow time for each group to prepare its case. Then the magistrate (or judge) calls first the prosecution and then the defence to put its case and call witnesses. You can have special chairs for the lawyers, a 'dock' for the accused and a witness stand for witnesses, or have everyone seated in semi circle round tables. When everyone has spoken, the magistrate sums up and decides whether the accused is guilty or not. He or she then decides the sentence (or the judge calls on the jury to deliver their verdict and decides the sentence).

*Plenary*

- Was the trial fair?
- Was the sentence fair? What should her punishment be?
- Who had good arguments? Why?
- What was difficult about the role you had to play?
- Is what way is the law useful?

*This activity was developed from an idea on the website:*

[www.nationalmocktrial.org/cases](http://www.nationalmocktrial.org/cases)

**Whose job is it?**

**If you were accused of committing a crime, what would these people do?**

<i>Defence lawyer</i>	This person would ask you about what happened, advise you and defend you
<i>Police Officer</i>	This person would be responsible for arresting and interviewing you
<i>Magistrate</i>	If your case was less serious, this person would hear it. He/she decides whether or not you are guilty and passes sentence on you.
<i>Probation Officer</i>	This person supervises certain types of sentence and would try to rehabilitate you in the community.
<i>Judge</i>	This person would hear your case, if it was more serious. A jury would decide whether or not you were guilty, but this person passes the sentence.
<i>Prosecution lawyer</i>	This person would present the case for the prosecution, ie against you.

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