

Integration and Citizenship in the Classroom & on the Sports Field

Policies and Practices for a more Respectful, Collaborative society

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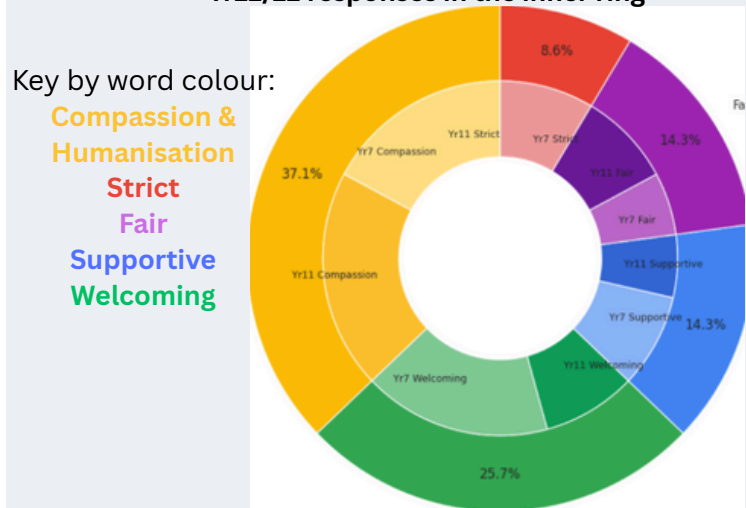
This study encourages critical-thinking, collaborative citizenship, and a multi-directional, multi-dimensional integration experience. It contests toxicity, tribalism, and exclusivity in current political debate, particularly regarding immigration policy. 21st century studies reveal increasingly inclusive and fluid boundaries and definitions of Britishness. Models for integration emphasise two-way processes of adaptation, whilst citizenship initiatives stress democratic practices and respectful discussion. However, reluctance in policy implementation has seen corresponding initiatives have insufficient impact to transform social relations. Education and sport are examples where integratory and empowering potential has been identified, but under utilised, hence the motivation behind this report.

Citizenship Education

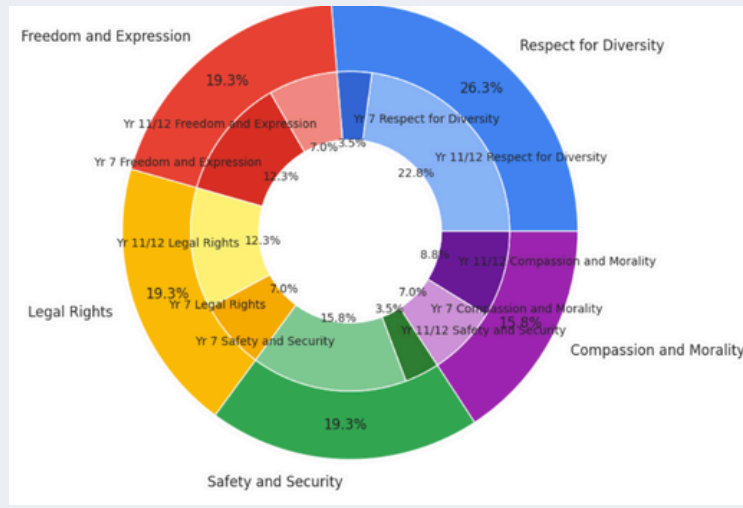
Context and methodology: though compulsory until 16, academics indicate citizenship education is de-prioritised in a result-driven education system, and misguided in emphasising 'Fundamental British Values.' Many re-imagine the motivators behind education, and form collaborative, globally aware learning models. This study draws on surveys and classroom activities with Year 7, 11, and 12 students at a high-performing state school. It reveals student perception and attitudes towards immigration and citizenship education, and encourages them to brainstorm questions for the *Life in the UK* test, and pedagogical approaches to citizenship education

- Students are uncertain about immigration, though consider it important. Whilst broadly well-informed, crucial knowledge gaps could be addressed to formulate more well-informed imaginations, and opinions.
- Students see content linked to citizenship education, human rights, law, and social values, as crucial to learn about. They believe these requires stronger installation in their education. They ask for a diverse, collaborative citizenship curriculum, grounded in real-life examples.
- Students reject the current *Life in the UK test*, and are sceptical of the concept. Their suggestions emphasise legal and civic content, with accessible cultural and historical content that is adaptive to modern sources of Britishness.

Student's preferred government attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees, broken into Yr 7 and Yr11/12 responses in the inner ring



Students key values and human rights for citizenship education, thematically grouped



Results and wider reading inform policy recommendations and teaching approaches recommended below:

- The Government must rethink citizenship education, and its approach to education at large. This includes scrapping or reframing 'Fundamental British Values,' and replacing the current GCSE with a compulsory 'independent student project,' based on wider community interaction and impact.
- Curriculum content needs to be avoid being a fixed imposition. It should give schools agency to adapt the subject to their own environment. Key national content should be informed by conversation with students and teachers. It must encourage opportunities to develop critical thinking; impactful democratic participation; and understanding of diverse global and national histories and identities.
- Teaching approaches should emphasise learning through respectful dialogue, and give students ownership of their own education through including them in planning lesson content and style.

Sport For Refugee & Asylum Seeker Integration

Context and methodology: though researchers avoid evangelising sports, various social benefits capable of enhancing integration and social cohesion have been identified. Some studies focus on sport's potential to encourage positive and meaningful intergroup contact, whereas others emphasise the enjoyment and belonging participants feel if welcoming environments are facilitated. Through interviews, questionnaires, and observations with three sports programmes aimed at supporting refugees and asylum seekers, this study looks to understand the impacts, effective teaching practices, and challenges associated with the programmes.

Programmes all emphasised and evidenced their integratory value, though benefits emphasised ranged across participants and deliverers. Key outcomes and facilitators include:

- Support with emotional wellbeing through feelings of happiness and relaxation, with programmes acting as safe spaces, and fostering inclusive friendship formations
- Forging familial belonging for participants, who are given a platform through respectful environments to express their identity, whilst adapting to and collaborating with others through a shared love of sport.
- Development of personal skills, ranging from behavioural values like self-confidence and tolerance, to empowerment through sporting attainments, and practical communicative and linguistic competences.
- When structured well, programmes operate as community assets, providing a base from which further ties and integratory experiences can be developed

"This club makes me feel important and gives me hope for my future. Every time I come here, I know my teammates care about me. It helps me feel at home in England."

"This club makes me feel hopeful about tomorrow. Every match shows that refugees can do good things for local people. I am proud to be part of this team and this community."

Results and recommendations for governments, sporting governing bodies, and programme administrators

- The successes of these programmes illustrates the need for widespread administration, ensuring sufficient subsidies and facilities.
- Key principles should be co-operation internally, and with the wider community. Coaches roles are crucial, and should create spaces of welcoming, safety and respect, whilst being adaptable to participant's needs, and offer opportunities for improvement.

Overall Conclusions and recommendations

Across education and sport, respect and empowerment emerge as non-negotiables for effective integration and citizenship-building. These can be promoted widely through:

- Creating national spaces for Britishness to be discussed and contested, such as public contribution to redesigning the *Life in the UK* test, and the creation of a 'UK day'
- Integration policy that prioritises a two-way process of adaptation.
- Ensuring political culture and government messaging is demonstrative of the respectful, deliberative, and inclusive nation they should aspire to build.

These practices and platforms provide foundations for inclusive dialogue, shared belonging, and evolving identities. By investing in these spaces, Britain can move toward a model of citizenship that values diversity, cultivates trust, and strengthens social fabric.

Key Reading:

On multi-culturalism and citizenship: Parekh, Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Cantle, Ted, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team* (London: Home Office, 2001)
On Education: Fullan, Michael, *The Right Drivers for Whole System Success* (Ontario: Centre for Strategic Education, 2021).; Tarozzi, Massimiliano, and Carlos Torres, *Global Citizenship Education and the Crises of Multiculturalism: Comparative Perspectives* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016).
On Sports and Refugee Programmes: Spaaij, Ramón et al., 'Sport, refugees, and forced migration: a critical review of the literature', *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 1 (2019); Doidge, Mark, Marc Keech and Elisa Sandri, 'Active integration': sport clubs taking an active role in the integration of refugees, *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 12.2 (2020), 305-19.