

# Active Citizenship and Young People:

## The Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study 2006



National Foundation  
for Educational  
Research

### The Views of Young People

The Citizenship Longitudinal Study is a nine-year long research project which is finding out about young people's views and experiences of citizenship education. Last year over 13,000 Year 9 students (aged 13 to 14 years old) who first filled in a questionnaire when they were in Year 7, gave us their opinions by filling in a questionnaire again.

#### Learning about citizenship

Young people told us they were more likely to have heard of citizenship by the time they were in Year 9 (2005) than they had been in Year 7 (2003). Twenty four % of students said that they had learned about citizenship 'a lot' in 2005, compared to only 16 % in 2003.

#### Understanding citizenship

Students told us they were **most likely** to think that citizenship meant learning about the law, and behaving fairly and well. Their top three responses were that citizenship is about:

Fair treatment  
for all  
(35%)

Being a good  
citizen  
(33%)

Responsibilities and  
obeying the law  
(27%)

### What does citizenship mean to you?

Young people said they were **least likely** to think that citizenship meant being active and involved. Their bottom two responses were that citizenship is about:

Being active in  
the community  
(15%)

Voting, politics  
and government  
(10%)

As well as this, around 120 students across the country took part in face-to-face group discussions, and gave their views on citizenship education.

#### Being active

- Despite the low numbers of students who connected 'citizenship' with active participation in the questionnaires, face-to-face discussions with students highlighted that they did think the following things were important:
  - Belonging to a community (especially the school community).
  - Belonging to and caring about their local neighbourhoods.
  - Being asked about, and allowed to have a say in, things that affected them (especially in school).
  - Being given opportunities to take part in their schools and communities, and to take responsibility for themselves and other students.

**Here are some of the things that students said about being 'active citizens' in their schools:**



**How much do you, or your friends, agree with these views? How do they compare with what happens in your school? Think about why you agree or disagree.**

**More Information:**

If you would like more information please go to:  
<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-areas/citizenship/>