

■ Georgina Westbrook

# Getting practical – Improving Practical work in Science Programme: the story so far

*'Getting Practical' is the new and somewhat shorter name for the Getting Practical – Improving Practical Work in Science programme referred to in earlier editions of EiS.*

Welcome to the *Getting Practical* update section, in which we tell you what the programme has achieved and how it is influencing the teaching of practical science. The last couple of months have seen the programme launch and begin to make itself known to science teachers across the country.

The Centre for Science Education at Sheffield Hallam University, working with Robin Millar from the University of York, has started work on mapping the current provision of practical science work in schools and, through working with a teacher reference group, is producing detailed input for the continuing professional development programme design. A team from the National Science Learning Centre is responsible for designing the training package and this will be ready for use in the first wave of *Train the Trainer* sessions scheduled for the autumn term 2009. This part of the programme builds on the work of SCORE and its *Practical Science Framework (Getting Practical)*, which consists of two booklets of

resources, one at primary and one at secondary level, and a report with key messages and recommendations about improving the quality and effectiveness of practical science work in schools.

*Getting Practical* is currently recruiting enthusiastic secondary and primary teachers experienced in practical science to become trainers through the *Train the Trainer* courses on offer at the regional Science Learning Centres. Trainer recruits will become familiar with the training package and how it has been designed. They will be given plenty of advice on how to run the *Getting Practical* professional development events in their locality and how to attract teachers and schools to take part in the programme. Teachers with extensive experience, education consultancy experience or Advanced Skills Teacher status are welcome to apply. The training is being offered free of charge by the regional Science Learning Centres.

From January 2010, the *Getting Practical* trainers will start to run professional development events in their local areas. These events will be offered without charge and will be open to teachers, technicians and teaching assistants who are looking to improve the quality and effectiveness of their practical science teaching. Schools wishing to register an interest in this part of the programme can contact us and we will pass on details of local professional development events when they become available. We are particularly keen to hear from teachers early on in their careers and those who do not often engage with CPD programmes at their schools.

The *Getting Practical* programme will be evaluated independently by the Institute of Education based at the University of London. The team of evaluators will meet the members of some science departments before they take on the *Getting Practical* programme and subsequently observe how the training

package is then used to enhance the science teaching in that school. Schools are invited to apply to become one of the key hosts for the evaluation team and hence become involved in influencing the direction of the programme.

To find more information about the *Getting Practical* programme, visit our website at [www.gettingpractical.org.uk](http://www.gettingpractical.org.uk) (going live in the autumn term 2009). To apply to become a trainer, register your interest regarding the Professional Development events or to offer your school as a host for the evaluation team, contact Kirstie Hampson: 01707 288524 or e-mail [kirstiehampson@ase.org.uk](mailto:kirstiehampson@ase.org.uk)

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### New Editor of Primary Science

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Tara Lievesley as the new Editor of *PS*. Tara takes over the position from September 2009.

There will be more about Tara as well as a tribute to Alan Peacock, the retiring Editor, in the November issue of *EiS*.

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Georgina Westbrook is Programme Manager: Communications for the *Getting Practical – Improving Practical Work in Science* programme. E-mail [georginawestbrook@ase.org.uk](mailto:georginawestbrook@ase.org.uk)