



Focus on... Climate change and sustainable practice

The first thing I need to write is that it is great to be back as Editor of *Primary Science*! I am particularly excited by this issue, which is at the heart of my own areas of research and practice. The theme of this issue raises a number of aspects of climate change and sustainability education that indicate they are not 'easy'. If they were, perhaps we would not be in the current global crisis. It is imperative when teaching about such issues that, despite the severity of the situation, hope and possibility are woven into our teaching. I hope that, after reading some of the articles, there is a sense of 'this can be done *and* done well'.

The opening article of this issue highlights the value of bold leadership as Emma Vyvyan describes how her school was opened and developed around a culture that focuses on the importance and value of our environment. Subsequent articles consider the need for careful consideration of implementation in order to achieve high-quality teaching and learning in this area. Esther Gray shares her reflections of doing just this, and examples from one of the Northern Star Academies Trust's head teachers, Mark Whittaker, demonstrate the need for such content to be closely linked with the national curriculum. Off the shelf is simply not good enough for our children and young people who are demanding high-quality climate change education. He also shares learnings about one of his passions, outdoor learning; and a key lesson for us all is that simply being in the outdoors does not mean children are learning about it, sustainability or climate change. Such content should be afforded the same respect in planning as any other.

Sustainability as a concept is being increasingly recognised as problematic: definitions remain unclear,

dated and western-centric, and the term is used as a catch all. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) are often cited as a basis for teaching about sustainability or climate change; however, recent updates indicate that more than 80% of these are not on target to be met globally. We need to be mindful of what we are using as the foundation for our teaching. In business and estates, it can mean something specific operationally and Julie Rowlandson explores how to avoid conflation of ideas. We often see sustainability and climate change being used interchangeably and they are simply very different. Julie's think piece is followed by Rebecca Cornwell reflecting on how she has brought learning about sustainability to life with real-life examples. Next, Carol Davenport considers how concepts can be explored through a gamification approach. Then, opportunities for making links between nature, art and science are outlined in the article by Verity Jones and colleagues.

A very timely article from Jennie Golding concludes the issue, considering what we can learn about primary science from TIMMS data. Perhaps it is time to really think about the data and evidence that supports what makes good-quality climate change education too.

As we move forward into the new academic year, the teaching profession will be challenged more than ever. There are increasing, competing demands on schools in terms of financial resource, SEND funding and provision, and the need to continue demonstrating improvements in attainment. The list goes on. What these articles show is that, with the vision of school leadership teams, their support and ambition, climate change education can also form one of the priorities.

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