

Famous scientists

When we watch television, go to a music concert or visit the cinema it is easy to be in awe of the people we see and what they are doing. There is something that can be so engaging and wondrous about them, it is a challenge to articulate. We all have famous people we hold in the highest regard. Most of us don't meet them or, if we do, it is only fleetingly, and yet their impact on our lives is no less because of that, and we have a sense of knowing them.

There are others we perhaps hear on the radio or interviewed in the media who inspire us: ordinary people who have done great things or succeeded in the face of adversity. People who are not famous, not seeking out the media spotlight, but simply doing inspiring things and changing lives. There are the people who have made significant medical breakthroughs, bringing us the next step closer to identifying the gene for a certain condition or a treatment for a disease; all can inspire and have an impact on us.

Through my career I have been very lucky to meet people who have supported my professional journey and been very inspirational. A few of them are famous; most are not. Some of them are the people I meet at conferences, the teachers who attend courses, the students I train throughout the year. A few of these have really helped shaped my thinking and made me look at life in different ways – either through challenging my thinking, encouraging me or presenting opportunities and opening doors. All of us have these people in our lives. Sometimes we just need to look a bit differently to see them in this way. This issue has the theme 'Famous scientists' and it has

been a great delight to put it together with such a range of articles. There are three focusing on the use of famous scientists as a means for teaching and one that highlights the role that children's television can play in offering the opportunity to find science in non-science-focused programmes. Now, with famous scientists as part of the National Curriculum in England, it is imperative that children have a sense of the contributions made to their lives by scientists from the past and there is great scope for looking at the famous scientists of today. But children

It is imperative that children have a sense of the contributions made to their lives by scientists from the past and there is great scope for looking at the famous scientists of today.

should also be made aware of the science going on all around them – the contributions made every day by those who will remain unknown, those who are working to change our lives for the better and those who are behind making the big breakthroughs happen.

Most of all, I think that there should be appreciation of what you, as teachers, do to change and impact on the lives of learners. We probably all carry memories of teachers, some good and some bad!

But you are the people who are shaping

our children's futures. You are supporting and inspiring the famous scientists of the future. You are nurturing the people who will become the inspiration, the awesome and the wondrous. There are people in your schools who, even if they do not become famous, will become the people who influence others at conferences, attending courses or in their working lives. Being famous certainly permits access into everyday lives with great potential for a sense of value. But being a class teacher of primary school children, in an increasingly technological and scientific world, is priceless.