

## Materials science

**L**ego® has provided the building blocks of many children's early years. Since the 1930s children have been making houses, zoos, boats, space rockets and whatever else their imaginations let them form. These little blocks of plastic have however evolved: it seems that children no longer have a carrier bag full of the multi-coloured bricks but rather have specific kits to build a Millennium Falcon, the Guggenheim Museum or a Batgirl Secret Bunker. These are very impressive end-products indeed, but there is a little part of me that is saddened by the lack of creation by little hands of structures reflecting some of the fantasy, imagination and visualisation of their amazingly open minds.

The last few days, as I write this, have very much involved primary science immersion for me. I have spent two days at the Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) conference learning about the new awards and working with people who are so committed to the primary science cause that it is impossible to come away feeling anything other than enthused. An Editorial Board meeting for *Primary Science* following the conference was equally stimulating and thought provoking. What occurred to me following these days is how so many people in this science community are out in schools and the wider world of education pushing back against this kit approach to teaching primary science.

There is an increasing move away from there being one way of teaching science: the fair test is challenged by a range of enquiry types. Letting the children generate their own questions, design approaches and lead their learning and there being potentially a variety of outcomes

is not only allowed, but expected and encouraged. Primary science is moving to the carrier bag of Lego approach. Let the children create, let them shape and let them produce something meaningful to them.

As champions of good primary science, we all act as individual Lego blocks coming together to make a stronger structure, but one that is able to reshape and reform in response to the pressures that come from curriculum change and shifts in government demand. This is something that cannot be done if there are fixed views of the one right outcome.

This issue has articles on the theme of 'materials science', among others, and it was thinking about this that prompted me to think about building, leading to the Lego analogy. I hope that the articles within this issue will give you an opportunity to build upon your existing knowledge of this area of science. There are some lovely ideas presented and it gives

me great pleasure to include Claire Walker's prize-winning investigation, which is very timely as the trees are shedding their leaves and we move firmly towards winter (although admittedly this started in June this year!). This start to the academic year always feels long – the run from September to December is such a drawn-out term. But it is a new year and with that comes the opportunity to do new things:

*What new things will you will build in primary science this year?*

*How will you help the children to create and let their thinking shape the outcomes?*

*How can you support your colleagues in having the confidence to welcome the openness of a wide variety of enquiry and child-led learning?*

