FOCUS on...

Raising the profile

Welcome to 2021 from all of us at *Primary Science*! After the ASE conference early in January we have had a most positive start to engaging with science education across the age phases. This issue focuses on 'raising the profile' of science and after the announcement at the end of 2020 regarding the removal of the need for teacher assessment it seems very timely. Once again, the status of science in primary schools feels a little threatened, with quite a clear message that it is not as much of a 'core' subject as others. However, what we also see is that there is an opportunity to further embed good practice around assessment of science and that it should, as always, be embedded within the teaching across the year. We know that science attainment is far more than a score at the end of the year – more than a tick in the 'met' box. It is now that bodies such as the ASE and PSQM come into their own, supporting the primary science community when they face further challenges.

The first article in this issue is a conversation with Professor Ben Feringa. I interviewed him in June 2020 and have to say that he is one of the most inspirational people I have ever met. His story speaks for itself. What overwhelmed me was his generosity with his time and willingness to share, and even more so his respect for primary teachers and recognition that the teaching profession is the pivot for future brilliance. In his concluding remarks, he states '*Primary school teachers are real heroes as they set the children on the road to their future*'. His journey from a farm in the Netherlands to Nobel Prize winner is testament to this. You will read this interview and smile.

This issue also introduces ways in which the profile of science can be enhanced by the efforts of one teacher through to bringing in support from larger organisations. Any step, no matter how small, is a step in the right direction. Within the ASE we try to work closely with other committees and the *Primary Science* Editorial Board and the Primary Science Education Committee are clearly closely aligned. We have taken the opportunity to introduce some of the committee to you; we hope that you will see their journeys to becoming part of the ASE in this way as an inspiration and take the next steps to become more involved yourself, whether on a regional or national level.

Change is something that we have had to learn to adapt to in 2020. Never did we think that we would be teaching online, part of a national lockdown (twice!), and challenged by whole-class absences at the drop of a hat. And that is all before we consider the emotional concerns of loved ones around us. One thing I hope we have learned is that as individuals we are more resilient than we thought; I certainly know that many of the learners in front of us have coped with these changes amazingly well. A crystal ball would be great to see how 2021 will pan out. As time marches on, one thing that we can see is how science has supported these changes, with the developments of technology, the advances in the medical understanding of how COVID-19 functions and is transmitted, which drugs can help to treat it and the generation of a vaccine to prevent it. There is so much science to learn from and in future years it will provide a really meaningful context in which to teach many aspects of working scientifically and conceptual knowledge.

I know that I am preaching to the converted here regarding primary science but as the changes happen, and will keep happening, make sure that science is still there on the agenda. Take it on the journey with you and think about what you can do within your school to raise its profile just a little bit more.

Leigh Hoath