

# Editorial

Welcome to March *EiS*!

As I write this editorial, it is nearly two years since the UK first went into lockdown. It has been an incredibly hard period for many and, with Covid rates continuing to soar in many schools, the first half of this spring term has been a particularly challenging one in education.

Since the start of the pandemic, teachers and technicians have worked tirelessly to support students. As well as enabling young people to access learning in and outside the classroom, we've also seen people taking on many other roles such as organising Covid testing and food parcels, as well as having to pivot activities and approaches at the drop of a hat as guidance and restrictions changed. And all of this while managing their own personal challenges outside school. I continue to be inspired by the stories of excellent science education against the odds, and proud of the key role that our community has played in supporting young people through this difficult time. I'm also proud of the way that ASE has continued to provide support across our community, both in terms of practical help and advice on such critical issues as wellbeing, diversity and inclusion.

This year's Annual Conference has been a case in point; despite the sudden arrival of the Omicron variant threatening to throw us off course, we were determined to deliver a fantastic professional learning opportunity for delegates. Thank you to everyone who helped us to make this happen and played a part in what has turned out to be a wonderful five days of online support and inspiration. In this issue of *EiS*, delayed until March in order to catch the later sessions, we take a look at a few of the highlights.

One of the areas covered by this year's Conference programme has of course been addressing the significant and long-term impact of Covid-19 on young people's education and we've also continued to do this through our wider projects and activities. In this issue, Neil Wade describes the BEST STEPS and NEXT BEST STEPS resources produced by our 11-19 Committee over the pandemic, using diagnostic questions to support students' conceptual understanding.

From a Diversity & Inclusion perspective, we've been proud to take forward several new initiatives, including being appointed to lead the Department for Education's *Inclusion in Schools* programme, working alongside the Institute of Physics. You can find out more on page 11, where Sarah Cosgriff writes about why underrepresentation of girls in STEM needs whole school action, while Andy Chandler-Grevatt also looks at what it means to be a diversity and inclusion ally and Jane Dowden from the British Science Association considers why closing the STEM gender gap starts in the classroom.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue!



Hannah Russell  
Chief Executive

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