

## Learning from lockdown

As future historians look back to the early decades of the 21st century, attention will undoubtedly turn to the societal turmoil caused by the emergence of COVID-19. Its subsequent effects on populations, countries, conflicts, politics and global finance will more than likely be related within the theme of 'lessons learned'. Reference will perhaps be made to the popular art and literature of the time in order to help define what was meant by terms like 'frontline worker' and to exemplify customs of the time, such as the nation joining to show their appreciation of the NHS through hanging rainbow pictures in windows and generating a cacophony of celebratory noise each Thursday evening on doorsteps. In all probability, the scientific community will recount in glowing terms the advances in medicine it generated, particularly in respect of rapid antibody testing, as well as novel vaccine creation and production techniques. With this in mind, the theme of this issue is 'Learning from lockdown' and is testimony to the resilience of those who helped maintain – and continue to maintain – the very best of primary sciences provision.

It is fitting therefore that our 'In conversation with...' piece focuses on the experience and successes of a class teacher. For this article Helen Spring interviewed Hiba El-Boghdadly, and it offers an open account of the trials and strictures placed on teaching, but also of the 'positive legacy' – such as rapidly developing new online teaching skills and know-how.

The pandemic experience has undoubtedly affected the nation's children, both in terms of their schooling and their mental health. The repercussions on them and on education in general will become clearer in the years ahead and understanding them will be of key importance. It seems relevant, therefore, to listen to what the children have to say. In their article, Verity Jones and her author team offer some insight into why listening to children's voices post-pandemic is absolutely crucial – particularly with respect to being prepared for any future social shocks. In the next article, Suzanne Robson offers a viewpoint on how primary teachers might support children's mental health through a personal attestation of the benefits of taking primary science outdoors.

The clear benefits of encouraging active, socially constructive primary science has never really been in question. Isolation, however, was undoubtedly a key overriding feature of the recent pandemic. For many

children, this meant long periods away from friends and peers, with schooling often pared down to a minimum of resources. Remediation in the form of enhancing collaboration and cooperation between children, online or – even better – face-to-face, was embraced at the earliest opportunity. This issue celebrates the return to such teaching, while recognising the huge efforts of those who helped children retain some semblance of peer learning over an online medium – however informal. Mairéad Hourigan and Aisling Leavy celebrate all that is best in collaborative practice in their heart-warming account of their early-years puppetry project. This resonates superbly with Sheetal Kowalczyk's piece on encouraging collaborative practices in primary science with girls. Both articles throw up some really good insight into collaborative practices across primary stages.

Our other three articles offer familiarity and surprise. Rachel Linfield and Erin Ireland's experience of their online home primary science club will immediately resonate with readers, as they attempted to keep primary sciences alive in the minds of children during lockdown. They recall the all-too-familiar challenge of building concept understanding with minimal resources, with the outcome being what we all recognise: that primary science is a worthy end in itself and that teachers of primary science are endlessly adaptable. Tsui Allen's article on robotics heralds a future in primary sciences that may have seemed an unassailable jump prior to the recent protracted period of relying on online learning and society's needful rapid familiarity with new digital peripheries. It gives a fascinating glimpse into a near future of robotics teaching as standard in primary sciences. Finally Bryony Turford and Paul Tyler look to the future with science clubs and the welcome return to children's collective social interaction in primary science.

Sadly, Helen Spring's contribution in this issue also coincides with her moving on as Reviews Editor. I take this opportunity to thank her for all her great work and insight over the years.

Issue 176 is part insight, part legacy, part hope for the future. It has been a privilege to curate the articles and to work with everyone who contributed. I hope you enjoy it.

**Robert Collins**