

# Focus

Welcome to *Primary Science 179*. This issue is an un-themed one and contains an inspirational plethora of articles we have gratefully received, which did not fit neatly into any particular theme. However, they are all insightful and useful contributions. Although disparate, by happy coincidence these articles make up a set of mini-themes and so this issue has made use of this to help shape a cohesive whole.

As with our last issue, readers will see that our 'In conversation with...' piece is again a little different. This opinion piece by class teacher and STEM communicator, Stuart Naismith, on the topic of introducing STEM careers education to young learners, certainly gives some food for thought.

Moving on from this, it seemed logical that articles investigating how children might get the opportunity to view science outside the school setting may prove equally interesting. With this in mind we present two intriguing approaches from new authors. Kay-Lee Dinsdale-Sherrington recounts her school's experience of working with the Ogden Trust, supporting a local community partnership in developing physics in a low socio-economic area. This is followed by a piece by Andrew Bell and his team on partnership working with local researchers and a university to help young learners understand more about microorganisms and disease. Both articles not only evidence the power of such work, but crucially also offer very practical advice on how teachers might establish partnerships and even secure additional grant funding for their endeavour.

Environmental issues are never far from our minds at *Primary Science*, so it will come as no surprise that we have also included articles about biodiversity and renewable

energy in this issue. Anne Ford, chair of a wind energy company in Northern Ireland, discusses her team's school workshops, which introduce pupils to renewable energy and culminate in them making their own model wind turbines. The aim is to support science and technology learning while fostering understanding and positive attitudes to wind farms. In the next article, Verity Jones and Marian Hill explain how the arts might reinforce science learning and change attitudes towards insects through engaging in close observation and collage work. Bringing both ideas of partnership working and ecology together, we then have Mark Stead of the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust talking about Generation Wild, a project aimed at connecting 5- to 11-year-olds with nature. Whether talking high-tech or low-tech, I am sure readers will gain inspiration from these articles.

Science capital and Earth materials are always popular choices for submitted articles. For this issue we have chosen two in particular. In the first, Mary Ennis introduces her own 'school of rock' – using actual rocks! As a new writer for *Primary Science*, Mary offers a passionate insight into how her mixed key stage 2 class created a 'rock and fossil museum' event for their parents and community, learning a great deal in the process. Finally, Jane Essex offers a tribute to the late Professor Chris King through a re-working of some Earth material lesson 'old favourites' – a worthy and thoughtful tribute to her good colleague.

I hope that you enjoy this issue and that it may inspire you to contribute an article sharing your own work and experience with fellow primary teachers.

**Robert Collins**