

# Why not try writing for Primary Science?

The person writing this article was not always an Editor. They were not always an author either. I know my job has changed a bit these days, but at heart I still love being a teacher of primary science. I still look forward to teaching it to primary-aged children, which I still do, but now I also get to teach their teachers – and future teachers – about primary science too.

When I was a younger teacher, I also liked to talk with my colleagues about the theories and practice, especially if I had been enthused by an article or book I had been reading or a CPD session I had attended, or even had just heard some chat about how ‘so-and-so’ in ‘such-and-such’ school was doing things a bit differently and getting positive results. I still do. The bigger the group of colleagues, the bigger the chat, the more I learned, the better my lessons became and the more learning my class enjoyed. There was value in that and there still is. To this day, I believe that like-minded folk saw that primary science was important to me, they helped me along the way to better teaching, enjoyed hearing about what I had done in my class, and appreciated that I wanted to know how they were getting on too.

Writing for publication is a bit like that. Think about it. The idea of writing – especially writing about primary science for the first time – can be daunting. What if no one likes my writing? What if my writing isn’t so good? Rest assured, fear of not being accepted or not being successful soon fades when you redefine your personal success as becoming an active member of a committed and caring association. And when it comes to primary science there is no bigger or more caring community than ASE. That is you, me and like-minded colleagues. There is a sense of belonging of which we should be rightly proud.


And what about feedback? Giving feedback is something the *Primary Science* Editorial Board value because we have all been through the critical friendship the journal offered when we first started writing articles. Just take a look at the image to the right. This was my first article for *Primary Science*. To be accurate, it was my first published piece and this was the third draft. None of the feedback I received to get there was painful; all of the warm encouragement I received was great and the feeling of elation at getting something published was phenomenal. It still is – I get the same feelings of achievement looking at it now, more than a decade and many articles and book chapters later.

Publication is also good for career development and is a genuine esteem measure for schools. ASE wants and

needs to hear from people like you who love teaching primary science. However, quite naturally, most people ask themselves three things before even considering writing. They ask about how, when and why? You might be thinking this now and that’s good: it means you have taken the first step.

The *how* is easiest to answer. You will have met the Editorial Board earlier in this issue: each is an expert in their field and is willing, able and keen to support you in your writing. There is also plenty of advice on how to start on the ASE website: [www.ase.org.uk/submission-guidelines](http://www.ase.org.uk/submission-guidelines)

And now the *when*. Creativity is free, but time, however, is an all-too-scarce commodity for teachers. So, why not send in a brief abstract of your article and some key words as a start? We can then get back to you promptly with feedback and I will contact an Editorial Board member who can



**CURRICULUM CHANGE AND ICT**

## PCs: A FORCE FOR EVALUATION?

*Robert Collins and Moira Paterson show how trainees have provided an effective way of evaluating on-line activities for science learning*

**Past expectations**  
Long, long ago, back in the early 1990s, I (Robert) was preparing to buy my first computer. At the time my elder brother, who had been a programmer since the late 1970s, was an executive in a very successful multinational computer company. As I was still a bit of a techno-novice I approached him for help and asked the definitive ICT question, ‘What is the best PC?’ I can still remember his weird reply: While breathing heavily into his empty teacup he retorted in his best Darth Vader impersonation, ‘I do not know, young Jedi. The choice is vast. But you must buy-in somewhere. If you stand still you will get left behind.’ He had always had a tendency towards this nerdy type of 70s-programmer humour. Seeing the ‘perturbed practitioner’ look on my face, as though I had just been pestered by some petulant pupil, he put the cup down and continued, ‘Look, just get something that matches your immediate working style and build from there. Everyone upgrades or changes eventually.’ Executive wisdom indeed.  
Although shocked at the time, I have found from experience that his advice was very true. In fact when asked the same question now by students and colleagues I give similar advice, albeit with greater verbosity, a drier wit and less ‘nerdiness’. I have got to keep academic standards up, you understand.  
The same is true now, I guess.

14 PRIMARY SCIENCE 110 Nov/Dec 2009

*Primary Science*, 110, 14–16

support you in taking it forward if needed. All of a sudden, what seemed like a gargantuan task really isn't. Most articles we publish are only 1500–2000 words in length and you are encouraged to send in images to illustrate your ideas – the more diverse and inclusive the images to reflect the principles of primary science the better.

Finally, the big question – why would I contemplate any of this? I can say, hand on heart, that, as a teacher, seeing your work in print is one of the best feelings ever. The satisfaction of such an achievement is really hard to beat. But the really best feeling? Sharing your printed work with the people that matter most – the children in your class or school. It never fails to impress me when I receive feedback from colleagues who went that extra mile to share their work in print. Don't take my word for it, just see the social media posting opposite from the author of an article in *Primary Science* 179.

As the Editor of *ASE Primary Science* I extend a warm invitation to all those who may be reading this and have never thought about writing for the journal before. If you have a good primary science experience that you would like to share, my inbox awaits your ideas with anticipation. Some weeks from now you, your children, your ideas, your school or your organisation could be in print with ASE. Think about it – then feel free to get in touch.

**Robert Collins**

Editor, *Primary Science*

Can't believe this has happened and I'm still a bit in shock but I officially have an article published in @PriSciJournal. Genuinely cried when I opened the post today. Our children have gained so much from @ogdentrust and their funding, it just had to be shared #PrimaryScience



## OBITUARY

### Helen Wilson 1954–2023



Helen Wilson was a secondary physics teacher, who transitioned to primary after the birth of her children and became Principal Lecturer in Primary Science at Oxford Brookes University. Her research with colleagues on the effect of increasing conceptual challenge in primary science was the foundation for 'Thinking, Doing, Talking Science'. Since 2013, the impact of the TDTScience teaching approach has been researched via trials funded by the Education Endowment Foundation and makes a significant positive difference to children's attitudes and attainment in science. Helen was an inspirational trainer and lecturer and she has an undoubted legacy in the thousands of people working in primary science who were influenced by her warmth, wit, wisdom and passion for science.

Mike Dennis, formerly Senior Lecturer, Oxford Brookes University

Bridget Holligan, Director of Education and Engagement, Science Oxford

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