

PRIMARY PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

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Introduction

Right now primary education finds itself in a changing landscape brought about through new curriculum reform. This book, which forms part of the *Transforming QTS* series, supports you as a trainee teacher to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities throughout your training, and into your first years of teaching.

Transforming QTS: The complex role of the trainee teacher

Curriculum reform cannot happen overnight. It is a process that takes a long time and is dependent on the extent to which the profession embraces the imposed changes. As you train to become a teacher you will be exposed to a number of schools, educational settings, tutors, teachers and other students, and all will have different responses. You will observe numerous ways of approaching children, teaching and education. At times you may find this very challenging, but you will always learn more about how you feel about education from the context you find yourself in.

As this edition goes to press a new government is in power but there is an intention to continue the previous coalition government's aspiration (Noble-Rogers, 2015) for schools to have a high level of autonomy, to innovate, have high expectations of children, and deepen academic knowledge through learning from each other (Gove, 2010). Indeed, the Expert Panel for the National Curriculum Review stated, 'Schools should be given more freedom over the curriculum. The National Curriculum should set out only the essential knowledge (facts, concepts, principles and fundamental operations) that all children should acquire, and leave schools to design a wider curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils and to decide how to teach this most effectively' (DfE, 2011, p.6). Furthermore, the Review was emphatic that it is important to distinguish between the National Curriculum and the wider school curriculum as experienced by all the pupils in school, explaining that 'the National Curriculum should not absorb the overwhelming majority of teaching time in schools' (p.6).

In order to be a successful trainee teacher in this climate, you will need to acknowledge and embrace your own highly complex role. Your teacher training is not about ticking off a list of competencies or demonstrating you can deliver a prescribed curriculum. Instead, you will be required to **take risks**, **ask questions**, and make **informed decisions** based on **collaboration** with others in a timely and professional way. Your training will ask you to reflect on your **values**: how do they impact on the way you think of yourself as a teacher and the way you develop relationships with the children you teach and your colleagues? Understanding **child development** and that all children develop in different ways and at different rates because

of **prior learning**, **learning styles** and **individual needs** are explored throughout the book also. It is not enough to focus only on children's learning. Your *own* learning and proactively approaching your own **personal professional development** through **reflective practice** and **research-informed teaching** is a core aspect of the extent to which you will succeed on your course and as a teacher.

These emboldened terms are some of the themes you will find within the book as you read it. Of course, these are not new. These aspects have evolved out of existing good practice. Indeed, in one of his earliest speeches as the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove stated, 'I want to celebrate the gains which have been made – and one of the most important is the development and deepening of culture in which we recognise that it is professionals, not bureaucratic strategies and initiatives, which drive school improvement' (Gove, 2010). By fulfilling the aspects identified above, you will achieve success in the high status profession you have chosen to enter.

Using this book

Structure of the book

Throughout this book the authors have drawn upon their extensive experience of teaching and mentoring trainee teachers. This book aims to reflect and address aspects that concern you as a trainee teacher at any stage of your course. It is presented in four sections.

Section 1: The curriculum

This section explores the development of the primary national curriculum used in schools, and shows how schools and trainee teachers can design learning opportunities using a range of approaches. The philosophies and approaches that are used in the Early Years Foundation Stage are discussed in Chapter 3, explaining how children in the early years are supported in their development and learning.

Section 2: The developing child

Over the last 50 years, the centrality of children in the primary phase has been acknowledged and embraced. Therefore this section considers aspects related to child-centred teaching and learning, issues of inclusion, and transition and progression. In this edition a new chapter considering children's voice has been included, to emphasise how the focus on children as learners is evolving in the primary school.

Section 3: The developing teacher

The Teachers' Standards require you to demonstrate appropriate professional attributes. These reflect teaching as a profession and this section challenges you to consider what it is to be a professional, including among other things how to safeguard children and your role as a trainee teacher and teacher in the wider school community. It will also encourage you to think