

# Introduction

## Poppy Gibson and Roger McDonald

Thank you for choosing to read this book, which is an exciting collaboration between primary practitioners, university lecturers and ITE experts. This book draws together detailed insights from UK Primary Schools in the form of case studies and vignettes from practicing teachers, together with an academic evaluative voice to support you in making connections and developing your own practice through a shared experience. The aim of this book is to offer the reader insights into schools’ practice in inspiring primary learners across the curriculum.

We are proud that this book brings together experts from across the country including colleagues from Leeds Becket University, University of Roehampton, University of Worcester, Canterbury Christ Church University, Bishop Grosseteste University, Wingfield Primary School, Plumcroft Primary School and the founders of the Writing for Pleasure Centre.

We have identified a need for this book due to many of the routes into teaching such as PGCE, BA, School Direct, Apprenticeship or SCITT placing students, for their extended practice, in schools based on a number of criteria which include location, age phase and the need for a contrasting experience. There are, of course, many benefits to this but one possible limitation is the students’ ability to discover insights into other excellent practice taking place in schools they will not have the opportunity to visit. This book provides, not only the insights, but a guided analysis and evaluation through the narrative provided.

In addition, we have seen a shift in pedagogy taking place in some primary schools with an increase in the objective led curriculum and a focus on testing due to pressures schools are experiencing. This shift has resulted in pedagogy sometimes shifting from one characterised by creativity, to teaching which, arguably, is compliant in nature. This book directly addresses this shift through the innovative way in which insights into practice are provided across the curriculum. Through each chapter you will be able to see a range of practices from a variety of schools in the UK which inspire primary learners.

Feedback from students regarding academic texts used on Initial Teacher Education programmes indicates that often texts they are directed towards can be theoretically driven, and they struggle to make the connections with what they read and how this relates to practice and their experiences. A key feature of this text is that the book starts from the practice which is underpinned by the theory. The emphasis will be on practitioner voice; woven throughout each chapter in a variety of modes including interviews, reflections, thought pieces and case studies. In addition, this book encourages student teachers to engage educational debates, prompted throughout the chapters in the form of critical questions.

Presented in two parts, you can take a journey through the subjects of the UK National Curriculum in Part One, and then through a range of wider issues and debates in Part Two. This book offers experience, expertise and valuable insights into the primary classroom across the curriculum, reflecting on practice and strategies in order to help practitioners achieve educational excellence.

This book offers the latest relevant insights into educational practice in UK primary schools through case study snapshots provided through the integral partnerships between a range of schools and the School of Education at the University of Greenwich as well as the wider partnership the University has with other educational institutions. This partnership allows for the exciting culmination of valuable case studies with the experience and knowledge of lecturers in the field of Primary Education, who are equipped both with knowledge of the primary classroom, and the pedagogy behind training teachers at university level.

We hope that this book will compliment your experience as a student teacher, practitioner in school or as a researcher. Its aim is not to provide a ‘how to guide’ or suggest that the case studies we feature are a holy grail. Instead we hope that the chapters will spark conversations through the insights given into other schools practice. As professionals we are all working in the same, often contested, space of education but with a clear aim to inspire primary learners. We hope this book will support you in your exciting, unique, challenging and inspirational journey.

Whether you are here as a student, a primary school teacher, or a teacher educator, we hope you enjoy reading this book as much as the authors enjoyed writing it.

Be inspired!