

Welcome to the 30th issue of *Science in School*



As we finalise the contents of this issue, I've been thinking a lot about mentors and teachers. A school reunion is not just an excuse to meet with old friends and classmates, but also an opportunity to revisit the school itself – which invariably seems smaller now than it did even when I was a student.

The school itself, of course, is just a collection of buildings. What makes it a school is the teachers that teach within it, and I count myself lucky to have had some great teachers. Looking back through old notes, I'm amazed how insightful they were, identifying my strengths and interests and encouraging me to pursue them.

October 5th is World Teachers Day, when hopefully even more people will reflect on the influential teachers from their past. Of course, here at *Science in School*, our role is to support the teachers of the present and future, with new teaching activities and insights into the world of science. Curricula and pedagogical techniques change over time, but some simple truths remain. Engaging classes and teachers will remain with students long after they leave the classroom, and learning human skills is as important as acquiring functional skills and facts.

In this issue, we start by looking at how science writing and blogging can help inspire students (p 5), before looking at more hands-on activities. The ESO Astronomy Camp (p 8), for example, combines the majesty of space and the sky above us with the most modern instruments to bring pupils closer to real-life astronomy and teamwork. For a more imaginative lesson, why not start planning our next trip to the Moon (p 36)? First we need to define why we should return; the actual planning will have to wait until issue 31.

Other teachers have taken large projects and scaled them down to size, from modelling particle accelerators like the CERN's LHC in the classroom using a cathode ray tube (p 21), to developing an electrolyser and fuel cell to explore how the hydrogen economy might one day power our cars and homes (p 31). Implementing such innovative teaching activities is what motivates Vasiliki Kioupi, both in her role as a teacher and as a teacher-trainer (p 49).

However, inspiration doesn't come only from big technological projects: the weird and wonderful world of slime moulds has been used to model transport networks, something you can explore with your students while also learning about chemotaxis and phototaxis (p 16). Taking weird to a different level, 'note-by-note' cooking is letting inspired chemists into the kitchen, changing how chefs look at gastronomy (p 44).

As well as getting inspiration from our latest issue, don't forget that the entire *Science in School* archive remains freely available online. Learning and mentorship don't stop when you leave the classroom, but as I reflect on my school days I realise that the best teachers prepare you for that.

Happy Teaching!

Laura Howes
Editor, *Science in School*



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