



# Professional Issues for Primary Teachers

EDITED BY

Ann Browne and Derek Haylock



## **Professional Issues for Primary Teachers**



# Professional Issues for Primary Teachers

Edited by  
Ann Browne and Derek Haylock



© 2004 Ann Browne and Derek Haylock  
Introduction and editorial arrangement (copyright symbol)  
2004 Ann Browne and Derek Haylock

Chapter 1 © Ann Oliver  
Chapter 2 © Helena Campion  
Chapter 3 © Sue Cox  
Chapter 4 © Ralph Manning  
Chapter 5 © Peter Gibley  
Chapter 6 © Tony Blake  
Chapter 7 © Ann Browne  
Chapter 8 © Gill Blake  
Chapter 9 © Ann Browne  
Chapter 10 © Maggie Woods  
Chapter 11 © Derek Haylock  
Chapter 12 © Jenifer Smith  
Chapter 13 © Fiona Thangata  
Chapter 14 © Rob Barnes  
Chapter 15 © Barbara Vanlint and Jacqueline Watson  
Chapter 16 © Linda Rudge  
Chapter 17 © Sue Lawes

First published 2004

Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form, or by any means, only with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction, in accordance with the terms of licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers.



A SAGE Publications Company  
1 Oliver's Yard  
55 City Road  
London EC1Y 1SP

SAGE Publications Inc  
2455 Teller Road  
Thousand Oaks, California 91320

SAGE Publications India Pvt Ltd  
B-42, Panchsheel Enclave  
Post Box 4109  
New Delhi 100 017

**Library of Congress Control Number 2003115342**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 7619 4403 6  
ISBN 0 7619 4404 4 (pbk)

Typeset by Dorwyn Ltd, Rowlands Castle, Hants.  
Printed in Great Britain by T.J. International, Padstow

# Contents

<i>The authors</i>	<i>x</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	<i>xv</i>
1 Primary Education in England	1
<i>Ann Oliver</i>	
The Development of Primary Education in England	2
The Diversity of Primary Schools	4
The Primary Curriculum	7
Issues for Reflection	15
Summary of Key Points	15
Suggestions for Further Reading	15
2 The School Environment	17
<i>Helena Champion</i>	
Primary School Buildings Today	18
The School Grounds	24
The Future for School Environments	26
A Final Reality Check	28
Issues for Reflection	28
Summary of Key Points	29
Suggestions for Further Reading	29
3 Teachers' Values and Professional Practice in Primary Schools	31
<i>Sue Cox</i>	
Values in Educational Policy and Practice	32
Wider Frameworks of Values	39
Issues for Reflection	42
Summary of Key Points	43
Suggestions for Further Reading	43
4 Teaching as a Profession	44
<i>Ralph Manning</i>	
Can We Recognize Teaching as a Profession?	44
The General Teaching Councils	46
Towards Greater Professional Autonomy	48

	Expectations of Teachers	52
	Working with Other Adults in Schools	54
	Issues for Reflection	56
	Summary of Key Points	56
	Suggestions for Further Reading	57
5	Primary School Teachers and the Law	58
	<i>Peter Gibley</i>	
	The Duty of Care	58
	The Rule Book	61
	The Teacher's Role	63
	The Teacher and Family Law	65
	The Data Protection Act, 1998	68
	Issues for Reflection	69
	Summary of Key Points	69
	Suggestions for Further Reading	70
	Acknowledgement	70
6	School Governors	71
	<i>Tony Blake</i>	
	The Role of the Governing Body	72
	Governors and School Improvement	73
	Governors and the Curriculum	75
	Governors and School Premises	77
	Finances	78
	Staffing	80
	The School Improvement Plan	82
	Issues for Reflection	83
	Summary of Key Points	83
	Suggestions for Further Reading	84
7	Parents and Teachers Working Together	85
	<i>Ann Browne</i>	
	The History of Parental Involvement	86
	Why Parents and Teachers Should Work Together	88
	The Parents' Perspective	88
	Establishing and Maintaining Contact between School and Home	91
	Involving Parents in School	95
	Involving Parents at Home	96
	Meetings between Parents and Teachers	98
	Helping Parents Understand the Education System	99
	Issues for Reflection	100
	Summary of Key Points	100
	Suggestions for Further Reading	101
	Acknowledgements	101

8	The Primary Teacher's Responsibility for Pastoral Care	102
	<i>Gill Blake</i>	
	School Policies and Other Structures for Pastoral Care	103
	Attendance	103
	Health and Safety	104
	Child Protection	105
	Physical Contact	106
	Health and its Relationship to Pupil Development	107
	Children in Care	109
	Bullying	109
	Strategies for Developing Mutual Support	110
	Communication	111
	Issues for Reflection	112
	Summary of Key Points	112
	Suggestions for Further Reading	112
9	Special Educational Needs in Mainstream Primary Schools	114
	<i>Ann Browne</i>	
	Definitions	115
	A Summary of the SEN Code of Practice and its Implications for Schools	116
	A Brief Guide to Some of the Special Needs Commonly Encountered in School	123
	Planning and Teaching	128
	Issues for Reflection	132
	Summary of Key Points	133
	Suggestions for Further Reading	133
10	Teaching and Learning in Special Schools	135
	<i>Maggie Woods</i>	
	Current Trends	135
	The Main Groups of Special Need Accommodated in Special Schools	136
	Special School Provision	139
	What Makes Special Schools 'Special'?	140
	The Future for Special Schools	144
	Working with a Team of Adults in the Classroom	146
	Assessment Issues – P Levels and Use of Data	147
	Issues for Reflection	147
	Summary of Key Points	148
	Suggestions for Further Reading	148
11	Gifted and Talented Pupils in Primary Schools	150
	<i>Derek Haylock</i>	
	The Nature and Range of Giftedness and Talent	150
	Characteristics of Exceptionally Able Pupils	152
	Acceleration or Enrichment	161



	Issues for Reflection	164
	Summary of Key Points	164
	Suggestions for Further Reading	165
12	Gender Issues in Primary Schools	166
	<i>Jenifer Smith</i>	
	Gender and the Child's Sense of Identity	167
	Gender and Achievement	170
	Issues related to Literacy	172
	The School's Contribution	175
	Issues for Reflection	178
	Summary of Key Points	179
	Who is What?	179
	Suggestions for Further Reading	179
13	Education for a Multicultural Society	181
	<i>Fiona Thangata</i>	
	Terminology	182
	Multicultural Education	183
	English as an Additional Language	184
	Traveller Children	186
	Culturally Responsive Curricula	188
	School Life and Home Links	189
	Anti-racist Education	190
	Issues for Reflection	192
	Summary of Key Points	192
	Suggestions for Further Reading	192
14	Personal, Social and Health Education	194
	<i>Rob Barnes</i>	
	Wide-ranging Themes in PSHE	195
	Person-centred Responsibility in PSHE	197
	Ways in which PSHE is Taught	198
	Emotional Growth	199
	Resources for PSHE	201
	Raising Questions and Assessing PSHE	202
	Issues for Reflection	204
	Summary of Key Points	204
	Suggestions for Further Reading	205
15	Spiritual Development, Moral Development and Citizenship Education	207
	<i>Barbara Vanlint and Jacqueline Watson</i>	
	What is Meant by Spiritual, Moral and Citizenship Education?	208
	A Whole-School Approach to Spiritual and Moral Development and Citizenship	214

	Classroom Activities for Promoting Spiritual and Moral Development and Citizenship	217
	Issues for Reflection	220
	Summary of Key Points	221
	Suggestions for Further Reading	221
16	Religion in the Primary School Context <i>Linda Rudge</i>	223
	Religion and Religions	224
	The Place of Religion in Primary Schools	227
	Religion in the Curriculum	231
	Collective Worship	234
	Religious Literacy	235
	Issues for Reflection	235
	Summary of Key Points	236
	Suggestions for Further Reading	236
17	Induction into the Profession <i>Sue Lawes</i>	238
	Main Elements of the Induction Year	239
	Hitting the Ground Running	241
	Baptism of Fire – the First Week	243
	New Kid on the Block	244
	That was only <i>Initial Training</i>	247
	Additional Duties	249
	Time Management	251
	Help! Sources of Information and Support	252
	Issues for Reflection	252
	Summary of Key Points	253
	Suggestions for Further Reading	253
	<i>References</i>	254
	<i>Index</i>	267

# The Authors

**Ann Browne** is a senior lecturer in education at the University of East Anglia where she works with primary Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) students and practising teachers. She has written a number of books about teaching English in the early years, including *Developing Language and Literacy 3–8* (2nd edition, 2001), *A Practical Guide to Teaching Reading in the Early Years* and *Helping Children to Write*, all published by Paul Chapman Publishing, and *Teaching Writing at Key Stage 1 and Before*, published by Nelson Thornes (1999).

**Derek Haylock** is an author and educational consultant who has worked in primary teacher training for over 30 years. Until recently he was mathematics tutor and Co-Director of the Primary PGCE course at the University of East Anglia (UEA), Norwich. His books include *Mathematics Explained for Primary Teachers* (2nd edition, 2001), *Numeracy for Teaching* (2001), *Teaching Mathematics to Low Attainers 8–12* (1991) and (with Anne Cockburn) *Understanding Mathematics in the Lower Primary Years* (2nd edition, 2002), all published by Paul Chapman Publishing. He has also had published seven books of Christian drama and a Christmas musical.

**Rob Barnes** is a senior lecturer in education at UEA and teaches information and communications technology (ICT) and Art and Design on the primary PGCE. His books include *Teaching Art to Young Children 4–9* (2nd edition), *Art Design and Topic Work 8–13*, *Positive Teaching*, *Positive Learning* and *Successful Study for Degrees* (3rd edition).

**Gill Blake** has been Headteacher of Cringleford First and Middle School in Norwich for 14 years. She has spent 30 years teaching in a variety of primary schools and one year in which she was seconded to work as a tutor on the UEA Primary PGCE. She was a founding member of the UEA Primary Partnership Development Group.

**Tony Blake** has been the headteacher of St Mary's Middle School in Long Stratton, near Norwich, for the past 16 years. Prior to that he was a deputy and class teacher in Norwich and London. He is a member of the National Middle

Schools Forum Steering Group and has served on a number of local education authority (LEA) and university committees dealing with a wide range of educational issues. He was a founding member of the UEA Primary Partnership Development Group.

**Helena Champion** is a tutor in Education on the Primary PGCE course at the University of East Anglia. She has taught for 10 years across the primary school age range. Her research interests are in the fields of Information Technology and the learning environment.

**Sue Cox** is a Lecturer in Education at UEA. She contributes to the Primary PGCE and has joint responsibility for co-ordinating the continuing professional development programme for the school. She taught in primary schools for 12 years and has worked in teacher education for 18 years. Her publications include articles and chapters in books on primary curriculum and pedagogy, including the teaching of primary art and action research in teacher education.

**Peter Gibley** is headteacher of Nelson First School in Norwich. Before he came into teaching he was a baker and an actor. He taught British Forces children in Germany before taking over a tiny first school in rural Norfolk. He is now head of a large urban school. He is also a magistrate with a special interest in family work.

**Sue Lawes** is a recent entrant to the teaching profession, teaching in a Norwich Primary School. She trained on the UEA Primary PGCE course.

**Ralph Manning** is a tutor in primary teaching training at the University of East Anglia. Previously he taught in primary schools in Bedfordshire and Norfolk. He is a founding member of the General Teaching Council, to which he was elected by primary teachers in 2000. Prior to entering the teaching profession he worked in the computer industry for many years.

**Ann Oliver** is a Co-Director of the Primary PGCE course at the UEA. Prior to becoming a Primary PGCE science tutor she taught across Key Stages 1 and 2. She has researched teacher recruitment and attitudes towards science education. Her publications include articles about interactive science centres, teaching science through stories and chapters in *Teaching Children 3–11*, published by Paul Chapman Publishing.

**Linda Rudge** is the Director of the Keswick Hall Centre for Research and Development in Religious Education (RE) at the University of East Anglia. She teaches RE on the Primary PGCE programme and works with teachers on continuing professional development courses and in-service training. Her research interests and publications cover policy issues in RE, the professional needs of teachers, and the faiths, beliefs and values of teachers and their pupils.

**Jenifer Smith** is a tutor in Education at UEA, contributing to the English and drama curriculum components of the Primary PGCE. She has joint responsibility for co-ordinating the Continuing Professional Development programme for the school. She has worked as an English specialist adviser for Suffolk County Council and been actively involved in induction and in-service training for the teaching of English in schools. Her publications include a number of edited volumes of classic literature in the Cambridge Literature Series.

**Fiona Thangata** recently joined the Primary PGCE team at the University of East Anglia as a mathematics tutor. She has worked in England, Scotland, Namibia and the USA as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, in-service provider and teacher trainer.

**Barbara Vanlint** is a primary school teacher and has taught at Mundesley Junior School on the Norfolk coast for the past 12 years. In 1999 she became a Farmington Institute Millenium Award holder, based at the UEA Keswick Hall Centre for RE, and wrote a paper entitled 'Children's spiritual development – why should we care?'.

**Jacqueline Watson** was an RE teacher for 10 years. She has been a research associate with the Keswick Hall RE Centre at UEA for the past six years, which have included research on citizenship and RE for a Farmington Fellowship. Her research interests include spiritual development, Religious Education and citizenship, and RE teachers' self-portrayals.

**Maggie Woods** is a School Development Adviser working with special schools and Education Support Centres in Hertfordshire. She has worked in special education for 18 years and has been headteacher of two special schools catering for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties. She has just completed her doctorate research at UEA looking at assessment and pedagogy for pupils in special schools in the context of RE.

# Introduction

The influence of primary education on shaping our lives cannot be underestimated. Everyone remembers something from their early days in school. It might be the smell of polish or disinfectant, the sound of the bell or the sunlight filling the space in the hall as you walked into assembly. It might be feeling scared because you had to read a whole sentence in front of the class, or being milk monitor for the first time. It might be enjoying creative lessons, art, embroidery and cooking, or having a new exercise book in which to write. It might be playing or singing in a musical event or taking part in a dramatic production. It might be listening to your teacher read stories. It might be the pride associated with an unexpected achievement or the embarrassment of failure. The strength of these memories is an indication of the importance that those years in primary school have held for us as individuals. It is important, therefore, that all primary school teachers are dedicated to making that experience as effective and as happy as possible for all pupils. This involves being thoroughly professional. This book is intended to be a contribution to raising the awareness of primary teachers and trainee teachers as to what is involved in all the different professional dimensions of their work in schools.

*Professional Issues for Primary Teachers* is a companion volume to *Teaching Children 3–11* (edited by Anne Cockburn, also published by Paul Chapman Publishing). This new book also emanates from the primary team at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, but with significant contributions from a number of other colleagues who are associated in some way with the university.

Since our collective experience has been mainly in the UK, specifically in England, we inevitably draw on primary practice, legislation and government guidance in this country. Readers in other parts of the UK and overseas will nevertheless find that the principles dealt with here have a more general relevance.

The book deals with the key professional issues in primary teaching that are addressed in primary teacher training courses. It contributes specifically to the QTS Standards for Professional Values and Practice (DfES/TTA, 2002). The book aims to enable the reader to understand the nature of primary education in England and the professional demands made upon primary school teachers, including those from parents, the children themselves, the law, government agencies, society and the profession.

Some chapters are written by tutors on the primary PGCE course at UEA, others by practising headteachers or teachers in schools within the UEA primary partnership, and some by teachers or advisers undertaking educational research at UEA. This blend of authors is a feature of the book, providing what we hope is a useful mixture of demands upon the reader. We also hope that you will enjoy the opportunities to engage with some of the philosophical aspects of primary school teaching, that you will find your thinking about professional issues is given shape and that you get from this book the basic information you need to operate in your own professional context.

Each chapter contains an explanation and discussion of the issues, issues for reflection, a summary of key points and annotated suggestions for further reading. Tutors working with professional development groups of primary trainees will find the questions posed in the issues for reflection to be helpful starting points for discussions.

The Internet websites to which we refer in this book were consulted during the period April to August 2003. Addresses and details were correct at the dates of consultation but may have been subject to subsequent change.

Derek Haylock and Ann Browne  
University of East Anglia, Norwich

# Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
ADD	attention deficit disorder
ADHD	attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ASD	autistic spectrum disorder
AST	advanced skills teachers
ATL	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
BESD	behavioural, emotional and social difficulty
CE	citizenship education
CEDP	Career Entry and Development Profile
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DoH	Department of Health
EAL	English as an additional language
EAZ	Education Action Zone
EBD	emotional and behavioural difficulty
ESO	Education Supervision Order
GMC	General Medical Council
GTC	General Teaching Council
GTCE	General Teaching Council for England
GTCS	General Teaching Council for Scotland
GTCW	General Teaching Council for Wales
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools
HRA	Human Rights Act
ICT	information and communications technology
IEP	individual education plan
ISCTIP	Independent Schools Council Teacher Induction Panel
ITT	initial teacher training
LEA	local education authority
LSA	learning support assistant
MLD	moderate learning difficulty
MSI	multi-sensory impairment
NACE	National Association for Able Children in Education
NASEN	National Association of Special Educational Needs
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolteachers Union of Women Teachers
NCC	National Curriculum Council



NQT	Newly-qualified teacher
NLS	National Literacy Strategy
NNS	National Numeracy Strategy
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PANDA	performance and assessment data
PcfRE	Professional Council for Religious Education
PD	physical difficulty
PE	physical education
PECS	picture exchange system
PEP	personal education plan
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate of Education
PNI	physical and neurological impairment
PMLD	profound and multiple learning difficulty
PPA	planning, preparation and assessment
PR	parental responsibility
PSHE	personal, social and health education
PTA	parent-teacher association
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
QTS	qualified teacher status
RE	religious education
SACRE	Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education
SCAA	Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority
SEN	special educational need(s)
SENCO	special educational needs co-ordinator
SLD	severe learning difficulty
SpLD	specific learning difficulty
STRB	School Teachers' Review Body
TA	teaching assistant
TEACCH	Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children
TPLF	Teachers' Professional Learning Framework
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UEA	University of East Anglia
VA	voluntary aided (school)
VC	voluntary controlled (school)
VLE	virtual learning environment

# 1

# Primary Education in England

*Ann Oliver*

The following topics and issues are covered in this chapter:

- how we have got to where we are in current primary school practice;
- the emergence of distinctive primary practice;
- the increase in central control of education;
- the tension between progressive and traditional approaches;
- good primary practice and effective primary teaching;
- the diversity of primary schools, including alternative schools;
- the current primary school curriculum, including the National Curriculum, the Foundation Stage guidance, the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS);
- primary practice related to grouping by ability;
- national tests and their influence on the primary curriculum;
- the current promotion of excellence and enjoyment; and
- the importance of teachers focusing on the individual.

This chapter provides a brief overview of primary schooling in this country, setting the context for the discussion of professional issues in primary education in subsequent chapters. The main theme that emerges in this chapter is the ongoing tensions that confront primary school teachers within a culture of testing, raising standards, centralized control and accountability. I have included comments from practising primary school teachers to illustrate this theme and to show how these tensions impact on them.

## The Development of Primary Education in England

### *The emergence of primary schools*

The history of primary school education in England is comparatively recent. It was not until the mid-1960s that *all* children between the ages of 5 and 11 could be educated in schools specifically allocated to children within this age range. It is hard to believe that before 1944 there was not even a Ministry for Education. This was established through the 1944 Education Act. The main feature of this Act was the division of responsibility between central government, the LEAs, headteachers and schools' governing bodies. Primary education since then has seen many changes, with the autonomy of the headteacher and the local authorities gradually usurped by more and more directives and control from central government.

Today, parents in England have a legal obligation to ensure that their child is being educated. The LEA is required by law to make a place in a school available, although a significant proportion of parents choose to send their children to private fee-paying schools and a small number opt to teach their children at home. Children must start primary education no later than the term following their fifth birthday, though in most cases primary schools take children into their reception classes at age 4 and, increasingly, into their nursery classes when they are 3. Primary education officially ends after the school year in which the child turns 11.

There are about 4 million primary age children attending over 18,000 primary schools. On average children aged 5 to 11 find themselves in a school of 225 pupils with eight teachers, one of whom is the headteacher. There are 30 children in each class. Children are taught most of the curriculum by their class teacher, who is very likely to be female (OFSTED, 1999a). The largest primary schools have over 800 pupils. The smallest have fewer than 20 pupils, all of whom are taught by a single teacher.

### *Distinctive primary practice*

The primary school curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning since 1944 have undergone remarkable changes. Primary practice in education in the 1950s was characteristically didactic, teacher-centred and narrowly focused on reading, writing and arithmetic. But more progressive influences were beginning to have an impact and to shift the focus towards the needs of the child. Froebel's theory and practice of natural development and spontaneity established the first kindergarten movement. Maria Montessori emphasized structured learning, sense training and individualization, based on the idea that teachers should listen to children in order to inform teaching. Alexander (2002) describes the relationship between primary education, education policy and society at that time as a mixture of nineteenth-century elementary education and a progressive counter-culture. 'The one sought to produce a workforce which was functionally literate and numerate but socially

conformist and politically docile, while the other celebrated individual fulfilment ... (Alexander, 2002, p. 17).

In the 1960s educational developments were rapid and a distinctive primary school practice began to emerge. Society was changing dramatically and, in the context of the new liberalism, local authorities encouraged innovation in schools. Primary schools found a freedom from constraints with the decline of selective secondary schools and the consequent abolition of the 11-plus examination in most LEAs, together with a decline in the role taken by their inspectors.

The Plowden Report (CACE, 1967) was the most influential factor in the emergence of a distinctive 'child-centred' primary school practice. The recommendations of Plowden included the establishment of educational priority areas, the expansion of nursery education and more involvement of parents in primary schools. However, the Plowden Report's influence on primary practice came from its emphasis on placing the child 'at the heart of the education process', non-streaming and a more humanist approach to teaching and learning. The philosophical position adopted by Plowden, and the freedom given to primary headteachers to determine their own curriculum, combined to generate many of the characteristics of 'good primary practice' that until recently were still the dominant orthodoxy in primary education: group work, topic-based work and projects, integrated studies, display of pupils' work, discovery learning, independent learning, differentiation and individual needs.

### *The current educational context*

The Plowden Report was quickly followed by strong criticisms from right-wing educationalists through a series of so-called 'Black Papers', the first of which was published in 1969. The battle between progressives and traditionalists has continued ever since. Table 1.1 indicates some of the key words and phrases that might characterize these contrasting approaches.

As these arguments continued between 1967 and 1988 there was no systematic monitoring or enforcement of the primary school curriculum. Eventually, after a succession of discussion papers exploring the issues raised

**Table 1.1** Contrasting progressive and traditional approaches to primary education

Progressive	Traditional
Child-centred	Subject-focused
Broad curriculum	Back to basics
Individual learning	Teacher-directed
Differentiation	Whole-class teaching
Choice	Prescription
Discovery learning	Direct teaching
Experience	Attainment
Informal assessment	Formal testing

in the debate, the government introduced the 1988 Education Reform Act. This was the most important Education Act since 1944 and the changes were profound. The main provision was the introduction of a National Curriculum. Teachers would no longer be free to be curriculum innovators. Instead they became, in effect, curriculum deliverers. Control of the curriculum was taken away from the schools and LEAs and passed to agencies accountable to central government. The National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC) were established to oversee respectively the content of the curriculum and the associated system of national testing. These were followed closely by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), which combined these roles, and then in 1997 by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) was set up to take over responsibility for inspecting schools, to ensure the implementation of the curriculum and to monitor standards.

In 1995 OFSTED commissioned research (Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore, 1995) to ascertain key characteristics of effective primary schools. The factors identified included:

- professional leadership;
- shared vision and goals;
- purposeful teaching;
- high expectations;
- positive reinforcement;
- monitoring progress; and
- home-school partnership.

'Good primary practice' had been replaced by 'effective primary teaching'. Schools had entered a new era where technique and performance were measured and monitored, where the school's standards were determined by pupils' achievements in national tests and the results published in league tables. Gone were the days where a primary headteacher could determine the curriculum and teachers could decide how to deliver it. Didactic formats, often at odds with teachers' perceptions of good primary practice, were introduced with the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1998a) and later with the National Numeracy Strategy (DfEE, 1999a). At the turn of the millennium, dialogue about primary school practice had become characterized by language such as standards, levels, achievement, tests, targets, success, failure, improvement, effective teaching, management, leadership, development plans and, most of all, OFSTED inspections and reports. To consider the philosophical issues related in this shift of emphasis the reader is referred to Chapter 3.

## **The Diversity of Primary Schools**

In England there is a bewildering variety of primary schools in both the state and independent sectors. Primary trainee teachers are often surprised by the

diversity of schools in which they get placed. A trainee placed in a large and challenging inner-city junior school may complain that they have drawn the short straw when they compare their lot with the trainee placed in a small rural all-age primary school. Trainees have to come to terms with the huge diversity of primary schools and recognize that the experience of teaching in one school might be very different from another. Primary schools vary, for example, in terms of the age range of their pupils, the size of the school, their resources, the turnover of staff, their geographical and social setting and their religious affiliation, as well as having their distinctive curriculum expertise and extra-curricular opportunities. Cullingford (1997, p. 109) comments that 'it is simply not good enough to talk of primary education as though it is the same thing across the UK as a whole. It is not'.

One teacher described her experience as follows:

My first teaching job was in a junior school in a small village with 37 children in a 1930s building. There were two classes, lower junior (13 pupils aged 7 to 9) and upper junior (24 pupils aged 9 to 11). The headteacher and I were the only full-time members of staff. We shared a tiny office. It was all very informal and friendly. My second job was in a town centre primary school with 570 children, aged 4 to 11, from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. Everything had to be highly organized and tightly prescribed: 45-minute lessons, year group planning meetings, setting for maths and English, children lining up, desks in rows, endless staff meetings and policy reviews. It was like a different job altogether, requiring completely different skills. I'm now deputy head in an open-plan primary school where I'm part of a team of three teachers working with 80 children. I've had to start learning new skills all over again.

(Primary school deputy headteacher)

### *Age ranges in primary schools*

Schooling in England up to the age of 16 is now based on the following 'stages':

- Foundation Stage for children aged 3 to 5 years. The year in which pupils have their fifth birthday is called Year R (reception);
- Key Stage 1, for children aged 5 to 7 years (Years 1 and 2);
- Key Stage 2, for children aged 7 to 11 years (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6);
- Key Stage 3, for children aged 11 to 14 years (Years 7, 8 and 9); and
- Key Stage 4, for pupils aged 14 to 16 years (Years 10 and 11).

However, the ways in which pupils in these stages are organized into schools can vary enormously, depending on the local circumstances, demography and history. For example, within our own region we have maintained schools with primary-aged children that include:

- all-age primary schools taking children in Year R and Key Stages 1 and 2;
- infant schools for children in Year R and Key Stage 1;

- junior schools for children in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6);
- first schools for children in Year R and Years 1 to 3;
- middle schools for children in Years 4 to 7;
- primary schools for children in Year R and Years 1 to 4;
- middle schools, for children in Years 5 to 8;
- first and middle schools, for children in Year R and Years 1 to 7;
- discrete nursery schools, for children in the Foundation Stage; and
- primary, infant and first schools with nursery classes.

The first three of these represent the most common patterns of primary schooling across the UK. A number of LEAs who have adopted the other models in the past are gradually reorganizing back to the primary and infant/junior structures to fit better with the Key Stages. There is also an increasing number of schools with nursery classes. This development is consistent with the government's intention to provide universal, free nursery provision for all 3-year-olds by the year 2004.

### *Categories of maintained primary schools*

Maintained (state) schools are non-fee-paying, funded by taxes and mostly organized by LEAs. The headteacher and the school governors have control over the day-to-day organization and running of the school. The governing body of the school is overseen by the LEA, and a link adviser is allocated to each school by the LEA. Further discussion of the roles of governing bodies is provided in Chapter 6.

Primary state schools can be divided into four main types (Jacques and Hyland, 2003):

- Community schools (formally known as county schools), with no religious affiliation; the LEA is the employer.
- Voluntary controlled (VC) schools; these are usually Church of England, though there are some Methodist VC schools and some without religious affiliation. The LEA is the employer, but the governing body determines worship and may make some condition of appointment related to the school's religious ethos. The term 'controlled' means that the church has handed over the control of the school to the LEA, so the influence of the church is less significant than in a VA school.
- Voluntary aided (VA) schools, such as Roman Catholic, Church of England and Jewish and Muslim schools. The governing body is the employer; it determines religious instruction and will usually make some associated conditions of employment such as religious commitment. The term 'aided' refers to the fact that the LEA provides a large proportion of capital expenditure, as well as paying maintenance and teaching costs and salaries. The religious affiliation of a VA school is likely to have a higher profile than in a VC school.
- Foundation schools. There is a relatively small number of these, mainly former grant maintained schools. The governing body is the contractual employer. Most of the school's funding comes direct from central government, bypassing the LEA.

All state primary schools, other than special schools, should take children of all abilities. There is no selection at any level, although each school will have admissions criteria that have to be applied when the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available. Church schools, for example, may give priority to families who are church-goers.

Many children with special educational needs are provided for within mainstream primary schools. Sometimes this is through a special unit attached to the school, such as a unit for hearing-impaired children. However, for those children for whom a place in mainstream schooling is not appropriate, there is provision within special schools which cater for pupils with a range of moderate and severe special needs. These issues are discussed more fully in Chapters 9 and 10.

### *Alternative schools*

Outside the state system, schools such as Steiner-Waldorf schools, Montessori schools and democratic schools provide education for primary-aged children based on alternative philosophies. Alternative schools are characterized by an emphasis on such principles as student-initiated learning, enquiry and discovery, shared problem-solving and decision-making. They tend to be fairly small schools, recognizing that it is difficult to foster positive relationships between pupils, parents, staff and the local community in larger schools. They claim to adopt a more holistic approach to learning than is possible in state schools. Steiner-Waldorf schools, for example, seek to cultivate feeling and will, as well as intelligence. Montessori schools emphasize young children's learning through activity and social development. Democratic schools give pupils a major role in decision-making about all aspects of school life and learning. The importance of dialogue is a key feature in alternative schools.

Alternative schools are free to experiment in a way that state schools bound by government orders are not. They are more concerned with the all-round development and achievement of pupils than performance measured by national tests and positions in league tables. At present, alternative schools receive no public funding at all. The government talks about diversity and parental choice, but within the state system this is limited to diversity within the centrally prescribed educational frameworks and legislation. However, a number of state primary schools are working to adopt principles applied in alternative education. For example, many primary schools now have school councils and a commitment to pupils participating in democratic discussion (see Chapters 8, 14 and 15).

## **The Primary Curriculum**

### *The National Curriculum*

The National Curriculum is a statutory entitlement for all children in state schools of the age of 5 and over. It was introduced to England (and Wales) in



1988. Since then it has undergone a number of revisions. At the time of writing, the version in use in primary schools was published in 1999 and became statutory in the year 2000 (DfEE/QCA, 1999).

The National Curriculum framework for Key Stages 1 and 2 provides teaching requirements for the three core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and the foundation subjects (design and technology, information and communications technology, history, geography, art and design, music and physical education). Non-statutory guidelines are also provided for teaching personal, social and health education, citizenship, modern foreign languages at Key Stage 2 and values in education. Schools are also required by law to teach religious education, but there is not a National Curriculum for this subject (see Chapter 16).

The four main purposes of the National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA, 1999) are:

- to establish the entitlement of pupils to a number of areas of learning, irrespective of their social background, culture, race, gender, difference in ability and disabilities;
- to establish standards by making expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, and the public. The standards can be used to set targets for improvement, measure progress and monitor performance between individuals and schools;
- to promote continuity and coherence, facilitating transition between schools and phases of education and providing a foundation for learning; and
- to promote public understanding of the work of schools and in the learning achievements which are the products of compulsory education.

A central message from the government is that teachers have the power to decide how they teach the National Curriculum and the government supports them in this. However, in practice, many primary schools do not take advantage of this apparent freedom and opt for conformity to non-statutory guidance and what they perceive to be the expectations of OFSTED. For example, the QCA offers non-statutory guidance to implement the curriculum for the foundation subjects in the form of schemes of work. Many primary schools have adopted these QCA schemes as the basis for their planning. 'Teachers already have great freedoms to exercise their professional judgement about how they teach. But many teachers believe that either the Government, or OFSTED, or the QCA effectively restrict that freedom' (DfES, 2003a, p. 16).

### *The Foundation Stage curriculum*

Non-statutory guidance is provided for teachers of children in the Foundation Stage (DfEE/QCA, 2000). The recommended curriculum for children aged 3 to 5 years covers the following areas of learning:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- communication, language and literacy;
- mathematical development;

- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development; and
- creative development.

For each of these areas, the guidance provides 'early learning goals' which establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. These 'are not a curriculum in themselves' but 'provide the basis for planning throughout the foundation stage, so laying secure foundations for future learning' (DfEE/QCA, 2000, p. 26).

### *The National Literacy Strategy*

The two most significant and influential non-statutory documents affecting the primary school curriculum are the literacy and numeracy strategies. The National Literacy Strategy, introduced in 1998, is a non-statutory approach to teaching English within a highly structured framework. The history of the implementation of the NLS demonstrates very clearly the conflict between centrally generated policies that are seen as prescriptive and the primary teacher's own professional judgement.

In general, the majority of primary schools seem to have included the strategy as their preferred method of delivering the English curriculum across Key Stages 1 and 2. To begin with, the recommended structure of the 'literacy hour' (DfEE, 1998a) was a daily lesson consisting of approximately:

- 15 minutes of shared text work, when the teacher leads shared reading or writing with the whole class;
- 15 minutes of focused word- or sentence-level work;
- 20 minutes of independent reading, writing or word and sentence work while the teacher works with one or two ability-groups each day on guided text work; and
- 10 minutes when each class is brought back for a plenary so that what has been taught and learnt can be reviewed.

Although there was a perceived view that this was how it had to be done, many primary school teachers found it difficult to teach the English curriculum within this structure. Consequently, many teachers modified the structures of the literacy hour to suit their teaching style and the particular needs of the pupils in their classes. There is certainly now much more variation in literacy lessons and, with encouragement from the top, this is increasing. Over the course of a week children will spend time on each of the elements listed in the framework, but the time and emphasis may vary each day depending on the work the children are doing.

But the strategy goes further than just recommending a structure for the daily hour of literacy. It takes a particular view of how literacy is taught and learnt most effectively. Hancock and Mansfield comment, for example, on the NLS approach to teaching reading:

This is portrayed as learning about the smallest elements (e.g. the letter names and sounds) and then combining these to make words that enable the reading of phrases, sentences and texts. It is a beguilingly logical theory but it is probably more an account of how government would like learning to read to be, rather than how those children inside the process variously experience it.

(Hancock and Mansfield, 2001, p. 98)

### *The National Numeracy Strategy*

The National Numeracy Strategy was set up by the government in 1999 to complement the National Literacy Strategy. Generally, primary schools have welcomed the structure and approaches of the NNS and it has been adopted widely as a means of delivering the mathematics curriculum. This may be associated with the fact that many primary school teachers are anxious about teaching mathematics and welcome the security of central guidance on what they should be doing and how to do it. Although the strategy refers to 'numeracy', its content covers all aspects of mathematics in the National Curriculum.

The NNS recommends that primary schools provide a daily numeracy lesson, increasing from 45 minutes for younger children to one hour for pupils in Key Stage 2. The lessons are designed so that everyone in the class works on mathematics at the same time and all the lessons follow a common format: an oral/mental starter, a main activity and a plenary. The distribution of time between these three elements can vary depending on the material. However, it is made very clear that all three elements should occur in every lesson and it is rare to see a numeracy lesson in a primary school nowadays that does not follow this structure. The NNS framework (DfEE, 1999a) provides an example of a programme of study for each year group, with the mathematical content suggested for each day of each week across the school year. The majority of primary schools seem to have adopted this example for their own long-term planning.

The NNS promotes a greater emphasis on mental calculations. Direct interactive teaching and questioning of either the whole class or groups of pupils are significant features of the strategy. There is a greater emphasis on whole-class teaching than had previously been the case in most primary school mathematics teaching. There is an expectation that for most of the time most of the children in the class will be working on the same mathematical topic. Differentiation should be limited to, at most, three groups working at different levels of challenge. In practice, teachers find that addressing issues of differentiation across the ability range is the major challenge that faces them in teaching this subject.

Extended problem-solving and mathematical investigations are not easily integrated into the prescribed format. This is a concern about the NNS voiced by many teachers, especially in relation to challenging the more able pupils. 'I let Jay and Ben work independently of the class. The numeracy strategy just doesn't meet their needs. It would be a waste of their time doing the mental

starter with the others. At the moment they are working on a project which will probably take three lessons' (Year 6 class teacher).

### *The primary timetable*

Over the course of a year, a primary school in England must be open for 190 days (38 weeks). These 38 weeks have conventionally been divided up into three terms of 12 or 13 weeks, with a long summer break. However, there is an increasing variety in this respect, with some LEAs moving to four-term and six-term models. The minimum recommended lengths of a full school week in England are 21 hours for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 23.5 hours for those in Key Stage 2.

There is no prescribed structure for the primary school day. Although there is considerable variety in this respect, a common pattern, particularly in Key Stage 2, would be two major teaching sessions of an hour or more in the morning, one for each of numeracy and literacy, with time also allocated to class registration and school assemblies. Schools are required to teach all the National Curriculum subjects to all pupils, but most schools find that science and the foundation subjects have to be squeezed into the afternoons and do not get the time that is needed to give the pupils the broad and balanced experience intended. Children in the Foundation Stage are more likely to experience a more integrated day, with smaller slots of teaching input at various times and opportunities for independent play activities.

Confident teachers, however, will always be ready and willing to respond to children's learning in a flexible way. Many would see such an approach as the essence of good primary teaching.

When the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy came in I thought, 'Give us a break!' Now I enjoy it. I'm slightly frazzled by the teaching hours per week but in a small school we can be flexible. Today I was outside with the children and there was a bucket of stagnant water with gnats' larvae, so we spent 20 minutes of the literacy hour talking about it. That wasn't in the plan. I'm happy to bend the curriculum.

(Teaching primary school headteacher)

### *Grouping by ability*

In larger primary schools, particularly in Key Stage 2, children from different classes are often put into sets for teaching on the basis of ability, particularly for numeracy and increasingly for literacy. In smaller schools setting is not a possibility, so teachers have to develop greater skills in differentiation; this will often involve identifying ability groups within the class and the provision of differentiated learning activities. At one extreme, primary teachers could find themselves working with, say, a high-ability set of children in one year group. At the other extreme, they could be teaching a class containing children from four different year groups across the whole ability range.

## ***National testing***

The National Curriculum (DfEE/QCA, 1999) provides level descriptions which enable children to be assigned a level of achievement. Levels 2 and 4 are the levels that are expected to be achieved by most pupils at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 respectively.

Towards the end of Key Stage 1, children in Year 2 (the year in which they turn 7) are required to take national tests in English and mathematics, produced by the QCA. Towards the end of Key Stage 2, children in Year 6 (the year in which they turn 11) are required to take national tests in English, mathematics and science. Scores on these tests are converted into National Curriculum levels, within the range 1–3 for Key Stage 1 and 1–5 for Key Stage 2. Teachers of Year 2 and Year 6 children are also required to make their own 'teacher assessments' of the pupils' levels of achievement in the subjects tested, based on evidence collected over the school year.

Schools send parents a report telling them what levels their children have reached in tests and in the teacher assessment. A summary of school results is published in the school prospectus and in the governors' annual report to parents. Primary schools are required to set targets for achievement in national tests, in line with government target-setting. For example, the government's target for 2002 was that 80 per cent of 11-year-olds would achieve level 4 in English and 75 per cent would achieve level 4 in mathematics. This target was not met.

The test results of primary schools with Year 6 pupils are published in league tables, designed to give parents information about standards. The major problem with these league tables is that raw results do not take into account the levels of achievement of the pupils on entry to the school. This has prompted consideration of ways of indicating the 'value added' to the pupil by the school. Each year schools receive an 'autumn package' from the standards unit at the DfES, containing their summary of Performance and Assessment data (PANDA). This shows the school how their pupils' achievements compare with those of other similar schools and gives them a basis for determining the value-added element of pupils' attainment levels in the national tests.

The QCA also provides optional tests for 8-, 9- and 10-year-olds that schools can use to check progress and to monitor levels of achievement. Many schools have taken to using these, so that children find themselves tested formally at the end of every year from Year 2 to Year 6. In addition, children are assessed throughout the Foundation Stage, by means of a profile which identifies their achievements in relation to the early learning goals.

Many comments made by teachers show a distrust of the whole system of national tests, league tables, target-setting and performance data: 'I am a Year 6 teacher and I am teaching to the test! It's ridiculous! We start drilling the children for the tests in February' (Primary teacher). Teachers are concerned that the tests focus too much attention on the narrow range of achievements that are most easily assessed in written test papers: 'I'm not sure what the tests mean. In science lessons John comes up with brilliant ideas, he can look at many possibilities, he has an enquiring mind and he knows a lot. But he has