

## Example of a personal statement for an NQT primary pool

I first became interested in primary teaching through working with a local Brownie Pack, something I have done since I was 15, training to become a leader in the process. This made me realise I enjoyed working with this age range, and school experience confirmed teaching as a career choice. My subsequent four-year BA Primary Education course at Norton University has served further to fire my enthusiasm and prepared me effectively to take responsibility for my own class.

My degree has trained me to cover all National Curriculum subjects, and my subject specialisms are design and technology and English, with an elective in drama. I have also studied design and technology at subject leader level and am going to be jointly presenting an INSET session for teachers on Computer Control; I would eventually like to be the coordinator for this subject in the school in which I work.

During my degree I have undertaken two practices in Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) and a further two in Key Stage 2 (in Years 5 and 6), my preferred phase. These included schools in inner city deprived areas and a school in a former mining town. These practices have given me a good understanding of the primary curriculum and of what makes effective teaching.

My time in school has developed my philosophy of valuing each child as an individual, as well as part of a community. I aim to give children as many learning opportunities and experiences as possible in order to engage, motivate and prepare them for future life. An appropriate, balanced, challenging and creative curriculum is essential in developing children's skills, knowledge and understanding. These all underpin personalised learning.

I have in particular come to understand the value of sharing learning objectives and success criteria with children. Knowing exactly what is expected and how they can achieve allows children to focus more clearly on tasks. This also facilitates effective self and peer assessments, as there are clear criteria and objectives to assess against, encouraging children to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Progression needs to be planned for, so that as children work and explore at their own pace, there is always something else ready to move them on and take them further in their learning. I also believe that differentiation and meeting varied learning styles are key to effective teaching and learning. Work should be set at an appropriate, but challenging, level. When I prepare lessons I make a conscious effort to ensure I am not just catering for visual learners like myself, but try to see lessons through other learners' eyes. For example, to introduce Year 2 children to pictograms, I got the children to create 'human pictograms' arranged by name length, pets, eye colour, etc. and then transferred that information as pictograms to the board. Kinaesthetic learners were thereby catered for in the physical movement and manipulation, visual learners in the pictograms created on the board and audio learners as we discussed and interpreted the graphs.

I feel it is important to make learning interesting and creative, and one way to achieve this is through the use of drama; this allows children to explore and understand situations and express feelings, thoughts and emotions. An example of how I have successfully used drama was with a Year 6 class learning about Victorian railways. I set up a debate with the children taking the roles of people affected by the building of the railways. They were incredibly enthusiastic and threw themselves into the task. They found this a fun, enjoyable and worthwhile learning experience, which enabled them to better understand the situation and empathise with those concerned.

Whilst on my school placements I have been able to try various assessment techniques. The most successful were noting comments about how well children have met the learning objectives, using a traffic light system, and recording those who achieved above and below expectations. I have also set and

levelled some literacy work, undertaken formative marking and carried out maths tests. Additionally, I have encouraged children to self-assess and carry out verbal peer assessment. As part of my final placement I was required to write an exemplar report on a child, which was highly commended by my mentor. I would like to expand and further develop my expertise in assessment during my induction year, with more focus on self and peer assessment.

During all of my placements I have taught ICT and used it to enhance my lessons with interactive white boards, the internet, videos, voice and sound clips, digital cameras, interactive games and work sheets. I have worked with other teachers to plan the curriculum; planned and organised the work of TAs; delivered an assembly to two year groups; attended a parents' evening, staff meetings and INSET days; been on school visits, including helping to organise two and writing the risk assessments; observed and helped run after-school clubs; and contributed to the classroom environments through interactive displays.

During my third year at university I studied a module called 'Integrating the Curriculum', looking at global issues such as sustainability and how these could be taught across the curriculum. This made me appreciate how this approach can be useful, particularly when addressing important social, ethical and global issues.

A third and fourth year module on 'Inclusion' has also really affected the way I think about children and addressing their needs in the classroom. Within this module I have focused on including all children, regardless of ability, learning needs, language, ethnic origin or any other factor. I have learnt how to identify and find ways to effectively aid the learning and meet their needs in ways which appeal to and best help them develop, gain a beneficial experience from their education and achieve their full potential. I have incorporated some of my learning in my final practice, as there was an autistic child in the class. I ensured that his learning needs were planned for and his TA was fully aware of what was expected.

As well as preparing me for school life, my university course has enabled me to take part in various experiences for my professional development. During my first year I undertook a week's residential camping holiday at Anglesey. With other students, I cared for a group of six Year 5 children, preparing and organising a range of outdoor learning activities and games, such as building shelters on the beach, orienteering and visits to sites of interest. It was an incredibly challenging week, but was also one of the best experiences I have had. It has made me aware of the value of such trips in extending children's education beyond the classroom.

I would like to work in the Midlands as it is close to my home, but also because its NQT programme appears to be one that is tailored to support me in my first year of teaching when I have so many new challenges to face. Your county is also appealing as it has an on-going school building programme, unlike many other areas of the country. As a Catholic, I would be very interested in working in a Catholic school. I have been through the Catholic school system myself and have also spent a lot of time helping out at my local Catholic primary school since the age of 16. However, none of my placement schools have been of religious denomination and I have thoroughly enjoyed each experience; therefore, a Catholic school, whilst it would be appealing, is not essential.

My university course, especially my teaching practice, has confirmed my belief that teaching is one of the most challenging, demanding, exhausting but varied and exciting careers there are. I really look forward to working in a job that is so important, being privileged to be such a vital part of so many young lives and making a real difference.