

By the end of this chapter you should be able to:

- explain how and why the role of the primary teacher has changed over time
- identify the new challenges that teachers are likely to face in the next few decades
- reflect upon the concept of a profession, the value of teaching and the responsibilities that teaching brings
- recognise the importance of collaborating with other professionals and parents

It is a life which requires a quiet, even temper, patience, sympathy, fondness for children, and habitual cheerfulness. (Newcastle Report 1861: 163)

Introduction

This chapter explores the professional values that should shape your teaching. The role of the teacher has changed considerably over the years. Modern primary teachers have responsibilities to promote equal opportunities, try to remove barriers to learning and accommodate the various needs of learners. They have to work alongside a range of professionals and are expected to develop close dialogue with parents. This is a significant shift since the sentiments of the opening quote were uttered in a government report on education, published in 1861.

The changing role of the primary teacher

The prevailing view of the nineteenth century was that almost anyone could have turned his hand to teaching. As one critic explained, ‘men were generally made schoolmasters because they were unfit for anything else’ (Horn, 1978: 18). Only a ‘bad moral character’ might dissuade school managers from appointing a teacher. The best teachers were judged according to how well their pupils performed in annual examinations in reading, writing and arithmetic, how well they kept classroom order and the extent to which they instilled religious and moral beliefs. The 1861 report concluded that teachers required ‘good sense and quiet intelligence [rather] than a very inquisitive mind or very brilliant talents’.

Expectations had certainly increased by the mid-twentieth century. In the midst of the Second World War, a professor of education declared that the teacher ‘must have an intelligent appreciation of the world in which the child is living and is going to live’ (Oliver 1943: 6). The teacher needed to be ‘a social scientist’, sufficiently well informed and perceptive to take an interest in world affairs and with a commitment to democratic principles. Oliver (1943: 12) would have applauded the inclusion of citizenship in the modern-day curriculum:

A teacher in a democracy must be trained to recognise the functions his pupils will be called on to fulfil as members of the democracy, and these requirements of society will affect the aims towards which his methods are directed. It is doubtful whether enough consideration has been given to the needs of society which different kinds of school are attempting to meet . . . Where is education in citizenship being successfully carried on?

It was not until after the Second World War that teaching became a more respected profession. Teachers’ heroic role in the mass evacuation of children raised their profile in the public eye, and the value of teachers in rebuilding post-war society was acknowledged. Teachers were associated closely with the new welfare state provisions and seen as key agents in providing equality of opportunity through education. As a consequence, teachers’ reputations gained in professional standing and, significantly, they took on a far more proactive role in directing education. In the classrooms, teachers exercised considerable freedom in terms of what was taught, how children were organised and the style of delivery. Their growing status was reflected in extended training courses in England and Wales, from two to three years, finally implemented in 1960. By 1965, student teachers could follow a four-year B.Ed degree programme – further recognition of their professional status.

By the 1950s and 1960s the role of the primary teacher had changed considerably since the inter-war years. Redl and Wattenberg (1951) highlighted the multi-functional role of the teacher, albeit in an American context (see Exhibit 3.1).

The Plowden Report (1967) on primary education in England stressed that the teacher could no longer be seen as a transmitter of knowledge: ‘He is becoming more and more concerned with stimulating and guiding learning, creating situations in which they learn, leading them rather than simply instructing.’ Similarly in Wales, the Gittins Report (1967: 481) suggested that ‘what the teacher is and does is more important than what he says’ and that most learning at the primary level occurs within a personal relationship.

Exhibit 3.1 Roles of the teacher in the 1950s

- Representative of society (inculcating moral values)
- Judge (giving marks and grades)
- Resource (possesses knowledge and skills)
- Helper (provides guidance for pupil difficulties)
- Referee (settles disputes among pupils)
- Detective (discovers rule-breakers)
- Object of identification (possesses traits that children imitate)
- Limiter of anxiety (helps children to control impulses)
- Ego-supporter (helps children have confidence in themselves)
- Group leader (establishes the climate for the group)
- Parent surrogate (acts as object of bids for attention from younger children)
- Target for hostilities (acts as object of aggression arising from frustrations created by adults)
- Friend and confidante (establishes warm relationships with children and shares confidences)
- Object of affection (meets the psychological needs of all children)

KEY CONCEPT**PROFESSIONALISM**

Latin from *prōfessus*, to 'declare open allegiance to, lay claim to knowledge of'

'Being professional' has an all-embracing feel about it and this is reflected in the new standards for qualified teacher status. Trainees can demonstrate their professionalism in all that they do, whether researching background knowledge, planning lessons, working alongside others, or completing records. Teachers share some characteristics with other professionals in performing a service to society, working from a body of scholarly knowledge, and operating within a professional community. But the profession has some way to go before teachers are perceived as having the same status as doctors, lawyers, architects, and the like.

The role of the teacher came under renewed scrutiny during the economic cutbacks in education, forced by the worldwide recession in the 1970s. Right-wing educationalists and politicians started to criticise teacher training colleges and schools for failing to meet the needs of society. Those responsible for training teachers were put under the spotlight amidst concerns that too much course content focused on subjects such as the philosophy, history, sociology and psychology of education at the expense of students gaining practical experience of classroom teaching. Among subsequent reforms

in the 1980s, students were expected to spend more time on school placement (and less in college), tutors were to be sent into schools to gain recent and relevant teaching experience, and quality assurance procedures in initial teacher training became more rigorous. Criteria for teacher training courses were also established.

In the 1990s central government sought to identify and remove poor teachers, whilst grading others according to their level of competence. Under the Conservative government, the favoured role and style of the teacher was one who taught formally, within strong subject and task boundaries, and to a raft of standardised assessments. Arguably there was little room for creativity, flexibility or encouraging pupils to think critically. Whether the Labour election victory in 1997 signalled a more conciliatory approach to the teaching profession is a point of debate (McKenzie, 2001). Under New Labour during the early 2000s a 'performance culture' continued to permeate primary education through prescribed national strategies and assessment (Richards, 2001). However, since 2000, the setting up of the General Teaching Councils for England, Wales and Northern Ireland has been seen as a key step towards safeguarding the integrity of the profession. Such a council has already existed in Scotland since 1965.

Variation in teaching quality became a key theme of the public discourse on teachers at the start of this century. McLaughlin and Burnaford (2007: 332) point out the difficulties in defining and legislating for quality teaching before reaching the conclusion that high-quality teaching 'depends on the quality of teachers' prior experiences, the nature of their classroom actions and their reflective capabilities'. This debate is not limited to Britain. Imig and Imig (2007: 102) draw attention to the tensions in American teachers' education and their views have resonance in many countries:

Advocates on one side emphasize achievement over learning, offer the 'good enough' teacher and promote subject knowledge over pedagogy – the other side urges a philosophy of progressivism and a psychology of constructivism . . . one side promotes teacher centeredness while the other contends that the child has to be at the center of good schooling.

Many of the developments in primary teaching over the second half of the twentieth century have centred on the questions of standards and professionalism. Should teachers have the professional autonomy to decide what is taught in school, how to teach, how to organise the environment, and what standards are appropriate for different ages, or should the state direct affairs? One expert argues that despite the rhetoric of radical change in teaching over the past 25 years or so, teachers continue to live in 'a system of terror' in which:

Performance is measured by databases, appraisals, annual reviews, report writing, quality assurance visits, regular publications of results, inspections, and peer reviews. And yet it is not always clear what is expected.

(Ball, 2008: 50)

What will the role of the primary teacher be as the twenty-first century unfolds? Teachers currently pursuing training courses may still be in the teaching profession in the year 2050. Given the rate and nature of educational change over the past 40 years, it is clearly foolish to predict what kind of skills may be required at the mid-point of the twenty-first century. However, core values of tolerance, respect, kindness and patience have stood the test of time and should underpin everything that teachers do.

What are the professional values expected of qualified teachers?

Hare (1993) is among those teacher educators who calls for a return to essential teaching qualities which he identifies as eight virtues or ‘excellences’: humility, courage, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm, judgement, and imagination. Similarly, the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI, 2004) identifies what it considers are the core values of teaching (see Exhibit 3.2).

Exhibit 3.2 Core professional values as set out by the GTCNI (2004)

Trust	Honesty	Commitment
Respect	Fairness	Equality
Integrity	Tolerance	Service

The Council believes that *commitment* lies at the heart of professional behaviour. It is not too difficult to pick out those trainees who lack commitment and enthusiasm for teaching. They are highly unlikely to achieve qualified teacher status. The vast majority of trainee teachers, however, do succeed in demonstrating the necessary professional values and attitudes. A minority go beyond this and show outstanding professionalism in action – whether planning lessons, teaching, undertaking administrative duties or through their professional relationships with others.

The McBer Report (2000) highlighted the importance of teachers keeping their word to children, being sincere and genuine, allowing pupils to act naturally and express themselves without fear of making mistakes. Strong modelling of these qualities helps to create a climate of trust in which children see the teacher as dependable and genuine. Hence you should avoid sending out ‘mixed’ messages by saying one thing but acting in a different way. For example, if you expect children to listen when you speak, demonstrate the same respect when they contribute. Above all, you should be mindful of the *privilege* of teaching children and the responsibilities that this brings. The McBer Report (2000: 21) highlighted four particular professional characteristics of *outstanding* teachers (see Exhibit 3.3).

Exhibit 3.3 The professional characteristics of outstanding teachers

1 Challenge and Support	A commitment to do everything possible for each pupil and enable all pupils to be successful.
2 Confidence	The belief in one’s ability to be effective and to take on challenges.
3 Creating Trust	Being consistent and fair. Keeping one’s word.
4 Respect for Others	The underlying belief that individuals matter and deserve respect.

Source: McBer Report (2000: 21)

A group of 30 senior mentors was asked to sum up the kinds of professional values that they look for in all trainees, and if possible to note those that they considered were the hallmarks of outstanding students. Their collective responses are shown in Exhibit 3.4.

Exhibit 3.4 Views of senior mentors who were asked what professional values they look for in trainee teachers

- Punctuality – arriving in school at least 15 minutes before the start of the school day.
- Reliability – delivering lessons, preparing resources, keeping up to date with records, and ‘filling in’ when asked.
- Commitment – prepared to work very hard and support children in their learning.
- Confidentiality – being sensitive to school matters and not sharing these with those who should not know.
- Respectfulness – in the manner of speaking to children and staff.
- Courage* – to defend what they believe in.
- Flexibility* – showing a willingness to adapt.
- Open-mindedness* – readiness to accept alternative ways of working.
- Initiative* – increasing independence necessary by the final school experience.

* Considered to be especially important in determining the professional values of outstanding trainees.

Flexibility and adaptive expertise

In his classic work on the role of the teacher, Hoyle (1967: 59) noted:

Studies of what makes a ‘good’ teacher have, on the whole, been unsatisfactory in that they have tended to look for universal qualities of personality which would characterise the good teacher and ignore the nature of the teaching situation itself. But undoubtedly one of the major qualities of the successful teacher is flexibility.

Flexibility is a popular concept in education with, for instance ‘flexible learning’ projects expecting teachers to respond to the different interests and needs of learners, to promote generally applicable skills not just subject-specific ones and improve motivation by offering a ‘pick-n-mix’ curriculum. However, Hargreaves (1994) points to the different faces of ‘flexibility’ and the difficulties this can bring, for instance when employers use the term to demand workers’ unquestioned compliance to increase ‘productivity’ – resulting in exploitation, diversity and divisiveness. This warns of the dangers associated with stretching something or someone too far. As trainee teachers on placement experience, it can be very challenging to strike a balance between showing a willingness to ‘help out’ as and when necessary in schools without feeling that you are a ‘yes’ person, subservient to the whims of others and ‘duty-bound’ to do

whatever is asked of you. This is particularly the case if you have a generally shy and 'quiet' disposition.

As teachers, you can demonstrate flexibility in many ways, whether changing the plan or direction of a lesson at the last minute, taking responsibility for teaching another class, or responding positively to a change in the timetable. The capacity for teachers to adapt well to changing circumstances, whether within the class, school or national level, is critical to individual and collective wellbeing. More generally in the era of the National Curriculum, teachers have had to demonstrate considerable fortitude in adapting to (or less often challenging) ongoing changes in government policies and educational initiatives. Over the next few decades, a number of key drivers of change have been identified that will determine the course of school provision and the role of the teacher therein (see Exhibit 3.5).

MOMENT TO REFLECT

Reflect over the expected future changes outlined in Exhibit 3.5 and consider the implications for you personally as a teacher.

Teachers will need to respond to the changing nature of schools and the demands placed on the educational system. Teachers will undoubtedly need to keep up to speed with the fast-changing world of computers. Advances in technology mean that teachers (and pupils) have the potential to access first-class resources and confer with the very best teachers from around the world. However, teachers and learners need guidance on making full use of digital technologies as a means of communicating daily. The best teachers of tomorrow will need both secure knowledge and understanding in their field as well as the skills to help students to 'learn how to learn' within the information age. Negroponte (1996: 146) summed up the pace of change brought by the revolution in information technology: 'You can expect to have on your wrist tomorrow what you have on your desk today, what filled a room yesterday.' The progressive introduction of ICT into schools has challenged traditional patterns of teaching and learning. But the implications of the ICT 'revolution' in schools have not fully been realised and, alarmingly, ICT is amongst the less frequently researched subjects in the primary school (Aviram, 2000; Lord and Jones, 2006).

It is not just a matter of adjusting to technological change. Many school buildings are not used to their full capacity especially in the context of falling pupil numbers. This is something that is particularly affecting rural parts of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Schools for the twenty-first century are likely to be much more community-centred. Estyn (2002: 2–3) asks:

If we were starting from scratch to organise a system for educating children and young people, how many of the following features would we include in our schools of the 21st century?

- opening times of fewer than 200 days per year;
- a working year based on the child labour demands of the 19th century agricultural year, with a crammed time schedule at certain times of the year depending on when Easter falls;

Exhibit 3.5 Key drivers for change affecting educational provision in the future

Demographic	• Younger and less experienced teaching profession • Generally people will be living and experiencing better health for longer • Greater ethnic diversity
Social	• Decline in 'traditional' family structures • Greater religious diversity • Greater proportion of children will have parents who were educated to university level • Child and adolescent mental health disorders are unlikely to diminish
Technological	• Increase in technological change such as rise in internet-based services • Costs associated with hardware, software and data storage will decrease further • Near-universal access to personal, multi-functional devices, smarter software integrated with global standards • Increasing amounts of information being available to search on-line (with faster search engines) • Using ICT will be natural for most pupils and for an increasing majority of teachers
Economic	• Living standards to be around 30 per cent higher, with more 'luxuries' becoming 'necessities' and a greater proportion of income spent on leisure, household services, sport and culture • Higher level skills will be emphasised within a knowledge-based economy • Working patterns will be increasingly diverse • Workplace skills will change, requiring employees to be flexible and adaptable
Environmental	• Heightened awareness of environmental threats • Individuals will be expected to take personal responsibility for their impact on the environment

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- built-in inflexibility with peaks and troughs of activity caused by variable length fixed holidays and term times;
- a cycle of activity that starts in September when people's body clocks are beginning to slow down, rather than in the spring which would tie in better with the planning and finance cycles.

Adaptive expertise:

the notion of adaptive experts refers to individuals who are able to adapt learned procedures to new problems and invent new procedures when necessary.

The importance of being able to respond to change is highlighted in the concept of '**adaptive expertise**' (Hatano and Inagaki, 1986; Bransford, 2005). A distinction is drawn between 'routine' and 'adaptive' experts. Routine experts may have the content knowledge of adaptive experts but lack the flexibility when faced with new challenges. Bransford *et al.* (1999) calls the former 'artisans' because they approach new problems as opportunities to use their existing expertise to do familiar tasks more efficiently. They see adaptive experts, on the other hand, as 'virtuosos', who treat problems as opportunities to explore and expand their current levels of expertise. While all teachers learn through their lifetimes, adaptive experts are more likely to modify their core beliefs, ideas and competencies. This may reduce their efficiency in the short term, but make them more flexible in the long run as they broaden and deepen their expertise.

Pastoral care and support for children

Pastoral care:

teachers have a pastoral duty of care in looking after the personal and social development of children while in school.

Perhaps the greatest manifestation of professional values in action is the extent that trainees demonstrate their **pastoral care** for children. Findings from specialist fields such as health education, child psychology and psychiatry, cultural and racial integration and gender, highlight the importance of helping children and young people develop their self-awareness (Marland, 1995). In particular, these studies have shown the inadequacy of limiting teaching to a 'facts only' approach when handling subjects such as drugs, bullying, sex and relationships education. This is because of the pervasive influence of the peer group which means that individuals need to be equipped with the necessary social skills of managing risks and applying assertive techniques.

In England, there are non-statutory national guidelines relating to Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE). These set out opportunities for children to learn about keeping safe and who to approach if their safety is threatened. There are similar curriculum provisions in other parts of the United Kingdom (see Chapter 5). Most school-based programmes feature lessons designed to promote the following:

- taking personal responsibility;
- developing positive self-images;
- making decisions and real choices;
- developing relationships;
- considering social and moral dilemmas;
- finding information and advice;
- preparing for life changes.

The planning and organisation for personal and social education will vary to reflect the needs of the school. Noble and Hoffman (2002) highlight the many forms of delivery, including timetabled sessions, topics, outside speakers, through the National Curriculum, and setting challenges. Teachers can gain important insight into children's thinking by using 'Circle Time' and 'personalised learning' approaches (see Chapter 9). More often, outstanding trainees respond appropriately to the incidental events in the day – the child who falls over in the playground, a child who acts 'out of character', or the latecomer.

School councils have an important role to play as a vehicle through which schools can address the need for learner participation in the life of the community. In the best practice, school councils have their own budgets and have a contribution to make on important matters such as staff appointments and setting rules. This gives such bodies a meaningful rather than a cosmetic status. As trainee teachers, it is worth spending some time talking to school council members about their roles and examples of how the council has had a positive impact on school life.

Blake (2004) warns that trainees, in their enthusiasm for the teacher's pastoral role, may fall into the potentially dangerous trap of believing that their empathy and personal classroom organisational skills will remove the need for more experienced and specialised guidance. This is particularly the case with child protection.

KEY CONCEPT

PASTORAL CARE

*Latin, **pascere**, to feed*

The concept of pastoral care originates with Christian teaching and the metaphor of the Good Shepherd who looks after the spiritual and moral needs of his flock. Since 'to care' is a verb, this is referring to something that teachers do and is essentially about the quality of relationships in the school. Experts suggest that pastoral care is best expressed in the 'commitment to the welfare, well-being and fullest development of the individual' (Best *et al.*, 1995: 15).

School councils

the School Councils UK define school councils as: 'An elected body of pupils whose purpose is to represent their classes and to be a forum for active and constructive pupil input into the daily life of the school community.'

Child protection

Child protection is the responsibility of all those who work with children. The field – or minefield as Blake puts it – of child protection is probably the heaviest responsibility for a class teacher. Allegations of **child abuse** (founded or otherwise) can lead to irretrievable breakdowns in relationships within families and schools. There are many potential signs of child abuse including physical symptoms, attention-seeking, low self-image and truancy. Schools are required to have clear policies and practices relating to child protection. They have duties to cooperate and share information with the local child protection network. Class teachers have key roles to play in child protection in order that all children feel safe, both within school and outside (Sweeney, 1999); hence the importance of being clear over the school's internal procedures.

Suspicions of abuse can be expressed by anyone who is in contact with the school, including children, parents, carers and caretakers. These should be conveyed to the appropriate designated officer within the school, usually the head teacher, recorded in writing, signed and dated. It is particularly important to respond to children who express concerns in a reassuring manner, showing that their views are taken seriously without guaranteeing complete confidentiality. Useful guidance is available on how to respond to children who make an allegation of abuse. Exhibit 3.6 shows the information provided by the Scottish government.

Child abuse

this can be defined in different ways but can include physical, mental and emotional abuse or threatened harm of children.

Exhibit 3.6 Checklist for responding when a child discloses abuse

- 1 Only ask enough questions to gain basic information.
- 2 Take the allegation seriously and support – do not interrogate!
- 3 Use open ended questions. (O)
- 4 Do **not** use leading questions. (L)

When	When did it happen?	O
	Did it happen last night?	L
Where	Where did it happen?	O
	Did he/she come into your bedroom?	L
Who	Who did it?	O
	Was it Daddy/Peter/the babysitter?	L
What	What happened?	O
	Did such and such happen?	L
How Why	Avoid if possible. These questions require a judgement by the child and may also induce self-recrimination.	

5 Remember:

- Keep the questions open ended.
- Do not prompt or suggest to obtain the answer you think you want to hear.
- Record, sign and date disclosure or concern on the same day.
- If producing the record by computer – print paper copy and sign and date.
Do not save copy to hard disk.

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Children need to know that information may need to be passed on to others in order to keep them safe. It is not the responsibility of teachers to investigate suspected cases of abuse (DfES, 2006a).

In a litigious culture, many teachers are naturally nervous over the degree of physical contact with children. It is unrealistic to suggest that teachers should never touch pupils, as the government acknowledges. Guidelines for schools in Northern Ireland point out that staff should not feel inhibited in providing a distressed child, especially a younger one, with reassurance involving physical comforting, as a caring parent would provide (DENI, 1999). In other contexts there are occasions when teachers have the right to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils in certain circumstances (DfEE, 1998). You should receive appropriate training as part of your course leading to qualified teacher status; often this includes visiting speakers with specialist knowledge, such as representatives from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children or local authorities.

One of the most challenging aspects of the profession is dealing with children who are experiencing distress. More able trainees recognise that there is no 'one size fits all'

approach, notwithstanding the need to follow school policies. Getting to know the foibles and idiosyncrasies of individual children is at the heart of pastoral care. Broadly speaking, Packard *et al.* (1997: 54) make the following suggestions for dealing with distressed children:

- 1 Be firm, but gentle.
- 2 Act quickly to settle children who don't want to be left at school by their parents or carers.
- 3 If a child is upset, don't change your expectations.
- 4 If an upset child becomes disruptive, send for help.
- 5 Give a child time and space to calm down.
- 6 Keep other children away.
- 7 Your expectation of the children is the most important thing.
- 8 Don't expect children to be able to explain why they are upset.
- 9 If your discipline of children upsets them, don't let them get away with things for a quiet life.
- 10 Tell the children: 'You can tell me anything'.

However, classroom life is more complex than following a checklist of recommended techniques. For children, the world can appear to be a harsh and unfriendly place, difficult to cope with on top of their own physical and emotional changes. Teachers need to make responsible decisions on behalf of children, with their best interests in mind. One of the joys and trials of teaching is that you never know what each day brings. How you deal with the unexpected is a good measure of your growing professionalism. As a base line, children's safety must always come first. As trainee teachers, you should pass on any concerns immediately to the class or head teacher.

TASK

Discuss in small groups how you might respond to these real-life scenarios reported by trainees during their school placements:

- A five-year-old regularly looks very tired and lethargic in lessons.
- A nine-year-old girl does not want to get changed for PE lessons in front of her peers.
- A gifted footballer in your class is dropped from an important tournament by a colleague and you feel that this is too harsh.
- A child accuses another child of stealing his lunch money.
- A ten-year-old boy says that his father hits him.
- An 11-year-old girl confides in you that she loves another teacher.
- A child comes to school dirty and dishevelled on most days.
- You overhear a group of children on the playground describing a graphic video that they had watched at the weekend.
- A newly-arrived child in the class swears at another child.
- A child is reluctant to go and play at break-time.

Teachers, schools and the wider community

The Westminster government's vision for 'extended services' ('schools') involves wrap-around childcare provision 48 weeks a year from 8.00 a.m. until 6.00 p.m. for school-age children (DfES, 2005). These extended services can include childcare, adult education, parent support programmes, community-based health and social care services, multi-agency behaviour support teams and after-school activities. Many schools already open up their facilities so that the community can benefit from study support, ICT, sport, music, arts and crafts and other special interest clubs. One trainee on her first school placement was amazed at the way in which a school ran classes for car maintenance, woodwork, computers, and drama. Several parents and grandparents were in the school learning at the same time as their children. Such developments do not mean that teachers are expected to take on additional responsibilities in running these services. Rather, the intention is for schools to work closely with parents and the wider community. As trainee teachers, you need to be clear that it is becoming increasingly important to see children in a wider context, recognising the need to work alongside other professionals, parents and members of the wider community.

Many schools foster links with the community by organising assemblies, concerts, fairs, festivals and special events. By working with parents, local residents, the business community, churches, charities and public services, children learn to become active citizens. Throughout the year, there are opportunities for children to take part in fund-raising events and you are likely to see activities linked to events such as 'non-uniform days', 'readathons', and sponsored spelling competitions. You should try to read about the background of the particular cause and what it is trying to achieve. For instance, one trainee undertook research on 'Jeans for Genes Day' and helped to organise activities to raise awareness of children with genetic disorders. More generally, you should try to make full use of the community as a resource to support the curriculum. Reports on outstanding schools show that they utilise the skills within their community, for instance by inviting speakers to contribute to curriculum projects.

Ahead of their final school placement, a group of postgraduate trainees was asked 'In what ways might they contribute to the wider development of the school?' Exhibit 3.7 shows the results.



Extend your knowledge

Read the case studies of trainee teachers working with local primary schools to develop their knowledge of farming and growing resources as part of a community project. Highlight which areas of the curriculum are covered: <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/CaseStudies/casestudy.cfm?id=276>

Exhibit 3.7 PGCE trainees' ideas on contributions to the wider development of the school

- Take a whole-school assembly.
- Take part/lead in a school play.
- Organise a visit.
- Invite in speakers.
- Run an extra-curricular club.
- Be available for a breakfast club or after-school society.
- Help organise a fete or school sports day.
- Contribute to an in-service training day.

Increasingly schools are becoming community learning centres for all ages. The concept of 'wrap-around care' has gained momentum, with breakfast clubs, after-school activities and holiday classes on offer. Many of the best teachers are fully aware of the need to work as part of a professional community. A professional learning community is characterised by 'the commitment and involvement of all staff in the community, not just teaching staff' (Stoll and Louis, 2007: 27).

Working with others

In recent years the importance of teachers working closely with other professionals has been highlighted in the context of high-profile cases of child neglect, notably the horrific death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. Victoria was an eight-year-old girl who died following months of neglect and abuse at the hands of her great aunt (Laming, 2003). This particular tragedy, in which 12 opportunities for child protection from different agencies were missed, led ultimately to the Children's Act 2004 that requires every local authority to appoint an officer responsible for coordinating all children's services. There have been other developments designed to support multi-agency working. The Children's Fund, for instance, was launched in 2000 to promote multi-agency teamwork for preventative services to address the needs of vulnerable 5–11-year-olds across 149 English local authorities (Anning *et al.*, 2006). In England alone, more than four million people, across public, private and voluntary sectors, work with children (DCSF, 2008). The Children's Workforce Development Unit (CWDU) was set up in 2005 to support the implementation of the government's *Every Child Matters* agenda and bring about improved wellbeing for all children.

The need for good communication among professionals and other support staff charged with the care and education of children is essential, although knowing what information to pass on and when is not always clear-cut. The DCSF provides a six-point checklist that is a useful summary for trainees to keep in mind (see Exhibit 3.8).

Exhibit 3.8 DCSF checklist

- 1 Explain openly and honestly at the outset what information will or could be shared, and why, and seek agreement – except where doing so puts the child or others at risk of significant harm.
- 2 The child's safety and welfare must be the overriding consideration when making decisions on whether to share information about them.
- 3 Respect the wishes of children or families who do not consent to share confidential information – unless in your judgement there is sufficient need to override that lack of consent.
- 4 Seek advice when in doubt.
- 5 Ensure information is accurate, up-to-date, necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, shared only with those who need to see it, and shared securely.
- 6 Always record the reasons for your decision – whether it is to share or not.

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Although as trainee teachers you are not required to demonstrate independent supervisory roles in relation to other adults, you do need to develop your skills in working alongside others; for instance, while planning lessons and allocating roles for learning support assistants. There are a number of professionals whom you may not immediately come into contact with, but who can play a major part in children’s lives. These include education welfare officers, child psychologists, the Traveller Education Service and health professionals. In discussing the future of initial teacher training, Estyn (2007: 8) notes: ‘the development of personal, leadership, managerial and team skills has not featured strongly in the initial training of teachers in the past’. However, Estyn sees the potential for cross-professional training of teachers alongside others involved in working with young people.

Exhibit 3.9 Examples of personnel links

Librarians	Education welfare officer
Museum curators	Paediatric occupational therapist
Gallery staff	Child psychotherapist
Caretakers	School nurse
School administrators	Link social worker
Specialist teachers	School home liaison worker
Speech and language therapist	Educational psychologist
Community workers	Police and other service personnel
Learning support assistants	IT technicians
School governors	

To establish and sustain good working relationships takes effort and sensitivity on the part of all concerned. Day *et al.* (1987) identified ten key features that characterise effective teamwork:

- 1 Awareness
- 2 Warmth
- 3 Interactions
- 4 Communications
- 5 Intimacy
- 6 Openness
- 7 Authentic behaviour
- 8 Motivation
- 9 Confrontation
- 10 Commitment.

It is important to know the skills and capabilities of others within the team, respecting rather than ridiculing difference and sharing the workload. An artistic trainee might offer her services in terms of displays or exhibitions. In one instance, an exceptional trainee taught guitar lessons to staff and older pupils in the school. Much has been written recently about the wellbeing of young children. A caring and considerate teacher also takes into account the feelings of colleagues. Teachers experience many interactions in the course of the day, and often it is the brief, informal discussions on

the way to a lesson, in the staffroom, on playground duty, or after school, that make all the difference to raising spirits. Day *et al.* (1987: 42) note that 'in schools where teamwork is effective, teachers smile at each other more, laugh together, take time to listen to each other, and get more involved in each other's work'.

When relationships are strong in schools, individuals tend to know about each other at both personal and professional levels. The challenge for the trainee on school placement is not to come over as too familiar with teachers but to show an interest in others. Sometimes, trainees 'hide away' from other staff confining themselves largely to their own classrooms. This can be based on a mistaken belief that they are not welcome in the staffroom or other classes. Most schools endeavour to involve trainees in the whole life of the school, for example by inviting them to in-service training courses or staff meetings. You are well advised to take up these offers because they provide valuable opportunities for you to extend your understanding of what being a primary teacher is all about. Perhaps the most important feature of teamwork is a willingness to be open and honest with each other.

The best teachers know the importance of exchanging accurate information and that knowing who to speak to and where to look for ideas are central to improving performance in the classroom. Dryden and Vos (2005: 35) make the point that of the 59 million or so teachers worldwide, if business trends are followed, 2 per cent of those teachers (1.18 million) are 'trendsetting innovators' and 13 per cent (7.67 million) are 'early adopters' of new methods. This forms an enormous potential for 'sharing interactive learning and teaching models'.

Trainee teachers, the law and professional codes of conduct

As trainee teachers, you are likely to have a professional code of conduct established by your college or university that you are expected to follow while on school placement. Although these vary in detail, they typically include the following areas:

- regular attendance;
- punctuality;
- respect for others;
- appropriate use of resources including internet facilities;
- appropriate behaviour;
- ability to listen and act on feedback and advice;
- taking responsibility for own learning;
- maintaining an appropriate standard of dress and appearance;
- carrying out duties as required by class teachers, mentors, other placement-related staff and tutors;
- carrying out reasonable instructions as requested by the school and college staff.

It is important to read and talk through these expectations with the appropriate staff so that there are no misunderstandings. Schools will have particular expectations, for instance regarding dress, which you would need to be clear about.



Extend your knowledge

Visit the website accompanying this book and read the summary of points relating to key legislation for teachers in England. For trainees in Scotland, *Building the Curriculum 3* (Scottish Executive, 2008) has information on key legislation and guidance relating to matters such as disability and additional support needs.

In addition, one of the standards for qualified teacher status is an understanding and upholding of the professional code of the respective General Teaching Council for England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland. These effectively require teachers to demonstrate a balance between professional accountability and personal responsibility. The overriding consideration to remember is weighing up what is in the best interests of the child in terms of their health, welfare and safety.

Although you are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of the law, you need to have a basic awareness of the statutory frameworks relating to the profession, understand how to gain information and where to access support. This is particularly important on matters such as demonstrating confidentiality. The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Act (updated annually) sets out teachers' legal responsibilities. These cover a raft of legal matters including planning, attending staff meetings and promoting the general progress and wellbeing of pupils.

The legal position of teachers is that they act *in loco parentis* (in the place of parents) by behaving reasonably in their duty of care, supervision and avoidance of negligence. Cohen *et al.* (2004) draw attention to legal issues that are most likely to be in the minds of student teachers while in schools. These include matters relating to discipline, detention, and confiscation of property, educational visits, accidents, child protection and data protection. The general line is for students to consult with the school and to follow their policies and procedures. At the start of their school placement, most schools will present students with an induction booklet containing all key policy documents. It is imperative that you read through and adhere to the key policies, especially those relating to:

- child protection
- equal opportunities
- teaching and learning
- bullying.

All schools are required to have an equal opportunities policy and teachers have a legal and moral duty to uphold its principles. Outstanding teachers serve as excellent role models to children. In one city primary school in Wales, the staff sought to express their commitment to equal opportunities through a statement which included a child-friendly diagram (see Figure 3.1). Mindful of having an all-female staff, this school made a special effort to compensate by frequently inviting male, as well as female, visitors to work alongside the children. These included representatives from the media, local hospital, police, a local church and mosque. Boys and girls had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, older pupils acted as 'stewards' for younger ones, planning documents and displays reflected different cultures and new staff were trained in the school's commitment to anti-racism.

Promoting equal opportunities is central to successful teaching. It particularly requires empathy, sensitivity and a commitment to fairness. Empathy is necessary because in order to understand pupils and others you need to recognise their feelings, viewpoints and experiences. Sensitivity to others is about picking up the signals of how they feel, and thinking through the potential consequences in their lives of what you say or do. Ultimately a desire to be fair should underpin all policies and practices.

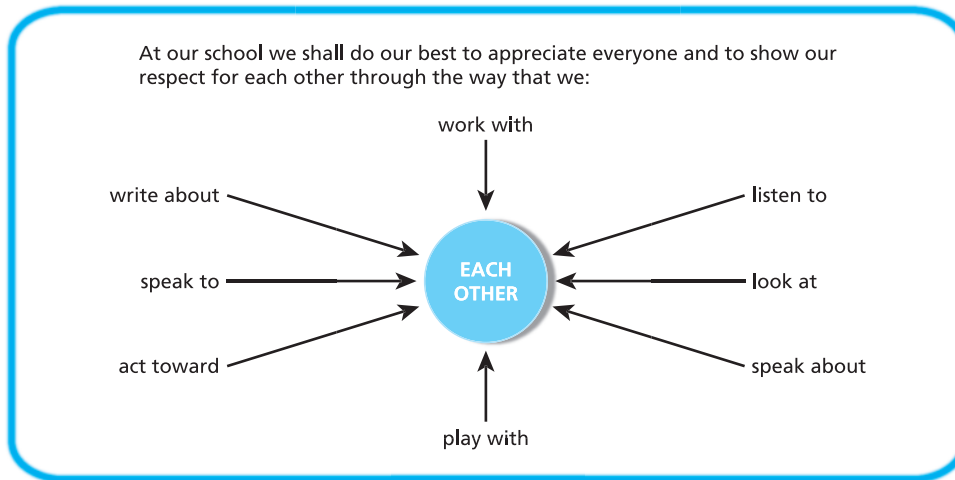


Figure 3.1

An extract from one school's equal opportunity policy

Source: ACCAC (2001: 20). Reproduced with permission.

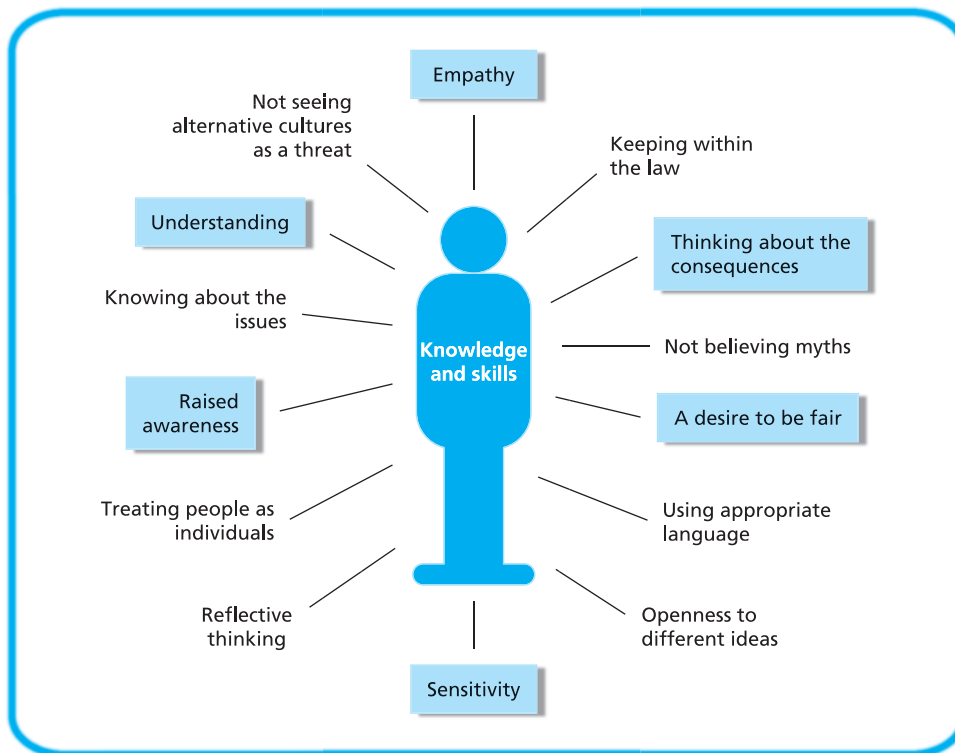


Figure 3.2

Transferable skills to promote equal opportunities

Source: Clements and Spinks (1996: 15). Reproduced with permission.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the transferable knowledge, skills and attitudes that you should seek to develop in all contexts. The boxed comments are the major skills that shape equal opportunities.

In practice, promoting equal opportunities can be very difficult to achieve given the inequalities in society and some children enter school disadvantaged in terms of

basic skills. The requirements for different parts of the United Kingdom can be accessed at the Equality and Human Rights Commission website (www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Occasionally you may find yourself in an awkward position, including requests to 'cover' for an absent class teacher at the last moment, perhaps because the teacher is ill. It clearly makes sense for you to gain more responsibility for teaching a class, and for doing this independently, in order to prepare for full-time teaching. There are circumstances when the host teacher might leave a trainee alone to gain such experiences. However, as trainees you are not supply teachers (for one thing you are not paid) and schools place an unfair responsibility upon you when they ask for your assistance to replace a serving teacher temporarily. However, it takes strength of character to politely refuse such a request and, if necessary, refer the matter to the university.



Extend your knowledge

Read the NUT guide on the teacher and the law available at: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/resources/pdf/Teachers&Law2007-12pp%20.pdf>
Make notes in the spaces provided in relation to the teacher's duty of care and how this impacts on your practice.

MOMENT TO REFLECT

How would you respond if asked to 'fill in' for an absent teacher while on school experience?

Communicating with parents

You can demonstrate your professional values in the way that you communicate with parents. Establishing strong and effective links with parents and other main educators and care-givers is clearly to the advantage of children's development. The Plowden Report (1967) was a landmark publication in highlighting the significance of good home-school relationships, advocating for example the introduction of Parent-Teacher Associations. The legacy is seen, for instance, in the Parent Councils introduced by the Westminster government's *Children's Plan* DCSF (2007). Recent European research has demonstrated that parental involvement can be a greater influence on a child's educational success than the quality of the school (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). In the United Kingdom, research suggests a growing number of parents are now more likely to see a child's education as mainly or wholly their responsibility than in previous generations (Peters *et al.*, 2008).

The example parents set in terms of their values and the manner in which they talk with (and not at) children, provides the bedrock upon which schools strive to build good relationships. Good communication between schools and parents depends upon three main factors (OHMCI, 1998: 9):

- taking into account the views of parents in identifying priorities for action;
- effective arrangements for meetings and written communications;
- informing parents of changes and the progress made to improve pupils' education.

Government guidelines make it clear that parents have the right to participate in decisions about their children's education and to receive information about their children

(DCSF, 2007). In recent years 'parent power' has also been used politically as a kind of checkpoint against teacher autonomy. Parents have seen their rights steadily increase, for example through greater access to curriculum information, inspection procedures, assessment data and overall school performance. Home-school agreements have been introduced in many schools to support the progress of particular pupils. More generally parents have also been reminded of their responsibilities, for instance in sending their children to school. After their final school placements, a group of postgraduate trainees were asked to draw upon their experiences to consider ways in which schools might work alongside parents. Their ideas are shown in Exhibit 3.10.

Exhibit 3.10 PGCE trainees' ideas on communicating with parents

Tapping into the know-how and specialist skills of parents (e.g. in ICT, business management, painting and decorating, building)

Governing body meetings

Notice boards

Newsletters

Website

Joint school-parent projects (e.g. reading workshops)

Exchange ideas via emails and blogs

Home visits

Parents' evenings

Written reports to parents

Social/fund-raising events

Parent representative bodies

One infant school uses a service known as ParentMail that allows parents to sign up to receive information by email from the school. The system means that all parents can access information, a practice that is particularly valued when parents do not live together (*The Guardian*, 11 December 2007). Figure 3.3 shows an extract from a digital report prepared by a trainee who taught an early years class. The trainee worked within the school and local authority guidelines to produce a CD-ROM sent home to each parent, detailing the progress of each child.

To become a qualified teacher, you will need to demonstrate understanding of the statutory requirements for reporting on pupils' progress and be familiar with the reporting procedures used by schools. Teachers are required to give parents and carers accurate information on the progress and attainment of their children, orally and in writing. Trainee teachers should always respect the confidentiality of reports that they are shown or information that might be sensitive to others.

Some schools use software to produce statements for reports. But the key is to identify clearly for parents how well their children are doing at school and how they might improve. This depends upon the teacher's knowledge of each child and should draw upon assessment records.

The vast majority of parents want to know how they can help their children move forward in their learning and so you should note the need to prepare suggested targets. These should include examples of what parents might do in terms of supporting

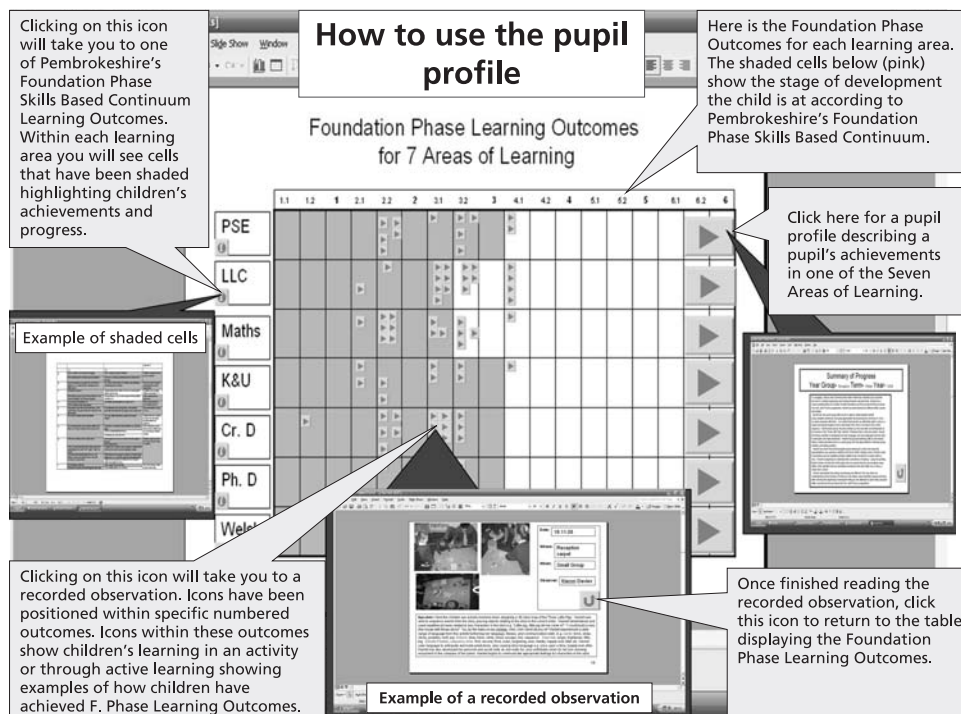


Figure 3.3
Extract from a
trainee's digital
report to
parents

Source: K. Davies
and Tavernspite
Primary School.

FOCUS ON PRACTICE

One trainee approached his senior mentor towards the end of a summer placement and asked whether he could sit alongside the teacher during a parents' evening. The trainee recounted the value of the experience in seeing how reports were put together and tailored to the individual needs of pupils:

What struck me was how emotionally-sapping such an event can be, in that you have to put a smile on for each parent and try to be upbeat. At the same time the teacher was adept at conveying clearly how each child could improve without talking jargon to the parents. This was a challenge because some of the parents were professionals and others were, like, manual workers.

language development, reading and mathematics. But parents are also interested in their children's personal development or as one parent put it – 'what is not on the curriculum'.

When reporting, most teachers use banks of comments linked to 'benchmark' statements based on end-of-year levels, derived either from the National Curriculum or Early Years documentation. These are then adapted to the needs of each child. The challenge for the excellent practitioner is to personalise the reports so that parents feel

that their child is reported upon as an individual and that they are included in the educational programme. Increasingly, primary schools use software for assessment purposes. For instance, since 2009 schools in Northern Ireland are required to use computer-based assessments with pupils in Years 4–7. Test results in reading, spelling and general mathematics provide teachers with:

- automatic marking and analysis, and a variety feedback options;
- age equivalent scores standardised within Northern Ireland;
- an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils;
- insights into which pupils need particular kinds of support.

TASK

Visit <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/> and read examples of good practice in reporting to parents.

SUMMARY

- This chapter has briefly charted the changing role of the primary teacher since its inception in the nineteenth century. The remit of the teacher has widened beyond transmitting knowledge, keeping order and instilling Christian values. The modern professional teacher serves many roles, especially a pastoral one, in trying to meet the needs of different learners.
- There are a number of professional values that lie at the heart of teaching. These include respect, integrity, fairness, honesty, equality, tolerance and commitment. Strong modelling of these qualities contributes to a climate conducive to learning.
- Those training to be teachers in the twenty-first century face a number of challenges, including responding to technological and social changes. ICT has the potential to transform school life, but any transformation has to be managed carefully. Increasingly schools are becoming community learning resources and the teaching profession has an important role to play in working closely with businesses, charities and local councils in developing a strong community. Teachers need to be flexible in their willingness to adapt to changing circumstances. Adaptive expertise refers to this ability to respond to change.
- Teachers are part of professional communities and need to demonstrate the requisite personal, leadership and team skills. Unfortunately these skills are not traditionally well covered during initial teacher training courses.
- As trainees, you should adhere to the respective professional code of conduct. You need to acquire a secure knowledge and understanding of the main statutory frameworks within which teachers operate including laws relating to disability, special educational needs, child protection and reporting to parents. The health, welfare and safety of children should be your prime consideration in all that you do.

Glossary

Adaptive expertise: the notion of adaptive experts refers to individuals who are able to adapt learned procedures to new problems and invent new procedures when necessary.

Child abuse: this can be defined in different ways but can include physical, mental and emotional abuse or threatened harm of children.

Pastoral care: teachers have a pastoral duty of care in looking after the personal and social development of children while in school.

School councils: the School Councils UK define school councils as: 'An elected body of pupils whose purpose is to represent their classes and to be a forum for active and constructive pupil input into the daily life of the school community'.

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