

Compare and contrast the role of the teacher in the two key stages you have experienced so far.

The role of the teacher in the two key stages is both similar and different in many ways. These can be established through a detailed analysis and observation of the teachers' roles both inside and outside the classroom setting. One means of doing this is to look at the teachers' roles against the headings for the standards for QTS. These headings are Professional Values and Practice, Knowledge and Understanding, Planning, Assessment and Teaching and Class management. Please see Appendix. For each heading the similarities and differences in roles for the two key stages will be considered.

Both teachers exhibit strong professional values and practice. Pollard (2002) stresses the importance of being aware of every pupil's 'unique biography' p. 82. Both teachers observed have considered the diversity of the children they teach in respect of their social, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic backgrounds and are concerned with their development as lifelong learners. Both teachers demonstrate and promote positive values, attitudes and behaviour in their classrooms. Pollard (2002) explains that 'the concept of fairness is vitally important' p.119. Although the teachers use different means to promote the positive atmosphere, the values are very similar. Both recognise the role of parents and carers in a child's learning. Pollard (2002) suggests that 'if a process for supportive knowledge exchange is established (...with parents...), the potential for enhancing children's learning is enormous' p.85. Both teachers involved parents to hear reader in their class or to take groups in school visits. Both teachers share in the corporate life of the school, but in slightly different ways. Both teachers were involved in extra-curricular duties in the school, such as playground duty and after school groups, but at KS2 this was more likely to be in a subject specialism. The main difference in this standard relates to the relationship the teacher has with the class. At Key Stage 1 the relationship is likely to be more parental and nurturing of children's emerging confidence. The KS1 teacher spends more time giving gentle reminders to children to organise themselves and listen to

each other, to play together and share resources as well as listening to personal stories from them. At KS2 the teacher's relationship with the class is more equal and based on mutual respect. The child aims to impress the KS2 teacher and gain his approval for his efforts and work at a greater level. The KS2 teacher creates an atmosphere of collaboration and teamwork through a table point system. Humour is used to build class relationships.

Teachers in both Key stages have broad, sound knowledge and understanding although there are some noticeable differences. Both teachers are confident when answering children's questions and are able to make cross-curricular links between subjects. However, in the observed Y5 class the teaching in some foundation subjects was done by subject specialists and the classes were streamed in maths. Teachers in this age range are more likely to have a strong subject which they have responsibility for teaching across the key stage, as the progression in subject requires a wider subject knowledge. During Key stage 2 the need for more technical vocabulary, especially with regards to literacy, is evident. However, in Key stage 1 the teacher's knowledge of pedagogical issues and maturation rates is very important to her assessment and teaching in reading strategies. Pollard (2002, p.144) notes how, 'different rates of development should be carefully considered by teachers.' The strategies used in behaviour management were also quite different, although based upon the same principles. At Key stage 1, behaviour rewards are likely to be more individualistic and in Key stage 2 the teacher relies on peer pressure to encourage good behaviour by the use of a table points system. This reflects understandings of children's development; they move steadily from being egocentric towards being increasingly socially aware. Both teachers respond to behaviour issues in a supportive and positive way and are consistent in their behaviour expectations, so that children begin to respond to them.

When planning lessons both teachers set clear ILOs which are made clear to the children. However, in Key stage 2 ILOs become more technical, a wider vocabulary is used and ILOs are more likely to be displayed. This is due to the increase responsibility children take for their own learning, as in Key stage 2 the teachers' role is to involve children in their own target setting and assessment of learning. This is seen in the differentiation the teacher uses.

The observed year 5 teacher overtly talked about his grouping systems and lets the children know how they are doing and congratulated those who he had moved up into a higher ability group. He also encouraged children to classify the types of learners they are. Both teachers use assessment details to inform future planning, to highlight areas that need further development or areas that could be extended to reflect learning. Pollard (2002, p. 333) notes that, 'the reflective teacher will constantly be using assessment information formatively to adapt their teaching depending on the children's responses.'

Teachers means to assess the children in their class were also very similar in principle but slightly different in implementation. Both teachers used record keeping as a means to assess a child's learning and used regular tests to gauge how well a child had met ILOs. Both teachers took background factors into account when assessing learning, but at Key stage 2 motivational and personality factors were likely to be more important when questioning underestimated the understanding a child had. In Key stage 1 marking was likely to be more quantitative and done during a lesson, but when children in Key stage 2 were given time to expand their ideas and work independently, marking was more qualitative and the teacher was able to examine their ideas in greater depth. The child's greater responsibility lead the teacher in Key stage 2 to allow children to mark their own work and assess others for significant achievement of learning outcomes and to form their own opinions about how they could improve. Moyles (1992) argues that getting the children to understand the learning intentions and to see how they could improve their work 'teaches children how to learn and be learners' p.83.

The area in which teachers in the two Key stages are likely to differ most is teaching and class management. In Key stage 2 children are more experienced in the rules and routines of the classroom but are also more likely to challenge the teacher's authority as they develop a more sophisticated sense of self and position. They are also more independent in terms of managing themselves and their environment. However, both teachers' strategies for teaching adhere to the same principles of encouraging children to be independent learners and developing lessons which stimulate and motivate them. In organising groups for learning, the KS1 teacher is more likely to use individual and pair work, as the children have not developed the

sophisticated skills to work co-operatively on a project, although group work skills are being practiced and introduced. Both teachers use intonation of voice to indicate changes of activity, but at KS1 this is more pronounced as younger children need clear instructions as to when to talk, listen or work independently. At Key stage 2 the teacher is able to introduce monitors in the classroom organisation, to teach responsibility in the classroom and citizenship skills, so that children make an increasing investment in maintaining the environment. Use of space is also different. In Key stage 1 teachers organise the children to sit on the carpet during whole class work, so they are relaxed and comfortable, to aid their shorter attention span. In key stage 1 congratulations are public and are celebrated in the class but the key stage 2 teacher is more likely to praise privately. Docking (1990 p.49) puts it that, 'with older primary children, a high quality of interaction is of greater importance than praise itself.' The Key stage 2 teacher uses positive interactions, such as humour and class games, to create a positive class atmosphere in which children want to behave appropriately.

The role of the teacher in the key stages are often extremely similar in principle but the teacher uses a different approach to skilfully adapt these principles to the age range they are working with, to reflect increasing independence and self-regulation. Comparisons of this type, however, must be used with caution, as each teacher has a particular personality and each class of children differs in terms of its diverse culture, ethnicity, ability, language, maturity, interest range and social background. Therefore, no one class is the same and ultimately, it is the teacher's role to adapt their approach to the needs of the children they are working with using the same basic principles outlined in the standards for QTS .

References

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- Moyles, J. (1992) *Organizing for Learning in the Primary Classroom*. Open University Press: Bristol.
- Pollard, A. (2002) *Reflective teaching*. Continuum: London.

