

Leading primary science in your school

Science leaders are responsible for the development, overview, and monitoring of science in their school. Science is special and should be celebrated because of the unique way that it allows children to explore and investigate, and for the sheer enjoyment that it brings children.

Successive governments have prioritised and promoted primary science because of its importance to our country's future prosperity. A long term aim of school science is in ensuring that our children when they are future citizens are equipped to make informed choices about how they live their lives. This is why, like English and mathematics, science is a core subject. Delivering such long term aims depends on ensuring that high quality practical work and scientific enquiries are carried out in all science lessons.



Science coordinators are less common than they once were. The responsibility is often now subsumed within broader roles: key stage, phase or year group leaders. However, teachers continue to need support in teaching practical science, and they will look to you for guidance, as the responsible member of staff. In addition, you may have been asked to ensure that science practical work is safe, as well as exciting, and that appropriate risk assessments and control measures are being implemented.

Having ideas that are fun and inspiring, knowing the answers to specific science questions, and being able to support colleagues to make practicals safe and exciting, is a full time job! At CLEAPSS we do this for a living, so if in doubt or in need of help, contact us.

Contacting CLEAPSS

Website: www.cleapss.org.uk

Email: primary@cleapss.org.uk

Helpline: 01895 251496

Twitter: @CLEAPSS_Primary

The leadership area of our website contains all the documents, resources and information that will be useful for anyone with a responsibility for science. Popular leadership documents include:

- P013 *Primary science leader model role description*, an editable, generic role and responsibilities template
- P010 *Model primary science policy*, an editable, generic policy template
- P008 *Resources, including a model policy*, an editable, generic resources policy template
- P009 *Monitoring science in primary schools*, strategies and tips to support successful monitoring
- P048 *Model Health and Safety Policy for primary science*, an editable, generic H&S policy template
- P022/23 *Making safety work for you*, a set of resources to help you deliver practical science training

If you want to download any of our resources but do not know your school's username and password contact us.

The newly-appointed leader

You may be appointed from outside the school or have been at your school for some time but are new to managing science. It is sometimes assumed that science is about answers, and becoming science lead makes you the font of all science knowledge! Whether the query is why a practical failed to give the expected, or any, results, or whether or not Pluto is a planet etc, you are likely to be asked challenging questions you can't readily answer. Remember science is fun and important because we don't know all or, indeed, many of the answers. Scientific explanations represent our very best explanation based on the

evidence we currently have. It takes time to establish the understanding that science is about observing and asking questions, and that many questions remain unanswered.

The long-established coordinator

Primary science has been a success story; as a result, attention has moved to other curriculum areas where there may be concerns. This may result in the neglect of science and a loss of its status. It may be important to again raise the profile of science and this may mean a fresh look at: the scheme of learning, how science is taught, or the organisation of events such as Science Week. In addition, you could think about raising the profile of science through successful in-service training, science visits and visitors, collaboration with other schools and outside agencies, a science club, or a parent science event. Does your school have a Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM)? (www.psqm.org.uk).

Useful Sources of Information

CLEAPSS

Primary Science and Technology (PST) is the termly newsletter sent out to all member schools. It is an invaluable yet simple way for those in charge of science to gain inspiration and stay abreast of any health and safety issues that arise in relation to practical work.

The CLEAPSS primary website has a variety of resources suitable for all members of the school community.



Teaching ideas: activities and ideas that teachers can implement in their science teaching



Doing things safely: concise guidance on substances, equipment and resources



Competition: details about our current competition, and examples of previous competitions



Leadership: everything anyone with a science responsibility needs to know



CLEAPSS services: more information about us and how we help schools

Association for Science Education (ASE)

Primary Science is published termly for its membership. It provides useful and up to date information about curriculum, assessment and pedagogy.

Be Safe! Health and safety in primary school science and technology is a good reference book, published by ASE.

Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM)

An award scheme to enable primary schools across the UK to evaluate, strengthen and celebrate their science provision. Schools can achieve bronze, silver and gold awards.

Primary Science Teacher Trust (PSTT)

Provide useful information, resources, funding opportunities, research findings, primary science conferences.