

Explore Drive Believe

Educated in Scotland by 'amazing' teachers Claire was motivated to become a teacher. Her own teachers had inspired her with their belief in all pupils and their passion for teaching and learning. She wanted to have the same positive influence as a teacher and make a difference to children's lives.

'I want pupils to achieve the best, be happy and flourish. Always be there for the children.'

Claire has worked in many different contexts and across Key Stages in schools in Surrey, Dorset and Hampshire. 'Stepping out of your comfort zone helps you learn'. Claire has embraced opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues which 'develops your own knowledge and expertise'. Whatever the context – high levels of social deprivation, special measures, outstanding – Claire has responded to the challenges by building positive relationships and having solutions-focused approaches.

Early on in her career Claire was given opportunities to lead and to mentor different colleagues at different stages of their careers. She took on leader of Mathematics and her drive and appetite for learning quickly secured her the role of SLE and she has a diverse portfolio of working with many different teachers and schools involved supporting schools in a variety of locations and also specialist training with the NCETM.

'Get as much experience as you can'

Claire has experience of different levels of leadership from subject lead, assistant head to headteacher and has formally invested in her own learning by following programmes such as NPQH. As a keen learner Claire decided to open up perspectives on life by travelling abroad for 18 months. Working with pupils was never far away; during her travels she volunteered to teach in China and worked with street children in Cambodia. Through homestays she listened to families talk about the importance of education for their children.

Returning to the UK Claire worked across two schools and secured a permanent role at Wellstead Primary which Claire describes as having a community feel where 'people have passion and drive and are forward-looking.' The culture of the school is one where there is high trust and this is important for Claire's growth and development.

'The head has trust in me and I feel empowered; I know I can try out new ideas and suggest improvements to practice. '

'Provision needs to be bespoke for both pupils and teachers'

When Claire works with colleagues inside and outside her school she is responsive to need. She wants to learn about their current thinking and to build a relationship that is key to success in collaborative working. The opportunity to work with teachers outside her own school has changed Claire's own practice, 'I am open to ideas and learning from others is a privilege and brings rewards.'

One of the many highlights of Claire's work is the design and facilitation of the NQT programme for ETC as the Appropriate Body. She sees colleagues grow and flourish and supports them in opening up perspectives on teaching and working with them to increase their toolkit. Her advice to NQTs is

'Embrace new experiences and challenges and don't be afraid to explore new ideas.'

Claire also reminds NQTs of work-life balance 'Don't put the job ahead of yourself.' Work-life balance is an important theme for teachers at all stages of their career.

'Be good to yourself to be a positive role model for the children.'