

#MonthlyMotivation: Kathryn Bailey (class of 2013)



Kathryn discovered her love of teaching through a graduate position at Putney High Junior School.

Did you always know you wanted to become a teacher?

No not exactly! I had always considered a career in teaching, but thought that it was something to do much later in life.

I was told by various people to study something that you love at University, and so at the time, I chose to study International Relations at the University of Birmingham. After I graduated, I was unsure about my future and so applied for various different graduate schemes alongside thinking seriously about teaching. I was still very unsure of the route I wanted to take!

What made you change your mind?

Although throughout University I sought to gain work experience – usually spending a week at a time in different types of schools - it was actually working as a teaching assistant in the Junior School at Putney. In my final year at Uni, I emailed a few schools to see if they had any Graduate Teaching Assistant roles and found that Putney High Junior School was offering one for a year. I grabbed the opportunity to see if teaching was really for me and I loved it!

What did you do after spending a year in the Junior School?

I was offered a teaching training position with the Alpha Plus group at Falcons School for Girls, and in September 2017, I started as a full-time class teacher whilst completing my PGCE with QTS through Buckingham University.

What does your role entail?

My job first and foremost is a class teacher, which means I teach all core subjects and a handful of non-core subjects too. Initially, I spent two years with Year One, but at the start of this academic year, I moved up to Year Three.

What does a normal day look like for you?

It varies hugely! Whilst completing an NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher), I also studied for the NASENCO course (National Award for SEN Coordination), which enables me to help children who have learning difficulties and special educational needs. This year, alongside being a class teacher, I am supporting the SEN department by not only organising and running specific interventions, but also with my involvement in the pastoral side of the role. In itself, this can be complicated and difficult but hugely rewarding. Finally, I'm also the whole-school Head of Science!

What would be your recommendations for those who are interested in following a similar career path?

There are now diverse routes into teaching: education undergraduate, fulltime postgraduate (PGCE), and a PGCE on the job either through certain schools or Teach First. The latter usually means that the school sponsors teachers to do their PGCE. Many people enter teaching as a second career, in which case I recommend arranging visits to schools to get a feel for work experience.

How do you think Putney helped you get where you are now?

Inspirational teaching and life-long friendships at Putney enhanced my confidence to be myself. Putney taught me the central importance of the pastoral side of my job, and that teachers really do change lives.