



## **Dr Nasim Butt, NPQH**

- **Early upbringing**

I was born in Pakistan and came to England at the age of five to join my father in 1966. I was brought up in the context of an extended family and now, in England had to get accustomed to being raised in the context of a nuclear family (a large one though as there were five of us siblings).

- **Primary school experiences**

I attended Lyon Park Junior school in Wembley, Brent, in the mid to late 1960s. The early years were very difficult as I could not speak any English. This was compounded by the fact that my mother could not either, and I relied entirely on the school to build my level of language acquisition. Greater confidence and self esteem came with fluency and command in the use of English.

- **Secondary school experiences**

I attended Vincent High school (a secondary modern) in the borough of Ealing. In 1973 Elliotts Green grammar school merged with Vincent High to create Northolt High school (this was the era of mass comprehensivisation). I was at Northolt until 1979. The merger created bitterness amongst staff and pupils of Elliotts Green grammar school. I had some good experiences at Northolt High, but this was marred by racist taunts and bullying. At times I was deeply depressed and afraid. My self esteem was damaged but I picked up again in the late seventies and went on to get a reasonable collection of 'O' levels and a few 'A' levels.

- **My best teacher**

The chemist and Head of Science Mr. Middleton. It was the depth of his subject knowledge and the sheer enthusiasm with which he delivered his subject that constantly inspired me. I wanted to model myself on him.

- **My best subject**

Science, of course, especially chemistry. I just fell in love with the subject and was determined to pursue it further for as long as possible.

- **What made me think about teaching**

Actually, it was the love for my subject. I came to the conclusion that there was no better way to really understand and get to grips with my subject at a fundamental level than to teach it.

- **College/University experiences**

I loved university life. I am an academic person, and being able to engage with a subject I love was something that really appealed to me. I was the first person in my extended family to go on to university - to have the opportunity to come into contact with the greatest that has been thought and written in my area of learning. As an undergraduate I was also inspired by a lecturer who taught philosophy of science. In fact I followed this up with an MSc at University College London in the history and philosophy of science.

- **First goes at teaching**

My teaching practice was successful but, initially, I had difficulty in breaking down teaching concepts into manageable portions. I also tended to use more complex phrases where simpler ones would suffice. I was on a steep learning curve.

- **What helped me get on**

The support of my excellent tutors at training college and mentors at the school – and, of course, my passion for teaching and determination to succeed.

- **Career to date**

I taught for a while in a state school and then went on to a career in the international/independent school sector for 16 years. I was head of science for 10 years after which I became a deputy for three. I am a strong believer in continuing professional development and lifelong learning. Hence, between 1988 and 2002 I acquired the following qualifications: PhD in Science Education, MBA in Educational Management, National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), and OFSTED training. I am an Ofsted inspector for state schools, and also an Additional Inspector (AI) working for Ofsted's Independent School Inspection Unit (ISIU). Since September 2004, I am also a headteacher of a small faith school (Muslim) in North West London.

- **What would you say to anyone who wishes to become a teacher**

Teaching is something which requires great passion for an area of learning. If you can kindle enthusiasm in young people through communicating that passion and, as a result, enrich and enhance the life of a young person, then no profession in the world will be more rewarding for you than teaching.