



Elizabeth Kangethe

I was born and brought up in Kenya in the early sixties .I attend a local primary school then proceeded to a provincial secondary school. I enjoyed my early days in school

Secondary school experiences

I attended a catholic nun's school and their expectations were very high. I particularly remember one who really inspired me into being a teacher Wright from those days I was school captain all through my secondary school life. My favourite subjects were English and religious education.

What made me think about teaching?

I grew up in a Christian family and go for Sunday school every Sunday morning. I took over the role of 9 church school teachers when I was about ten years old. I found this really fulfilling. This role developed my love for dealing with children and then on I decided that I wanted to be teacher when I grow up.

My qualification and early years

At University I took a teacher training course and proceeded on to teaching. I didn't teach for long as a classroom teacher before I was asked to apply to become a deputy head teacher. I took up this challenge. My next title was head teacher in a model primary school in Kenya.

I taught for 14 years before moving away from Kenya due to political problems. I came to the UK as a Refugee teacher in the year 2000. This was a very distressing time in my life. By then I was totally disorientated as a refugee and straightway enrolled in care jobs in nursing homes in order to support myself. There was no job satisfaction but I knew I had to keep going. I applied for teaching posts directly to schools in Newham as teacher. I was always knocked back by comments schools being unsure about my qualifications. Heads thought my qualifications were not suitable since I had trained overseas. It was very frustrating however I never gave up hope as I believed I was a good teacher.

What helped me get on?

I contacted various agencies to enhance my chances of going back to teaching, this proved very difficult. I then contacted Empower teachers agency they were very willing to take me onto their books. I started on an overseas trained teacher course with them which has now been enhanced and has recently been approved by the TTA and the agency is now working as a Recommending Body.

This helped me to learn all aspects to do well with the British education system. I worked with my Lubna Lone from the agency; she found day to day supply cover posts for me. This gave me an opportunity to show my experience to schools. For the first time I was allowed to show schools that I was a serious and committed practitioner. I felt a sense of worth and gained in confidence with every single day I was working in a school doing the job I love.

The agency found me a post at primary schools in Newham and I started my first long term position.

Even with 14 years teaching experience in Kenya, I still had to work extra hard to prove my ability to the schools. Some of my colleagues still looked down upon my previous experience. I found it very frustrating that even senior management found it difficult to support me. I was determined to gain my QTS and with that determination I persevered.

I moved on from the school in Newham when the agency found me a long term post in Romford teaching year 4. I felt the Head teacher understood and respected my background experience as a teacher and I felt I could flourish in this school. I then moved on to year 6 for 1 year and successfully took the children through the Key stage 2 SATs. This was a tremendous boost to me as teaching a SATs class comes with its own challenges. After one year in year 6 I moved back to year 4 which is what I am teaching at the moment.

While I was teaching year 6 I started on Overseas Trained Teacher programme with Empower Teachers Ltd. I found the course to be both flexible and sensitive to needs of an OTT. Every effort was made to accommodate my needs. I received one to one training as and where the need arose. Empower Teachers, The Head teacher and my mentor worked in partnership with me to obtain my QTS.

I have just had wonderful news that I have passed my assessment and pending my skills test I have now passed my QTS. The agency has also negotiated exemption from induction for me which has allowed me to carry on with my job with smooth transition. My head teacher is ready to give me more responsibility within the school. I am very happy to take on more challenges at the school.

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

Teacher is the most satisfying career there is. You change peoples live. It is never boring and it's fun as you watch the young ones mature and finally succeed in life. It gives you lots of joy. One needs to be determined, have a passion for young ones and there you are. With God all things are possible. Outside school I am a scout leader which I started back in Kenya and also a church school teacher. I am happy with my progress for now. I am going to keep in touch with Empower Teachers to take advantage of their Continued Professional Development programmes in the future.