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## MAJOR PRIMARY SCIENCE CONFERENCE HELD IN MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY

**From John Dalton to graphene, splitting the atom to IVF, Manchester's always been a city where the boundaries of science are pushed further and faster than anywhere else. And that was emphasised this week, with a major two-day conference held at the University's city centre campus on 16-17 June.**

Over 100 Fellows of the Primary Science Teacher College, who are specially selected and exceptional teachers working in primary schools through the UK, met in the splendid surroundings of the Engineering and Physical Sciences building to share their insights and experience and hear from some inspiring speakers.

Launched in 2003, the College typically accepts around 7-8 members each year; which makes this year's conference – where an astonishing 30 new Fellows were elected – particularly celebratory. College Director Kathy Schofield said: "This year saw our greatest number of awardees, including more men and more Early Years teachers – but definitely no drop in standards."

The theme for this year's conference – 'Never Stop Questioning' – reinforced the enquiring nature of Primary Science, and the organisers highlighted this bold theme with challenging and thought-provoking keynote speakers.

**Tony Hughes**, MD of Huthwaite International, explored a range of different situations and scenarios, and showed delegates how they can identify what makes for good interaction, as well as motivating and encouraging them to "take the lead for change". Drawing on many years' experience – including a spell as a secondary school teacher – Tony showed how the techniques pioneered by his South Yorkshire research company could be applied to real-world scenarios.

Closer to home, **Dr. Phil Manning** from Manchester University asked a series of ever-more intriguing interdisciplinary questions, starting with why the famously enigmatic answer "42" ...is so unsatisfactory. Reader in Palaeobiology and Head of the Palaeontology Research Group (PRG) at the University of Manchester (alongside a host of other roles) Dr. Manning's blog is well-known as a place to find some of the more mind-stretching ideas in science education.

And this wasn't all – the event also included a hugely enjoyable Children's Conference, co-ordinated by **Dr. Lynne Bianchi's** Manchester University's Science Education and Research and Innovation Hub. Her 'FaSciNate' project drew over 100 excited representatives of 14 Greater Manchester schools to share some very creative approaches to science. "It's so rewarding to see children experiencing real delight in discovery," said Dr Bianchi, "and it's great to be able to welcome them to the University."

Add workshops, hands-on sessions, and the launch of a ground-breaking set of classroom materials, and there's no question that the Primary Science Teacher College is set to make waves in classrooms across the UK. "These teachers are doing incredible work, raising standards, excelling in tough conditions and going above and beyond what is expected," says Kathy Schofield, "and we're delighted to be able to celebrate their contribution."

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**Notes to editors:** *The Primary Science Teaching Trust (formerly AstraZeneca Science Teaching Trust) exists to help improve the education of children and young people in science. Its focus is on giving teachers and researchers the time and resources they need to raise the status and effectiveness of primary science, and its provide financial support to projects which deliver our objectives. Please contact David Gooda on 07841 976699 for more information, high-res photos or interviews.*

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*Children's conference*



*Primary Science Award winners at Sackville Street*



*Primary Science Award winners at Sackville Street*



*Tony Hughes, Huthwaite International*



*Dr Phil Manning, Manchester University*