The foundations of learning
In her role as a part-time foundation teacher in a Hertfordshire primary school, Nicky Lawson’s days are always varied. ‘I love the flexibility we have within the Early Years curriculum; we constantly adapt our curriculum according to the interests of our cohort. This means that no two years are ever the same and each year it’s exciting to see how the children develop their confidence and skills. To me, teaching Early Years is more than a job, it’s a privilege.’

Nicky is also the subject coordinator for geography and the international coordinator, ensuring that diversity and global aspects are embedded within the curriculum for each year group.

A global dimension
As well as her teaching role, Nicky also has an involvement in delivering an international element within the curriculum, partly through collaboration with the charity Childreach International. The organisation, amongst other things, works to ensure children receive an education and to raise awareness of the rights of the child around the world. She has linked her school to another in Tanzania and a British Council grant allowed her to spend some time there, which was reciprocated by her Tanzanian colleague.

‘Last year we were awarded the British Council’s International Schools Foundation and Intermediate Awards and are now working towards obtaining the full accreditation by embedding a global dimension within our curriculum. As part of this we are involved in a pilot project with twelve other schools to develop children’s awareness of issues which affect their local communities as well as communities in the wider world.

‘We are aiming to teach the children that they have a voice which can affect change to improve the quality of their own lives and others. It’s a very exciting project which we hope will culminate with a Children’s Parliament where they can discuss issues and concerns they face. I guess it’s about developing tomorrow’s people today, ensuring that in a world of free information, children are aware of the facts.’

Future plans
It is clear that Nicky is an advocate of keeping an open mind and seeing the possibilities in every situation. ‘I went into my degree expecting to come out as a Foundation Stage teacher. However, I didn’t envisage working with children on projects that deliver data to the UN. I couldn’t foresee the depths you can go within the constraints of the curriculum.’

In the next few years, Nicky hopes to continue to develop her practice within the Foundation Years of education. Beyond that she would like to use her knowledge and skills to either support the development of early years practice in developing countries or to develop global education in schools in UK.