



My moments...

Outstanding teacher **Elizabeth Hanson** recalls some of the major milestones of her career

THE MOMENT I...

...gave in to the inevitable

As the daughter of a teacher I knew from an early age I didn't want to follow in my mother's footsteps: long hours, little reward and working with teenagers forever definitely didn't seem like the dream job. However after fighting it for many years I finally succumbed to what was clearly in my blood – and what a rollercoaster it has been so far.

...knew I'd probably chosen the right career

In the first week of teaching in my training year a particularly disaffected year 11 boy strutted to the front of class and put a screwed up, dog-eared piece of paper onto my desk. There were about six pencil scrawled lines on it and his name boldly written in capitals in the corner, and as he pushed it towards me he said, "That's the first bit of homework I have ever done for anyone, Miss. Ever." Slightly perplexed I took it to the staff room at break and no one could believe their eyes, it was indeed the only bit of homework he had done. Ever. I felt very proud that I'd had that much of an impact on him!

...realised I was definitely good enough

I spent a whole year battling with a sixth former who resented the fact he hadn't ended up doing 'A'-levels with the teacher he had had for GCSE. The teacher in question was nothing short of a legend at the school and even with an ego as big as mine I started to feel quite deflated. The

FACT FILE

NAME: ELIZABETH HANSON
AGE: 30
JOB TITLE: ENGLISH TEACHER AND HEAD OF YEAR
SCHOOL: WILLIAM FARR C.E. COMPREHENSIVE

THE BEST BIT:

BEING ABLE TO LAUGH EVERY DAY, I DOUBT MANY PEOPLE CAN SAY THAT ABOUT THEIR JOB.

THE WORST BIT:

THE 'TICK-BOX TEACHING' CULTURE. HOW DULL ALWAYS TO BE TOLD WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO LEARN/KNOW/UNDERSTAND.

ELIZABETH HANSON WAS NAMED TEACHER OF THE YEAR IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL (MIDLANDS) AT THE 2011 TEACHING AWARDS. FIND OUT MORE AT TEACHINGAWARDS.COM

turning point wasn't until half way through the course when I'd spent a whole lunchtime going through an essay with him and working 1:1 to boost his coursework grade, and he finally started to work with me a bit. After getting his results another year later he came back into school, apologised for giving me a hard time and thanked me for being me.

... always treasure, every time

I love seeing students come out of themselves – watching them grow and figure out who they are and what they believe is incredible, and inspiring students to do things they didn't realise they could do is a wonderful part of teaching (even if it means they may aspire to become an English teacher!) My favourite thing is getting a class totally immersed in the moment, whether it be recreating an audience at The Globe theatre, investigating a crime scene or marching to the front line trenches of the Somme. It's those lessons that students remember forever and what can make secondary education so fun. When it is fun they listen and when they listen, they learn.

...was given the perfect present

The best gift I have ever been given as an English teacher is a sieve; a student presented it to me at the end of the year with a letter explaining that it was a metaphor and the class wanted to say thank you for persevering with them and for 'sieving' through their essays to spot the hidden gems. It's still pinned to the wall in my classroom and on those days when paperwork seems to take precedence over teaching, it keeps me focused on what is really important.