Ben Davies – video transcript

‘I guess as a maths teacher one of the key things is when your teaching a concept or you’re doing a task for a child to discover a topic and they kind of go ‘ahh’ and they get that yes I get it now moment, but when that happens its really awesome and you can tell the student really appreciates it as well when they actually get it. I think when you walk out of a lesson and you have had a fantastic lesson and you think yes that’s why I’m a teacher, that’s a really great feeling going home and feeling really special when that happens.’

‘So I didn’t go straight into teaching, I did a few office jobs in London first. I found them quite unfulfilling and I did have this nagging feeling pulling me back to teaching for those reasons, and I retrained two years ago and went back to university. I actually found the financial support at university was really surprising even coming from working in the city, which would definitely be something I would definitely recommend to someone considering teaching.’

‘My favourite lesson that I have taught recently is a lesson about criminal penguins, so there is a clip from a David Attenborough series called Frozen Planet where there is a community of penguins building nests out of rocks, and some penguins steal from the other nests instead of fetching their own. So, it’s a mathematical model about that community and the probability of whether it’s better to be a criminal penguin or a nice penguin and I really enjoyed teaching that lesson.’

‘I think the effect a teacher can have on a teachers life is very profound and they can have a huge influence over students, I think a lot of people say ‘I can remember this teacher, my maths teacher at school.’ What you probably mean is not that you really enjoyed spending any time with them or that you really enjoyed their lessons but actually they had a real influence over your life and what you did as a consequence of being at school, and for me that’s true with my physics teacher and I think that is for a lot of people as well. As a maths teacher I spend 4 or 5 hours a week with students so you actually have a lot more influence than you think, even in your kind of mannerisms and your expectations, so I think it’s certainly a profound influence and a real responsibility as a teacher.’

‘The most important thing for me when recommending teaching to someone else is how fun it can be, building a relationship with students and the staff, working with such passionate people about their subjects and the amount you can learn as a teacher as well, I think that transcends all the things about being a teacher is enjoying learning and trying to enjoy your job and have fun and ultimately have a bit of sense of humour about what you do as well, I think that’s the really key thing for me and what keeps me going and I really enjoy that aspect, so that’s what I would say to a prospective trainee teacher. It’s incredibly satisfying when it goes well, you do have to be resilient to when you don’t have fantastic lessons and no teacher is going to be teaching perfect lessons, lesson after lesson, you have to manage your own resilience as well so you have to be very reflective about yourself and how you can get the best out yourself and the children as well, but mainly its very satisfying.’