In this seminar, Professor Hudson will draw on recent work building on the idea of powerful knowledge in the future school as proposed by Michael Young and others. Young identifies two main approaches which he extrapolates as trajectories. In the first - Future 1 - knowledge is underpinned by an under-socialized epistemology and defined as fixed sets of verifiable concepts evaluated through standardized testing.

The second tradition - Future 2 - arose as a response to the first, in which the epistemology of knowledge is reduced to “who knows” with an over-emphasis on generic skills. Against this background, the policy shift to restore “a core of essential knowledge” in England can be seen as a direct response to the perception that the shift towards generic skills had undermined disciplinary “rigour” in schools.

However, both of these traditions are seen as deficient.

Professor Hudson considers the notion of epistemic quality by drawing on outcomes from a recent study arising from the ‘Developing Mathematical Thinking in the Primary Classroom’ (DMTPC) project. This idea is founded on a distinction between mathematical fallibilism and mathematical fundamentalism. The relation between powerful knowledge and epistemic quality is considered further by framing it within a sociological theory of knowledge. This distinction will be used to illustrate examples of high and low epistemic quality - both in school mathematics as well as across school subjects in general.

Tea and cakes available from 4.45pm and canapés and drinks served at the end of the event.