



Skerne Park Primary School
in the woods with Reception

Elemental experiences

Working with children's ideas

Elemental experience.

Vivid, all senses engaged
They're living; they fizz and glow with it.

They're imagining it together,
building on the parts that lit them up.
Needing to feel it more and again
they grow new rumours
Keeping alight the energy
of real and imagined
they make and share new meaning
as both creature and audience they skip and dance,
taking myth forward

joy





wildness



adventure



magic



elements



fire



being at home



courage



peace



privacy



teamwork



the unknown



collaboration



investigation



drama



endeavour



inventing



beauty





imagination



Looking at the path and the heat rising Billy commented:
" **There's a river of fire.** "



Respect for the environment and its creatures



Olivia: A spiky dragon!

Maddie: It's not a dragon!

Olivia: It's a spiky old caterpillar.

Cath: How do you think it sees?

Olivia: Without eyes, 'cos its eyes are on the bottom.
And them's are the tails (pointing to the back).

Maddie: Them not tails! They are the eyes at the back.

Cath: Why does it have eyes at the back?

Maddie: 'Cos when something looks at it and it's going to stamp on it, it looks back and then it runs away.

Olivia: When they stand on it, it goes dead, doesn't it... when they squeeze it and stamp on it... Leave it alone and touch it gently, 'cos that's nice, isn't it.



Olivia: That one's a kid. It's a girl 'cos it's got a yellow shell.
Maddie: She lives underground with her family.
Olivia: She might move to a new house underground.
All the boys and girls might dig the mud and find the snails.

A large, textured, brown, brain-like shape with a central text box. The shape has a complex, wrinkled surface, resembling a brain or a cluster of small, rounded objects. It is centered on a light beige background.

working with
children's ideas

adults listening
to children

A large, textured, brown, brain-like shape with a white rectangular box in the center. The shape has a complex, wrinkled surface, resembling a brain or a cluster of small, rounded objects. The white box is positioned in the middle of the shape, containing the text "working with children's ideas".

working with
children's ideas

adults listening
to children

opportunities for
children to be in
exchange

A large, textured, brown, brain-like shape with a white rectangular box in the center. The shape has a complex, irregular, and somewhat organic appearance, resembling a brain or a cluster of small, interconnected nodes. The color is a mottled brown with darker and lighter patches, giving it a three-dimensional, textured look. The white rectangular box is positioned in the center of the shape, containing the text "working with children's ideas".

working with
children's ideas

adults listening
to children

opportunities for
children to be in
exchange

A large, textured, brown, brain-like shape with a central text box. The shape has a complex, wrinkled surface, similar to a brain or a pine cone, and is centered on a light yellow background. A white rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the shape, containing the text "working with children's ideas".

working with
children's ideas

developing
ideas and
theories;
making meaning

adults listening
to children

opportunities for
children to be in
exchange



working with
children's ideas

building a
shared
culture

developing
ideas and
theories;
making meaning

Adults listening to children

We watched, listened and documented how the children spent their time in the woods.

We noted their conversations, negotiations, collaborations and friendships.

We looked for what engaged their attention, their imagination, their ideas, and their energies.

We then met together to share our observations our hunches and hypotheses before deciding what we could offer to enable the children to further their ideas and their autonomous enquiries.

On the classroom wall children could see photos of themselves in the woods from the previous week.

Adults listening to children

mutual respect

children express themselves when they are listened to

giving time

building confidence

observing and respecting children's individual energies, interests, ways of being and relating.

friendship groups

modelling respect and listening, taking turns in conversation

video - digging by the tree

Children in exchange





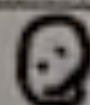
T-Jay

"I'm to climb to
the top of the tree!"



Connor

"I'm sitting on the
tiger tree, relaxing"



Wiktoria

"Haha, a tiger, claws...
lots of them"



Crystal

"I was scratching and
climbing and rearing!"



Craig

"I was a leopard
and I climbed"









Developing ideas and theories

Rachael: What have you got there?

Olivia: Snail shells and a sea shell.

Cath; How do you think the seashell got here?

Olivia: One day maybe some sea must have come here and the shell must have come here.

Maddie: The pirates might have left it

Billy: Yeah, a little bit of magic and it dropped on the floor, a little bit of zoom and it went into the woods. The pirates always give us their treasure. One day they might give us gold!



Cath: How did the pirates get here?

Harvey: Pirates flying in their magic spaceship

Billy: Yeah, and there was a hole in the spaceship and it dropped out.

Maybe this used to be a seaside when we were not here. 'Cos there might have been sand under all this dirt.



Harvey: The dinosaurs were here
Connor: The dinosaurs are dead.
Jamie: Maddie might be right about the fossils.
I've found something like a fossil
MacKenzie: Looks like the bone off a ghost.
Billy: Ghosts don't have bones!
MacKenzie: Looks like the bone off a skeleton!



Maddie: They turned into a fossil, the dinosaurs, when they were died, and killed.
Jamie: Looks like that's a dinosaur's tail... head..

Billy: Look, I've found a tree fossil, look at all them lines

Billy: Maybe trees drink up the sea...



How did this shell get to Geneva Woods?

"A pirate might have gone to the beach, put the shell in his pocket...but his pocket had a hole in it..it dropped out of his pocket into the woods" Maddie

" Maybe a huge wave came over the whole world and the shell fell out of the wave, into camp and then Olivia found it!" Billy

"A golden seagull picked it up!" Olivia

"A seagull picked up the mussel, They pick things up, dropped them on rocks, fly down, get the mussel. Out then drop the other half in the woods" Jamie

"The pirates brought it to put it in the treasure chest!" Wiktor

"easily...the pirates got a big hook that keeps the ship still, got out and put the shell there!" Mackenzie

They were wanting to find the treasure but they found a shell instead!" T-Jay



"It's from a dinosaur. They might have stomped, stomped, stomped to the woods with their big feet. They might have lived there a long time ago. It's a dark woods, it's nice for them. They found a nice home...in the woods, they hid in a dark place in the woods. Nobody could see them. They're hiding..they eat,drink in the woods!" Maddie

"A dinosaur's leg..it's the bone..it crashed on the way to the woods"
Wiktorja

"It's a fossil, it fell out of a tree!"

"Fossils have dinosaurs in them, when they're killed they go into the sand and make a fossil!"
Maddie

"Dead sea animals get into things to make a fossil" Billy

"It might be a pirates leg...his leg was chopped off and that's his wooden one"
Bailey

" I think the dinosaur dropped the bone out of his mouth. A t-rex dropped it!"
T-Jay



Building a shared culture



Building a shared culture

evolving



Building a shared culture

evolving

based on experience



Building a shared culture

evolving

based on experience

including home, school
and community



On a chilly November day in Skerningham Woods children found that a very muddy ditch was wonderful for sliding, climbing, peril and rescue.

All the children were involved. They emerged cold, muddy and joyful...



as mud monsters!



In January this group of boys had developed the mud monsters idea, encouraged by groups drawings and discussions in school.
In response to this we invited them to go looking for clues...



They found muddy hollows in the ground where trees had melted into mud.



Lines in the earth made by a meteorite that fell from the sky and left a trail.



Leon has a tree protector and a sword



Another groove showed us where a tree monster had been sliding on its belly.

Clues!

Children wonder what has happened to this tree!





And this one?



What is this that Annie has found? Leon thought that it was a snake skin.



Blake calls Leon and shows him a tree. They wonder what is happening to it. Is it going to melt? What else might be happening?



They find more evidence of things happening to trees done by tree monsters , mud monsters or meteorites.



"Scratches like writing"



A meteorite licked this tree and made
a
black mark with its black tongue.

It licked right to the top of the tree
then it burst and tree monsters came
out.

It licks all of them and is killing the
planet!

There is a white mark on one tree
where a Mammy meteorite has licked
the tree.



Brent finds a speck of "gold" in what they call a "meteorite hole"



Leon worries about Annie and Courtney. He thinks that they might have gone with the mud monster and is relieved when he sees them.

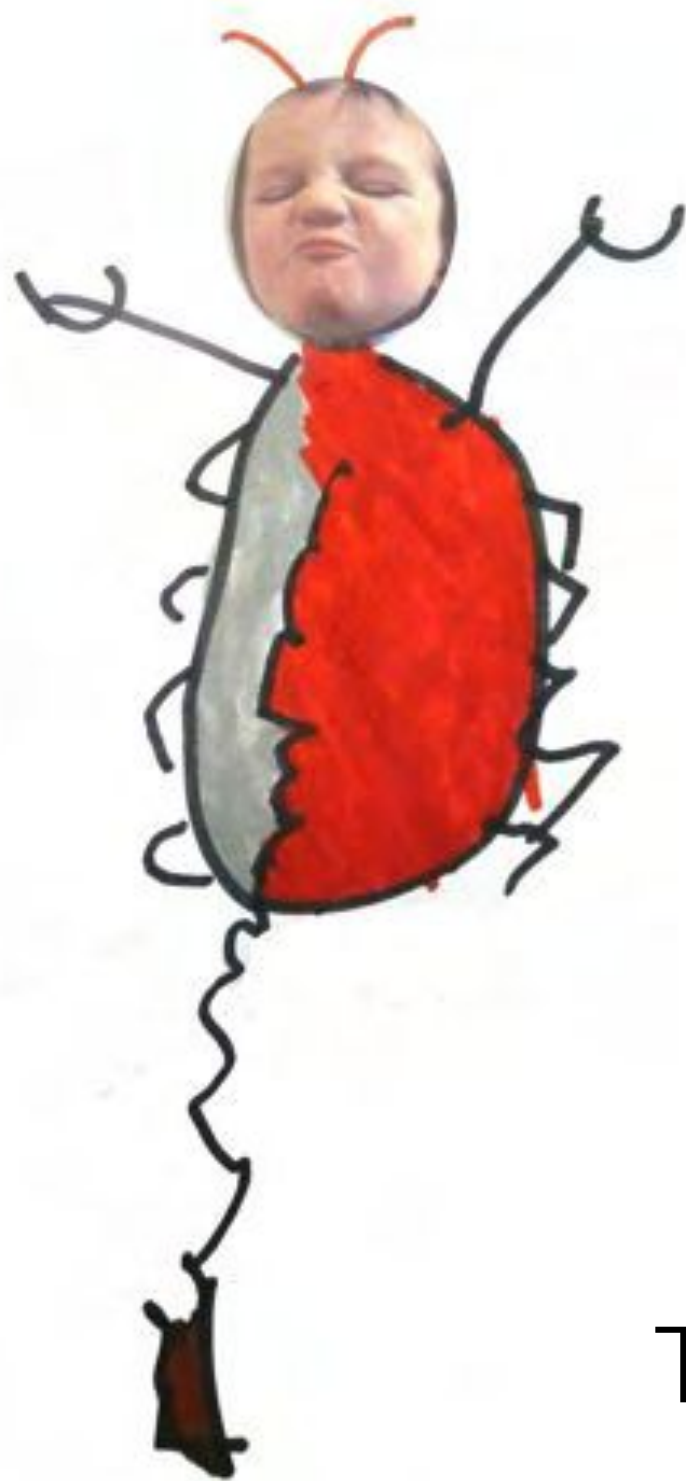
Liam thinks that there are six mud monsters and sixty nine tree monsters.

Leon examines the marks on trees looking for clues

The children's woodland stories were so alive to them we decided to make narratives a focus. We offered the children different media to use to explore their ideas.



A mud monster



They became monsters.



The children found in the woods, what they believed to be a letter from the Mud monster. Some of the children wanted to write back to him. They had become very fond of their monsters.



Leon was very keen to make him a birthday card. He drew a picture of the monster, made him a sunflower then put all inside a carefully addressed envelope.

Children interpreted other finds in the woods as evidence of an unseen world.



Annie and her friends think of these tree roots as puppy dogs tails. Annie creates a story about a Daddy dog looking for his puppy underground

Back in school, we ask the children to form groups and draw their memories from the woods.



Holly: There's a moon at the top,
and lovely leaves.

Tyler: The black is the big cave
with the big bear.

Amy: And there's some mud
there. There's some flowers
there and there's a very big
tree. And there's some very,
very deep mud! And there's a
very colourful worm. And it's
called "The woods that we're
going to".





Leon and Reuben tell the story of their picture and answer their friend's questions

Princesses in flower gardens or centipedes



We invited children to tell us about their pictures and recorded them alongside the image.



Rachel read each child's illustrated story to the class.

She made a book of each story and made them easily available as library books for children to borrow and take home.

Parents could then read their child's and other children's stories.



We introduced a story telling chair into the classroom.

When the children had a story they could sit on the chair then others might come to listen.

In the woods, when they felt quiet, children sometimes found a cosy space to play and tell stories.



Parents visited the
classroom to see
pictures of their
children's
time in the woods





Blake's Uncle drew a treasure map for him.

Blake lead the class in a search for treasure



Other children were interested in his map.

"You pull the gear stick, then it pops up, then you pull the gun, push the button and fire the gun. It's a targeting gun".

"I was the best builder.. I did it all by myself.. my brain has a mind of it's own.. I switched it off and I had an idea.. DING DING Idea!!"

"It's a gun...there's a button over there"



"The gear stick"

"You pull it down to make the gears work"

"the button to make all of the gun's work"

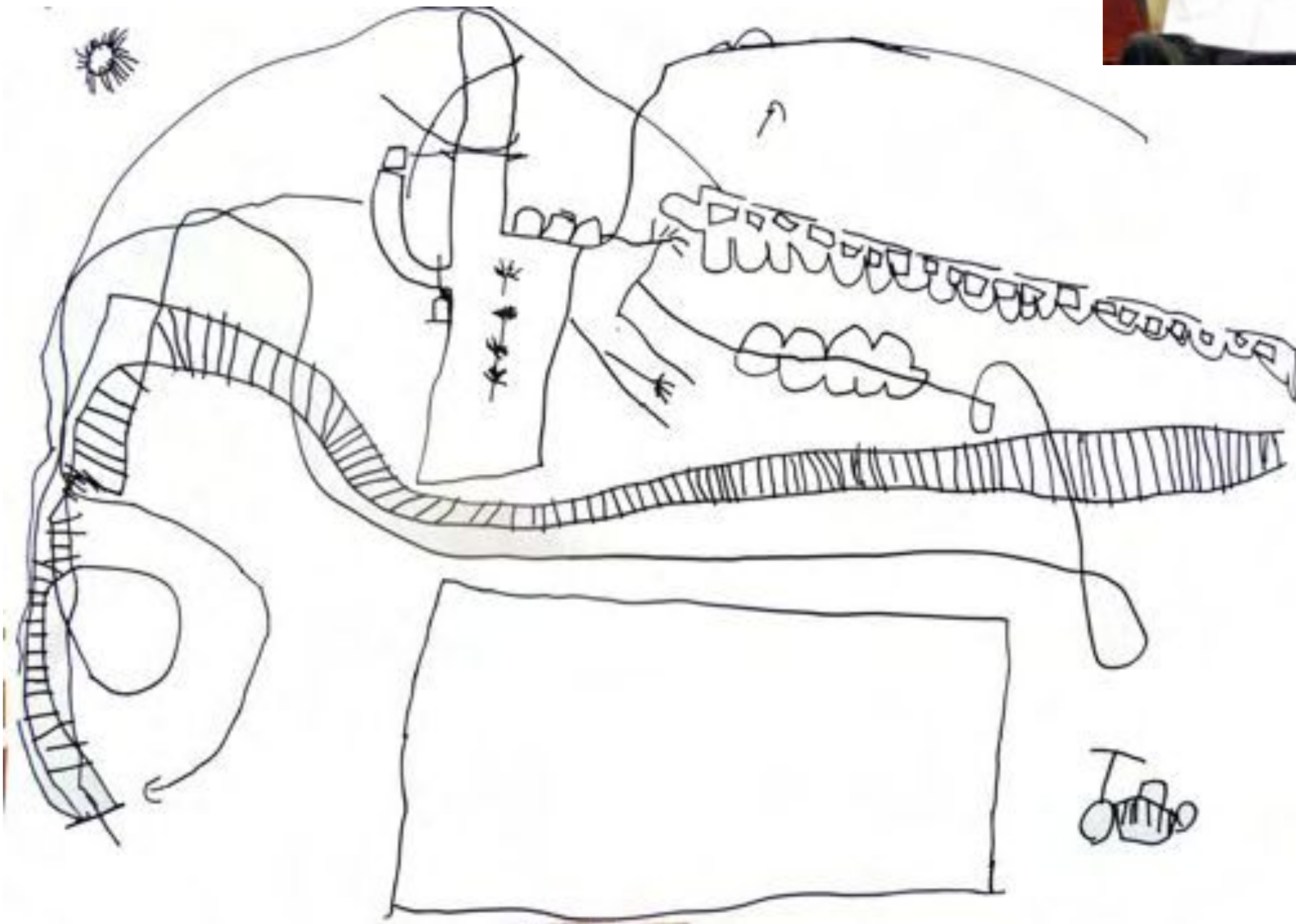
"All of the gears"

"You don't drive the tank...it drives automatically..you don't have anybody driving it..like a transformer... It will go to America and shoot a targets"

"decorations"

"Gears..they make it all work..you control them the stick balances and pushes up"

He made a map to illustrate the adventures of the tank in the woods. Oliver sat on the chair to tell the class about it.





Liam, one of the less confident story tellers, told a story he had rehearsed at school.



To the delight of the class Oliver performs one of his stories.

His Mother who was with us, had never seen this side of his character. She was amazed!





Annie.

One day the Sun crashes out of the sky; its night time.



The sun sleeps near a tree forever because she's very tired. She likes rocks and clay and sticks.



Now there's a new special sun, a Queen sun!

A Lion came and roared. "Can you help me" said the Sun? "I want to be up in the sky."
The Lion tried to jump the Sun up into the sky but the sun kept falling down again.
Then two parrots saw the Sun. They put it up on their backs and flew it into the sky.



All the creatures see the Queen sun in the sky & say Hurrah!
All the animals think it's the old sun but she's different.
Down she looks different - up she looks very beautiful
and the Moon didn't know!

Saying goodbye to the woods

Billy: You can't kiss it (a tree) because it's too..

Olivia: .. dirty.

Charlie: You can give it a cuddle.

Mackenzie: Or cuddle your favourite spot.

Olivia: No-one's cuddling my tree 'cos I'll cuddle my tree, when I'm climbing up

Mackenzie: You could give the trees a kiss.

Billy: They're too woody and dirty! The creatures might come out when you're kissing the tree and go on you. You might swallow them and eat them!

Maddie: What about that? (she waves her hand)

Mackenzie: I'm always gonna go to Geneva Woods to see Grandma. I'll always be here.

