

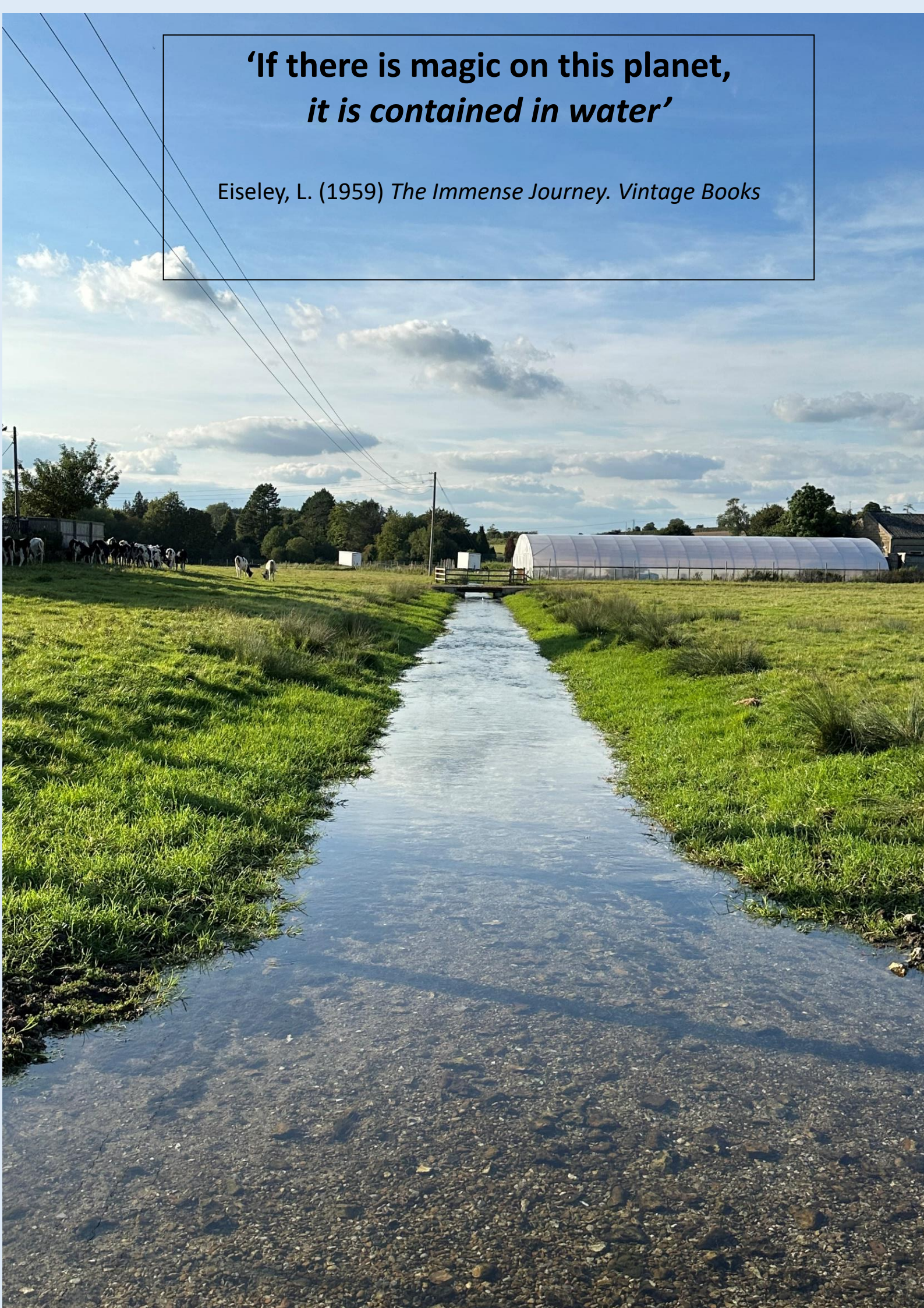
Making chalk stream magic -
Paying attention to watery encounters
with Ropley C.E. Primary School
Helen Clarke and Sharon Witt





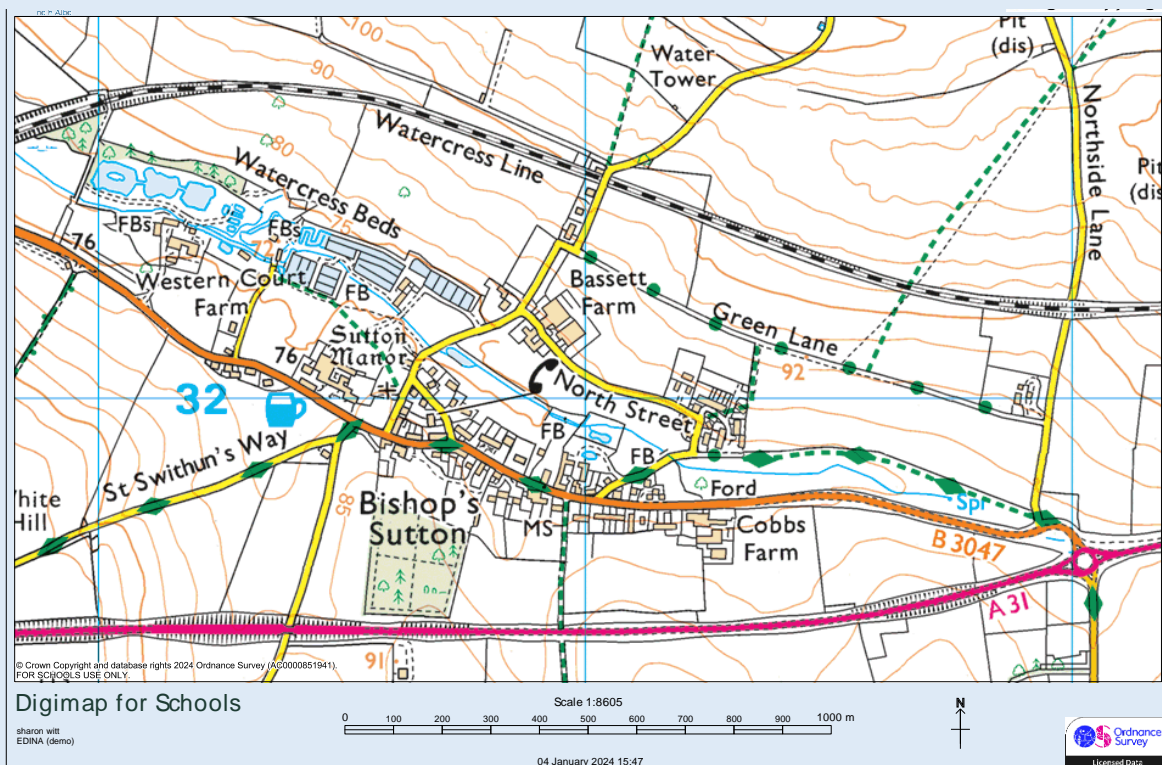
**‘If there is magic on this planet,
it is contained in water’**

Eiseley, L. (1959) *The Immense Journey*. Vintage Books



Whispers Of Chalk Stream Project

Making chalk stream magic is part of ‘Whispers of Chalk Stream’. This is a community project, funded by Watercress and Winterbournes and the Lottery Heritage Fund, which focuses attention on the headwaters of the River Alre in the Hampshire village of Bishop’s Sutton. We are very proud that this beautiful chalk stream rises at its source here as a beautiful intermittent winterbourne, to become the mighty River Itchen.



A map of Bishop’s Sutton location



Introducing making chalk stream magic



We have been lucky to share a morning with the children in years 3,4 and 5 of Ropley C. E Primary School, Ropley to celebrate chalk streams during their Arts week as part of the Alton Arts Festival. We have come to know chalk streams through looking, listening, making, collaging, knotting, inking, thinking, feeling and smiling.

The children regularly visit the River Alre in Alresford as part of their geography curriculum with their teachers and leader from the Hampshire Wildlife Trust. These artistic activities complement and expand their knowledge and understanding of, and responsiveness to, chalk streams.

Conversations with chalk stream

Chalk streams are lively with stories-
What if chalk stream could whisper?

Children's responses:

- *Save me!*
- *Look at glamorous me!*
- *Come swim in me!*
- *Look at my shimmering waters. Look at my shimmering waters.*
- *Listen to the water gently moving forward.*
- *Plunge yourself in my shockingly cold waters on a windy October's day.*
- *Please don't destroy my magnificent waters.*
- *I wish the sun was out so I could sparkle and shine and flow.*
- *Listen to my ripples of water gently flowing along my river.*
- *The chalk stream murmurs and whispers 'I glimmer and shine, I crumble and flow, I am the chalk stream, I am important.'*

RIVER

Roaringly cold

Impressively peaceful

Venturously busy under depths

Encouragingly calm

Ring-like temperatures, cold like metal.



Whispers of Chalk Stream: inky explorations

We explored watery patterns and inkiness...watching chalk stream, noticing flow, tracing patterns, following movement:



Whispers of Chalk St
Cool-
of fairly low temperature



Dazzling
Water



WHERETAKE
FUEL





drop, mix, flow,
dilute, drizzle, plop,
drip, trickle,
bubble, blob, dot,
stripe, run, leak,
squeeze, pour,
press, blot, crush,
seep, spill, ooze,
percolate, sprinkle,
trace, spray, churn,
fizz ...

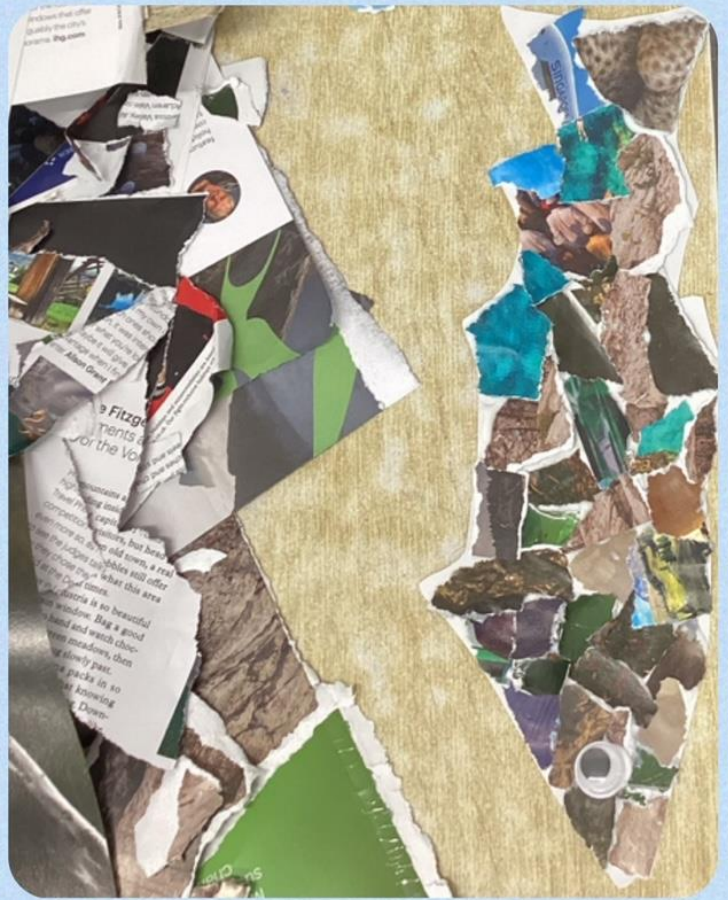




Whispers of Chalk Stream: collage creatures

We brought the river to life with collaged creatures:



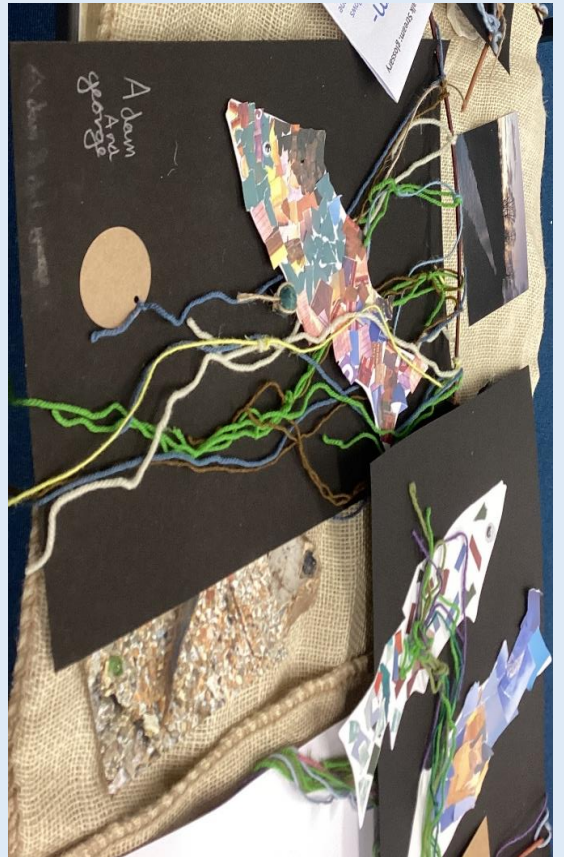


We thought carefully about colour, shade, texture, shape and pattern as we created our fish – we gave care and attention to our creations.

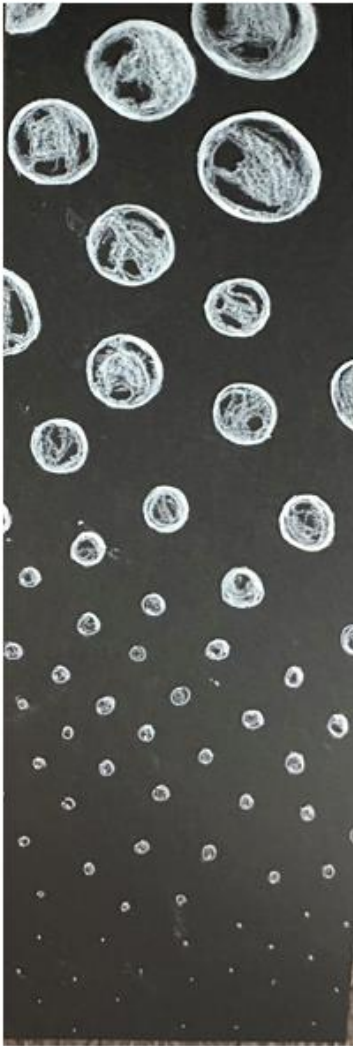


Choose, cut, stick, arrange, blend, overlap, mingle, combine, cut, tear, merge, layer, join, fold, meld, mesh, interweave, tear, shuffle, shift ...

We displayed a lot of patience and attentiveness.

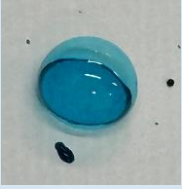


Whispers of Chalk Stream: Bubbles of hope! A wish for a happy chalk stream...



I wish...
I hope...
I think...
I will...

Hopes, dreams, actions and challenges...



Children's Responses to bubbles of hope ...

I hope that lots more animals are seen in the chalk streams.

I hope that people will finally start to realise how important chalk streams really are.

I wish that climate change will stop.

I hope that sewage and plastic will stop being pumped into our rivers.

I hope that the chalk stream will be respected and have no litter in it.

I hope that chalk stream will get bigger.

I hope that chalk streams are looked after nicely in the future.

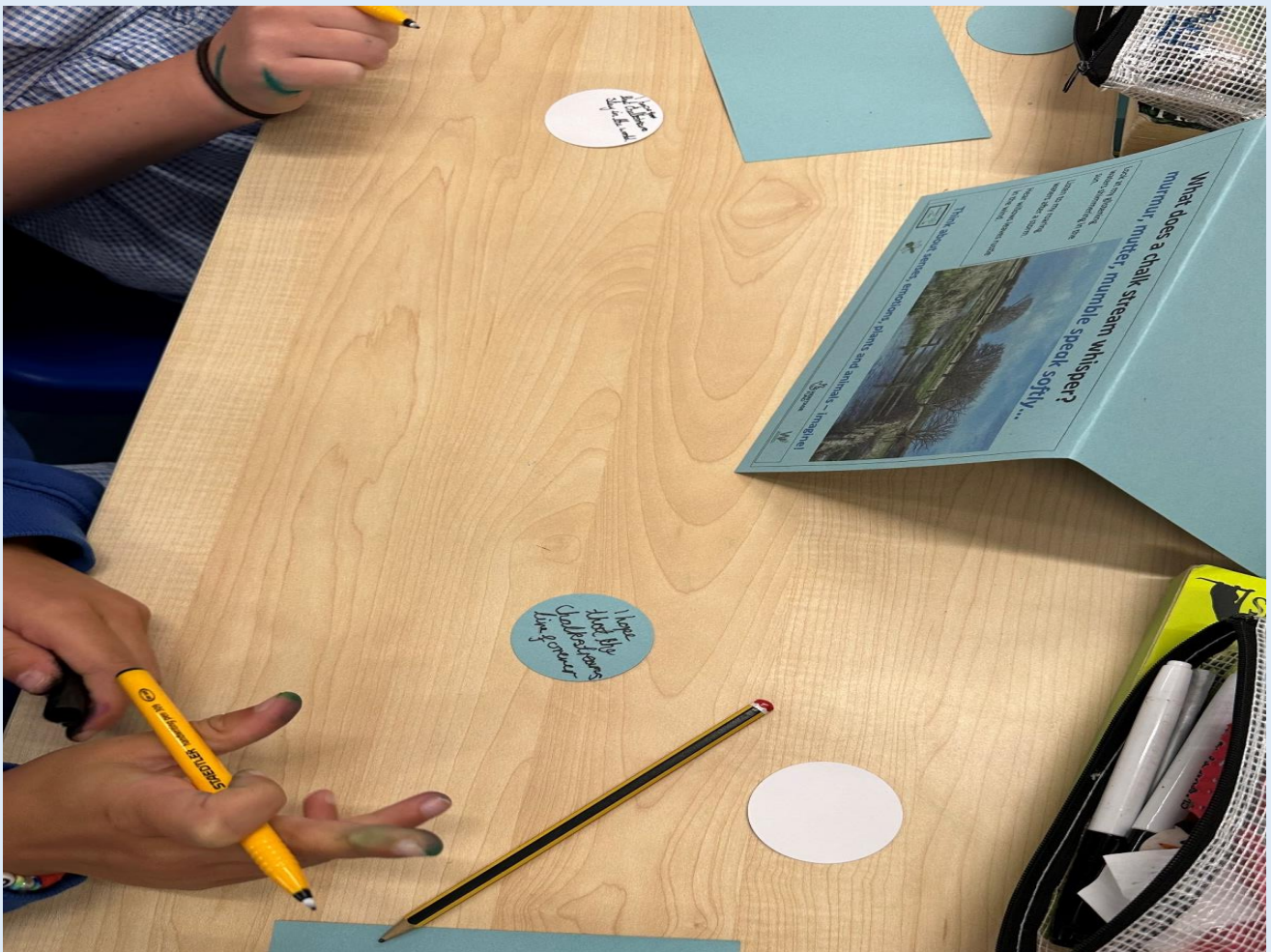
I will look after chalk streams.

I wish that chalk streams will stay alive.

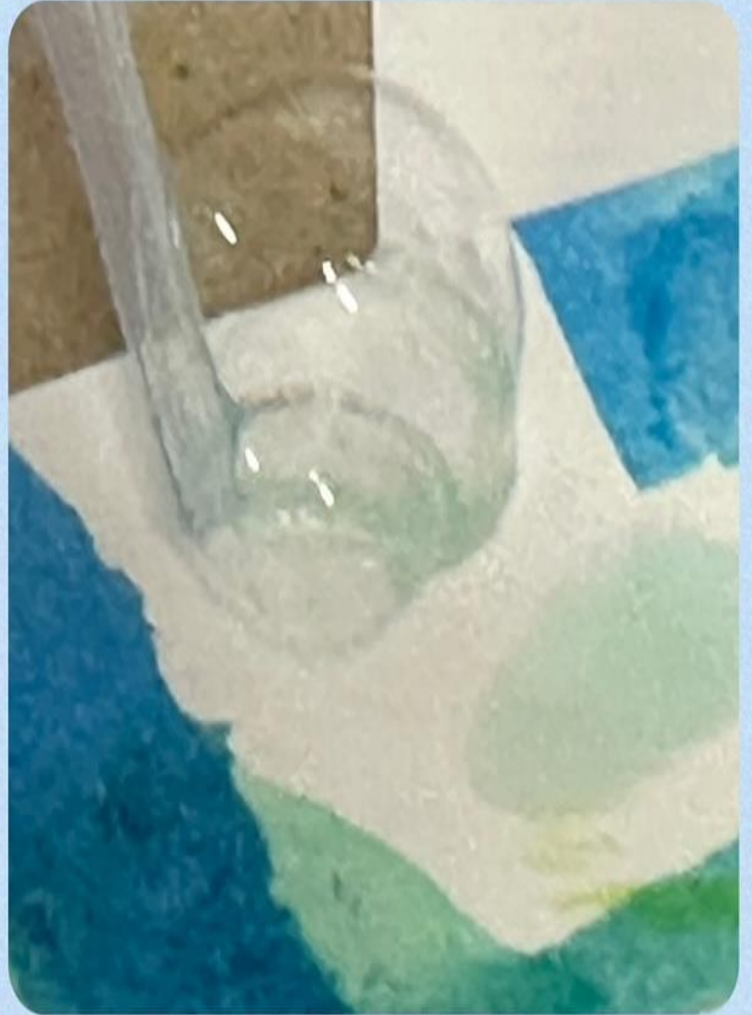
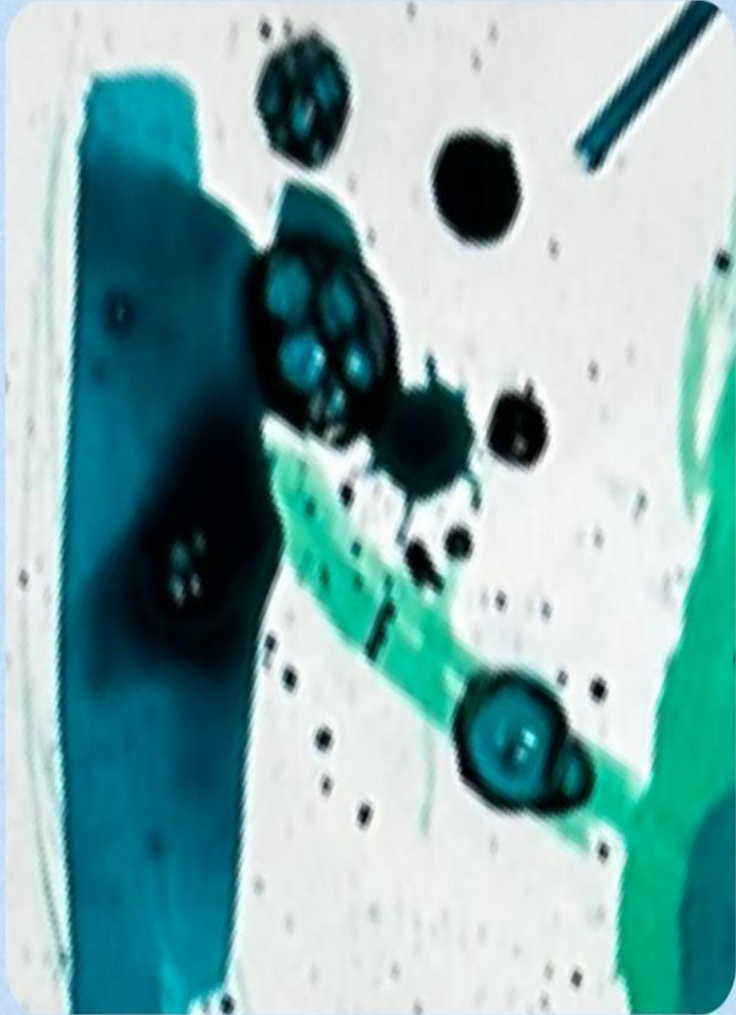
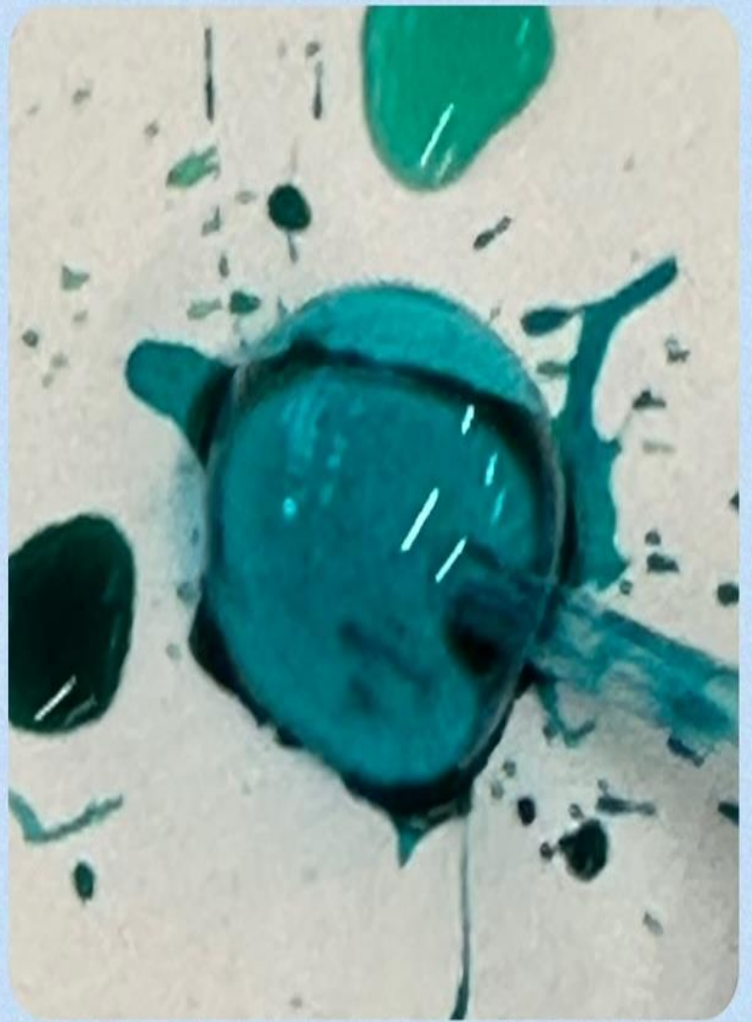
I hope that chalk streams will stay in the world.

I hope that the chalk streams will live forever!

Writing messages of community, commitment, hope and care.



- Futures thinking
- Expanding possibilities
- Generating alternatives



Whispers of Chalk Stream: quipu knots

What are quipu knots?

Quipu knots are used in Andes region of South America by descendants of Inca people.

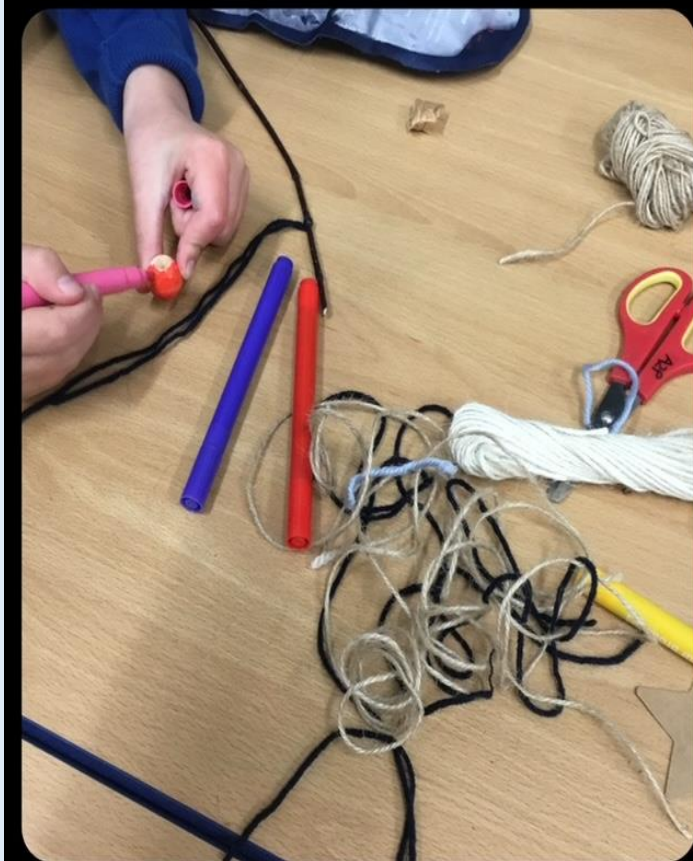
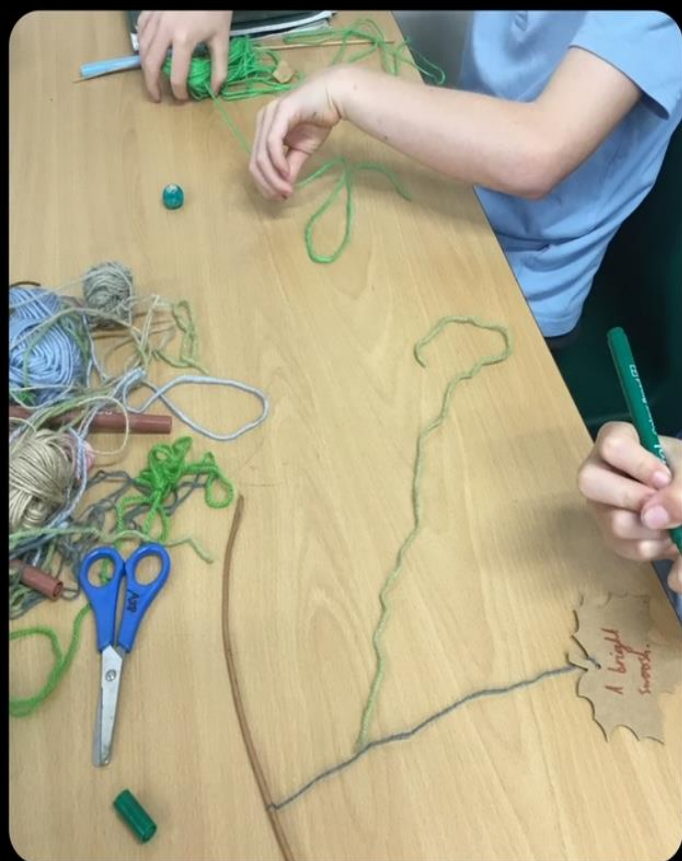
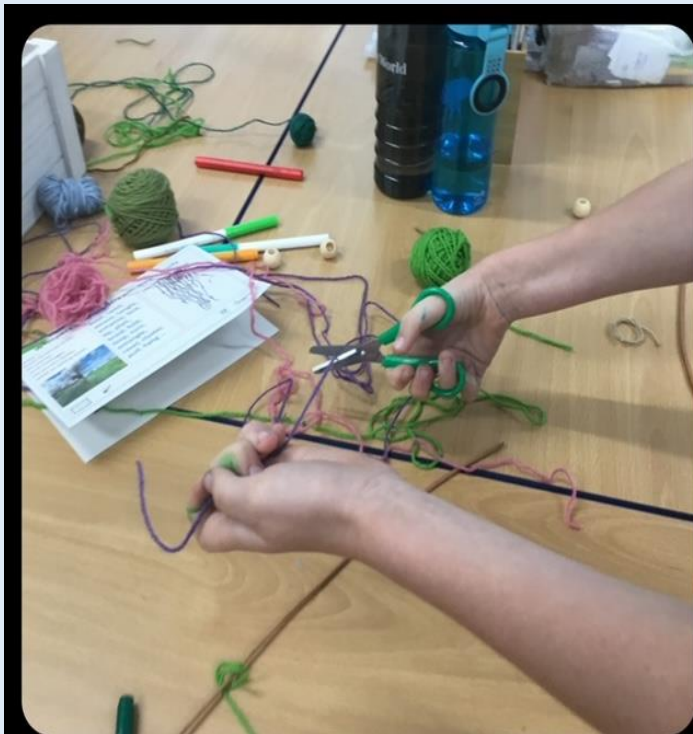
Quipu is a Quechua word meaning 'to knot'. It is a recording device made from string which involves a series of threads and knots of different sizes and shapes. They contain information based on colour, order and number.

Quipu knots are:

- perhaps a mathematical system.
- possibly a writing system.
- used to tell stories.
- used to send messages.

They can be described as 'ancient books' and are sometimes called 'talking knots.'





Knotting, twisting, weaving, tangling, entwining, lacing, tying, plaiting, braiding, folding, looping, turning, entangling, ravelling, clustering, pulling, hanging ...

Children's quipu knot conversations

'The strings are long because the river is long.'

'The beads are round like tumbling rocks.'

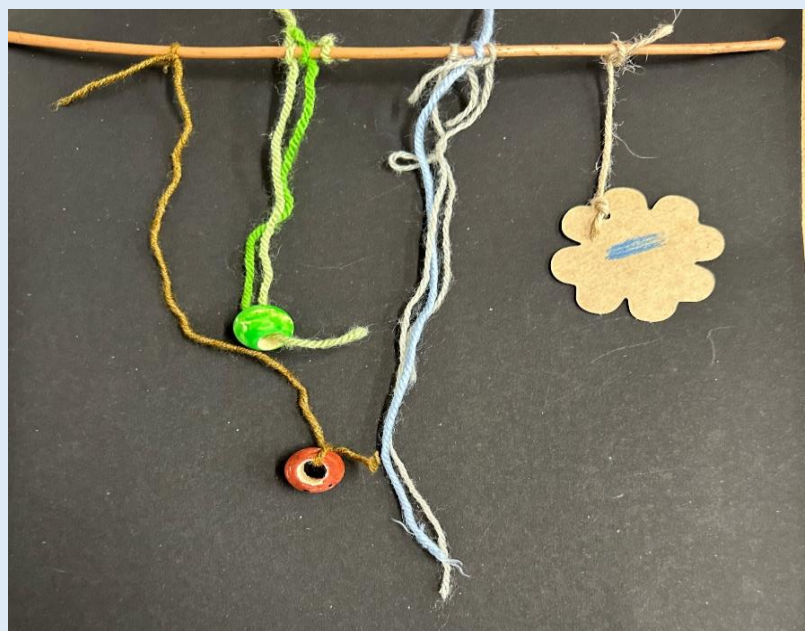
'The green is the mess of the weeds.'

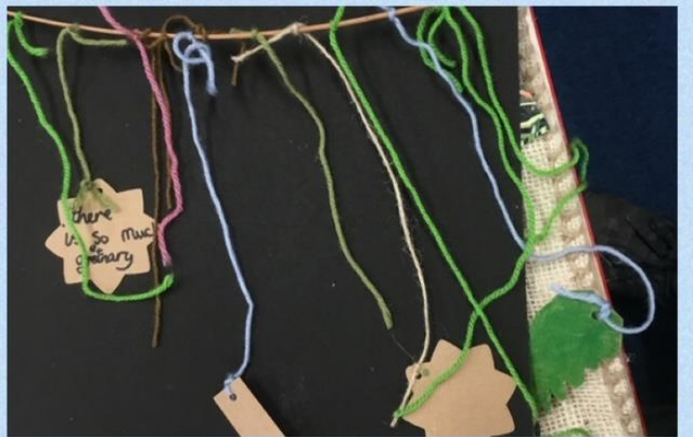
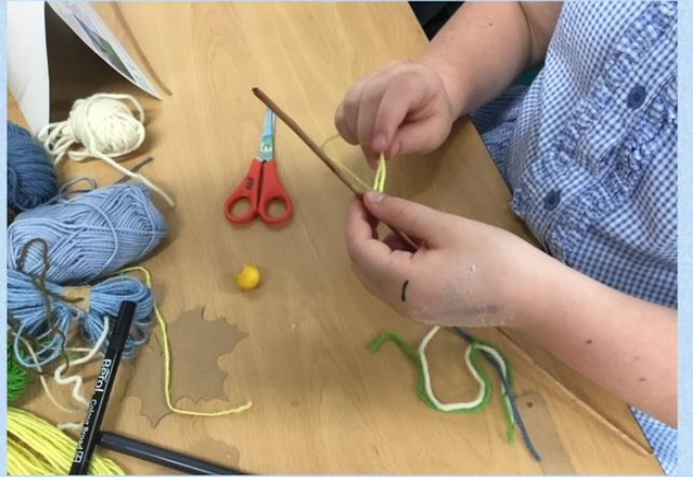
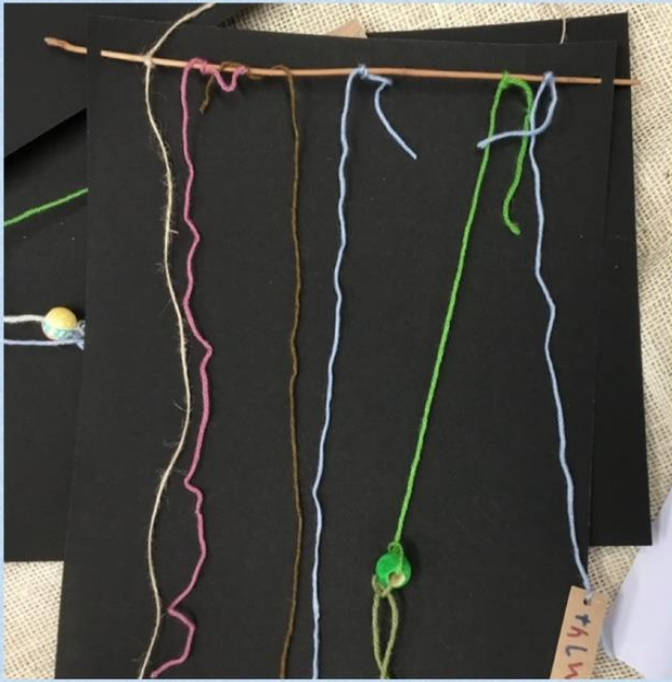
'The brown bead is otter poo.'

'The yellow thread is to reflect the sunshine sparkling on the river'.

'Brown is mud, lots of things live in the mud.'

'A rainbow for rainbow fish'.

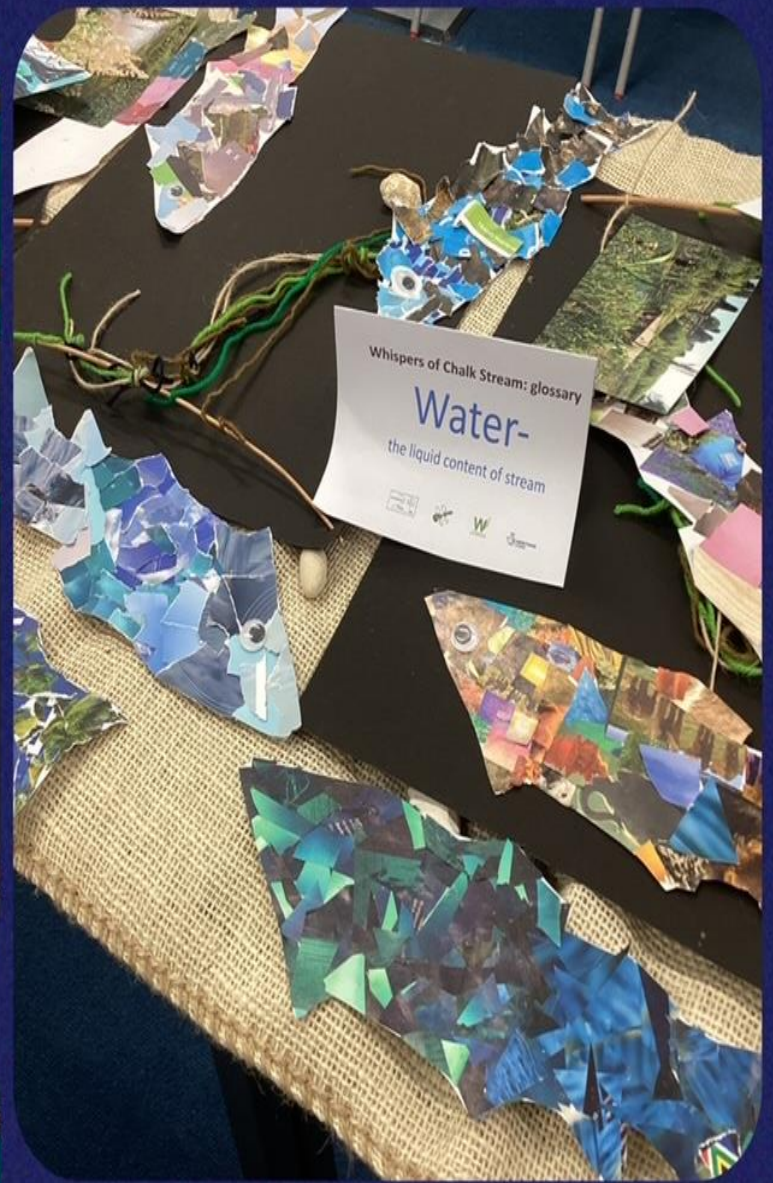




A stream of responses

We placed our watery inspired arty creations on a table to create a chalk stream of responses.





We spent time with chalk stream, and we explored and experimented together in artistic ways...

We thought about:

- chalk stream as rare, lively and precious
- chalk stream ways of knowing
- chalk stream as inspiring artful practices
- chalk stream as a gathering place for ideas

We are chalk stream whisperers!



Thank you to the children and staff at Ropley C.E. Primary School – it was lovely to share your Arts Week. Many thank to Michael Clarke for his help and support.

Attention2Place:

Dr Helen Clarke and Dr Sharon Witt work in the UK as independent scholars with Attention2Place. They engage in interdisciplinary work, with backgrounds and interests in science, geography, sustainability, climate change and global citizenship education. Between them they offer many years of experience as Early Years and Primary Teachers, Teacher Educators and Education Leaders and Researchers. They have written chapters on small world play, playing with place and creative approaches to outdoor learning. In numerous conference presentations they have introduced whimsical characters, such as pigeons, gnomes, and bats, to engage teachers and children in place-based learning offering innovative, more-than the National Curriculum approaches. Rooted in notions of relational thinking, collective knowing and place responsiveness, Helen and Sharon are currently thinking with 'Pedagogies of Place Attention'. They engage in experimental research through participatory, sensory, situated, material and embodied ways documenting elemental more-than-human encounters.





Design by Attention2Place

Photographs by Attention2Place and Ruth Chattell

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