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Pre-school children s experience of place

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Pre-School Children's Experience of Place

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Chapter 10
Data Analysis

The analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, a focused attention to those data, and an openness to the subtle, tacit undercurrents of social life.

Marshall and Rossman (2006:158)

10.1 Introduction

This chapter details the analysis of data generated in the field from 12 children[1] and, as the opening quote suggests, there is a full and reflexive consideration of all aspects of the process. This involves the consolidation, reduction and interpretation of what the children said during the conversations and interviews, as well as consideration of the affective activity, the photographs and the artwork. It may be described, then, as the process of meaning-making. One of the most important objectives of data analysis was to preserve the richness of the material so that the complexity of the experience of place was reflected as accurately as possible. To achieve this, due time and care were taken with the transcription of verbal material. Excerpts of the children's conversations appear in the presentation of the findings.

Section 10.2, details 'The analytic process' wherein there is an account of the nature of the data gathered; how they were managed; the process of transcription and its associated problems. In 10.3, 'The analysis', there is a full and thorough consideration of the creation of themes from the transcribed data, and descriptions of how the thematic index and thematic charts were constructed. Tables in the text illustrate the findings and include favoured and least favoured places; what the children photographed and the place themes of individual children. Part 10.4, 'Summaries' comprises summaries of each of the child participants and a summary of the analysis at each of the three field sites. 10.5 ends this chapter with 'Concluding comments'.

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[1] The children selected for this research – names have been changed - are as follows, with ages at the time of research in brackets:

University Day Nursery, Durham City: Tim (4.0), Will (3.6), Sophie (3.5) and Beth (3.10)
Drumlithie Playgroup: Andrew (4.8), Ross (4.11), Greta (3.8) and Patty (4.3)
Kiddiwinks Nursery, Fraserburgh: Matt (4.11), Amy (3.5), Gail (3.9) and Claire (4.10)

10.2 The analytic process

The analytic process, described by Marshall and Rossman (2006:159) as 'significant intellectual work', is summarised in the form of a flow chart, Figure 10.1. This shows the successive stages of the data analysis from data management to data description. It should be pointed out that the process was not a smooth linear progression as there was cause to revise and refine themes, and revisit material on many occasions, but it is useful to see the staged processes of interpretation and assignment of meaning (Ritchie et al 2003). One of the most helpful texts during the analytic process was that of Bogdan and Biklen (*Qualitative Research for Education*, 1992) in which they suggest aids for analyzing data as they are collected. These include narrowing the study; developing analytic questions; writing memos and comments to stimulate critical thinking; revisiting related literature to stimulate ideas. All these helped move the analysis forward and facilitated reflexive thinking about the data.

10.2.1 The raw data

The data gathered at the three fieldwork sites from the 12 children included the following:

> ➤ numerical data (likes and dislikes) for pictures of places in the affective activity
> ➤ recorded and written notes from research conversations in the affective activity
> ➤ 12 sets of photographs[2]
> ➤ notes of verbal exchanges taken during the walks
> ➤ recorded and written notes from the semi-structured interviews
> ➤ artwork[3]
> ➤ notes of verbal exchanges taken during the artwork

10.2.2 Raw data management

Large amounts of data were generated during the fieldwork from the 12 children and from the three field sites. Thus it was important to manage the data in a way that they could be ordered and accessed readily and easily. During the data gathering stage all

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[2] All the photographs are presented in Appendix 14
[3] All the artwork is presented in Appendix 12

THE ANALYTIC PROCESS

RAW DATA   DATA GENERATED – affective task charts & transcripts,
                                                  semi-structured interview transcripts,
                                                  photographs, artwork & transcripts

DATA MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW OF DATA – reading, familiarising

IDENTIFY SUBSTANTIVE THEMES – data coded by themes
related to experience of place

CONSTRUCT THEMATIC INDEX – assign coded data to
individual themes and sub-themes

CONSTRUCT THEMATIC CHARTS – data sorted by theme
into discrete units

DATA DESCRIPTION

SUMMARISE DATA FOR EACH CHILD (X12)

SUMMARISE DATA FOR EACH FIELD SETTING (X3)

SUMMARISE COMMONALITIES

DATA EXPLANATION

Figure 10.1: *The analytic process: the stages involved*

data – handwritten notes, taped conversations or documents from field sites, photographs and artwork – were labelled and dated. Abbreviations or codes were assigned to the fieldwork site and to individual children. In this way data were labelled for reference purposes and to enable navigation through the material (Denscombe 1998). All the material from each fieldwork site was put into a similar format and kept in separate box files.

10.2.3 Transcription

Transcription of tapes was carried out on an on-going basis both during and after the fieldwork to avoid having to face a 'monumental task' once work in the field had been completed (Bryman 2004:332). The process of transcribing tapes and notes inevitably meant losing data from the original encounter (Cohen et al 2000) as it involved translating verbal and non-verbal material into the rules of written language. For Miles and Huberman (1994) transcripts are inescapably selective so the result is material that has undergone not only reduction, but also a transformation and a form of interpretation. To minimise the decontextualisation of the conversations with the children, the notes taken during the sessions regarding body language, voice inflection, mood, interruptions and facial expressions were crucial to the production of dynamic, fluid transcripts. As far as possible, then, the voices of the children were preserved and respected during this process.

It should be pointed out that the adults and children in Fraserburgh speak Doric to a greater or lesser degree. This is a Scottish dialect spoken only in northeast Scotland, and to the outsider – even other Scots – it can be difficult to understand, hence the need stated earlier to 'tune in' to local speech conventions. Broad Doric made transcription of the vernacular and interpretation of subtle nuances challenging, but every attempt was made to safeguard the richness of the language.

Transcription conventions were based on those cited in Graue and Walsh (1998:137) and they are presented in Appendix 8. The transcripts were word-processed and each line of text numbered for later retrieval. 12 sets of transcripts were compiled, one for each of the child participants. The sets included transcripts for the research conversations recorded during the affective activity; notes taken during the walking

expeditions; semi-structured interview material and notes recorded when the children were drawing.

10.2.3.1 Problems with transcription

The interview transcripts were, as far as possible, verbatim accounts of what transpired yet, as a reflexive researcher, I acknowledge that they were only partial accounts of a much richer interaction experience (Poland 1995). Although notes about mood, body language and voice intonation were made, it was far from easy to translate these into the written record. Conversation is, by its nature, messy with interruptions, pauses, irrelevancies and broken sentences. This combined with background noise and the children moving in and out of recording range, meant transcription was difficult and that it became an interpretive act in itself. Thus it should be stated that the transcripts were *my* interpretations and, that whilst efforts were made to minimise issues of inaccuracy, ambiguity and discrepancy, it is important to acknowledge that this should be considered as an issue of rigor and integrity within the research process.

10.2.4 Exclusion of material

It was stated previously that the data obtained during the pilot study were not included in the final analysis. Other material excluded was from the affective activity where, initially, as many children as possible were invited to participate, but only the material gathered from the 12 children who later took part in the walking expeditions was used. I believe this decision is sound because the research is centred on these selected children and the data becomes more meaningful if they concentrate on them and them alone.

Decisions were made during the transcription phase to exclude verbal material that was not relevant to answering the research question (Wolcott 1994). Such material included some of the children's references to home, family, relatives and friends together with anything that had nothing to do with the concerns of the research. However, it was important to ensure that by discarding material it did not have the effect of reducing meaning or rendering dialogue out of context. Developed photographs that that were blank or totally unfocussed were discarded, although there were very few that fell into either category. The low incidence of unfocussed

photographs probably reflects the fact that the children stopped to take photographs rather than taking 'action' shots, thus avoiding any blurring. Photographs the children took of each other during the walks were available to them during the semi-structured interviews and were often the means of initiating conversation. These particular pictures are not included in Appendix 14 for reasons of anonymity and confidentiality.

10.3 The analysis

This section of Chapter 10 examines in detail the analysis of the affective labelling activity, the assignment of themes to the transcript material, what the children photographed, favourite and least favourite places, and summaries of the child participants and three field sites.

10.3.1 Affective activity

This activity was intended as a way of familiarising the children with the idea of talking about and expressing their opinions about place. The places were presented in the form of 11 pictures (see Appendix 3), and were places that had not been experienced by the children first-hand. Each child applied either a smiley face sticker or a sad face sticker to each picture. If they had no response to a picture this too was recorded. The results of the activity are, perhaps, more important in terms of the research conversations that were carried out around this activity, nevertheless the outcomes of the sticker chart are worthy of inclusion as they contribute to understanding what pre-school children like or dislike about places.

Table 10.1 shows the results for the children with regards to their likes and dislikes of pictures of places. For each picture the child's response is recorded - ☺ indicates like; ☹ dislike and NR refers to no response. Thus, for example, Will liked the pictures of the field, swings, buses, river, wood, boats and shops. He disliked the street, the sea, the rubbish and the motorway, whilst Greta recorded liking all the pictures except for the rubbish for which there was no response. Matt disliked all the pictures except the swings, the street, the rubbish and the wood. The relatively high number of 'no response' by Gail was almost certainly due to an unsuitable pairing in the activity. Her partner was far more vocal and dominant.

CHILD PICTURE	DURHAM				DRUMLITHIE				FRASERBURGH			
	Will	Sophie	Beth	Tim	Patty	Andrew	Ross	Greta	Matt	Amy	Gail	Claire
1 Field	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	NR	☺
2 Swings	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
3 Buses	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	NR	☺
4 River	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	NR	☺
5 Street	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
6 Sea	☹	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☺	NR	☺
7 Rubbish	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR	☺
8 Wood	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
9 Boats	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺
10 Motorway	☹	☺	☹	☺	☹	☺	☺	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺
11 Shops	☺	☺	☹	☹	☹	☹	☹	☺	☹	☹	☺	☺

NR = no response ☺ = like ☹ = dislike

Table 10.1: *Individual results for affective labelling activity*

In Table 10.2 the responses are summarised by field site. Here it can be seen, for example, that 3 out of the 4 Durham children liked the field; 4 out of 4 in Drumlithie and 2 out of 4 in Fraserburgh. The places liked most by the children across all three field sites were the swings and the wood. The most disliked was the shops. The research conversations that took place during this activity reveal the reasons behind the children's choices. These reasons have been summarised and are presented in Table 10.3. It was clear that some of the children found expressing why they liked or disliked one place more than another difficult as there were several occasions when there was no response. Equally, some of the reasoning was remarkable for its clarity. By way of example, Patty chose the wood as her favourite picture as she believed that fairies lived there whilst, more pragmatically, Tim chose the wood as it reminded him of a recent visit to the local botanic gardens. When choosing the place the children liked least they often struggled to articulate the reasons, although their non-verbal responses – shrugs, frowns etc – were clear enough. Again some of the responses were unexpected and included Andrew disliking the swings most of all as he had a clear memory of falling and hurting himself on a recent visit to the local park. Sophie least favoured the picture of the sea as she had memories of it being very cold there.

This section of the chapter has presented the data obtained from the affective activity. Attention now turns to the data recorded during the research conversations, the walks and the artwork.

10.3.2 Overview of transcribed data
The quantity of transcribed material from the 12 children was substantial and, before any decision about coding or themes was embarked upon, it was essential to become truly familiar with the data. As Ritchie et al (2003:221) state, 'the process of familiarisation is akin to building the foundation of the [analytic] structure'. Although there was a sense of familiarity with the data during their gathering, it was essential to spend time reading and re-reading the material until there was a stronger sense of the overall data set (Creswell 1998; Tesch 1990). The data was analysed manually rather than using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software. Such software packages facilitate the identification of text segments, attach category labels to these segments and allocate them to a specific category thus providing a comparatively fast

	DURHAM			DRUMLITHIE			FRASERBURGH			TOTAL		
	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR
1 Field	3	1	0	4	0	0	2	1	1	9	2	1
2 Swings	4	0	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	11	1	0
3 Buses	4	0	0	3	1	0	2	1	1	9	2	1
4 River	3	1	0	3	1	0	2	1	1	8	3	1
5 Street	0	4	0	3	1	0	4	0	0	7	5	0
6 Sea	2	2	0	4	0	0	2	1	1	8	3	1
7 Rubbish	0	4	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	4	6	2
8 Wood	3	1	0	4	0	0	4	0	0	11	1	0
9 Boats	4	0	0	4	0	0	2	2	0	10	2	0
10 Motorway	2	2	0	3	1	0	2	2	0	7	5	0
11 Shops	2	2	0	1	3	0	2	2	0	5	7	0
TOTAL	27	17	0	34	9	1	28	11	5	89	37	6
	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR	☺	☹	NR

NR= no response   ☺ = like   ☹ = dislike

Table 10.2: *Summary of affective labelling activity by field site*

CHILD/ SITE	FAVOURITE PICTURE(S) OF PLACE	REASON	LEAST LIKED PICTURE OF PLACE	REASON
DURHAM *Will*	The wood The river	*Reminded him of somewhere similar and excited imagination* *Again seemed familiar*	Motorway	*Too small (may have been actual size of the picture)*
Beth	The sea	*Because it had pink flowers*	Rubbish	*Not a nice place*
Sophie	The swings	*Because they were good fun*	Seaside	*Associated it with being cold and perceived danger of choppy water*
Tim	The wood	*Reminded him of Botanic Gardens which had enjoyed and liked trees*	Street	*Concerned there were no people in the street*
DRUMLITHIE *Andrew*	The bus station The sea	*Lots to see* *Could play in sand and go in sea*	Swings	*Had hurt himself there*
Greta	NR	*NR*	NR	*NR*
Patty	The wood	*Fairies lived there*	Motorway	*NR*
Ross	The boats	*Liked boats*	Rubbish	*Not a nice place to go*
FRASERBURGH *Matt*	The sea	*NR*	Field	*Boring*
Claire	The swings	*Liked swings*	NR	*NR*
Gail	The swings The boats	*NR* *NR*	Woods	*Scary place*
Amy	The sea	*Reminded her of holiday in Spain*	Boats	*NR*

Table 10.3: *Favourite and least liked pictures of place for individual children*   (NR= no response)

method of analysing data. Furthermore, material can be located easily and, as Creswell suggests,

> *A computer program "forces" the researcher to look at the database line for line and think about the meaning of each sentence and idea.*
>
> Creswell (1998:156)

Whilst these issues point to some clear advantages of using a computer programme to analyse data, my position as a reflexive researcher, my integral role both in the analytic and interpretive processes, and my aim to preserve the integrity and richness of the children's words and maintain a close connection to the data set, supported my decision to perform manual analysis. With this stance comes the view that I am inevitably and inextricably implicated in all aspects of this research so that the analysis must therefore reflect and express these relationships which may be lost or removed from the original context through the use of analysis software.

10.3.3 Identifying substantive themes through coding

The process of identifying themes in the data set started with coding place-related ideas and remarks. These were low inference, descriptive codes that referred to a class of place phenomena that occurred in a segment of text (Miles and Huberman 1994). The units of analysis were either single words, phrases or, in some cases, more extensive dialogue. At first there were more than 60 codes and then these were refined to about 40 codes when duplication and repetition were eradicated (see Appendix 9). These codes were highly descriptive and labelled with words or abbreviations that described the aspect of place being described and distinguished them from other codes e.g. SHAD for shadow; DAN for perceived danger; PLUSE for place use etc. Coding effectively reduced the data into ideas about place or, as Punch (1998:204) describes it, 'they index the data, providing a basis for storage and retrieval'.

10.3.4 Thematic index

With the codes pulling material together to permit analysis, the next step was to further reduce the data into a smaller number of analytic units through creating themes. This deconstruction of experiences into smaller elements or components of experience was seen as the most effective way of identifying what the children

perceived. At this stage the 12 sets of photographs and the children's artwork were referred to constantly as they were integral to the process.

The thematic index was constructed by identifying patterns and categories of meaning between the codes so, for example, any reference to a place that involved the senses or a particular preference or feeling was placed in the higher order theme 'affective' and then allocated to the appropriate sub-theme. In this way recurring patterns were captured that cut across 'the preponderance' of the data (Taylor and Bogdan 1984:139). The process of generating themes was 'highly intuitive' (Merriam 1998:156) and thus explaining the relationships between data is difficult to explain, but it was systematic and included commonsense constructs, analytical preferences and my own values and prior experiences (Constas 1992; Ryan and Bernard 2003). Furthermore, the themes can also be described as how the children conceptualise their own world view – be it through patterns, shapes, reference to past experience etc – so in effect they were *re*constructed concepts. If the themes accurately reflect the purpose of this research then, in effect, they contribute significantly towards answering to the research question i.e. all the themes reflect some aspect of experience of place.

The index was refined as the process of abstraction proceeded and was, as Edwards (2001:133) describes, 'an evolving document as adjustments are made to descriptors in response to the data'. 11 initial themes were reduced to a more manageable 8 by the end of the exercise. These 8 themes were deemed to involve descriptive categories that were close to the data and that gave a workable structure. The 8 themes with their associated sub-themes were numbered and are presented in Table 10.4, whilst the initial thematic index can be found in Appendix 10. The themes are internally consistent but distinct from one another, and reflect the understandings expressed by the children. However, it is not possible to enclose a theme so that its contents are thematically 'pure'; inevitably themes overlap and merge with elements of others. The final theme of 'other key issues' emerged as there were aspects of place that could not be incorporated into the existing themes yet were important to include. These included issues of perspective, places of special interest and unexpected responses to place.

Theme	1 COLOUR, DARKNESS & SHADOWS	2 SHAPE, PATTERN & NUMBER	3 SENSORY RESPONSES	4 AFFECTIVE RESPONSES	5 CONTEXT	6 IMAGINATION	7 WATER, ON THE GROUND, SPEED & MOVEMENT	8 OTHER KEY ISSUES
Sub-theme	1.1 Identifying colours	2.1 Identifying shapes	3.1 Sound	4.1 Like	5.1 Reference to past experience	6.1 Animals	7.1 Water features	8.1 Near & far – issues of perspective
	1.2 Using colour in artwork	2.2 Drawing shapes	3.2 Smell	4.2 Dislike	5.2 Reference to home	6.2 Traditional stories & folklore	7.2 Ground features	8.2 Non-recognition of places
	1.3 Darkness	2.3 Identifying patterns		4.3 Emotional reaction	5.3 Simile	6.3 Developing a story	7.3 Speed & movement	8.3 Places of special interest
	1.4 Shadows	2.4 Drawing patterns		4.4 Fear and perceived danger	5.4 Reference to other children			8.4 The unexpected & the unusual
		2.5 Counting			5.5 Reference to place use			
					5.6 Environmental awareness			

Table 10.4: *Thematic index for pre-school children's experience of place*

In some studies researchers have predetermined themes or categories for analysing the data so that the analysis is theory led. These themes may be based upon research that has gone before. Several pieces of place-related research were considered to see if any pre-established themes could be used. Hart's (1979) study of children's experience of place produced themes that reflected the perceived values afforded by places i.e. land-use, commercial, social and aesthetic. These are broad themes that Hart used with a large sample of older children who experienced place very differently from the pre-school children selected as participants in this study. However, Hart's sub-themes such as 'rivers' and 'brooks or frog ponds' obviously equate to the 'water features' sub-theme in this study, whilst his 'dangerous and scary places' relate to 'fear/perceived danger' in the 'affective' theme. For Moore (1986), children's place preference was categorised into a number of different types of favourite place such as home sites; open space; vegetation and natural ground surfaces whilst Van Andel's (1990) investigation into places children like, dislike and fear involved categorising place according to direct questions asked of the children i.e. which places they thought were the most attractive/boring/scary/dangerous in their neighbourhood.

In this thesis, the affective theme, which incorporates emotional responses and place preference, emerged from several writers of place research including Sobel (1990); Chawla (1992); Malinowski and Thurber (1996). Place affordance (referred to here as the sub-theme 'reference to place use') is a common construct and used by Hart (1979); Gibson (1988); Heft (1988); Matthews (1992); Aitken (1994) and Genereux et al (1995). The themes devised by all these researchers were obviously influenced by the nature and objectives' of their research, together with variables such as the age of the children and the methods used to generate data. The creation of themes in this study was similarly shaped by such variables and, although the themes were not directly derived from the literature, they were influential to a degree.

10.3.5 Thematic charts

With the data coded and sorted it was then possible to draw up thematic charts which were an effective means of organizing and displaying the information (Robson 2002). For each of the eight themes there was a column for each sub-theme and a row for each child participant in which the numbered lines of relevant text were noted. An

asterisk was used to indicate text that included a relevant quotation that could be used later in the process. The eight thematic charts can be found in Appendix 11.

10.3.6 What the children photographed

The photographs taken by the children, some of which appear in Chapter 12 and as complete sets in Appendix 14, are of interest in several ways. Not only does the skill of the children present itself, but the subject of the photographs is clearly important as this drove the semi-structured interviews. It is appropriate, too, to summarise the main place themes in the photographs and see what emerge as places that, for whatever reason, excited the children's interest. These were counted for each child and then added together for each of the three field sites. The results are presented in Table 10.5. The final row – 'child-specified' - incorporates all those photographs which hold specific features of interest that the child captured in his or her picture and which were identified as such during the interviews. In Durham these included: the park, a garden, railings on the bridge, the back of a bench, a drain, graffiti, a road sign, a hiding place and flowers. In Drumlithie the children showed specific interest in a taxi, a tractor, a garden, frost and ice, a metal fence, a barbed wire fence, a beech hedge and a street light. In Fraserburgh, a cat, cars, a garden, a spiky plant, a bird table, a bus shelter and a school all captured the children's attention.

Main subject of photograph	Number of photographs taken		
	Durham	Drumlithie	Fraserburgh
People	20	10	13
Water features	14	12	5
Ground	5	5	17
Shape	6	2	-
Colour	4	6	2
Pattern	6	1	3
Shadow	7	4	1
Buildings	2	10	18
Landscape	1	12	5
Sky	2	9	2
Child-specified	11	16	10

Table 10.5: *What the children at the three field sites photographed*

It was no surprise that the children took numerous pictures of each other and accompanying adults during the walk as these people were not only familiar and significant in their lives, but also added colour, movement and active responses to the photographs. There were several pictures of legs and walking feet, again unsurprising when walking was a significant part of the outings. Notwithstanding, the range of photographs that encapsulates place or elements of place was wide and included close-up perspectives and broader landscapes. DeMarie (2001) suggests that children either use cameras to get a closer look at something or as binoculars to view action or distant objects. Generally, the children took photographs of what was familiar, so the ordinary was valued over the extraordinary, although there were instances of the children choosing to take pictures that included new or novel ideas or experiences e.g. the leaves in the frozen puddles in Drumlithie.

The three walks offered different experiences with, arguably, Durham offering the widest range of place experiences and Fraserburgh the most limited (refer to figures 8.2-8.4 for maps of the walks). However, whatever the locality offered all the children took photographs that were their own personal record of their experience of place taken during the walks and as such the 12 sets of photographs are an intriguing glimpse into their perceptions of place.

10.3.7 Favourite and least favoured photographed places

From data emanating from the semi-structured interviews it was possible to collate material pertaining to each child's favourite photograph(s) of place. Table 10.6 demonstrates each child's reasons for choosing their favourite place and their least favoured place as photographed during the walks. Thus, for example, Sophie favoured her picture of leaves with the straightforward, honest comment that she 'liked it', whilst she perceived the road near the nursery as dangerous and therefore it was her least favoured photograph. Ross, who often expressed his knowledge about farming, liked his tractor photograph best and, quite fairly, did not have a photograph he did not like. Meanwhile, Amy was most taken with her picture of a garden because of the bird table, and the dirty puddle was her least favoured.

CHILD/SITE	FAVOURITE PHOTOGRAPH(S) OF PLACE	REASON	LEAST LIKED PHOTOGRAPH(S) OF PLACE	REASON
DURHAM Will	The bridge over the river	Liked being on the bridge and watching the water go under it	NR	NR
Beth	The path	Because her friends were in it	Pond	Not a nice place
Sophie	The leaves on the ground	Liked it	Road near nursery	Boring and dangerous
Tim	W walking along the towpath	W's his friend and it was a sunny day	River side with rubbish Dark places	Made him angry Because you can't see when it's dark
DRUMLITHIE Andrew	Drumlithie steeple	Personal interest and knowledge	Gated garden	Fear of dog
Greta	Shadow of J Children and the staff	Amused her All sat on bench having fun	Dark ditch	Didn't know what it was
Patty	The ice puddle Princess shadow	Familiar with Jack Frost story Liked fairy stories	NR	NR
Ross	Tractor and trailer in field	Interested in farming	NR	NR
FRASERBURGH Matt	Street and cars	NR	NR	NR
Claire	Garden	Lots to see in the garden	Pavement	Fell over during walk and hurt knee
Gail	Garden	Because it had grass	Garden wall and bare garden	Very plain
Amy	Garden	Liked the bird table with the plastic bird	Puddle	Dirty and there was rubbish in it

Table 10.6: *Favourite and least liked photographs of place taken by individual children*

10.3.8 Artwork

As stated earlier in this thesis (see 8.2.5), the intention of the artwork was not to make inferences about the drawings *per se*, but to utilise them as a facilitation of further conversations about places the children had experienced during the walks. This was achieved successfully as the accompanying narratives took place when the children were relaxed and they happily explained what they were doing and thinking as they drew. These narratives were incorporated into the transcripts.

Table 10.7 shows the subjects of the children's drawings. Most selected a photograph from their own set without any supervision, although three or four required direction and encouragement. All the drawings can be found in Appendix 12.

The drawings represented the children's interpretations of places and things they had seen during the walks. Andrew's drawing of Drumlithie steeple reflected his interest and knowledge, whilst Matt's fascination with the cars around Fraserburgh emerged in a drawing of a car with speeding wheels. There were some surprises. Beth drew a rainbow which, though not photographed, was seen during the walk and had clearly made an impression on her. Will's perspective of the River Wear was of the curve of the river as it flows through the city and around the cathedral peninsula – this was not, to my knowledge, discussed during the walk, but he clearly knew about the unusual configuration. The individual drawings were, as Backett-Milburn and McKie (1999) state, direct translations of images either from the photographs or from memories of place.

Will	River Wear	
Sophie	River	DURHAM
Beth	Rainbow	
Tim	Pond	

Patty	Sky and frosty grass	
Andrew	Drumlithie steeple	
Ross	Underground pipes	DRUMLITHIE
Greta	Drumlithie steeple	

Matt	Fast car	
Amy	Surface of road	FRASERBURGH
Gail	Girl playing in the garden	
Claire	Herself taking a picture of house	

Table 10.7: *Children's subject selection for artwork*

10.4 Summaries

10.4.1 Summaries of participants

For each child a summary of their contribution was constructed and these may be viewed in Appendix 13. These summaries comprise the child's general contribution; the affective activity; an overview of the photographs taken; an overview of the semi-structured interview and a record of what was drawn during the artwork. Extracts and quotes from the child's transcripts are included under relevant themes or sub-themes. In this way each child has a personal record that is easily referred to for analysis purposes.

The thematic charts described in 10.3.5 were used to summarise the main theme or themes of experience of place for each child and this gives an idea of what, if any, strategies the child used to make sense of a place. This was achieved by counting the number of times an element of place was referred to by a child. For example, Beth referred to colours on 32 separate occasions and she showed affective responses to place 18 times. All the information was collated in this manner and the results are shown in Table 10.8, 'Place themes of individual children'. Here, for example, Ross' responses show that the main themes of his experiences of place include affective

THEME \ CHILD	COLOUR, DARKNESS & SHADOWS	SHAPE, PATTERN & NUMBER	SENSORY RESPONSES	AFFECTIVE RESPONSES	CONTEXT	IMAGINATION	WATER, ON THE GROUND, SPEED & MOVEMENT	OTHER KEY ISSUES
Will	●	●		●	●	●	●	●
Beth	●			●				●
Sophie	●	●		●			●	●
Tim	●	●		●	●		●	●
Ross				●		●	●	●
Andrew				●	●		●	●
Patty	●					●	●	●
Greta	●							
Gail				●			●	●
Claire					●			●
Matt			●			●	●	
Amy			●				●	●

Table 10.8: *Place themes of individual children*

responses, imagination, water, on the ground, speed and movement, and some other key issues. Will in Durham was the most diverse respondent in that his experience of place involved seven of the eight themes whilst Greta's experiences only encompassed one theme. The table gives an indication of the range of experiences and shows that each child in this study has a personal response to place that can be categorised into distinct themes.

10.4.2 Summaries of the three field sites

This section does not seek to describe the differences between research findings at Durham, Drumlithie and Fraserburgh. Rather, it is a brief summary of what was found at each of the sites achieved by examining certain aspects of the data findings. In Table 10.9 the three field sites are summarised in terms of what the children liked most and what they liked least in the affective task; what they photographed; what they drew; and the main themes that emerged.

Field site	Affective activity: most popular places	Affective activity: least popular places	Most popular places photo-graphed	Most popular places drawn	Most common themes from experience of place
Durham	swings, buses, boats	street, rubbish	water features – river, pond, shadows	water features – river, pond	range covers all main themes with emphasis on affective and colour
Drumlithie	field, sea, wood, boats	shops	landscape sky, burn	steeple	affective, context, colour, shadows
Fraserburgh	swings, wood	boats, motorway	ground, houses	mixed	affective, ground

Table 10.9: *Summary of field site data*

10.5 Concluding comments

This chapter has provided an explicit description of the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the data set in a way that reflects my belief that all

aspects of the analysis should be open to scrutiny. By proffering this explanation, the methodological rigor and analytical defensibility of the research were considered. The process did not proceed in a linear fashion as there was a constant movement back and forth through the data. The first step involved thorough familiarisation with the data that had been generated in the field and organising them so that transcription could be undertaken smoothly. The transcription process was laborious, but it was important to transcribe the material as accurately as possible and to include both non-verbal and paralinguistic communication also.

The analysis of the transcripts was a reactive and reflexive encounter that aimed to preserve the richness of the children's responses. The challenge was trying not to fragment the data too much during the analysis so that any sense of holism was lost yet, realistically, textual conventions, subjective interpretation and selection always means transcriptions are not 'literal'.

The results of the affective labelling activity in which the children assigned stickers according to whether they liked or disliked the place pictured, was presented in the form of individual results for each of the 12 children and also in a summary of the responses for each of the three field sites. The findings from this analysis reveal that the most liked places were the swings and the wood; the most disliked were the shops. A further table presented the reasons the children gave for liking or disliking a place. There was a wide range of responses for liking a place that incorporated, for example, what it offered, recognisable features, or the place reminded a child of some other place they knew. Reasons for disliking a place were more difficult for the children to express with the most common response being that it was not a 'nice' place or there was a memory of an unpleasant event that had happened somewhere similar such as falling off a swing at the park.

All the transcribed material (that is the material obtained from the affective activity and the research conversations; conversations during the walking expeditions; the semi-structured interviews; conversations during the artwork) was organised into 12 units – one for each child – and then coded. These codes were further reduced by grouping them into a set of eight themes. These themes, derived inductively from the data, are: colour, darkness and shadows; shape, pattern and number, sensory

responses; affective; context; imagination; water, on the ground, speed and movement; other key issues. The themes, which are by no means exclusive, were then applied to the transcribed data and thematic charts for each child drawn up. Each theme is described in detail in Chapter 11.

Further aspects covered in this chapter included a summation of what the children photographed. These photographs were personal records of what the children saw during the walking expeditions and each child in each field site produced a unique set. Whilst people were the most commonly featured aspects of the photographs, in general there were specific interests in water features, shadows, the ground, buildings, landscapes and special places that the children favoured. The latter included anything from a drain, a fence and ice to a garden, a spiky plant and a bus shelter.

All 12 children drew pictures of aspects of place seen during the walk. The drawings *per se* are not analysed as it was the conversations that ensued during the drawing that were important. It was found that the children described what they were drawing and made other salient remarks that were recorded and used to supplement the material obtained from the affective activity and the semi-structured interviews. Notwithstanding, the drawings are interesting translations of places the children associated with places they saw during the walks.

Summaries of each child were constructed that informed the place themes so that it was possible to see the dominant themes for each child. This then presented a child's personal response to place as categorised by one of 8 themes. The final analytic procedure was to summarise each of the three field sites according to the criteria of most popular places in the affective activity and in the children's photographs; the least popular in these two areas, and the most common themes that emerged from the experience of real place.

Chapter 11 provides a detailed account of each of the 8 themes of place as experienced by the 12 children in the three field sites. It aims to provide the reader with a true sense of the worth of the experiences through accessing the children's words, photographs and artwork.

CHAPTER 11
Themes of Place

11.1 Introduction

This chapter examines in detail the eight themes that have been constructed from the experiences of place of selected pre-school children in three field sites. These eight themes were derived from verbal data gathered in the field i.e. talk during the affective activity, the walk, the semi-structured interviews and during artwork. Visual data in the form of photographs and drawings also made significant contributions to gaining understandings into the children's experience of place.

The eight themes are presented in this chapter as follows:

> 11.2 Theme 1: colour, darkness and shadows
> 11.3 Theme 2: shape, pattern and number
> 11.4 Theme 3: sensory responses
> 11.5 Theme 4: affective responses
> 11.6 Theme 5: context
> 11.7 Theme 6: imagination
> 11.8 Theme 7: water, on the ground, speed and movement
> 11.9 Theme 8: other key issues

The first three themes, 11.2 – 11.4, are those that are comparatively straightforward and objective i.e. there is relatively little ambiguity when a child mentions a specific colour, a shape or reports a certain noise or smell. The remaining five themes, 11.5 - 11.9, are my own interpretations and pertain to more individual and personal responses made by the children and, as such, are somewhat less tangible and more subjective. It should be made clear that the boundaries of these themes are not clear-cut and that there are overlaps. For example theme 7, 'water, on the ground, speed and movement', includes a wide range of place elements that merge with aspects of other themes such as 'places of special interest' in theme 8 which includes references to ice and frost.

Each theme and its sub-theme components are discussed comprehensively. This includes relevant extracts of dialogue and photographs taken by the children. All the drawings done by the children can be found in Appendix 12, and full sets of the children's photographs are presented in Appendix 14. There is a summary at the end of each theme and 11.10, 'Concluding comments' provides an overview of the entire chapter.

11.2 Theme 1: Colour, darkness and shadows

The cognition of colour is a basic skill that pre-school children are still mastering. Knowledge of the primary colours, together with the colour green, is usually well established at this stage of development (Roberson et al 2004). It is believed that children between the ages of 3-5 years possess some colour information that is incorporated into a network of knowledge involving common object attributes e.g. grass is green, bananas are yellow (Davidoff and Mitchell 1993). The children involved in this research into place experience were at the younger end of this age range so there was some expectation that they would have difficulties recognising some colours and also problems retrieving colour names. Consideration must also be given to the linguistic ability of the children to describe a colour in the environment.

The sub-theme 'darkness' includes references to dark places encountered either on the walks or discussed during the affective task. Shadows were a dominant feature of two of the walks. On the day of the walks shadows were particularly clear during the walks in Durham and Drumlithie, a phenomenon denied the Fraserburgh children due to the overcast weather.

11.2.1 Identifying colours

The identification of colours in the environment was a process common to most of the children with one child showing a particular interest in a specific colour. Beth's favourite colour was pink and it was often mentioned in the course of conversations e.g. the colour of her bedroom at home and the colour of various items of clothing she wore. Pink was not an obvious colour seen during the walk (although Beth later included it in her rainbow picture which is mentioned in 11.2.2), but she noticed some pink flowers in the picture of the sea during the affective activity. Looking for a particular colour in the environment was not demonstrated by any other child.

The autumnal leaves in Durham drew a variety of colour-related comments and were photographed by several children. The reds, oranges and yellows were mentioned by all the children with Beth describing some of them as "very red" (Photograph 1) and Sophie as "reddy-orange". In Drumlithie, Patty was interested in the blue sky and the contrasting leaves of the copper beech tree which she said were "sort of goldy" (Photograph 2). Patty also took a picture of the sky and noticed that there were grades of blue that went from "blue-blue" to "whitey-blue".

The surroundings in Fraserburgh were of more uniform colour with markedly little green and, in consequence, there were fewer references to colour. Indeed when looking at their photographs the children resorted to identifying the colours of the clothes worn by each other.

During the affective activity the children used colour identification to help them make sense of the places in the pictures. Primary colours were often picked out – blue buses, red cars and yellow sand – together with green as seen in trees and fields. However, again the Fraserburgh children appeared to be less likely to discern specific colours or attribute them to aspects of place.

11.2.2 Using colour in artwork[1]

At each pre-school centre the same set of drawing equipment was provided so the children had access to the same colours. Some children chose the colours for their drawings with care, whilst others used whatever was to hand. Both Andrew and Greta chose not to use any colour in their drawings of Drumlithie steeple (A7). In Durham, Beth drew a rainbow because "there's pink in it" (A1). Beth had noticed a faint rainbow at the start of the walk and, although she had not taken a photograph of it, she remembered it later as it contained her favourite colour. In Fraserburgh, where there had been little comment about colour and place, both Amy and Gail drew intricate pictures that involved a variety of colours (A9 & A11). Both chose the colours prior to drawing. Gail referred to her photograph of the garden and Amy to her photograph of the road to provide ideas.

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[1] All the pictures drawn by the children can be seen in Appendix 12. Specific drawings referred to in the text are indicated by 'A' for artwork and then a number that corresponds to that child's drawing.

Photograph 1, 11.2.1 Identifying colours:
"Very red leaves". *Beth, Durham*

Photograph 2, 11.2.1 Identifying colours:
"Sort of goldy" beech hedge. *Patty, Drumlithie*

As she drew, the following conversation with Gail was recorded:

> Sue: And what's in the garden?
> Gail: [draws shapes then colours one side of the picture orange and the other blue] Tha's the sky there an' tha's a wall. Wall o' the hoos {house}. Now I'm wanting the blue again for the pond.
> Sue: Uh, OK. And is that ...who's that? [Indicates figure]
> Gail: [laughs] Me! An' then I'll be putting... [Draws purple circle] This is maybes flowers.
> Sue: Is there any grass?
> Gail: Na.

The colours Gail chose were very specific for the purpose even if there was not always an exact colour-matching relationship. Rather, it demonstrated what was meaningful and expressive to her in her personal representation of place.

11.2.3 Darkness

Dark places both intrigued and frightened the children. There is an overlap between this sub-theme, the theme 'imagination' (11.7) and the sub-theme 'fear and perceived danger' (11.5.4).

The dark tunnel that featured in the picture of rubbish bins was disliked by most of the children, but there was no other mention of darkness during the affective task. The children's own photographs included dark places some of which involved water, and when the children talked about them there was a marked sense of unease if not fear. These ranged from Amy's "awful dark" drain, to Ross's deep ditch, to Tim's perception that it would be very dark at the bottom of the pond. When Tim looked through his photographs he selected the darker ones as his least liked:

> Sue: Why don't you like that photo? [Landscape of part of School of Education gardens]
> Tim: [pulls face] It's all dark. And----and this is black dark. [indicates path]
> Sue: So you don't like dark places so much? Why's that?
> Tim: Because you .... you can't see that's why.

Attempting articulation of dislike of darkness was difficult for the children and concurs with similar findings in Hart's (1979) research. However, what emerged clearly was a sense that dark places concealed something that was potentially frightening.

Beth regarded one dark place as offering a hiding place for herself and her friend. Beth said that the corner … "had leaves in it and we hid there and it was dark but not *too* dark". Beth also took a photograph (Photograph 3) of a steep section of road where it was a "dark place" under the tree canopy and ahead "sunny there with blue bits". From an adult's point of view the contrast between dark and light was obvious (if not especially worthy of mention), but Beth's observation and remark was surprising for a young child.

11.2.4 Shadows

As mentioned previously, shadows were features in Durham and Drumlithie, but not in Fraserburgh where the weather was overcast. The children took a variety of photographs of shadows of themselves and each other, seeing them more as 'reflections' rather than their bodies coming between the sun and the ground. They enjoyed experimenting with shapes they made on the ground and chasing each other's shadows. Patty's photograph of her own shadow was taken as it made her look as if she was wearing a "fairy dress" (Photograph 4) and that the effect of the road made it look like "stones are in my shadow".

Children in two different locations took photographs that were remarkably similar. Sophie took two photographs of the railings on the footbridge over the River Wear in Durham. One was of the actual railings and the other the shadows of the railings described as …"this is a shadow of that. That's the lines." In Drumlithie Patty's photograph of fence shadows is similar to the bridge railings. Of her photograph Patty said, "there's the shadow coming out of the fence". Interestingly, this comment echoed Piaget's (1930) findings that five year olds believed that shadows 'come out' of the surrounding environment.
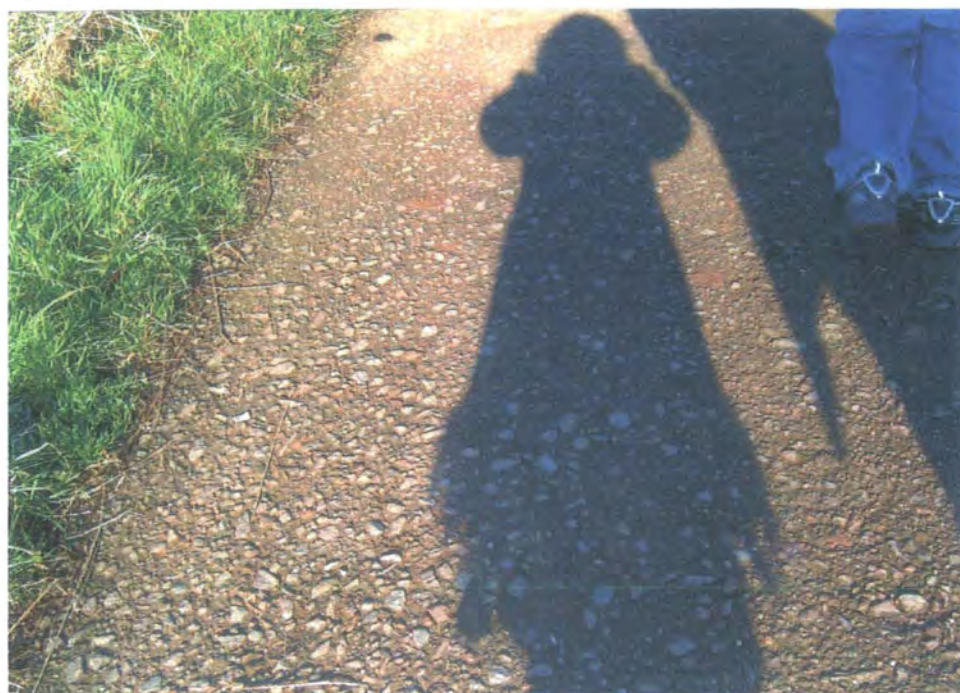
11.2.5 Summary of colour, darkness and shadows

The responses to both novel places and experienced places that included reference to colour, darkness and shadows are summarised thus:

- ➤ some children used colour to identify or define features of place
- ➤ colour may be seen as a stimulus to understanding place
- ➤ darkness was generally a negative feature of place and was equated with something hiding

Photograph 3, 11.2.3 Darkness: From darkness to light – "sunny there with blue bits". *Beth, Durham*

Photograph 4, 11.2.4 Shadows: The "fairy dress" shadow. *Patty, Drumlithie*

- shadows were enjoyed by some children with at least one child believing they come out of the surroundings
- colour, darkness and shadows were visual transactions with place that contributed towards the children's experience of place
- little, if any, research has been undertaken that involves pre-school children's use of these three elements in their experience of place

11.3 Theme 2: Shape, pattern and number

This section of the chapter concerning themes of place explores further experiences that are visual by nature. Shape, pattern and number were placed together as they form a theme that is characterised by early mathematical concepts. As in the previous theme, particularly regarding colour cognition, the competencies of the children varied yet what emerged was a clear indication of further strategies used to understand place.

11.3.1 Identifying shapes

For three children, two in Durham and one in Drumlithie, the concept of shape was of particular interest. These children identified shapes in the affective task and for Will shape was a recognisable and important component of his set of photographs.

Asking a child if he or she could identify a shape was not a specific question during the affective task, but some of the children spontaneously recognised and named shapes during the conversations. Both Tim and Andrew identified shapes in the pictures. Tim found circles in the multi-storey car park that featured in the cityscape, square houses in the street picture and rectangular offices in the harbour scene. Arguably, Andrew's shapes were more instantly recognisable in that they included painted arrow and diamond road markings. However, observing such fine detail in a cityscape was an unexpected skill.

Will showed a propensity for shape recognition in his photographs. Whether he chose to take a particular photograph due to a certain shape or only identified shapes once he saw the photographs, is unclear. One of Will's pictures is ostensibly a photograph of a white car, but during the interview it transpired that Will was more interested in the background brick wall and said, "There's ---- on that wall. There's rec:tangles".

This observation was unanticipated but it became clear during the interview that Will was keen to share his knowledge and interest in shapes – the cross on top of the war memorial; the rectangles of the memorial steps square flagstones and square windows; the "ziggy-zag teeth" of the brick edging by the pond. 'Zigzag' was also used by Amy (Fraserburgh) to describe the shape of the roof tops.

11.3.2 Drawing shapes

Drawing shapes was not confined to pencil on paper. A couple of children drew shapes in the air with their hands and fingers to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the concept. Will sketched the shape of a bollard, an object that featured in one of his photographs. Later he formed a tunnel with his hands and, in similar vein, Ross made a pipe shape with his fingers. Ross's intricate pattern of underground pipes is discussed in 11.3.4, 'Drawing patterns'.

Will, whose interest in shapes became increasingly apparent, chose to draw the River Wear (A4). Rather than drawing it as seen during the walk he drew it from an aerial perspective with its distinctive curve as it rounds the cathedral peninsula:

> Will: That's what the river does. It goes like this. [Draws curve]
> Sue: You mean the river here? The Wear?
> Will: Yeah. And then it goes off this way [indicates direction off the paper].

Clearly, Will had remembered seeing and/or hearing about the configuration of the river in Durham and then reproduced it on paper. Here, then, was an example of a young child with a fascination with shapes that had a clear influence on his experience of place.

11.3.3 Identifying patterns

Patterns were identified by children as both random e.g. leaves on the ground as photographed by Sophie in Photograph 5, or regular patterns such as seen in her photo (Photograph 6) of paving stones. Sophie was interested in the "leaves on the floor" that made "scattery patterns of red" and also leaves embedded in mud by the river. Sophie's fascination with pattern was expressed in her description of the paving stones:

Photograph 5, 11.3.3 Identifying patterns: "Scattery patterns of red". *Sophie, Durham*

Photograph 6, 11.3.3 Identifying patterns: "They go this way and then they go that way". Paving stones, *Sophie, Durham*

There's the path we....went on. It was stones that---- (?) that made the path that were sort of ....a.... (?) pinky colour. And they go this way and then they go that way [makes interlocking shapes with her fingers]. You see that's how they go.

Other examples of patterns seen in places included stones in the road and pavement cracks. Patty took Photograph 7, a puddle with leaves frozen within it that she described as "all patterndy" and was puzzled as to how they "got in the ice". Photograph 8 taken by Amy in Fraserburgh was, for both of us, initially difficult to interpret, but Amy eventually said that it was "patches of different bits of the earth" that were "fine to see". These observation of patterns – all of them on the ground – suggested that these young children closely observed details beneath their feet, details that many adults may take for granted or that go unnoticed.

11.3.4 Drawing patterns

Two children incorporated patterns into their drawings. Ross was fascinated by the deep drain and the sight of broken pipes at the bottom. His drawing of pipes (A8) was carefully planned and was his idea of what the pipes were like "doon {down} under the ground". He made an intricate pattern that involved several colours and explained that the pipes were joined up "as I have to do that". The pipes took water to the village and the surrounding fields. This was a drawing inspired by his imagination and interpretation of what the pipes looked like under the fields.

In Fraserburgh, Amy drew herself looking at the road with dot patterns on the road surface (A9). The dots were added quite specifically and the yellow marks had a particular meaning:

Amy: [starts drawing a blue face] This is me here an' I'm just looking at the
       --- the road here where there's this.... [makes various marks and dots].
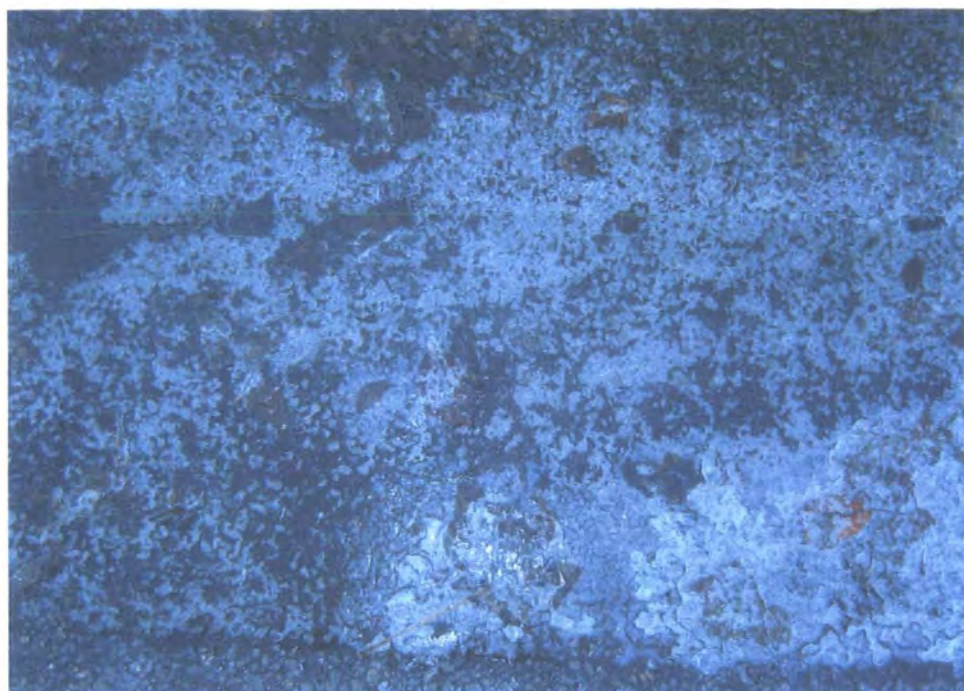Sue: So this is the road? OK.
Amy: Oh I've forgot [adds some yellow marks] There...there...
Sue: And those bits are?
Amy: Well it's wee bits o' sunshine.
Sue: Uhuh. And so they're kind of---like um shiny bits are they?
Amy: Sort of, aye. That are yellow on the road.

Photograph 7, 11.3.3 Identifying patterns: "All patterndy". Leaves frozen in ice. *Patty, Drumlithie*

Photograph 8, 11.3.3 Identifying patterns: "Patches of different bits of earth". *Amy, Fraserburgh*

11.3.5 Counting

Like learning colours, counting is a familiar activity to most pre-school children. The counting of discrete objects was carried out by children in each of the three field sites. Only two children counted features in their own photographs – 7 windows in a house (Amy) and 28 railings on the bridge (Sophie), but several used counting when talking about features in the affective task. These included sheep, buses, swings and cars. In all cases the counting was spontaneous. The counting of objects may have been more of an enjoyable activity than a way of understanding the place featured in the picture.

11.3.6 Summary of shape, pattern and number

The responses to both experienced places and unfamiliar places that included reference to shape, pattern and number are summarised thus:

> ➤ it appeared that some of the children had a propensity for seeing shapes and patterns in the environment
> ➤ some of the children were able to describe details of a place that may be taken for granted by adults
> ➤ some of the children had a keen eye for features on the ground
> ➤ shape, pattern and counting objects are visual transactions with place that can contribute towards young children's experience of place
> ➤ little if any research has been undertaken that involves pre-school children's use of these three elements in their experience of place

11.4 Theme 3: Sensory responses

There are four possible sensory responses to place – visual, auditory, olfactory (including both taste and smell) and tactile. The visual response is the most dominant part of the experience of place in that it contributes significantly to location and orientation in space, spatial relationships and the characterisation of places (Rodaway 1994). As such, it permeates the experience of place and is integral to all the other seven themes. Thus it is not dealt with as a sub-theme of sensory responses. No tactile responses were recorded and so this section only deals with auditory and olfactory responses termed here as sounds and smells.

11.4.1 Sounds

The three field sites offered different auditory experiences and it should be noted that the three were very different with regards to the level of ambient noise. Durham was the noisiest in terms of background noise from overhead aircraft and traffic on busy roads close to the nursery and the environs of the walk. Drumlithie was the quietest with only occasional traffic. Of course, the children were used to these background noises and so it is likely that they were a taken for granted aspect of their experience of place.

Sounds are immediate real-time experiences which the children found difficult to remember after the walks. Similarly, when the children looked at pictures of places in the affective activity they found the abstract concept of imagining what *might* be heard in a certain place virtually impossible. Carson (1998:84) suggests that sounds and hearing require 'conscious cultivation' so, with this in mind, unless listening to specific sounds is suggested to children they may not be conscious of them or indeed be unable to interpret them.

The most commonly imitated noise was that of cars and sirens. For example traffic noise was made in response to the picture of the motorway where Matt also provided the noise of car wheels squealing followed by a big crash. Emergency sirens were associated with the children's photographs of the fire station in Fraserburgh and Tim remembered he had heard a police siren during the walk in Durham.

The other element of place that evoked response to sound was that of water. In Durham Beth imitated the River Wear with swishing noises and Sophie imagined the sound of falling into the river as a "splashy-splash". Also in Durham, Tim talked of water "slooshing" in a drain in response to the sound of water beneath the drain grating, and Patty (Drumlithie) described a "whish-whish, pitty-pitty" sound of the water in the well, a very apt onomatopoeic description.

These two sounds – traffic and water- are both common in the children's lives hence the ability to relate to and imitate the sounds. There was no reference to other environmental sounds such as bells ringing, bird song or people talking.

11.4.2 Smells

As with sounds, each of the three field sites offered a variety smells. Part of the walk in Durham was dominated by exhaust fumes and, in sharp contrast, the rural setting of Drumlithie offered agricultural smells, and Fraserburgh a distinct smell of the sea. Again these were common and everyday smells that the children either took for granted or did not notice.

Imagining a smell and, furthermore, describing a smell (Porteous 1985) is extraordinarily difficult for an adult let alone a young child so the most likely response was always going to be a simple differentiation between a good or a bad smell. During the first-hand experiences of place on the walk, unpleasant smells were associated with water and mud. In Durham the pond smelled bad and the mud by the River Wear was described as "pooh" by Sophie and by Tim as "stinky". Amy in Fraserburgh held her nose and described her photograph of the puddle as "all yuk".

In the affective task the picture of the rubbish bins was acknowledged by three children as being associated with a bad smell, with Matt graphically describing it as "it'd reek" and be "real stinky like".

11.4.3 Summary of sensory responses

Sensory responses to place are summarised thus:

- auditory responses to place were dominated by the sounds of traffic and water
- smells were associated with water, mud and rubbish
- ambient sounds and smells pertinent to each setting were taken for granted by the children
- there is little literature that considers very young children's auditory and olfactory responses to place, although these perspectives are discussed by Porteous (1985) and Rodaway (1994) in relation to adult perspectives

11.5 Theme 4: Affective

This is a broad theme, described by Ittelson (1973) as the first level of response to the environment that encompasses positive and negative responses to place, together with emotional responses. Conway and Pointon (2003) write that young children are able

to articulate their likes and dislikes of particular features in the environment forcefully and the findings in this research substantiate this belief. The reader is referred to Tables 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 in Chapter 10 for tabular results of affective responses to place whilst this section presents a more thorough consideration of these particular reactions.

11.5.1 Like

The children expressed liking a place from a straightforward simple affirmation to more complex reasoning. The former response was common during the affective task when the children looked at pictures of places they had not experienced first-hand. The prevalence of brief, positive responses in the task may have been as a result of a willingness to please and, perhaps, not fully understanding that it was acceptable to be negative or appropriate to have different opinions about places. However, by the semi-structured interviews involving the children's own photographs there was a greater tendency to express why a place was liked. This was due, most probably, to the first-hand experience of place so that it was personal and meaningful to the children – they had experienced it directly. The development of closer relationships between me and the children may also have contributed to the increase in verbal responses.

The reasons given for liking a place were sometimes linked to what a place offered or 'afforded' (Gibson 1986), or had functional significance (Aitken 1994). The picture of the swings, for example, evoked a positive response as several children liked playing on them. Will liked being on the footbridge over the River Wear, "cos you can see all the water---down" (Photograph 9) and Patty liked the picture of the woods as it was a place where fairies and a princess lived, an imaginative response that is discussed more fully in section 10.6. Many of the children, as Hart (1979) and Matthews (1992) found in their studies, liked water elements such as the river, streams and ponds. In Durham the children were fascinated by the pond and keen to get to the river; in Drumlithie the village well, the burn and the deep drain provoked strong interest; in Fraserburgh the one puddle seen on the walk received much scrutiny as did an empty pond in a garden.

Picking out elements of a place that were familiar was also linked to a positive response. Thus Tim liked the bus station picture as he liked the buses, cars and lorry whilst Ross, who often talked about farms and farming, liked his own photograph of a tractor despite the fact the tractor was a long way off and difficult to see. In Fraserburgh Claire picked out her photograph of a garden as her favourite because it was "fine, an' it ha' got grass".

Liking a place was most commonly linked to what a place offered, elements within a place that were familiar such as water or, quite simply, just liking it. It has to be stated here that giving reasons for liking or disliking something or somewhere is challenging for adults, let alone young children. The same applies to why a place is disliked, as is discussed in the following sub-section.

11.5.2 Dislike

Negative responses during the affective task were less than half the number of positive replies but, as mentioned previously, the higher percentage of affirmative responses may have been linked to a desire to please. With some children, negative remarks increased as they became more confident and understood that it was perfectly acceptable to not like a place. As with the positive replies of the children, straightforward, unambiguous responses were common, so when asked why they did not like a place the children were apt to say, like Amy, "I just dinna." More expansive grounds for disliking pictures of non-experienced places included Tim saying of the street picture "I don't like this as…well, where are the people?"; Ross of the shops, "I don't like shopping"; Andrew of the swings, "last time I went to the park I fell down and cut my hand and crashed and I hit my head"; for Amy of the boats picture, "I'm not liking boats an' all".

Of course, taking a photograph of an unpleasant place was not common amongst the children and in fact only occurred on the suggestion of an adult when a child had made some negative comment about it when on the walk. So, for Beth the pond "wasn't very nice"; for Tim of the riverbank, "I didn't like it really"; Andrew commented "I hate it" of a high gate that kept a dog in (Photograph 10) and Gail said "it's awful plain" about a bare garden. Such remarks about places in their own photographs were relatively seldom – as Hart (1979:171) comments 'it is not

Photograph 9, 11.5.1 Like: From the footbridge over the River Wear, liked because "you can see all the water". *Will, Durham*

Photograph 10, 11.5.2 Dislike: A high gate disliked because of the intimation it held back a large dog. *Andrew, Drumlithie*

surprising that they have no interest in trying to recall places they do not like' - yet when comments *were* made interesting clues arose as to why some pre-school children dislike certain places.

11.5.3 Emotional reactions

This sub-theme includes reactions to place such as humour, anger, pleasure and boredom. A place described as boring by a child should be viewed with a degree of caution as it can be interpreted in several ways. It may mean that the child was bored; it is a response that can indicate non-comprehension of the task or, indeed, non-comprehension of the picture itself. 'Boring' is a signifier of many things, but of interest here is the fact that it was applied most commonly to pictures of unfamiliar landscapes suggesting, perhaps, that the macro-level scale was problematic for some children.

The sense of humour displayed by the children was unexpected. Will was convinced that there were a crocodile and a snake in the pond and was equally sure, much to his obvious amusement, that they were stuck there. Also at Durham, Sophie found the funny side of many things including the smell of the river mud which was "pooh"; that falling in the river "with a great big splash" would be comic and that the sheep in the picture of a field had "sticky ears". For Greta the shape of a member of staff's shadow caused much laughter – "Funny! Janet's[2] head's all little!" (Photograph 11), and Gail decided that the spiky plant that she had photographed was "silly".

Pleasure with regards to a place was expressed in other ways. Words such as beautiful, nice, good, happy, fun, fine and pretty were all used. Conversely, emotional reactions of a negative nature were signalled by words including cold, boring, bad, awful, scary, clarty (*Scots. mucky*) and dirty.

Some of the children were able to project feelings about what it *would* be like in a certain place and this occurred whilst looking at the pictures during the affective task. For example Beth thought the river in the picture looked cold:

      Beth: ...it's very cold.

---

[2] Janet was a member of staff at the playgroup

Sue: What? The water?
Beth: Yes, the water makes you do this [shivers and hugs herself].

Only one child displayed anger in connection with a place and that was Tim. Tim took a photograph of a broken bottle by the River Wear and said at the time:

> Some bad people have left rubbish everywhere. They should put it in the bin and leave it everywhere as it's ---- it's very bad to leave it and at nursery we have to put it in the bins.

But the child with the most pronounced emotional response was Matt. Although able to express pleasure, Matt was more usually negative and apt to be hostile. Of note is a recording taken during the walk whilst Matt was looking at the fire station:

> I hope there's a fire an' then the fire engine'll come oot {out}...Maybes there'll be fire this big [stretches arms high] an' I hope there's a fire an' that folk'll die.'

The emotional reactions to place were thus varied, ranging from finding something about a place amusing to finding a place offering drama or, perhaps, imagined drama. What does emerge is an honesty about the responses, an honesty that deserves to be valued and respected.

11.5.4 Fear and perceived danger

The children showed a marked appreciation of what *might* happen if they were in certain places that they perceived as dangerous and this is in accord with Hart's (1979) findings that children generally have a high awareness of danger. Fear is quite a common expression of children of this age and may reflect misconceptions and unfounded misgivings as well as instilled anxiety. Some fears were personal to children, perhaps reflecting past experience. Andrew's reaction to his photograph of the high gate, referred to in Photograph 10, was due to a fear of dogs:

Andrew: ...this one is a big gate with criss-cross wire and Janet said it---
            was a dog there and that's why it has the gate to stop it getting
            out....I don't like big dogs.
Sue: Well the gate would've protected you so it'd be alright.
Andrew: If it was *ve:ry* big then it could jump over.

One of the strongest fears and common to several children was falling into water. Both the pond and the river at Durham were felt to be dangerous. Sophie understood that the railings on the bridge were to stop people falling in, whilst Tim became agitated during the walk if anybody went too close to the pond. The deep drain at Drumlithie was the subject of both intrigue and fear, with a common consternation of falling in and not being able to get out. The drain was a water authority hole about 10 feet deep and at the bottom it was possible to see two pipes that emptied water into a small reservoir. There was a secure iron grating across the drain. However, Andrew and Ross both thought this grating could give way with Ross feeling that, "If you fall doon {down} there I expect you'd not get oot {out}" (Photograph 12). There was an element of imagination connected to this fear as the blackness of the hole sparked off stories of dead bodies (see section 10.6 for further details). Imagination also played a part in a fear of the pond in Durham where Will's imaginary crocodile became so real that we were advised not to go too close "else it'll snap us". And for Gail her imaginary bear in the picture of the woods was frightening enough for her to mime a scream:

> ...I wouldna gae there wi'oot ---by my sen an' if he rushed outta tha' hole then... [Opens mouth in silent scream] {I wouldn't go there without---by myself and if he rushed out of that hole then...}

Apparently, falling off swings had affected children in each of the three field sites and there were associated memories of being hurt. Beth indicated the black rubber mat under the swings in the picture and said, "This black [points to surface under swings] is for when you fall down then it doesn't hurt you". Sophie knew that it was dangerous to go too high on the swings, whilst Ross and Andrew had both fallen off the swings and hurt themselves.

Falling over was the third aspect of falling talked about by the children. Claire's memory of the pavement near the fire station in Fraserburgh was where she had tripped during the walk and "my leg got scraped", and Patty, looking at one of her photographs, recalled the ice on the road: "The ice puddle! And I walked on it and I didn't fall over but I did fall after that on some ice and hurt my arm. I've got a bruise on it now".

Photograph 11, 11.5.3 Emotional reactions:
The distorted shape of the shadows caused amusement – "Janet's head's all little". *Greta, Drumlithie*

Photograph 12, 11.5.4 Fear and perceived danger:
Child walking over iron grating above a deep drain. *Ross, Drumlithie*

Roads were another source of perceived danger talked about by the children with reference to their photographs and in a way that clearly echoed the words of adults. Sophie insisted that, "…you mustn't walk on the road as it's dangerous and a car could come" and Andrew said, "That's the road and it's got fast cars so you have to be careful there".

The fear of falling – falling in, falling off and falling down – was the fear most commonly ascribed too by the children and was associated with places such as the river, the swings and icy puddles. This fear may be one instilled by parents and carers concerning the need to be careful, and from the personal and painful experience of falling and being hurt.

11.5.5 Summary of affective responses

The affective responses to both direct and indirect experience of place are summarised thus:

- ➢ all the children had personal and individual opinions about place
- ➢ feelings of amusement, fun, boredom, anger and fear were recorded so there was evidence of emotional involvement with places
- ➢ interpretation of the affective responses was undertaken with caution as, for example, boredom may be translated as disinterest or non-comprehension of the task as well as finding a place boring *per se*
- ➢ some children related place to what it offered or afforded
- ➢ danger was perceived in some places, often associated with falling
- ➢ the children displayed an understanding of places and interaction with the environment through their affective responses
- ➢ there are links to existing literature on affective responses to the environment, for example Tuan (1977); Hart (1979); Rodaway (1984); Gibson (1986); Matthews (1992); Aitken (1994); Conway and Pointon (2003)

11.6 Theme 5: Context

In this section context – setting a place in terms whereby it is better understood - is considered as a theme of experience of place. This theme, one that is subjective by

nature due to my personal interpretation of responses made by the children, includes references made largely to situations outside the current experience. By referring to other places or events or people, some of the children appeared to better understand or make sense of first-hand experience of place. It should be noted that drawing upon a web of interconnected references is a complex process and one that, perhaps, very young children are not expected to achieve. In addition, this section also includes reference to place use whereby children interpreted a place by what it offered or afforded, and also takes into account mention of environmental issues such as rubbish and vandalism.

11.6.1 Reference to past experience

During the affective task when the children were shown pictures of places they had not encountered first hand, the strategy sometimes used to help them make sense of the place was to set it in the context of past experience. Places that were generically familiar such as the playground and swings evoked the response that it was local and that they had been there. Will and Tim were both sure they had visited the playground in the picture, and Amy was certain she had been there with her aunt the previous day. It would seem that the children focused on familiar elements of a place and not the background features which, if identified, might have provided clues to the location of the park.

For some children there was a struggle to understand a novel place and set it in the context of their own experience. This is exemplified by a conversation with Matt concerning the picture of a street:

> Matt: This is ----it's a road that goes o'er there [points through window] an'
> if you take it you get to (?) ----you get to (?)
> Sue: What? Where do you get to?
> Matt: D'you ken the way doon tae... {Do you know the way down too...}
> [Becomes frustrated and kicks chair]
> Sue: OK don't worry. It's fine.

Tim in Durham also became frustrated by his inability to express a link with prior experience:

> Tim: This picture is the seaside and these are flowers. I saw some flowers

like this…at the… (agitated). Um yesterday I did.

Sue: Oh OK. Where did you go yesterday? Somewhere with Mummy and Daddy?

Tim: Yeah. I can't think of it.

A little later Tim was looking at the picture of the wood and made the connection, "Yesterday I went to the Botanic Gardens and there's…*that's* where the flowers is". For Claire the cityscape with the bus station seemed to be familiar, although there was nothing comparable in her hometown of Fraserburgh:

Claire: There're buses. Blue.

Sue: It looks quite busy doesn't it?

Claire: Yeah. Do you ---- (?) Mam and me gae {go} on the bus.

Sue: Where do you go?

Claire: Aye well here [points to picture] and to my nan's and other folk an' all.

The strategy of referring to past experiences was not used as much when looking at their own photographs. Ross shared his knowledge and experiences of farming when he studied his photograph of a tractor, and Beth was motivated by her photograph of a ride-on horse at the playground to talk about riding a real horse during a past holiday.

11.6.2 Reference to home

The children often talked about or referred to home which is, of course, the place of particular significance in their lives. Such reference was related to their family, pets, specific rooms, gardens and various activities they engaged in at home. The relative size of other houses and gardens seemed to be important to the children. When looking at one of his photographs of a house in Drumlithie, Andrew said, "My garden's bigger you know and it's got a high bit and then a vegetable patch". Andrew also said there was a den in his garden where he and his brothers played but, "we don't let other people come and we can hide". Claire described the size of her garden by stretching out her arms to convey its size. However she preferred a garden she photographed as it had "things like toys" in it – they were in fact garden ornaments - and she wished her own garden looked like that.

Whilst the issue of home and attachment to home is beyond the scope of this thesis, there are indications that home is a common form of reference in the experience of place. For the children in this research home appeared to be somewhere against which

other places could be compared or measured and, as such, was significant in making sense of place.

11.6.3 Simile

Similes were used by children on a few occasions. During the affective activity, Will described the foreground tree in the picture of the field as like "a plane or like this [spreads arms] and it's a monster now". The tree in Sophie's own photograph was described as "a tree with big branches like arms" (Photograph 13). Beth took a picture of small yellow flowers of which she commented, "They're like little yellow stars" (Photograph 14). These children showed a sophisticated use of language and the ability to compare and then draw parallels with other objects, once again revealing a level of competence not usually associated with pre-school children.

11.6.4 Reference to other children

Reference to other children was a common occurrence and may have contributed as an aid to putting place in context. The children at all three field sites took great pleasure in taking photographs of each other and then talking about them later. For some children it was a key feature of the walk with comments about best friends and activities they liked to do with other children.

Photographs taken by Gail concentrated on the ground and sometimes included children's feet. The feet provided a sense of scale and clues to where the photographs were taken. Gail's picture of a street drain became "Matt's drain" as it included his feet, and a photograph of a garden wall which included Matt's lower leg was remembered because "it's the garden where Matt chucked a steyne{stone}o'er the wall like".

The photographs of other children may have served to position a place in context so, for example, Greta took a photograph of the other children and a member of staff on a bench. Later she recalled the place in detail as where they had a rest, took some more photographs and where one of the children in the photograph had fallen off the end of the bench. With some lack of sympathy, Greta said that Andrew had been messing about and that "aye, and it served him right".

Photograph 13, 11.6.3 Simile:
"A tree with big branches like arms". *Sophie, Durham*

Photograph 14, 11.6.3 Simile:
"They're like yellow stars". *Beth, Durham*

11.6.5 Reference to place use

Place use includes remarks made by the children about what a place offers to them personally or what it is used for in a more general sense such as farming or shopping. The affordance of place was touched upon briefly in 11.5.1, 'Like', as being associated with places children favoured. This section of the chapter expands this further.

The affordance of place, devised by Gibson (1986) and discussed previously in 5.5, is the way in which children experience place in terms of what it offers and provides. This can be a negative or a positive perception and, according to Gibson, is indicative of a child detecting meaning. This also suggests that there is a dynamic relationship between the child and the environment or place. During the affective task, the children interpreted or distinguished some of the pictures of places by referring to their functional significance (Heft 1988; Aitken 1994), or behaviours that occurred there (Genereux et al 1995). The seascape prompted two children to talk about paddling and playing in the sand whilst Beth suggested picnics in the field or by the river. The picture of the wood was seen as a good place for playing and making a den. Andrew said, "I could build a wee den under----you see this? [indicates area under tree]. This'd be a good place and the rain wouldn't get to you." To be able to imagine the functional significance of a place the pre-school child had *not* experienced was unexpected. Research by Hart (1979) and Moore (1986) that involved examining this functional approach only involved older children in direct contact with place and did not consider indirect experiences.

The photographs taken by the children also included places where they envisaged playing. The most obvious was the playground in Durham, but other places had potential. Beth took a photograph (Photograph 15) of a quiet corner which she saw as a place to hide. It was described as "dark but not too dark". Ross's knowledge of farming has already been mentioned. His descriptions were rich in detail and prompted by his photographs. The following was recorded in relation to Photograph 16:

Photograph 15, 11.6.5 Reference to place use:
A place to hide. *Beth, Durham*

Photograph 16, 11.6.5 Reference to place use:
"The field had the trailer wi' the bales on it". *Ross, Drumlithie*

Ross: ...the field had the trailer wi' the bales on it. It were way away [indicates tractor in distance]. Then the tractor came an' it hitched it up and took the trailer to the other field doon {down} there.

Sue: So what's this growing in the field?

Ross: Nay! It's nay *grow*:ing. It's the ald {old} corn that's ....that were harvested away back.

The children also came up with practical suggestions for place use or use of a specific feature of a place e.g. the railings on the footbridge were to stop people falling in; barbed wire on top of a fence was to keep people out of a field and the well at Drumlithie was thought to be for horses and also for people if they were thirsty. According to Will, the high gates at the entrance to a driveway in Durham were to keep the garden in at night (Photograph 17).

11.6.6 Environmental awareness

There were two instances of children revealing environmental concern or awareness. Tim's anger at the rubbish by the River Wear in Durham was cited in 10.5.3. The broken bottle (Photograph 18) was the source of Tim's distress and, according to the staff, was probably in response to a theme about looking after the environment that the nursery had covered recently.

In Fraserburgh Amy commented on an incident that was stimulated by the picture of the playground in the affective task:

Amy: I was here yesterday at the park wi' my auntie an' wi' her friend as well an' we went on all the swings but one of them was broke an' d'you ken why?

Sue: No. What happened?

Amy: Well it wasnae me that broke it. It was broke afore we got there an' the---- [moves arms up and down]

Sue: Chains?

Amy: Aye uhuh. The chain had come off an' it was most like one o' the boys that shouldna be on it anyways. [sighs] Ah me. [shrugs]

The rubbish and the broken swing were examples of damage done by other people. Whilst Tim was clearly angered, Amy showed a resignation that it was simply something that happened.

Photograph 17, 11.6.5 Reference to place use:
Gates to keep a garden in at night. *Will, Durham*

Photograph 18, 11.6.6 Environmental awareness:
A broken bottle on the towpath *Tim, Durham*

11.6.7 Summary of context

The setting of a place in context by reference to other situations is summarised thus:

> ➢ the strategy of referring to past experiences assisted children in understanding their experience of place

> ➢ reference to home was common and often used as a comparison to the place experienced either firsthand or in the affective task

> ➢ similes were used as a sophisticated way of describing a feature of a place

> ➢ reference to other children and places contributed to the experience

> ➢ there was evidence of environmental awareness

> ➢ perceived behaviours in a place contributed to understanding place

> ➢ there are links to existing literature concerning place affordance e.g. Gibson (1986); Aitken (1994); Genereux et al (1995)

11.7 Theme 6: Imagination

The use of imagination is one way that children begin to explore their world and make sense of it. Places can be replicated or invented through imitative, creative or fantasy play. In this research, imaginative interpretations of places pictured in the affective activity and during the walks were stimulated by a variety of factors. This part of chapter 10 considers imagined animals together with local folklore, traditional stories and stories constructed by the children themselves. Imagination provided particularly rich and inventive descriptions in a way that Cobb (1977:15) describes as adding "form and novelty" to the environment. Meanwhile, Hart (1979) feels that the ability to use imagination in connection to places is one often lost to adults.

11.7.1 Animals

Places that excited the children's imaginations tended to involve water in which creatures were thought to live. Fish were believed to live in the pond and river in Durham, together with crocodiles and snakes. Will suggested these creatures were in the pond as he perceived it was deep and thus capable of concealing large animals. Will's story about them is explored more fully in 11.7.3. Tim also thought it likely that large fish inhabited the pond and there were also spiders and other "creepy-crawlies". Tim's drawing of spiders in the pond (A3) was accompanied by the following dialogue:

Tim: This is a spider. See? One, two…eight legs. [adds legs to drawing]
       And it's going into the pond. It's a very----it's a really big spider.
Sue: It's almost as big as the pond.
Tim: You see this? [draws another spider] It's another one but not as big
       really. It lives on the other bit of the pond and doesn't come out.

A spider also featured in Matt's drain along with a "growling beastie" that was apparently difficult to see as it was usually hiding. This perception of unknown depth and darkness associated with water was the most likely scenario to prompt imagined animals.

11.7.2 Traditional stories and folklore

Two of the children in Drumlithie demonstrated their knowledge of local folklore and a traditional story in response to features seen during the walk through the village. Andrew's interest and imagination was captured by the story of Drumlithie steeple. This construction – a tall, narrow spire – houses a bell that was last rung at the end of the working day during the Nineteenth Century. Local lore has it that the villagers were so proud of their steeple that they picked it up and carried it to a shelter whenever it rained. Andrew took a photograph of the steeple and also one of the visitor information board (Photographs 19 and 20). He explained:

Andrew: [points to notice board in photo] It's about the steeple and it's
           writing on it. And there's the picture of when it rains and it's a
           man carrying it to stop it getting wet.
Sue: But how can you carry it? It's enormous. It must weigh tons
           and tons.
Andrew: [shrugs] You get lots of people. But not now. A long time ago.
Sue: Oh right. So if it rains today then we won't have to go and
           help?
Andrew: [jumps up and down] No *no*! *We* don't have to carry it. It was a
           long, long time ago!

Andrew went on to explain why the steeple had been built and later demonstrated how it was built using building blocks. He finally drew the steeple as seen in A7, explaining that the vertical line on the outside was the bell rope. Greta also drew her perception of the steeple (A6).

The action of Jack Frost – the personification of frost – was of great interest to Patty in Drumlithie. Clearly believing he was a real entity, she told the story of how he had

Photograph 19, 11.7.2 Traditional stories and folklore:
The top of Drumlithie steeple. *Andrew, Drumlithie*

Photograph 20, 11.7.2 Traditional stories and folklore:
Drumlithie steeple visitor notice board. *Andrew, Drumlithie*

made the frost and the ice. According to Patty, Jack Frost visited overnight and went "nip-nip with his long fingers and "nippity on a leaf so there's all ice on it". She went on to explain that he did nips all over the grass before flying off, and demonstrated this in her drawing (A5). Her first attempt to show the frost on the grass with a white crayon was unsatisfactory so she used a black pen instead. Patty was also keen on fairy stories and the picture of the wood in the affective task was the stimulus for a tale about a princess, fairies and a witch who lived there. The princess, who had a "really, really pretty dress" lived in the woods and one day the witch came to take her away, but "the fairies live here and they protect the princess". This explanation was followed by Patty dressing up and acting out the story with two other girls, and seemed to be based on an amalgam of traditional fairy tales.

11.7.3 Developing a story

Stories that evolved from experiences of place were almost exclusively associated with real or imaginary animals. In section 11.7.1 there was mention of Will's belief that there were crocodiles and snakes in the pond. The crocodiles – of which Will was clearly frightened – snapped at people if they went too near. During the walk he stood back from the pond and was anxious that everybody was careful:

> You see under the water and it's *very* deep and there's the crocodile. It comes and it goes like this [hinges his hands and snaps them] and it goes snap. So we'd better not go any closer else it'll snap us.

Will's anxiety was such that he pulled a couple of children away from the edge of the pond and managed to frighten one of the other children. Will's friend, Tim, took a more pragmatic view of life in the pond, but was still not completely sure that there was not a crocodile in it. He asked, "It's only fishes. Crocs aren't there are they?"

In the affective activity the picture of the wood, or more specifically a dark hole in the wood, led to Gail's story of a creature living in the woods. The creature, or "critter" as Gail termed it, was possibly a bear which might or might not have been a nice bear. Either way, Gail managed to frighten herself and, even with reassurance that there was not a bear there, she remained unconvinced and was sure the bear ate small children.

A rather different story emerged from a discussion about the deep hole seen during the Drumlithie walk. The boys, Ross and Andrew, were particularly intrigued by what lay at the bottom of the hole. Ross told Andrew that there were dead bodies at the bottom and was sure he could see a leg. Later, during the semi-structured interview with Andrew he informed me that,

Andrew:	I'm not sure if there were really people's bodies in it...down there. Maybe if they had been very, very, *ve:ry* bad. I *told* him [Ross] that if there were dead bodies there then they'd turn into soil cos that's what happens when you die. Your body turns into soil. Did you know that's what happens? I wouldn't go in there but maybe if I was a bee.
Sue:	A bee?
Andrew:	Uhuh as I could fly out.

Here we see the range of Andrew's imagination. There also appears to be an attempt to reassure himself that only certain people might be consigned to the hole – clearly very bad people. The leap of creative imagination to becoming a bee that could fly out of the hole is remarkable, yet Andrew also brings an understanding that bodies decompose over time. This is truly an attempt to make sense of a place through the use of imagination combined with rational understanding.

11.7.4 Summary of imagination

The theme of imagination has shown how some pre-school children were stimulated by places to develop exiting and new ideas. It is summarised as follows:

- ➢ animals – usually associated with water – were significant features of the children's imagination
- ➢ local folklore was talked about by one child
- ➢ the personification of frost was taken as a real entity by one child
- ➢ some children told their own stories relating to places they saw
- ➢ the origin of imaginative thoughts expressed by the children in relation to place is, potentially, worthy of further investigation
- ➢ there is extensive literature that relates to children's imagination and storytelling, but little that relates to this research in a direct sense, although

Cobb (1977) takes the view that imagination is vital in structuring a child's understanding of the environment

11.8 Theme 7: Water, on the ground, speed and movement

Young children's fascination with water is well-known and early years centres cater for this interest by providing water trays. It was also a feature of place - as indirectly and directly experienced - that drew a great deal of interest.

11.8.1 Water features

Of the 11 pictures of places in the affective activity, water featured in 4 of them in the form of a stream, the sea, a harbour and a river. As a feature, water was easily by the children and was liked, it seemed, purely because it was water. Indeed, the pictures that featured water were favourites for half the children.

For the children in Durham water features were both the most photographed aspects of place and also the most featured aspect in artwork. With the river a dominant aspect of the walk this was unsurprising, and the Wear appeared in many of the photographs. The pond, a dark algae-covered area of water (roughly 8'x 5') in the grounds of the School of Education, also provoked considerable interest. Will, whose story of the crocodile was described in 11.7.3, took Photograph 21. He found the algae on the surface of the water strange because it "looks just like grass but it won't keep you up if you go on it". Will threw a small stick into the water and he seemed surprised that it floated on the surface – "It's too small that's why it's on top". Sophie's picture of the River Wear (Photograph 22) was selected for inclusion because of her interesting explanation of where the flood water had gone. She also drew the river using vigorous pen strokes that evoked the fast speed of the water (A2). The dialogue was recorded during the walk:

Sophie:	You know the water was up----all over the path and up [holds arms above head] cos there was so much rain and that makes the river do that.
Sue:	So where do you think it's gone---all the water?
Sophie:	Because the rain's stopped and then it does this [makes narrow shape with hands] and the water goes down there [points downstream].
Sue:	It's left quite a mess. All the mud there and the plants have been knocked down.

Photograph 21, 11.8.1 Water features:
The pond. *Will, Durham*

Photograph 22, 11.8.1 Water features:
The River Wear. *Sophie, Durham*

Sophie: I think it's going to rain again and the water will---the river will do it all again.

Both Will and Sophie actively tried to make sense of how water behaved in different circumstances. This fascination with water was also present in Drumlithie where the water features encountered during the walk included a burn, a ditch with running water, a well or spring and the deep drain with water running in it some way below. The last feature inspired Ross's drawing of underground pipes (discussed previously in 11.3.4) and Andrew's description of the decay of dead bodies (11.7.3). Photograph 23, taken by Patty, shows the spring that fills the water trough. The children referred to it as the well and apparently there was a well at this site some years ago. The variable flow from the pipe and the sound of the water transfixed the children and this allure was then transferred to water running in a ditch alongside the lane. At times the water went underground and Ross's photograph (Photograph 24) shows one of these points, "I dinna ken {I don't know} where it's gan {gone} but maybes it's a deep tunnel that takes it under the steynes {stones}".

Water was not a major feature of the walk in Fraserburgh, but it was still possible to see the children's compulsion to investigate it if they could. A dirty puddle attracted great interest (Photograph 25), the temptation to jump into it too great for Matt. All four children took a picture of it. An empty pond in a garden was the source of comment by Amy and Gail both of whom wished it was full of water with, said Amy, "a wee bridge that I can walk o'er and play wi' the water" (Photograph 26).

Comments about water during the affective task drew some comments usually in the form of identifying the water feature be it a river, the sea or a small stream. It would appear that for young children water is an easily recognisable, fascinating and important feature of place.

11.8.2 Ground features

This section of the chapter examines features the children saw on the ground to which, of course, they are at closer proximity than adults. Mention has been made of the children's attention to detail especially with regards to shapes and patterns in 11.3.1 and 11.3.3, and this ability to notice details of place is expanded in this section.

Photograph 23, 11.8.1 Water features:
The water trough. *Patty, Drumlithie*

Photograph 24, 11.8.1 Water features:
Water in the burn as it disappears underground. *Ross, Drumlithie*

Photograph 25, 11.8.1 Water features:
Puddle. *Matt, Fraserburgh*

Photograph 26, 11.8.1 Water features:
The empty pond. *Amy, Fraserburgh*

The affective task did not seem to stimulate the children's interest in ground features and little mention was made of anything specific. However the children's first-hand experience of place during the walks produced a very marked interest in what lay beneath their feet. There was a variety of comments regarding the ground ranging from observations about leaves and mud to finer details such as pavement cracks, the writing on manhole covers and the surface of the road. The children chose very specific features on the ground to photograph. Ross's picture of tractor wheel marks (Photograph 27) was taken as he had a great interest in anything related to farming. He spent some time examining the prints and surmised that the wheels were "awful big". In Durham the mud left on the towpath after the river flooded provided a talking point and is seen in Sophie's photograph (Photograph 28). For Sophie the mud was "runny stuff that stuck to my boots". All four children spent some time investigating the mud with sticks and making footprints in it.

The children in Fraserburgh took more photographs of the ground than the children at the other field sites. Hypothetically, this may have been because there were not as many larger scale places of interest or distinction. Gail, who said she took her photographs of the ground "cos it's near", took a variety of pictures including the road surface, the pavement, grass, soil, and children's feet. A photograph of a road surface was taken by Gail and during the semi-structured interview the following exchange was recorded:

> Sue: Tell me about this one. I'm not sure what it is.
> Gail: [turns photo round] It's *this* way. On the road. [Long pause] Aye, it's a ---there's a spot. It's a spot of--- (?) spot of a dry bit.
> Sue: Oh, OK yeah I see. A spot of dry. How funny. I wonder why just that bit's dry.
> Gail: [shrugs] Cos it is. Don't know. That's Matt's shoes an' maybe Claire's. They're looking at it too.

11.8.3 Speed and movement

There were two aspects of place that were linked with speed and movement – water and vehicles. The water in the River Wear, Durham was described variously as "going round"; "it goes quite fast today"; "going fast in circles". The last comment, made by Sophie, related to the eddying effect seen from the footbridge. In Drumlithie the burn

Photograph 27, 11.8.2 Ground features:
"Awful big" tractor wheel marks. *Ross, Drumlithie*

Photograph 28, 11.8.2 Ground features:
"Runny stuff" or mud on the towpath. *Sophie, Durham*

was also described as fast. Greta talked about the well and the pipe with the movement of the water as, "it goes----it comes out down that pipe bit and then out of there and into that [the trough] then some of it goes over the top and out again".

Any children who took photographs that included moving cars or vans invariably described them as moving very fast. In Fraserburgh, Matt was the most interested in vehicles and his set of photographs featured several cars and vans. Whilst on the walk Matt compared the cars he saw to his father's car and gave his opinion whether it was a "guid car" or a "rubbish car". During the artwork Matt chose to draw a car that was moving very quickly (A12) –

> I'm doing a car an' it's like the one in my picture. An' it's gang {going} real fast an' that's why the wheels gae {go} like this [draws circles rapidly for the wheels]. An' the mannie [man] driving it is driving it fast as he can. You see the wheels here? It's a sport's car like tha' I saw an' it's --- big engine so tha's why it's fast an' all.

11.8.4 Summary of water, on the ground, speed and movement

From this theme that covers water, ground and movement, the following can be surmised:

> ➤ water in any form was an aspect of place – experienced both indirectly and directly - that was of particular interest to the children in this research
> ➤ some children paid close attention to features on the ground that adults may take for granted and which, for the children, are closer to them in the physical sense
> ➤ interest in playing with water and playing on the ground is well documented, but there is little with regards to pre-school children's recognition of these features within the context of place
> ➤ the movement of water and of vehicles was observed by some children

11.9 Theme 8: Other key issues

This theme includes the children's experiences of place that were deemed too important to omit, yet could not be categorised within the existing themes. It is not, however, a repository for the more random or unusual experiences of place. Rather it

considers, in the first two sub-themes, the opposing ideas of ways of seeing or perspective which contrasts with the non-recognition of or 'not seeing' place. The third sub-theme deals with places in which children were particularly interested as this presents further indications of how place was experienced. Finally, unexpected or unusual findings are presented as they contribute further to the unique perceptions and understandings of individual children.

11.9.1 Near and far: issues of perspective

The choice the children made about what to photograph had minimal input from adults present during the walk. In this way the children chose to photograph place from a variety of perspectives or foci. The camera could be used either as binoculars so that distant features at the macro-level were framed in the viewfinder or as magnifiers so close-ups could be taken of near objects at the micro-level.

Each child tended to have a variety of perspectives of place from landscapes to close-ups, with some children showing a propensity for one or the other. For example the majority of Gail's photographs were close-ups of features on the ground; Patty chose the details of ice and frost whilst, in contrast, Ross's landscape photographs featured farming activities. Once developed some photographs showed perspectives that reflected the problems of fitting in a large object. Andrew's attempt to photograph the whole of Drumlithie steeple resulted in just a small part of it being captured on film. He said that "it was all I could fit in cos it was so big and now it looks like it's falling and I didn't get the bell".

11.9.2 Non-recognition of places

All the children had difficulty recognising places in the affective activity, some more than others. This may be explained by the range of individual experiences of place. Some children have had more experience in terms of living in a more varied environment such as Durham, and/or may have travelled more. Thus some of the places that featured in the pictures were beyond the children's experience and as such did not make sense to them. The picture that was the most problematic was the tunnel with the rubbish bins under it. The elements of this picture appeared to confuse the children.

Whilst some children made no comments about a picture, others attempted to describe what they could see. For example, in the picture of the harbour the boats were easily recognisable, but the sense of wholeness of place was absent. As has been described in previous parts of this chapter colour, shape or the number of objects were extracted from a place, but it was difficult to establish how much the child really understood about the place as a whole. It could be suggested that children of this age are unable to understand how the elements of a place can add up to a single entity or that they are unable employ a single descriptive word such as harbour or town that effectively embraces the totality of a landscape.

The children's non-recognition of places in their own photographs was not surprising – after all, adults can have the same problem – but it was most noticeable if the focus of the picture was of a very small detail of place. The immediate reaction to this was denial that the picture was theirs with Amy initially convinced that she had the wrong set of photographs.

Worthy of mention is a photograph taken by Tim. Photograph 29 shows a view across the grounds of the School of Education towards Durham cathedral. Tim could not explain this photograph and did not recognise the cathedral – in fact he said the photograph was boring. The question that remains unanswered is why he chose to take the photograph at all.

11.9.3 Places of special interest

Each child had a place or a feature of a place that was of special interest or significance to him or her. This served to emphasise the personal and individual responses to place. It was the special places that each child talked about more and often chose to draw. A place of special interest seemed to have one or more of the following characteristics:

> distinctive shape, pattern or colour
> reminded child of a similar place previously experienced
> was perceived as exciting
> offered play opportunities
> fed into personal interest

➢ captured imagination

One example that effectively includes most of the above was the interest Claire showed in the Fraserburgh fire station. Claire's photograph (Photograph 30) shows the fire station on the right. Later, Claire and I had the following conversation:

Sue:	What can you see in this photograph Claire?
Claire:	Them red doors are the fire station.
Sue:	I wonder why they're red.
Claire:	Cos it tells you it's where the fire engines are and we went there wi' nursery for a visit an' we saw them. We was let up into the engines wi' the firemen.
Sue:	Wow! Sounds great.
Claire:	Aye it was. An' my brother has a fire engine tha's got --- tha's makes a noise like the real engine. Mind his is only a toy like. But d'you know what? Fireman Sam doesna live there not really cos he's only in a book and on the telly. He's not real.
...	...
Sue:	So what happens when there's a fire? What do the engines do?
Claire:	Well they come ootta {out of} them doors real fast an' gae awa' tae where the fire is an' the firemen take oot their ladders and the water goes all over the fire.

This dialogue includes reference to colour, previous experience, reference to home, a character in a book and on television, and imagination. Claire used all these resources to help her make sense of her experience.

11.9.4 The unexpected and the unusual

These are summarised below on a child-by-child basis. The aspects of place experience were selected because they highlight the unique experiences of individual children:

➢ Will's drawing of the bend in the River Wear; his story of the crocodiles in the pond; his photograph of rectangular bricks behind a car

➢ Beth's drawing of a rainbow that was seen during the walk; her comparison of yellow flowers to stars

➢ Sophie's photographs of the footbridge railings and the shadows

➢ Tim's anger at the rubbish on the towpath

➢ Ross's drawing of underground pipes; his detailed knowledge of farming

Photograph 29, 11.9.2 Non-recognition of places:
Unrecognised landscape. *Tim, Durham*

Photograph 30, 11.9.3 Places of special interest:
The fire station. *Claire, Fraserburgh*

> Andrew's fascination with Drumlithie steeple and his knowledge about how bodies decay underground; his awareness of the functional significance of a wood where he could build a den

> Patty's interest in Jack Frost and the associated detailed photographs of ice and frost

> Greta's fascination with shadows

> Gail's focus on the ground and her search for detail

> Claire's memory of her visit to the fire station

> Matt's knowledge and interest in cars

> Amy's zigzag roof tops

11.9.5 Summary of other key issues

Section 10.9 has covered a variety of experiences of place that were included as they were judged to contribute further to answering the research question. The main points that have arisen include:

> the children's perspectives of place, close-up and distant, were revealed through their photographs and associated comments

> some places were not recognised by the children

> it was difficult to assess how much of a landscape children understood

> the individual preferences for a place were defined by certain characteristics such as colour or affordance

> the children had the capacity to surprise (and perhaps question adult assumptions) with unexpected comments about places, experienced indirectly and directly

11.10 Concluding comments

This chapter has taken each of the eight themes of place and described in detail the place experiences of the children involved in this research. Extracts from conversations and semi-structured interviews were included together with photographs and artwork. From the individual themes and from taking a holistic view of the experience of place several points emerge. These are briefly considered here and are discussed more fully in Chapter 12, 'Pre-school children's experience of place'.

The variety of experiences of place was extensive and, furthermore, personal and individual to each child. The children experienced place in a deep and direct manner rather than seeing place as a background for events the way some adults do (Sebba 1991). The children's perceptions were expressed through speech, facial expressions and body language, through their photographs and artwork. This is contrary to Aitken's (1988:70) view that children 'possess limited repertoires for expressing their feelings about the world'. Whilst the themes enable understanding of the children's experience of place it should be made clear that not only do the themes/sub-themes overlap in some instances e.g. the sub-themes 'darkness' and 'fear and perceived danger', but it also appears that the children experienced place on a range of different levels or domains simultaneously. An example of this was the deep drain in Drumlithie which Andrew described using fluid, interwoven ideas that included pragmatic notions of decaying bodies, imagined reasons for the bodies being there and that being a bee would enable him to fly in and out.

Each of the 12 children had a different perspective and a different way of experiencing place so that even in Fraserburgh where it could be suggested that the landscape was relatively uniform, each of the four children experienced place on a distinctly personal level. An aspect that emerged was the physical size of the children and their relative proximity to the ground. This affected their experiences in that they observed the micro details around them such as the surface of the road and the movement of water, details often taken for granted by adults who tend to concentrate more on the macro-environment. Equally, some of the children found landscapes difficult to interpret and 'failed' to see the broader picture or isolate features that adults might find significant.

The children actively looked for clues in the environment to help them make sense of the encounter. This was coupled with the existing knowledge owned by these pre-school children with regards to variables such as colour and shape; his or her prior experiences, specific interests and likes and dislikes as well as an existing geographical understanding and a geographical vocabulary. To this some children exhibited an emotional involvement in place. This ranged from anger to pleasure, from boredom to fear.

There were, then, multiple ways these 12 pre-school children experienced place, which is itself multifaceted and multidimensional. It would seem that there was so much information to be processed that there had to be some sort of selection process to make it manageable (Ittelson 1973). This may have been achieved by breaking down a place into manageable units or perhaps classifying features according to colour or what a place offered or afforded. There then followed a process of reconstruction whereby a place became akin to a framework that was personally meaningful to the child. There was evidence of children favouring one particular strategy i.e. the use of an objective approach such as shape identification or, in a more subjective manner, comparing a new place to one experienced previously. This assignment of meaning to place was a dynamic, evaluative process (Aitken and Ginsberg 1988) that entailed a variety of interrelated perceptual, cognitive and affective responses.

This research has provided an indication of how very young children experience the lived world in physical and psychological ways and by doing so has demonstrated their competencies and strengths. It is, as Hart (1979) found in his research, a very personal process, *so* personal that elements of place such as a pond or a puddle hold meaning pertinent only to the one child. This research also echoes Matthews' (1992) belief that different places are imbued with different meanings by individuals. In the next chapter the findings of this research are discussed in depth, together with the implications and potential contribution they could make to educational research.

Chapter 12

Pre-school Children's Experience of Place

The point of research is to discover things.

Freebody (2003:218)

12.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the findings of this research endeavour. It considers these findings in the context of existing research and suggests how they may contribute to ways of thinking about pre-school children's experience of place. Discovering things, as the opening quote propounds, is the goal of research and this, most certainly, has been the impetus behind this study. With a small number of children involved in the research process there is, however, a sense of caution about extrapolating the results or making generalisations. Nevertheless, it is believed that the quality of the material does lend itself to tentative suggestions concerning pre-school children's experience of place. To this end a model has been devised that suggests how place was experienced by the 12 children in this research. It is presented in part 12.6.

The opening part of this chapter, 12.2 'In the first place', revisits the original objectives of this research in order to remind the reader of the main issues that drove this research. 12.3, 'Finding places' is an examination of the empirical findings; both the indirect and direct experiences of place. The subject of 12.4, 'Building places', is the manner in which the children in the three field sites made sense of place and there is a consideration of the components and constructs that constitute these places. In 12.5, 'The place of this research', there is a discussion of where the findings sit within existing research and whether this research confirms findings in other studies. There is consideration of the 'New dimensions' offered by this study in 12.6. The following section, 12.7, 'Theoretical places' reflects upon the validity of the framework suggested in Chapter 5, and then presents a model that has been constructed as a representation of what happened in this research regarding the children and their experiences.

In 12.8, 'The limitations of this research', there is an account of the restrictions to accessing the experiences of the children. 'Ways of looking' in 12.9 is an honest assessment of the research design – ways in which it was successful and issues that need addressing. 12.10, 'Place matters', discusses the significance of place as the object of enquiry and, if so, to whom. In 'Future places', 12.11, there is a consideration of research that could extend the findings, and also thoughts about other research directions that would add to knowledge about pre-school children and their place experiences. Finally, 12.12 'Future places', draws this thesis to a close.

12.2 In the first place: original objectives

In Chapter 7 the focus and objectives of this research were described in detail and it is pertinent at this point to revisit these intentions. The focus was derived from several factors including personal interest; concern surrounding the underestimation of pre-school children's geographic competencies; that this area of children's learning and development is not adequately understood and, finally, that the experience of place for children of pre-school age is a relatively under-researched topic. The research question – 'What are pre-school children's experiences of place?' – evolved from consideration of these factors.

It was not felt at any stage of the research process that the objectives needed revising - they were neither too broad nor too narrowly focused and restrictive. In fact, they provided a good degree of latitude which enabled a more flexible approach to the research design. The objectives also served to delineate and bound the research successfully. The main aim of this study was, of course, to answer the research question. Imbedded within this question a set of objectives were identified. The objectives were grouped into two thematic areas and these are discussed herewith:

- **Experience of place**

The first objective comprised exploring and building rich descriptions of how pre-school children experience place, and to identify and attempt explication of any patterns of experience that emerged. This included both indirect and direct experiences of place. These objectives are considered in sections 12.3, 'Finding places' and 'Building places' in 12.4.

Further objectives included contributing to existing knowledge concerning pre-school children's experience of place, and to set this research within the context of existing research. A thorough search revealed that very little exists in the way of directly related studies and thus this research is set in a multi-disciplinary context and is contextualised by being embedded in a range of theories. 12.5, 'The place of this research' provides an appraisal of this thesis in the context of existing work, followed by thoughts on findings that suggest new dimensions to understandings about the experience of place in 12.6. The suggested model of pre-school children's experience of place in 12.7 is predicated upon the experiences of the 12 children who took part in the fieldwork and, as such, is not viewed as a model that can be applied to wider populations. However, and such limitations are described in 12.8, it is felt that this is an effective way of demonstrating what *could* be happening during this phenomenon.

- **Research design**

The problem that required addressing was how to enable the children to externalise the experience of place. Thus the objective here was to use research techniques that enabled the children to express their ideas and perceptions of place, and to employ an approach that preserved their voices. A flexible and reflexive approach was required and thus the decision was taken to set it within the interpretive paradigm. The effectiveness of this approach, together with problems identified, is discussed in 12.9 'Ways of looking'.

12.3 Finding places: the children's experiences

In this part of the chapter there is a consideration of the empirical findings. There are two aspects of the children's experience of place that will be discussed here. Firstly, the indirect experience which the children encountered during the affective activity and secondly, the direct interaction with place that occurred during the walks. Following this there are reflections upon the wealth of information that the children encountered and dealt with during their experiences of place and how this information was used to help their understandings.

12.3.1 Indirect experience of place

In essence, the affective activity sought to discover the children's opinions about

place by encouraging them to enter into a dialogue about the 11 pictures of place they were shown. The children showed preferences and dislikes for certain places, with some of them able to express reasons behind their choices and some of them able to choose their favourite and least liked places. The level of reasoning was sometimes unexpected. Their responses were not only verbal but, in addition, facial expressions and body language were used to indicate feelings. This ability to voice and convey non-verbal opinions and reasons was significant, not only in terms of the progress of the research, but also as it discredited claims by some researchers that pre-school children are generally unable to express themselves effectively.

It appeared, from analysing the findings in this activity, that the children were employing tactics or strategies of some sort to help them make sense of the places in the pictures. The children identified discrete and often very small features in the pictures so, for instance, they picked out colours and shapes, and counted items. On a different level some of the children were able to think about a place in terms of its reality whereby they projected what it would be like to be in the place in the photograph, such as being cold at the seaside, having fun on the swings or, indeed, falling off a swing and hurting oneself. It emerged that these projections were based on prior experiences and with responses like these it became increasingly clear at this stage in the fieldwork that the children were using sophisticated thinking to make sense of place.

Conversely, some children had difficulties making sense of some places in the pictures to the extent they appeared not to understand what they were looking at. The problem may lie with the selection of photographs which, in retrospect were poor choices on my behalf especially as they included confusing perspectives. So, for example, the rubbish bins under the archway and the photograph of a shopping mall were particularly problematic as they were taken from unusual viewpoints. Thus there may be a correlation between this factor and the high number of children who disliked these two photographs. Speculation aside, it was clear that certain photographs proved challenging to the children and evoked either no comment or a 'don't know'.

What emerged strongly during this activity was that the children were showing marked individuality in their responses to place. This aspect is of significance for

early learning in that it cannot be assumed that pre-school children respond in the same way to indirect experiences of place. What one child understands from a picture or image of place may be very different from another child's and this may have implications for learning about place through second-hand means such as through books or images on a computer screen.

12.3.2 Direct experience of place

The 12 sets of photographs - taken with very little adult intervention - were individual and unique to each child. On the macro-scale, in Durham and Drumlithie where the scenery was varied and offered different landscapes and place features, individuality was expected. What was surprising was the variation between the 4 children's sets of photographs taken in Fraserburgh. This town is a more uniform, grey, built-up landscape and did not seem, at least from my perspective, to offer much scope. Whilst many photographs pictured buildings and the ground, the 4 Fraserburgh children also sought instances where the uniformity was broken up – a spiky plant, the red doors of the fire station, a muddy puddle, a garden full of ornaments. There was, it seemed, an active attempt to find something that contrasted or stood out from the surroundings even if these features were unremarkable in themselves.

That the nature of the landscape reflected the choice of what to photograph was also evidenced in the other two settings. The open rural surroundings of Drumlithie resulted in more shots of the landscape, whilst in Durham the children's most popular places to photograph were two water elements which were prominent features of the walk, namely the pond and the river. What also transpired was that it was presumptuous to assume that the place I saw in a photograph was the place that the children saw. This was exemplified by William's picture of a parked car in Durham. It became apparent during the interview that it was the shape of the bricks in the wall behind the car that was the focus of his attention rather than the car. A further issue worthy of consideration is that photographs of place that ostensibly make no sense to adults may, in fact, be meaningful to the child. A case in point was a photograph taken by Gail in Fraserburgh. Whilst I saw just a road surface, Gail had focussed on a 'spot of a dry bit' (an area no bigger than 10cm diameter) which stood out in contrast to the dark grey of wet tarmac.

What can be gathered from the subject of the photographs? In simple terms the children took pictures of 'what was there'. But this implies a lack of thought or an element of randomness. There was, it seems, a level of deliberation about the subject of their pictures and in some cases, such as Andrew in Drumlithie, an extraordinary degree of care taken with the photograph. Andrew's fascination with the village steeple manifested itself through a series of photographs of the steeple and the information board beside it. This very personal interest in a specific feature was shown by most of the children, not necessarily to the degree shown by Andrew, but present nevertheless.

12.3.3 Summarising indirect and direct experiences of place

There are some aspects of indirect and direct experiences of place that have features in common, in that the children in this research:

- ➤ had preferences for certain places
- ➤ had dislikes for certain places
- ➤ could express likes and dislikes non-verbally and verbally
- ➤ had problems interpreting or making sense of some places
- ➤ used strategies to try and make sense of a complex world such as referring to prior experience; identifying elements of a place that were more familiar such as colour and shape, or objects/elements that were already meaningful to them
- ➤ showed individual variation and personal responses to place
- ➤ showed imaginative responses to place

More specifically the following may be added:

- ➤ some children had specific interests in specific places
- ➤ some children sought out aspects of place that contrasted to the surroundings
- ➤ it was easier for a child to relate to a place and make sense of a place through direct experience rather than indirect

In the next part of this chapter I discuss how, in the context of this research, the children's experiences can be viewed as constructs built from component parts of place.

12.4 Building places: themes and constructs of experience

In 1971 Goodey suggested that to make sense of a place we have to 'interpret the various components (colours, movement, form etc)' (p.4). Canter (1977) reiterated this proposal by stating that place experience is 'the putting together of the various component parts of place' (p.148). It was upon this premise that the composition of the experiences the children had was initially considered. The nature of the transactions with place had an emergent and constructive quality in that it seemed that the children extracted the parts of place, or the components of place, that made sense to them. These components were sometimes objective in nature such as identifying colour or shape, or were subjective so that the child imposed meaning by expressing what they sensed or felt about a place. As such, there was no predictability about the way the children appeared to experience place as there seemed to be individual transactions with place which could involve any combination of components.

These components, identified in the data analysis, were organised into 8 themes, themes that, it was believed, were both illuminating and meaningful. The notion of ascribing themes to the experiences of place was inspired by Hart (1979) and later Moore (1986) and some of their themes or similar themes were used to make sense of the data generated here.

Themes were also derived from literature that emphasised the affective responses to place (Sobel 1990; Chawla 1992; Malinowski and Thurber 1996) and, although this did not pertain directly to pre-school children, it did emphasise that liking and disliking places and showing emotional reactions to place are important factors of place experience. This theme was noted during the affective activity and later emerged as a theme from the children's experiences during the walks. A further aspect of place experience is affordance which is discussed by several writers including Hart (1979), Gibson (1986), Heft (1988) Matthews (1992), Aitken (1994), and Genereux et al (1995). Once again this concept, whereby places are understood in terms of what they can offer, is usually related to older children but was found to be an aspect of this research with pre-schoolers. Like them, these younger children sometimes viewed places as sites where, for example, they could play, have a picnic or build a den. Heft terms this seeking of affordance 'experiential primacy' (p.31)

highlighting its importance and it would seem that even very young children have a strong inclination to view places in this way.

Of further note are Hart's themes of dangerous or scary places equivalent to the sub-theme of fear and perceived danger in the affective responses theme. His description of fear of dark places which stimulate imagination was seen, for example, in the responses given by several children to a dark drain and dark water, with the common belief that something frightening existed in the darkness. Another element of place that Hart, and also Bernaldez et al (1987), noted was the power of water to intrigue children. Water was a prominent feature of interest in many ways and was one of the strongest themes in this research. Water seems to fascinate children of all ages and for pre-school children is a particular favourite not just outside, but in play activities inside the nursery or playgroup.

Thus, by reference to the existing literature and the findings in this research, themes were derived that were not only an effective way of organising the data, but also a powerful means of revealing the different component parts or building blocks that the children used to construct understandings of place. From these components that constitute some of the experiences of place, 3 larger constructs have been derived. These reflect the main essences of these constructs and are presented in Table 12.1.

Components of place (derived from themes)	Essence of construct	Construct of place
- colour, darkness and shadow - shape, pattern and number - water, ground, speed and movement	Aspects of a place that the child recognises	Objective and specific features
- reference to home - reference to other places - similes	Aspects of a place that make sense by recourse to prior experience	Frames of reference
- sensory responses - affective responses - emotional responses - imagination	Aspects of a place that evoke personal feelings	Aspects of self

Table 12.1: *From components to constructs: building place understandings*

Arguably, this table neatens the experience of place which is, by its nature, an unwieldy, variable and complex phenomenon. I feel, however, that in order to make sense of these experiences it is justified and it helps towards an appreciation of both the ways preschoolers think about the world and the manner in which the information is processed.

12.4.1 Too much information?

Places offer a vast amount of information. When children directly experience a place they are bombarded with impressions, issues of scale, sensory messages; a three dimensional image of extraordinary complexity. Whilst there may be some aspects that are simply incomprehensible to a pre-school child, there also has to be an element of redundancy so that some particulars of place are not processed. The sheer volume of information that confronts the child could be overwhelming if it were not for the adoption of coping strategies, whereby features are selected through effortful processing (Gärling et al 1984). There is, too, a suggestion of Bronfenbrenner's (1993) theory here in that the children could be exhibiting the selective sensitivity he described. This is a process whereby individuals 'tune in' to certain aspects of the environment so, by inference, there are going to be many features that are not processed.

There are, then, some limitations to the experience of place imposed not by a child's lack of competence, but by the sheer volume of information that he or she encounters. Being aware of this should be a consideration in assessing the findings of this research and should, perhaps, be borne in mind as a facet of pre-school children's experience of place.

12.4.2 Commonalities between children and field settings

Across the three field sites in Durham, Drumlithie and Fraserburgh and notwithstanding the differences in landscape, there were findings that exhibit commonality of experience. The following points demonstrate this:

 ➢ the children exhibited personal and very individual ways of experiencing place
 ➢ place was experienced in a deep and direct manner
 ➢ the children were experts in their own right with a range of skills and strategies

> ➤ the micro-level of place was of particular interest with competence shown through the observation of fine details

> ➤ the children shared several components and constructs of place

> ➤ there were difficulties experienced by children in all three settings with regards to making sense of novel places

> ➤ the children revealed, through their choice of what to photograph, places which were of specific interest to them

> ➤ interest in water was a recurrent theme

> ➤ fear of falling was a theme that stood out most strongly across the three field sites – falling over, falling in and falling down

12.5 The place of this research

As stated previously, research into pre-school children's experience of place has not been an explicit focus of academic enquiry. Thus the empirical base is somewhat restricted to work in related fields, for example that concerned with the mapping skills and wayfinding abilities of young children. With these restrictions it was necessary to consider research that focussed on the experiences of place by older children, or work that questioned or speculated on the geographical and environmental competencies of young children. Whilst an investigation into pre-school children's experience of place is an under-researched area I do not believe, however, that this is an isolated piece of research. It can be located within a theoretical framework and can be contextualised within studies that emanate from a variety of disciplines. Equally, this research may contribute to several fields including early years education, geography and environmental psychology.

12.5.1 Confirming other findings

The findings of this research corroborate several issues identified by existing research. The concept of ascribing themes to the experiences of place is in line with some existing research and this has been discussed in 12.4. There now follows consideration of the findings that substantiate other aspects of research and these are detailed in four distinct areas:

1. Competencies and underestimation of pre-school children's competencies and capabilities

2. The importance and relevance of the experience of place

3. The depth and uniqueness of the experience

4. Influences on experience of place

12.5.1.1 The underestimation of pre-school children's capabilities and competencies

One of the long-lasting influences of Piaget was the tendency to underestimate the abilities of young children, a view challenged by many researchers in the field of early years education. Certainly, in this research into pre-school children's experience of place a Piagetian perspective would not have expected children of this age to be able to express themselves so coherently and give views and opinions in the way they did. Contemporary writers, particularly those writing from the perspectives of childhood studies and early years education, now support the belief that very young children are active thinkers who display expertise and skills. There are also those who have researched more specifically into children's geographical and environmental aptitudes who, surprised by the level of competence at map reading and route-finding, projected that pre-schoolers were potentially competent at a wide range of tasks (see, for example, works by Spencer and Darvizeh 1981: Spencer and Blades 1993; Blaut 1997b). Catling (1987:19) goes as far as to say that 'no child, in reality, comes to school who is not already a geographer'. If, by geography, we include the skill of making sense of place then this research certainly goes towards substantiating this claim. A major contributing factor was, I feel, the position I took as a researcher who maintained the strong sense that children are experts in their own lives and one who valued and respected the children's individuality.

12.5.1.2 The importance and relevance of the experience of place

The natural world is described by Hyun (2005:200) as a 'dynamic stimulator' and this belief, this particular expression, is well-suited to the findings of this research. The children responded keenly and with great enthusiasm to the places encountered during the walk, which infers that they were indeed actively inspired by what they encountered. Spencer and Blades' (2006) belief that experience of place contributes to long-term cognitive and emotional development is obviously difficult to assess in terms of this research, but what can be said is that these young children already have opinions, values and attitudes to place that will inevitably change and develop in

future years. Although the children were able to comment upon the pictures of place in the affective activity, this indirect experience did not produce the richness of experience as was had directly during the walks where, as Matthews'(1992) found, children see things that adults often take for granted. It seems, too, that the pre-school children in this research did not seek out scenic places or panoramas; much of their interest was directed at what lay beneath their feet. From the findings, it would seem that sensory stimuli encountered during the walks evoked a range of responses that was simply not possible in the affective activity. Direct experience, then, promotes more varied and detailed responses and thus, I believe, there is no substitute for the real thing. Scoffham (2004a:121) says, 'rich experiences can promote brain growth while sensory deprivation can inhibit it' and this is further echoed by Owens (2004), for whom first hand experience of place is not only stimulating, but also engages a range of cognitive, physical and emotional responses. This is, in effect, immediate feedback which is a key component of learning.

In terms of place preference, described in 5.7, most of the children were able to identify their favourites with ease. Whether this corresponds to Korpela's (1992) and Korpela et al's (2002) theory that favourite places afford feelings of well-being is difficult to assess. What is clearer is a link to Gibson's (1986) concept of affordance, an example of which is the particular liking for the swings pictured in the affective activity as they offered opportunities for playing.

12.5.1.3 The depth and uniqueness of the experience

That each child has a unique relationship with the world (Palmer 1994) is not disputed in this study. In their research with older children, Hart (1979) and Matthews (1992) were of the opinion that children have highly personalised views about place, a fact echoed in the findings of this research with pre-schoolers. I particularly echo Hart's beliefs that places have meanings known only to that child and that place can evoke responses in a child that are quite remarkable in their uniqueness, so much so that it is difficult to establish quite where they came from. For example, Ross' highly detailed drawing of underground pipes, William's fascination with shapes and Patty's captivation with frost and ice were personal to them and them alone. Again, this may be what Bronfenbrenner (1993) referred to as selective sensitivity to the physical characteristics of the environment which was mentioned in 12.4.1 in connection with

selecting specific phenomenon for attention. This research also bears similarities to Bowles' (2004) findings with primary school children's understanding of locality inasmuch children's skills of observation are not inferior to those of adults'. Indeed, some of the children in this research displayed remarkable attention to detail that ranged from fascination with the stones in the surface of the road to the sound of water trickling down a drain.

Matthews' view that 'the environment is more than just an objective phenomenon' (p. 11) is also confirmed in this research, as is Scoffham's (1998) conjecture that there is no predictable or inevitable sequence of events when a place is experienced. The individuality of the children's responses and the variety of these responses in my study also empathises in general terms with the findings within environmental psychology and more specifically with discussions by Cobb (1977), Sebba (1991), Holloway and Valentine (2000b), and Spencer and Blades (2006). The range of stimuli was broad, from sensory to affective, from spurs to the imagination to colours and shapes, a range that Aitken (1994) believes that children, as active learners, are ready and able to attend to with their own distinctive styles.

12.5.1.4 Influences on experience of place

In Chapter 5, part 5.8, the influences on experience of place were considered. The influences were described as direct and indirect, the former pertaining to the effects or perceived effects of experiencing place first-hand. It became apparent, when in the field, that what a child brings with him or herself to the experience of place has a direct impact on the nature of the experience. Thus it emerged that some of the children had travelled to places outside the home, including trips abroad, so that references to specific places were used as a comparison or as an *aide memoire*. Such findings are in agreement with those from Goodey (1971), Matthews (1992) and Spencer and Blades (2006). In terms of indirect influences, the findings reflect Matthews' thinking that they have a powerful impact on children in that it was possible to establish that stories, television and social interaction with other children and adults influenced ways of thinking about place. So, for example, the television character 'Fireman Sam' was mentioned in relation to the fire station at Drumlithie and in Durham the influence of fairy stories was apparent.

12.6 New dimensions

This part of the thesis is approached with caution as I do not wish to overstate the children's competencies and capabilities that emerged during their experiences of place. This caution is related largely to the small number of children who took part in the study and the fact that they were selected specifically from the larger population due to the level of their communication skills. This is not to say that verbal competence equates with specific or different ways of experiencing place. In fact it is this difference or differences between the experiences of individual children that has emerged in any case.

As has been emphasised throughout this thesis, existing research into children's experience of place has focussed in the main on children over the age of 5, with researchers stating openly that they were unwilling or unable to work with the younger child. Thus it *could* be stated that all the findings in this research provide new dimensions into this phenomenon. In addition, this research has revealed more of the dynamic relationship between pre-school children and place, one that they were able to express in ways that indicated the sophistication of their transactions. This contrasts sharply with Matthews' (1992) view that children under the age of 10 are unable to 'talk about places in a reasonably structured and coherent manner'. This may or not refer to direct experiences of place, but given support, encouragement and using appropriate data generating strategies the very young children in this study were able to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally.

The central role of the senses in making sense of place has been cited by writers such as Porteous (1985; 1990); James (1990) and Rodaway (1994), more as a matter of opinion rather than on any empirical basis. In this particular study, however, the senses did not play a major role as such although, of course, it cannot be disputed that sight is the prime mechanism for engaging with place. The children in this study did not respond in any significant way to smells or sounds in the environment, nor did they use touch to help them understand some of the aspects of place.

Other points that may offer new insights include:

> Nabhan and Trimble (1994) and Louv (2005) mourn children's loss of experience of the outdoors; the findings of this research may give rise to optimism that some pre-school can engage with place in meaningful ways

> some children actively seek out something different in relatively uniform landscapes

> it is difficult to assess the holistic understanding of a place i.e. what the child understands from a landscape rather than smaller details of place

> imagination may play a greater role than previously ascribed to experiencing place; Catling (2005a) suggests this may offer potential for further research

> the possibility that pre-school children seek meaning or order in place by the use of strategies such as identifying patterns

> Kaplan (1988) suggests that there is a high correlation between place preference and place mystery; in this research with very young children mystery was, perhaps, synonymous with places that were frightening and thus not regarded favourably

> there is no substitute for experiencing place directly, as the range of experiences is far broader compared to indirect experiences

> Hart (1979) correlated exploration of place with understanding place; pre-school children have had little opportunity to explore place yet may still possess an (innate) ability to make sense their experiences

> there is potential for devising a model that represents place as experienced by the 12 children in this research – this is discussed in the following section

12.7 Theoretical places: a suggested model of pre-school children's experience of place

My thoughts at the start of this research endeavour with regards to a theoretical framework were that it should be dynamic, situated socially, culturally and environmentally, and relate to children in real contexts. As described in Chapter 5, there is no one theory of learning, of development of perception or emotions, of

childhood or of environmental understanding that effectively encompasses the totality of pre-school children's experience of place. Instead ideas and elements of theories have been incorporated from a range of disciplines so that a flexible, perhaps eclectic, approach has been taken that emphasises the child as an active participant in his or her own learning. This has been embodied in a socially constructed ecological framework that takes ideas from schema and information-processing theories. Moore and Young (1978), Bronfenbrenner (1979 & 1993), Siegler (1996 & 1998) and Lee (2003) are amongst those whose ideas have been drawn upon. Prior to the fieldwork, the framework appeared to offer a plausible way of demonstrating the interaction between psychological, sociological and physiographic processes that a child may employ when experiencing place.

Do the findings validate or invalidate this framework?

Always bearing in mind the small number of research participants, I feel that on the whole the theoretical framework stands up to scrutiny although there are modifications that can be applied. The first is a stronger emphasis on the individuality and uniqueness of the experience of place predicated on the diversity of responses that were recorded in the field. Secondly, more weight should be given to the process of breaking down the experience into components of place which are imbued with personal meaning. Meanings, from the evidence gathered in this study, stem from a variety of processes which, for example, may have emotional, cultural or imaginative origins. From these components understandings are constructed. Thirdly, as described in 12.4.1, places offer a great deal of information to the child and only some of it can be - and is - selected. Thus there is much information that is redundant and this should be a consideration within the theoretical framework.

The decision was made to present the findings of this research in the form of a visual representation or model. Models are used in various branches of psychology to provide a demonstration of the links and relationships between phenomena, and assist in the clarification of ideas, hypotheses and theories. In essence, then, a model can organise data by presenting a tentative ideational plan of relationships between variables; it represents a phenomenon on the one hand and explains a phenomenon on the other. Exploration of psychology models revealed that they may be applied in a

broad sense to a worldview about the basic nature of people or reality, or in a more limited manner – a mathematical or graphic representation - to the way something operates. The level of complexity of these models varies from the very simple such as a basic behaviour model where a stimulus results in a response (Skinner 1985) to computational models of the mind that are being developed in connectionism (Richardson 1998). The use of models, then, can be viewed as an accepted approach in the social sciences.

That being said, there does not appear to be an existing model that can be applied to the findings of this research, nor is there one that may be adapted or altered to realise an effective presentation of these findings. What was required was a new model that demonstrated the relationship between the experience of place and how sense is made of that experience. Hence I decided to develop a unique, appropriate model that best encapsulates the research undertaken for the thesis. Thus the model described in this chapter is in line with an accepted approach to social science research presentation. It also provides an original contribution to the literature of model-based analyses.

From the findings, a model can be constructed (Figure 12.1). This model shows that experience of place for the 12 preschoolers is essentially a product of meaning-making that arises from factors such as prior experience, imagination and a range of cognitive processes that include perception, language and emotion. These processes, described in the bottommost box in the diagram, link experience of place and meaning of place. The list presented features processes that were found in this research and, as such, is by no means definitive. The model portrays the child as an active learner who engages with place indirectly or directly, and who makes sense of that place by constructing meanings from one or more components. The components (presented earlier in Table 12.1) include, firstly, aspects of a place that the children recognised e.g. colour, number, which are objective and specific features. Secondly, there are components of place that involve recourse to frames of reference that cover prior experiences or reference to home. Thirdly, there are aspects of self which refer to personal feelings, emotions and imagination.

All these factors enable the child to structure the experience in a way which is unique and individual to that child. By inference, some pre-school children already possess a

Redundant information

Experience of place

Absorption of set of
complex information

Indirect and direct

Micro and macro
scale

Experience stimulates response

Meaning of place

Subjective and
objective
understandings
constructed from
single or multiple
components

Constructs formed;
objective and
specific; frames of
reference; aspects of
self

**Sense made of the experience of place that
contributes to learning and understandings**

**Linked by active meaning-making
Involvement of imagination, emotions, feelings
cultural values and attitudes, reference to
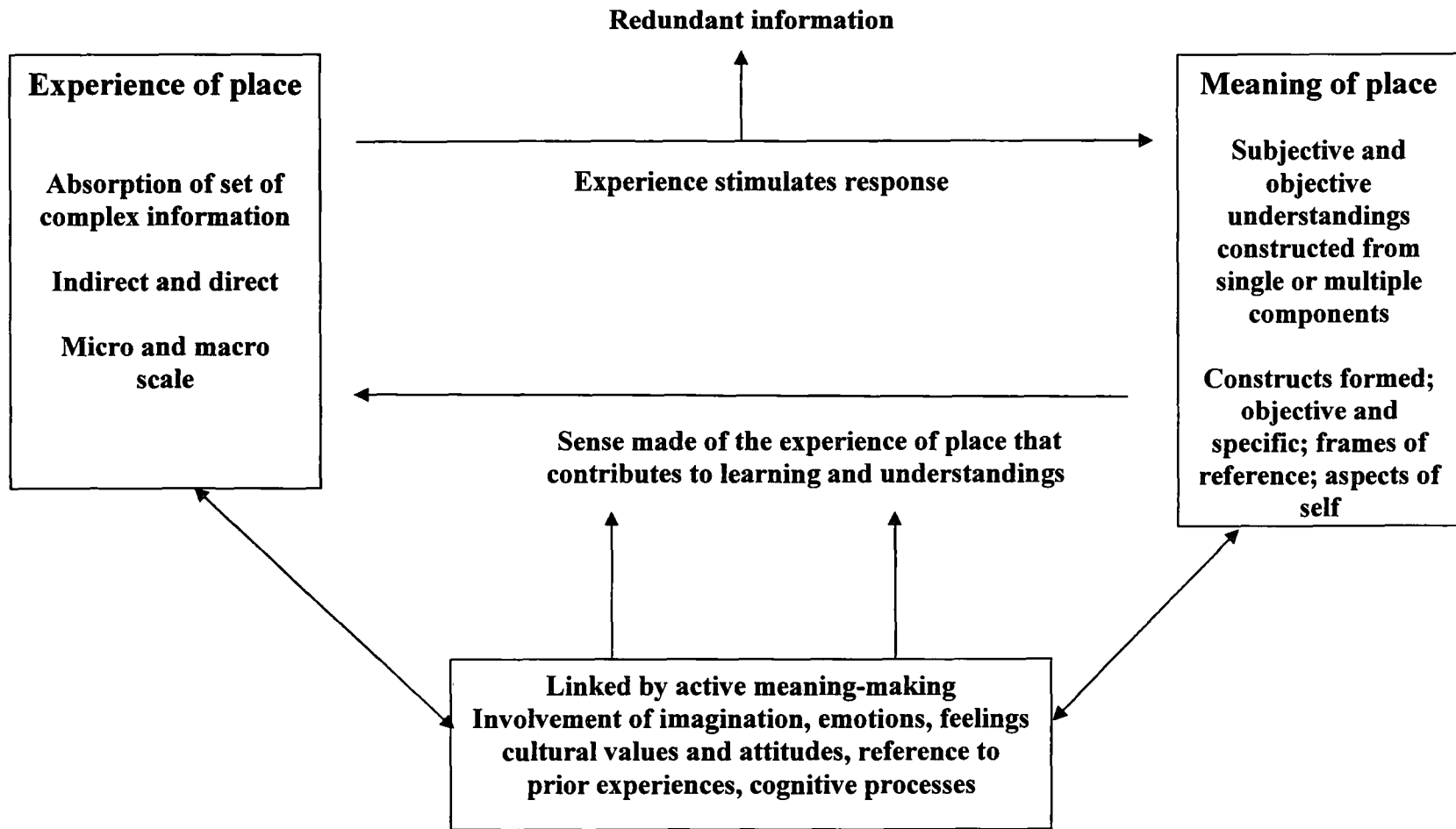prior experiences, cognitive processes**

Figure 12.1: *How place is experienced: a model to represent the experience of the 12 children in this research*

considerable amount of knowledge about place and will take this knowledge to their primary schools. The role of schema theory is evidenced in the way place is understood through reference to previous experience or, if novel, a new schema is started. From information-processing the notion of individuality is incorporated in this model and also that the child chooses what features of place to attend to. There is, as mentioned earlier, a certain amount of information that is redundant and unprocessed and this is included in the model.

It should be emphasised that this is a tentative model as it represents the experiences of place in *this* research and based on the findings from *these* children; it is not proposed as a definitive template. Rather, the aim is to summarise the nature of the transactions with place the pre-school children experienced in Durham, Drumlithie and Fraserburgh. Although tentative, I do believe that the model presented in Figure 12.1 organises the findings in a way that demonstrates what was happening when the 12 children experienced place, and presents the reader with an effective and clear means of understanding this complex phenomenon.

12.8 The limitations of this research

The objective that stated that obtaining the voices of pre-school children in order to build a substantial quantity of rich, descriptive material was achieved and, whilst this has led to the suggestion that the children use components and constructs to make sense of places they experience, there are a number of limitations to this study that should be explicated.

There is no question that every aspect of an experience by a person other than ourselves can be fully understood so I am in full agreement with Aitken (1994:30) who states, 'as adults we are incapable of perceiving what the child experiences'. This is not just due to problems such young children may or may not have relating their experiences. So much is happening during these encounters that it is impossible to obtain the full picture – we do not have access to the thoughts and feelings of a child, nor can we see what he or she is really seeing.

Neither can we know with any certainty the extent of their prior experiences, nor the definitive sources of their responses upon which their impressions of a novel place are predicated. The home lives, social lives and cultural backgrounds all contribute to the uniqueness of each child and again this is impossible to subtract from the experience. A further consideration is that the direct experiences of place are based upon the findings of a walk that occurred on a particular day, at a particular time and in a particular place. It is not possible within the parameters of this study to assess whether these same children would respond the same way if, say, the weather was different or the walk occurred during the morning or the afternoon. What one is left with then is partial access to experiences and it is upon these that this thesis is based. This is not to say that the experiences are thin. Far from it. What the children have expressed through words and pictures provides a fascinating account of what it is to experience place as a pre-schooler.

12.9 Ways of looking: an assessment of the research design

12.9.1 Researching with pre-school children

My perception of pre-school children as competent social actors who play an active part in their learning is intricately linked to the way they are perceived as participants in research. This is in accordance with the view of childhood as a time of creating meaning and is broadly in line with the view of those within the new sociology of childhood who also promote the individuality of childhood. I certainly do not have the reservations about children as unreliable, suggestible and risky research participants, the negative qualities ascribed to them by some researchers. My knowledge of children of this age, gained from many years of experience working in the early years sector, stood me in good stead so that I knew that if a situation was perceived as enjoyable and made sense to them they were more likely to become engaged and responsive. Equally I was also aware of - and responded to – times when the children were unlikely to stay on task.

It is important in research of this kind to spend time to get to know the children and the routine of the pre-school centre. In a large nursery like that in Durham it took a few days to settle in, get to know the staff and talk to all the children. Conversely, in Drumlithie it was possible to start the research proper within two days or so. The use of the book All *About Me*, written specifically for this research, was very successful

as the children had a natural curiosity about my family and where I lived. The one issue it threw up for some children was confusion that I did not live near them, particularly so for the children in Scotland. Explaining I lived a long way away did not seem to help their understanding.

Working within an ethical protocol, working with respect and honesty resulted in excellent relationships, not only with the children but also with relevant adults. Very few interpersonal problems were encountered during the field work which, I feel, was due to thorough preparation at all stages. What is difficult to assess is how much the children understood about my presence in the nursery or playgroup. In the Durham nursery, researchers in various guises are commonplace due to its links with the university. In Drumlithie and Fraserburgh my presence was more obvious, but I do not believe this impacted upon the findings. The other issue that warrants mention here is the attachment some children develop with the researcher. This was only problematic in one setting where a child became very possessive of my attention and exhibited difficult behaviour when I worked with other children. This is not unusual in very young children, but it is an aspect of research that can be difficult to manage. In this case, it was found that distracting the child in question with other activities helped resolve the problem.

12.9.2 The design
The challenge of this research was to access the children's experiences of place in a way that reduced the tendency to process these experiences through an adult view of the world. This access would then enable the exploration of meanings from this transaction that were as far as possible the children's. The strength of this generic interpretive design lay in its responsiveness to these experiences and it reflected the individuality of experience, plus the subtler nuances that could not be picked up if a positivist approach was used. For example, the field work took place in real contexts; it enabled the children a level of freedom when taking their photographs and there was a degree of flexibility and latitude in the semi-structured interviews. A substantial quantity of in-depth data was generated through a judicious choice of research methods which reflected my stance as bricoleur whereby I responded to human experience and, in this instance, the various ways pre-school children communicate.

In addition, the analysis of the data was undertaken with thorough explications of why and what was being done.

The design was faithful to personal ontological and epistemological perspectives. Ontologically, I maintain the view that reality is a social construct; that experiences are subjective and there are multiple constructions of meaning. Epistemologically, the interactions between me and the children, the context of the research and, specifically, my belief that a place is imbued with meaning by a child, are all clearly represented in the methodological approach to the study.

The original objective of maintaining integrity – the credibility, replicability and verifiability - in this research has been upheld. The experiences of the children were presented authentically and there was an honest account of the selection of participants; of the reflexive nature of the approach; of the use of data generation strategies and of the analysis of the data. All of these contributed to the credibility. In terms of replicability, it is felt that it is acceptable to state that the methods could be applied to other contexts and the meanings derived from the data may have similarities to that obtained if a similar study was done with a larger research population and in different contexts. Certainly, it is possible that some of the themes of experience of place may be replicated. On the issue of verifiability or bias, the aim was to minimise the threats to verification through being aware of the factors such as inaccurate data or interpretation, and personal bias. In retrospect, I think this has been achieved satisfactorily within the parameters of this research.

The success of the research design was achieved through a combination of a thorough understanding of pre-school children's learning and development, the use of innovative methods, a sound grasp of methodological issues and techniques, and personal experience. Working with young children demands considerable patience. In particular, the use of interviews requires a set of skills that cannot be acquired in a short space of time and thus it is not a technique that can be recommended to all researchers. The ability to engage with the children in this study was, I believe, largely due to many years of working in pre-school settings and acquiring in-depth knowledge and understanding of very young children.

12.9.2.1 Design issues for consideration

There are some issues of the research design that warrant consideration because there were either problems or unexpected results. These can be summarised thus:

- the choice of the pictures of place for the affective activity was arbitrary and warranted more thought
- the stickers used in the affective activity were distracting in that the children wanted to use them in ways other than the specific task
- when working in pairs in the affective activity the children sometimes influenced the responses of each other
- electronic recording was unsatisfactory in all three venues due to background noise, poor acoustics and the children moving in and out of range
- the route of the walks was pre-determined due to health and safety issues, but it may be possible to involve children more in the decision-making by discussing the walk beforehand
- there was a difference in the time of year the walks took place and also the weather conditions (Durham; autumn and sunny; Drumlithie; winter and frosty; Fraserburgh; winter and dull), and this may have influenced the results
- the time taken for the semi-structured interviews was longer than anticipated and sometimes the sessions were interrupted and disjointed

In terms of the results of this study it is not felt that any of these problems had any significant impact on the findings. There was no aspect that proved insurmountable so, for example, with the stickers I took more control over the process and, when circumstances dictated, field notes were taken instead of recordings.

12.10 Place matters

Does this research matter? If so, to whom does it matter? Has this research generated knowledge and forwarded thinking in this area by making a contribution to early years research and the understanding of pre-school children's geographies?
Defining the meaning of place was discussed in detail in Chapter 2 and was described as an extraordinary difficult and complex concept. It is not simply a matter of fact (Scoffham 2004b:18), but involves levels of engagement such as perception, emotions and affordances. Indeed, there is ongoing debate and little agreement about

the concept of place partly as it is the focus of attention from several disciplines which adopt different ways of approaching its study. Whilst this can make for difficulties in unravelling the many definitions and meanings, here it has added to the richness of place as the central theme for this research. One possible contribution this research has made is a consideration of the meaning of place as understood by pre-school children and that to access that meaning the children have to engage in an active problem-solving process. The literature shows that even very young children are remarkably competent at 'working with' place in terms of route finding, recognising landmarks and map reading. What this research contributes is what place can *mean* to children between the ages of 3 and 5; what it *is* about place on a more basic level that a child takes from his or her transaction with place. Perhaps, then, this first-hand experience of place can be viewed as a baseline or fundament of geographical understandings and competencies. Again this should be treated with caution. Extrapolating what children may or will learn from early environmental experiences can only be speculative, although this does not prevent Cooper et al (2006) stating with assurity that it leads to later understandings of sustainability, global citizenship and diversity.

The view that place is a complex notion is borne out in this research as the findings prove that pre-school children imbue it with many different meanings. Place is multi-meaning and multifaceted for these children, yet it is also an individual and personal encounter. The manner in which each child in this research experienced place and the strategies employed to help make sense of place are unique to that child and this, I believe, is an important contribution to the research agenda. The child's active transaction with place can be viewed as contributing to many aspects of learning. These include emotional development in terms of affective responses to place; cognitive development; conceptual competencies and social development. The strategies pre-schoolers use in the experience of place are, perhaps, of far greater breadth and involve higher levels of skill than previously thought. For the 12 children in this research their opinions, affective responses, imaginations, personal interests and past experience emerged as ways of making sense of their experience of place. This research does not seek generalities, but, rather, the variety and diversity of the children's experiences. Indeed, it was the richness of detail that was sought, arguably at the expense of generalizability.

The individuality of the child's experience is something to be valued and respected and should be the basis for future learning, not only about local places but the wider world. Connections with place and how these connections arise are important in child development, although I would argue that there is a danger of these connections being lost. Pre-school children are being protected from perceived dangers outside the home and with this protection and strong emphasis on home entertainment come the risk that they will miss opportunities to experience local places directly. Without these opportunities for active learning in real contexts these children will lose out on the way they shape their blossoming relationship with place and their own unique view of the world. Place, then, should not be an abstract concept but a way of learning that stimulates curiosity, discovery and exploration.

This work has a place in supporting national debate and policy on early childhood provision. It contributes to the view that provision for pre-school children is falling short in some areas. The report into pre-school provision by the DfES (2004) suggested that the knowledge of child development was often weak and, in effect, this research substantiates this claim by highlighting the shortfall in both our understanding of this particular phenomenon of experiencing place and also in the opportunities provided for young children in early years settings. The evidence from these 12 children, in terms of competencies and capabilities, is strong and there is no reason to suggest, albeit cautiously, that similar findings cannot be seen elsewhere.

The fact that the solution to the problem upon which this thesis is based – what are pre-school children's experience of place? – does not lie in existing work and involves the undertaking of an investigation of something hitherto unavailable, is a strong indication of originality in this work. However this is a broad definition of originality and it needs to be embedded firmly in the received wisdom of early years research. Although there is a near absence of research that focuses specifically on the subject of this work, this study does not exist in isolation but exists on a continuum and extends, qualifies and elaborates upon previous research in related areas. With this in mind, the argument for the originality of this work is centred upon the production of new data generated in imaginative ways that has resulted in new insights into pre-schoolers' experience of place.

Has the research question been answered? What *are* pre-school children's experiences of place? In this study with these children in these places, the findings point to a complex interaction with place which has personal and objective nuances; that components of place are identified sometimes in isolation and at other times cemented together to make larger constructs; that the learning that happens is an active meaning-making process. Whilst I cannot claim access to these experiences in their entirety, I feel that progress has been made to understanding more about the focus of this research.

12.11 Future places

In the three years that this research has taken there is a fast growing impetus amongst the research community to place children's geographies firmly on the agenda, with an emphasis on early years geography and active exploration of the immediate environment (Conway and Pointon 2003). The number of related texts, seminars and conferences, journals, articles and websites are increasing. There is still, however, an apparent reluctance to involve pre-school children, to listen to their voices and elicit their views. But, as citizens (and citizens with rights) we should work with these young people and appreciate how they think and learn about an everyday aspect of their lives.

From this study it is possible to propose further studies in this area of early years research. Firstly, there is a requirement to undertake similar research with a larger population so that findings in this study may be confirmed or contradicted. Secondly, this research could benefit from an ethnographic approach whereby the developing and changing views of young children could be recorded. This could effectively link up existing work with older children. Thirdly, a further aspect that is worthy of consideration is how a preschooler's negative image of local place effects the perception of other places. There is the assumption that children are fascinated by their environment and enjoy exploring it (Ashbridge 2006). Is this always the case? Fourthly, there has been work undertaken that involves children's innate ability to comprehend the world around them in term of map-reading and route-finding. Is there, too, an innate ability to make sense of the experience of place?

In section 6.4.4 there was a discussion of other variables that may, potentially, influence the results. These included consideration of the influences of the family unit, the socio-economic background and prior experiences. These variables were excluded in this study as a central objective was to maintain the purity of the children's voices. However, the inclusion of these factors in future research presents ways of furthering our understanding of preschoolers' experience of place in that the influence of such variables may have significant effects on the individual response or reaction. For example, exploring the socio-economic background and the concomitant experience of children could reveal marked differences between children of wealthy families and those from less privileged backgrounds. Equally, the absence of any significant correlation could indicate that this particular variable does not carry weight in the child's response to place. There is, then, considerable scope for extending this research through the incorporation of other variables.

Finally, the early years curriculum. In general terms the UK curricula do not place much emphasis on the importance of real place experiences from a personal perspective. However, this appears to be changing and writers such as Catling (2005a; 2005b; 2006) are advocating a more pro-active approach to geography in the early years, thus challenging the view that pre-school children cannot engage in geographical concepts before entering primary school. Catling (2006) highlights the sense of discontinuity between the children's real lives and what is being taught in the early years, saying that children's experiences, perspectives and interpretations are used in a limited way with the adult interpretation of the world-at-hand still dominating geographical learning. And, for Owens (2004), the lack of first-hand engagement with place by pre-school children is having a serious impact on geographical understanding in general, and place in particular.

12.12 The ending place: final thoughts

This research endeavour has been challenging and exciting, occurring at a time when research with pre-school children is gaining impetus, perhaps due to its junction of social, political, pragmatic and theoretical forces. Working directly with pre-school children in Durham, Drumlithie and Fraserburgh, having the opportunity to be part of their lives for a short time and to share their experiences was a great privilege. There

was an extraordinary dialogue between myself and the children, and they in turn shared their dialogue with place with me. What the children already knew and brought with them to the experiences was as exciting as observing them develop further learning. Their views, values and attitudes are different from adults' *not* inferior, and this must be remembered when constructing their learning in pre-school centres. All the children's perceptions are of value and reveal a great wealth of geographical knowledge that can be built upon to help them move into the adult world. I believe the 12 children have made a contribution, albeit small, towards understanding more about the experience of place in their everyday lives. The children saw things that I for one had forgotten how to see and I hope that this thesis serves to respect the richness and diversity of their very personal experiences of place.

APPENDIX 1: PARENTAL CONSENT FORM

Date......

Dear .... (*names of parents or guardians*)
I'm writing to introduce myself to all the parents and guardians at .... (*name of nursery/playgroup*). My name is Sue Trees and I'm studying for a PhD at the School of Education, University of Durham. I'm investigating pre-school children's thoughts and ideas about place and I'll be working at .... (*name of nursery/playgroup*) during .... (*month*).

Parental permission is required before the study commences. The study involves children taking part in conversations about places, local walks, drawing and painting. I'd like to reassure you that the children will be thoroughly supervised at all times. Your child's participation is completely voluntary. In addition to your permission, your child will also be asked if he or she would like to take part. Only those children who want to participate will do so, and any child may stop taking part at any time. Any recordings of taped conversations and all other information that is obtained during this research project will be kept secure and not used for any other purposes. The names of the children will be changed so their identity will be protected.

The results of this study will be used for my PhD thesis, and possibly other publications such as journal articles.

I do hope you feel your child can take part as it would be of great help to me. It will also be a really positive experience for the children as my aim is to make their involvement fun and educational. So if you're happy about my proposal and your child's participation then please complete the form below. Please return the slip to .... (*name of staff member*) by........(*date*). Additional information about my study is available at the nursery and I will also make available a summary of the findings at a later date. If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me either by mail, e-mail or telephone.

Thank you for your assistance and I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Trees
School of Education, Leazes Road, University of Durham, DH1 1TA   0191 384 2990
s.j.trees@durham.ac.uk

I give permission for my child_____ **(name of child)**
to participate in the research project described above.

_____ **Date** _____ **Parent's/Guardian's signature**

APPENDIX 2

LETTER TO PARENTS

3 November 2005

Dear Mr and Mrs ......,

Please find enclosed a set of the photographs Will took when we went out from the Nursery for a walk on October 25th. As you know this walk was part of my PhD research into pre-school children's experience of place and Will was one of four children who took part.

I'm absolutely delighted with the results as each child took very individual pictures and, furthermore it just goes to show how effective a cheap disposable camera from Tesco can be! Will was very interested in what we were doing and certainly seemed to enjoy the experience thoroughly.

Although I've yet to analyse the data and will be carrying out further fieldwork in north-east Scotland, my initial – and tentative - impression of Will's photographs, and also from what he said about them, is that he's particularly interested in shapes in the environment. For example he's taken pictures that include stonework, stone bollards, steps, and windows. Photographs taken by some of the other children focus on other environmental elements around them such as patterns and colours. It will be very interesting to see what children in Scotland make of their localities – one a very remote, rural setting and the other a busy fishing port.

The contribution each child at the Nursery has made towards my research has been tremendous, but a special thanks to Will for his efforts and not getting fed up with my questioning!

Thank you for giving permission for Will to take part and I hope you enjoy the photographs.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Trees

School of Education
University of Durham
Leazes Road
DH1 1TA

APPENDIX 3:
AFFECTIVE ACTIVITY
PICTURES

1. Field

2. Swings

3. Buses

4. River

5. Street

6: Sea

7: Rubbish

8: Wood

9. Boats
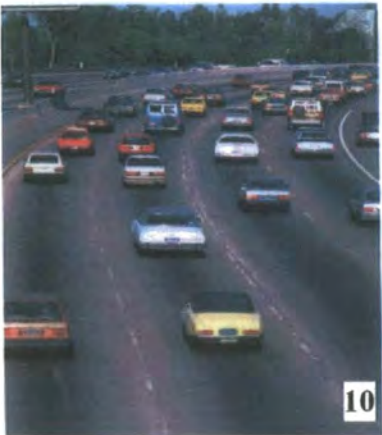
10: Motorway

11: Shops

APPENDIX 4

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS

Opening statement:
We're going to have a look at the photographs you took yesterday. I'm going to ask you some questions about them but there isn't a right or a wrong answer. You just tell me what you think and if you don't understand the question then please tell me. If you want to stop at anytime then that's not a problem.

1. Did you enjoy the walk we went on yesterday?

2. What did you think about having a camera to take pictures?

3. Can you remember where we went on the walk?

4. Tell me about this photograph.

5. What can you see in this photograph?

6. I wonder why you took this photograph.

7. How do you feel when you look at this photograph?

8. Tell me about the colours in this picture.

9. I don't remember this place. Can you tell me something about it?

10. What do you like about this place?

11. What could you hear when you took this photograph?

12. I wonder if we could smell anything when we were here.

13. Can you find a photograph with a car/tree/water/nursery etc in it?

14. Which photograph do you like best?

15. Is there a photograph of a place that you don't like?

Closing statement:
Thank you very much for taking such wonderful pictures and thank you for talking to me. You've been really great and you've helped me so much with my work. You can keep the set of photographs and take them home to show your parents.

APPENDIX 5

The Pilot Study

Purposes
The purposes of the pilot study were as follows:
- ❖ To 'tune in' to children's talk
- ❖ To assess the effectiveness of the ethical protocol
- ❖ To assess the effectiveness of the author's book, '*All About Me*'
- ❖ To assess the effectiveness of the affective activity
- ❖ To engage the children in semi-structured interviews
- ❖ To check appropriateness of questions
- ❖ To check the practicalities of note-taking and recording
- ❖ To check that the data generated go towards answering the research question
- ❖ To aid development of a standardised approach
- ❖ To identify procedural problems

Context
A pilot study was carried out at a private nursery in Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire, north-east Scotland. I was able to access the nursery at short notice through a long-standing friendship with the nursery manager. It was arranged that I would work with two children only, one the son of one of the nursery nurses and the other the manager's niece. Consent was obtained from the parents that the research could involve their children. Assurances were given of confidentiality and anonymity.

Pilot procedures
a) Reading and talking using the book, '*All About Me*'
b) Affective activity
c) Semi-structured interviews: based on the 11 photographs of place

Issues arising
a) Dialect
The dialect in this part of Aberdeenshire – south of Aberdeen City – is not as broad as that further north where Doric is widely spoken. Nevertheless it was useful to 'tune in' to the local accent and dialect.

b) Linguistic ability
Both Laura and Iain were articulate children although Laura showed some frustration on a couple of occasions when he could not explain what he meant or I failed to understand him. The greater problem was the speed of Iain's speech which increased as the session went on and was difficult to follow.

c) Relationships
There were no problems establishing good relationships with the children but possibly this was due to both having mother/aunt on the premises. Other children did not show much interest in what we were doing. The staff were helpful and interested.

d) Explanation of research to children
It was difficult to establish how much the children understood in terms of the research process. I was concerned that a staff member was told by Laura that 'it was work'.

e) Note-taking

Hand-written notes were problematic when more than one child spoke and if the child spoke quickly. Tape-recording conversations were quite successful but there was a lot of background noise. Notes on facial and body expression need to be carefully more related to speech.

f) Behaviour and intervention

It is important to establish with staff prior to starting the fieldwork how to react when behavioural problems from other children come to my attention - should I intervene and, if so, how should I intervene? Obtain behaviour policies and child protection policies from each centre prior to fieldwork.

g) Sustaining concentration

There was a wide variation of concentration span between the two children. It is important to ensure children know they can stop at any time. The timing of any research activity within the nursery session is important as certain routines such as snack-time in mid-morning or story time cannot be disrupted. Thus fitting in with the nursery schedule must be pre-planned.

h) Quiet place

It is important to have a place to work with the children that is quiet and away from 'traffic' as we were interrupted several times by other children. Do all settings have an area that can be dedicated to the fieldwork? Is there an ethical issue if another room is used and the staff cannot see us?

i) 'All About Me' book

This was read through to the children and then they were able to look through it themselves. They came up with lots of questions especially about where I lived. I also used the book during another session to show Laura my favourite place and had a prolonged and interesting conversation that was totally unplanned. How do spontaneous conversations equate with issues of validity and reliability? Do they constitute research data?

j) Affective activity

Instructions to label with ☹ / ☺ were understood but the children wanted to stick them on the photographs rather than the chart. It is very important to differentiate between the stickers so the child's identity is known. Laura and Iain had their own opinions most of the time although Laura had quite a strong influence on Iain and may have affected his decisions on places he liked/disliked. Therefore consideration should be given to whether this is an individual or a paired activity. Although the affective activity will lead onto a research conversation in the fieldwork proper, the opportunity to carry out semi-structured interviews was taken at this stage. These were based on the 11 photographs and what the children felt about them. Results are as follows:

Photograph	Laura	Iain
1. Field	☹	☺
2. Swings	☹	☺
3. Buses	☺	☺
4. River	☺	☺
5. Street	☺	☹
6. Sea	☹	☺
7. Rubbish	☹	☹
8. Wood	☺	☹
9. Boats	☹	☺
10. Motorway	☹	☺
11. Shops	☺	☺

k) Semi-structured interview – questions and prompts
1. What can you see in this photograph?
2. I can see some ...... in this photograph, what can you see?
3. Would you like to go to this place?
   If yes, why?
   If no, why?
4. You stuck a ☹ / ☺ on the picture. Tell me why you chose that sticker.
5. What do you like about this place?
6. What don't you like about this place?
7. Which place do you like best? Why?
8. Which place do you think is the worst? Why?
9. Do you know a place like this?
10. I wonder what you could do here.
11. I wonder if this place smells nice?
12. What do you think you could hear if you were in this place?

I did not use all the questions and found that I instinctively adapted some to suit the child. Some photos evoked more comment than others and this may reflect personal interest/knowledge. This nursery was in close proximity to the sea so there was strong sense of familiarity with all things maritime. Is this an important factor in determining like/dislike?

l) Quality of data/usefulness of data
Everything the children said was of relevance, even if it was not strictly on task. The two sample children were able to describe the places, express what they liked and did not like, give some limited reasons for their choices. There was some confusion involving the photographs in that the children believed they were local and that they had been there.

Conclusion
The pilot study was a useful exercise and presented an opportunity to assess various aspects of the fieldwork. From the issues raised several points came to light that needed addressing prior to the fieldwork.

APPENDIX 6
INFORMATION FOR PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES

Personal Background

I have been involved in early years education for over twenty years. I am a qualified primary teacher specialising in nursery education and I have taught in several nursery settings.

I have also worked as a development officer for the Scottish Pre-school Play Association and as an officer in the Education Department of Aberdeenshire Council. Following this I ran my own training business for early years practitioners in Scotland for several years.

In 2003 I completed an MA in Early Childhood Education at Sheffield University and then started a full-time PhD at the School of Education, University of Durham in October 2004. My supervisor is Professor Joy Palmer-Cooper who has researched extensively in the field of environmental education, including studies of pre-school children.

Research outline

My research seeks to answer the key question, 'What are pre-school children's lived experiences of place?' What I want to find out is how pre-school children experience place by investigating what feelings they have for places, what they like and dislike, and how they discriminate between places. Little research exists in this area of study yet it has the potential to increase our knowledge of how very young children perceive and understand places in the local environment. This in turn may inform us of our approach to teaching about place, an aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world within early years curricula. My aim is to encourage visual and verbal communication with the children, thus enabling their own views and voices to be heard on the issue of local places.

Fieldwork will commence in autumn 2005 and three pre-school settings will be involved in England and Scotland.

Personal perspectives on young children

An integral part of my approach to this research is my perspective on young children as it informs the whole process. I strongly believe that all children, including the very young, have the right to be respected as individuals and to express their views or, indeed, to remain silent.

Research with children of pre-school age increasingly acknowledges that they are social agents with their own views, experiences and perspectives. In essence they are 'beings' rather than 'becomings', a view that has changed significantly since a time when children were seen as people working towards adulthood and not people in their own right.

I perceive pre-school children as experts in their own lives and that they have a range of competencies. They have, then, much to tell us about how they see the world. Even if they are not able to express themselves verbally there are other ways researchers can learn about their experiences. An important part of this research is to enable such

expression. It is discussed later in the section that details the children's participation in this research.

Ethical considerations

Ethics permeate this research from beginning to end. My research has been approved by the University of Durham's Ethics Advisory Committee. I have been checked and approved by the Criminal Records Bureau in accordance with protection of children procedures. I follow ethical guidelines published by the National Children's Bureau (*Guidelines for Research* 2003 NCB).

The points below summarise the main ethical considerations for this research:
- This research is based on principles of respect and fairness, equality and non-discrimination
- The children will be protected from harm and discomfort; their best interests are central
- At least one member of staff will be present during every stage of the research process
- The children's identities will be changed in order to respect anonymity and confidentiality
- All data will be kept secure with access only by myself
- Any planned future publications other than the PhD thesis will be reported to the centre
- Consent for the research will be sought from parents/guardians of the children through an 'opt-in' form (*See attached form*)
- There will be no discrimination against parents/guardians or their children if they do not wish to participate
- Children will be asked if they wish to participate in the research and have the right to say no and the right to leave the research procedures at any time

Relationships

A vital part of my research is the establishing of good relationships with all concerned i.e. parents/guardians, staff and children. Such relationships are based on shared trust, respect and a mutual willingness to negotiate. My aim is, as far as possible, to be part of the pre-school setting albeit temporarily. To this end I wish to fit in with the centre's routines and working practices, and I am very willing to be of assistance as this will give me an identity that is familiar to both adults and children.

I will negotiate with staff the best manner of introduction and explanation of my presence to the children at the pre-school centre. I would like to encourage open communication between myself and staff at the pre-school setting both whilst I am at the centre and also outside it. Contact details are provided at the end of this leaflet.

Children's participation in research

This research is multi-method by nature and aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the children's experience of place. It takes an integrated approach that combines visual and verbal responses so that voices and creative work are used to maximise the children's the amount of data generated

The research conversations are informal discussions with the children about place. I plan to an activity which involves looking at pictures of place to stimulate

conversation and to elicit what the children understand by place. These sessions will involve small groups of children and the conversations may be taped. I aim to involve as many of the children in the setting as possible.

The walking tours or expeditions will involve short walks in the locality. This talking whilst walking approach is intended to harness new knowledge and add new layers of meaning. The destination and the number of children who partake will be discussed with staff and children. Appropriate adult-child ratios will be met. Each child will be given a disposable camera and can photograph places that interest them during the walk.

The photographs will be used subsequently for the basis of semi-structured interviews whereby there is an outline agenda of questions rather than a set format. Following on from this the children will be asked to paint, draw or make models of places that they have seen during the walk.

Benefits of this research for the children
In this research the children will have the opportunity to express their views about places in their local environment. They will be treated as experts in their own lives and they will be listened to and respected. The methods chosen are aimed to enhance their strengths, to engage them as fully as possible and to be fun and enjoyable. I hope to encourage their involvement in the research process itself by seeking their ideas and thoughts about, for example, where to visit locally and what places to see.

Dependent upon parental/guardian consent I wish to involve *all* the children at some stage of the research, such as the research conversations and artwork. For some parts of the fieldwork smaller numbers will be involved and the selection of children will be in full consultation with the staff.

The children will be involved in using disposable cameras, discussing the developed photographs and participate in painting, drawing and model making. Each child who takes part in the walking expeditions will be given a set of photos to take home.

Timetable
It is anticipated that the fieldwork will commence in autumn 2005. It is impossible to predict how long will be spent at each pre-school centre but as a rough guide I propose a total of 10-15 research sessions at each centre. This includes familiarisation with staff and children; research conversations; walking tours or place expeditions; follow-up semi-structured interviews; artwork and feedback. To make best use of time only one setting will be involved at a time.

Use of data
Data collected during the fieldwork will be analysed and used within the final research report. The completed PhD thesis is made available to readers at the School of Education library, University of Durham. There may also be opportunities to use data within research reports for academic journals or in research seminars.

Communication and contacts
Details of how to contact me are given below. Please contact me if you have any queries relating to the research.

APPENDIX 7
FIELDWORK SCHEDULE

Session	Time allocated (approx)	Aim	What is involved?	Who is involved?	Data generating techniques
Pre-fieldwork	1 session	Discuss timetable for fieldwork	Visit centre, meet staff Send consent letters to parents/guardians ~ 2 weeks prior to commencement	Staff Parents	
Familiarisation	3 or 4 sessions	Familiarisation with setting and staff Introduction to children	Attend playgroup/nursery session Participate in activities	All children Staff	Field notes re: structure of sessions, guide notes for fieldwork Informal observation
Meet and talk	2 to 4 sessions	Children learn about me, particularly about my favourite places etc Start building relationships, 'tuning in' to children Start identifying children for later research	Talking to children Reading 'All About Me' Listening to responses by children	All children – in groups of 3/4 or possibly whole group Discuss any issues arising with staff	Field notes re: responses to book, identifying children
Affective activity	2 to 4 sessions	Further opportunity to get to know the children Assess children for possible participation in next fieldwork session	Sorting photographs of place into likes and dislikes using stickers Listen and talk with children; research conversations	Children in pairs – selected by register/ friendship grouping/ staff advice	Field notes and taped conversations
Pre-walk	1 session	Risk assessment Introduce use of cameras	Explaining use of cameras Reading 'Tanya & Sam's Walk'	Discuss risk assessment with staff Maximum 6 children	
Walking expedition	1 session	To have photographic record of places	Short walk in vicinity Children take pictures of places Informal conversations	Maximum 6 children Member staff – adherence to child:adult ratios	Field notes
Semi-structured interviews	3 or 4 sessions	Children talk about their photographs and express their thoughts and feelings	Research conversations/informal interviews with children who took part in camera work Discussion using the developed photographs	Participant children	Taped conversations and field notes
Draw and talk	2 sessions	Children use opportunity to express their understandings of places through artwork	Children asked if they'd like to paint/draw a place Conversation during creative work	Children involved in field trip and children who wish to partake	Field notes and/or taped conversations
Leaving the field	1 session	To express gratitude to all involved	Report to staff Report to parents	Children Staff, parents	

APPENDIX 8
Transcription Conventions
(After Graue and Walsh 1998)

Double parentheses, (())	information about tone of voice
Double oblique, //	point at which speaker is interrupted and stops speaking
Italics	emphasis placed on the italicised word achieved through pitch change or increased volume
Colon, :	within a word indicates that the pronunciation of the preceding syllable or syllable part is prolonged e.g. ve:ry signifies elongated pronunciation of the 'very'
Ellipses,…,	indicates omitted material
Four dashes, ----,	pause to rephrase or self-correct
Question mark (?)	indicates indecipherable sounds
[description],	indicates description of action
Brackets, {}	indicates translation of dialect

APPENDIX 9
DATA ANALYSIS CODES

CODE	MEANING
DIRS	Child gives directions e.g. along the road
POSPREP	Positional preposition e.g. up, over, beside
SHAPE	Shape of object
PLNOUN	Place noun e.g. hill, river
COL	Colour
CHILD	Mention of other children
PLUSE	Place use
FAV	Expressed favourite
WATER	Water feature
NOISE	Anything heard
ANIM	Animals
IMAG	Imagination
FAN	Fantasy
NORESP	No response
DUNNO	Don't know response
PLADJ	Adjective regarding place e.g. big, nice, dark, scary, high
HOME	Mention of child's home
DECPHOTO	Verbal decision made about taking photographs
NUMB	Child counts objects
OPINION	Like or dislike
MEM	Memory of a place
PLCON	Trying to place in context
PAT	Pattern
EXPL	Explanation of decision to take photo
SMELL	Description of smell
FEEL	Expression of feelings – happy, scared
SHAD	Shadows
HUM	Humour
SIM	Simile
CWOR	Child's invented word – puddley
FOCUS	Particular focus
NONV	Nonverbal response
DANGER	Perceived danger
PERS	Personification
SPECINT	Specific interest
SPECPL	Special place
LIGHT/DARK	Light or dark
ENVAWA	Environmental awareness
DETAILDESC	Detailed description
SPEED	Fast movement
REAL	Realist view
GROUND	Features on ground
DIRT	Mud, dirt, muck

APPENDIX 10
INITIAL THEMATIC INDEX FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF PLACE AMONG PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

1. AFFECTIVE
    1.1 Like
    1.2 Dislike
    1.3 Noise
    1.4 Smell
    1.5 Fear & perceived danger
    1.6 Humour
    1.7 Other

2. CONTEXT
    2.1 Reference to past experience
    2.2 Reference to home
    2.3 Simile
    2.4 Other children
    2.5 Other

3. SHAPE
    3.1 Identifying shapes
    3.3 Other

4. PATTERN
    4.1 Identifying patterns
    4.2 Other

5. NUMBER
    5.1 Counting objects
    5.2 Other

6. COLOUR & LIGHT
    6.1 Identifying colours
    6.2 Favourite colours
    6.3 Shadows
    6.4 Dark
    6.5 Other

7. IMAGINATION/FANTASY
    7.1 Animals
    7.2 Fairy stories & traditional stories & myths
    7.3 Developing stories
    7.4 Other

8. PLACE USE
    8.1 Identifying
    8.2 Suggested
    8.3 Environmental awareness

9. WATER
    9.1 Water features
    9.2 Movement
    9.3 Response to
        9.3.1 smell
        9.3.2 movement
        9.3.3 sound
        9.3.4 danger
        9.3.5 imagination
        9.3.6 animals
    9.4 Ice
    9.5 Other

10. ON THE GROUND
    10.1 Features
    10.2 Other

11. OTHER KEY ISSUES
    11.1 Near and far – issues of focus and perspective
    11.2 Non-recognition
    11.3 Specific details of a place
    11.4 Movement
    11.5 The unexpected/unusual
    11.6 Other

FINAL THEMATIC INDEX FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF PLACE AMONG PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

1. AFFECTIVE RESPONSES
    1.1 Like
    1.2 Dislike
    1.3 Emotional reaction
    1.4 Sounds
    1.5 Smells
    1.6 Fear/perceived danger

2. CONTEXT
    2.1 Reference to past experience
    2.2 Reference to home
    2.3 Simile
    2.4 Reference to other children
    2.5 Reference to place use
    2.6 Environmental awareness

3. SHAPE, PATTERN & NUMBER
    3.1 Identifying shapes
    3.2 Drawing shapes
    3.3 Identifying patterns
    3.4 Drawing patterns
    3.5 Counting numbers

4. COLOUR, LIGHT & DARK
    4.1 Identifying colours
    4.2 Using colour in artwork
    4.3 Light and dark
    4.4 Shadows

5. IMAGINATION
    5.1 Animals
    5.2 Traditional myths, stories & folklore
    5.3 Developing a story

6. WATER, ON THE GROUND & SPEED & MOVEMENT
    6.1 Water features
    6.2 Ground features
    6.3 Speed & movement

7. OTHER KEY ISSUES
    7.1 Near and far – issues of perspective
    7.2 Non-recognition of places
    7.3 Places of special interest
    7.4 The unexpected and the unusual

APPENDIX 11: THEMATIC CHARTS

THEMATIC CHART 1: COLOUR, LIGHT AND DARK

	1.1 Identifying colours	1.2 Using colour in artwork	1.3 Light and dark	1.4 Shadows
WILL **Durham**	37 Red leaves 117 Red leaves 118 Yellowy leaves 152 Green water 247 Red cars	169 Red used for crocodile		
BETH **Durham**	11 Yellow & blue boots 13 Red, brown leaves 42 Yellow flowers 72 Blue sky 101 Autumn leaves 106 Leaves turn yellowy-brown* 111 Rainbow colours – red, blue & pink 114 Fave colour pink* 126 Had 7 pink felt-tip pens at home 142 Black under swings 148 Picked out blue, red & green in bus station 163 Asked if I knew pink was fave colour 165 Had pink bedroom and pink socks 167 Pink flowers at seaside; influenced it being fave pic 170 Asked what the blue and green things were (bins) 181 Green in wood pic	111-118 B drew rainbow and selected colours carefully 123-4 Used yellows and oranges for autumn picture	18 B hid with friend in a corner during walk that was dark but not too dark* 28 Pond was all dark 48 Identified reflections in river 69 Road going up hill to SoE was a dark place 72 Described dark area under trees and then sunny ahead with blue sky* 132 Pic of field was rather dark and B asked if it was night* 174 Tunnel with bins was a bit dark and a bit black	
SOPHIE **Durham**	19 Leaves reddy and orange 21 Scattery patterns of red* 64 Pink paving stones 70 Saw something red on ground 172 Green traffic lights 186 White waves	127 Drew river in blue 140 Chose blue, red & purple for picture 150 Used red to make shadows on river		32 Identified own shadow on ground 84 Identified shadow of railings on bridge* 150 Shadows (reflections) on river*
TIM **Durham**	27 Red on road sign* 45 Green on pond 50 Black at bottom of pond 64 Red boots and red hat of W 71 Identified many colours by river 204 Green trees in wood pic	132 Blue used for pond	50 Dark at bottom of pond 82-6 Didn't like dark photos (landscape of trees and cathedral, overgrown path) – it's all dark* 86 Didn't like dark places in general* 91 Liked sunny day*	73 Shadows of 2 people in one of his photos
ROSS **Drumlithie**		114-131 Used variety of colours for pipe picture	41 Burn flowing in ditch a bit dark	

ANDREW **Drumlithie**	24 Black around hotel windows	163 Specifically said didn't want to colour in his pic of steeple*	207 Asked what 'dark thing' was in tunnel pic	99 Identified own shadow
PATTY **Drumlithie**	13 Blue sky 28 Orange leaves 35 Sky was blue-blue to whitey-blue in photo* 137 Blue, green 148 White	130 Used lots of blue in pic then green; black for frost as no white		68 Giant shadows and own shadow* 87 Own shadow and looked like wore a fairy dress* 91 Shadow looked like had stones in it
GRETA **Drumlithie**	36 All blue sky 63-66 Colours of bush – yellow, red, green and black berries 169 Water in boat pic was bluey*	110-115 Drew on blackboard with specifically blue the rain and red the sun		13-17 Several photos had shadows and tried to identify who it was* 40 Shadow of member of staff 45 Shadows of self and R
GAIL **Fraserburgh**		88-106 Whilst drawing used variety of colours for the garden and each was for specific reason*		
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**	28 Pink hat and pink bobble on hat 147 Blue buses 166 Blue, yellow, green, pink in sea pic 167 Pink fave colour			
MATT **Fraserburgh**			50 & 81 Dark drain*	
AMY **Fraserburgh**	21 Yellow line on road 68 Green grass	97 Prepared before drawing – purple and blue pens. Added yellow for sun bits	60 Drain was black and awful dark* 148 Tunnel dark &smelly	

THEMATIC CHART 2: SHAPE, PATTERN AND NUMBER

	2.1 Identifying shapes	2.2 Drawing shapes	2.3 Identifying patterns	2.4 Drawing patterns	2.5 Counting
WILL Durham	22 Recognised rectangle shape on brick wall* 45 Cross on top of war memorial and rectangular step* 55 Suggested windows were square 71 'Ziggy-zag' shape of brickwork by pond 86-7 Framed a photo in a square with railings * 147 Square flagstones	30 Drew shape of bollard in air 49 Made triangle and diamond shapes with fingers 158 Drew bend in River Wear* 222 Made shape of tunnel with hands	139 Asked what pattern was on war memorial		179 Counted 4 sheep in field pic 196-8 Counted buses in bus station pic
BETH Durham					
SOPHIE Durham	69 Suggested paving stones were square		15 Leaves on 'floor' made pattern 21 Leaves- 'scattery patterns of red'* 35 Leaves in mud made a pattern 42 Marks made by dog	64-7 Described using hands the herringbone pattern of paving stones*	86 Counted 21 railings in her bridge photo 167 Counted swings in playground pic
TIM Durham	27 Identified round street sign 177 Identified lots of circles in pic of bus station carpark 187 Square houses in street pic 209 Rectangle shape of office block		62 & 125 Marks made by dog in mud – 'is it dog feet'?*	136-8 Drew dot patterns on pond	
ROSS Drumlithie		9 Demonstrated shape of tree branches with arms* 60 Demonstrated shape of pipe with hands		114-129 Described and drew patterns of pipes*	
ANDREW Drumlithie	25 Triangle shape above hotel entrance* 147 Triangle shape on top of steeple 157 Identified cross 'thing' on top of steeple 180 Identified	146-158 Drew shape of Drumlithie steeple*	30 Identified criss-cross wire on gate	146-158 Drew line patterns on steeple	217 Counted 34 cars on motorway

	diamonds on road in bus pic 182 Identified arrows on road ditto				
PATTY **Drumlithie**			91 Identified patterns of stones on road 119 Patterns of leaves frozen in puddle – 'it's all patterndy'*		
GRETA **Drumlithie**	133 Identified cross on top of steeple*	126 Drew shape of steeple			129 Counted 8 horizontal lines on steeple
GAIL **Fraserburgh**			19 Attention on pattern cracks in pavement		
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**		71 Made shape with hands to show shape of her garden 180 Made shape of boat with hands			159 & 190 Counted pics and photos as went through them
MATT **Fraserburgh**					
AMY **Fraserburgh**	53 Zig-zag shape of roof tops in photo*			108 Drew a road with dot patterns for surface	38 Counted 7 windows on house

THEMATIC CHART 3: SENSORY RESPONSES

	3.1 Sounds	3.2 Smells
WILL **Durham**	25 Imitated car engine 107 Imitated police siren* 108 Said road was busy	
BETH **Durham**	54 Imitated river with swishing sounds*	32 Pond was smelly as water was bad*
SOPHIE **Durham**	59-60 Splash if fall in water; 'spashy-splash' 79 Suggested could hear a bird in trees 201 Motorway pic very noisy as lots of cars	42-4 Mud by river was very smelly. Smell of mud was 'pooh'*
TIM **Durham**	21 Water 'splooshes' in drain*	60 Stinky mud near river* 109 Wondered if rubbish made smell in rubbish pic*
ROSS **Drumlithie**		
ANDREW **Drumlithie**	206 Imitated noise of rubbish lorry	
PATTY **Drumlithie**	57 Imitated water in well – whish-whish* 153 Thought field pic quiet as sheep not baaing as lying down	
GRETA **Drumlithie**	52 Suggested could hear car on photo of road	
GAIL **Fraserburgh**	148 Described the motorway pic as fair noisy. Imitated car noise	
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**	59 Imitated fire engine siren 62 Said didn't hear anything during the walk	
MATT **Fraserburgh**	18 Imitated car noise 57 Made growling noise of imaginary beast* 61 Imitated fire engine siren 137 Imitated car crash	129 The rubbish pic would be very smelly; 'it'd reek' and was 'real stinky'*
AMY **Fraserburgh**	77 Imitated bird sound with tweet-tweet	28-32 'All yuk' – smell of puddle 148 Tunnel with bins was 'pooh' as it was dark*

THEMATIC CHART 4: AFFECTIVE RESPONSES

	4.1 Like	4.2 Dislike	4.3 Emotional reaction	4.4 Fear and perceived danger
WILL Durham	92 Liked being on bridge & looking at water* 100 Liked big garden 110 Fav. photo was bridge 181 Liked field picture 194 Liked picture of swings 202 Liked bus station 240 Liked boats 254-5 Fav. picture of wood	247 Thought motorway picture was too small	72 Found idea of snake and croc being stuck in pond funny* 85 Pleased with photo* 100 Described garden as beautiful as trees and big* 117 Looked through viewfinder; view of trees was nice 156 Said he was good at drawing	40-1 Understood the fence around building site was for safety reasons 151-2 Imagined snapping crocodile in pond so have to keep distance 187 If sea is rough then can't go in it
BETH Durham	37 Preferred trees to pond in SoE garden* 58 Liked horses and the ride-on at swings 145 Liked going on swings 169 Strong liking of sea picture 190 Liked boats	28 Didn't like pond 82 Pulled face when described pond* 174 Didn't like rubbish pic as too dark.*	17 Hiding place in corner on walk was funny as we didn't see her 32 Pond water was bad and so it smelled 48 Described view from bridge as beautiful* 84 Pond was not nice 155-7 Described river water in pic as very cold* 174 Rubbish pic was not nice 191 Large boat in boat pic was not nice, but was funny 197 (as in odd)*	142 Under the swings in pic there was back surface to stop hurting self if fall*
SOPHIE Durham	89 Liked leaves on the ground photo 166 Liked swings 178 Liked rivers in general	44 Mud by river 97 Photo of 'only the road'* 179 Didn't like street pic 189 Wood was 'yuk' as 'all muddy'*	44 Found smell of mud, pooh' funny 59 Laughed about falling in river 75 Was 'happy' about tree photo as was pretty 157 Pic of field was boring* 163 Found pic of sheep funny as had 'sticky' ears* 184 Pic of seaside described as very cold* 219 Swings were 'good fun'	59 Without railings on bridge would fall in* 97 Danger of road and cars 166 If go high on swings will hurt self* 186 Inferred rough sea was dangerous*
TIM Durham	90 Liked photo with best friend in best 177 Liked bus station as buses, cars and lorry 204 Liked wood pic best as green and lots of trees*	60 Didn't like it by river as rubbish and mud 85 Didn't like dark places* 166 Didn't like field pic 184 Didn't like river pic 189 Didn't like street pic as no people	79 Laughed when suggested seat back was railway 110-1 Felt people who left rubbish were bad people* 115 Agreed it made him angry* 202 Said wood pic was beautiful*	14 Facial expression of fear re: deep drain* 52 Care needed near pond in case fall in* 86 Fear of dark places as can't see
ROSS Drumlithie	75 Liked his tractor photo 138 Liked pic of field 156 Liked sea pic 173 Liked boat in	165 The rubbish pic was not a fine place to go* 179 Didn't like shopping	138 Field pic was nice 156 The sea was a good pic 165 Rubbish pic was 'not fine'	26 Deep ditch that might not be able to get out of* 57-64 Iron grating over deep hole – might fall in and not get out*

ROSS (cont)	harbour pic 184-6 Liked boats best		173 The boat's fine 178 Motorway pic was OK 179 Liked shopping in big toy shop* 183 Shop boring	143 Fell off swing
ANDREW **Drumlithie**	118 Best photo was Drum steeple 201 Liked sea pic 220 Sometimes liked shops	30-36 Disliked place where big dog lived* 112 Didn't like tractor prints 171 Didn't like swings as got hurt	36 Hated place where big dog lived* 220 Shops looked boring	20 Have to be careful on road as fast cars and big lorries 29-34 Fear big dog could get over wire fence* 72 Iron grating over deep hole could give way 171 Fell over & hit head
PATTY **Drumlithie**	30 Liked trees 156 Liked field pic 182 Liked wood as fairies there	191 Didn't like motorway	110 Frost was sparkling 124 Leaves frozen in ice were pretty* 156 Field pic was quite nice	98 Ice slippery and can fall over*
GRETA **Drumlithie**	146 Liked bus station		15 Found shadow shape in photo funny 68 Found J's shadow funny as head looked very small* 122 Said was difficult to draw Drum steeple	
GAIL **Fraserburgh**	59 Liked spiky plant in garden 69 Liked garden with grass photo 113-6 Liked the swings pic	51 & 73 Disliked a garden without anything in it 142 Didn't want to go on boat	43 Garden photo was fine 51 One garden was 'awful plain'* 59 Spiky plant was funny 145 Described motorway pic as fine 157 Woods were described as 'scary'*	136 & 157 Imagined bear living in wood and frightened it would attack her*
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**	83 Liked photo of garden best 206 Liked swings pic best		45 Puddle was 'clarty'* 198 Shops looked boring	47 Running on pavement as tripped
MATT **Fraserburgh**	30 Liked his photo of road and cars best		12 Proud of shoe photo 18 Said passing van driver was happy & had waved & smiled at him* 30 Angry with me when confusion over photos 61 Hoped there would be a fire and people would die* 87 Drew sad man 122 Frustrated	
AMY **Fraserburgh**	116 Liked pic of field 133 Strong like of river pic (but didn't want to go there) 141 Strong preference for street pic	28 & 79 Strong dislike of her puddle photo* 154 Didn't like boat pic as doesn't like boats	28 -32 'Yuk' about dirty puddle 79 Further emphasised puddle with yuk-yukky-yuk* 116 Pic of field was fine 90 Beach at F'burgh was cold 130 Bus station was 'big place	

THEMATIC CHART 5: CONTEXT

	5.1 Reference to past experience	5.2 Reference to home	5.3 Simile	5.4 Reference to other children	5.5 Reference to place use	5.6 Environmental awareness
WILL Durham	186 Ref to swings pic; had been there and knew them 207 Struggled to put river pic in context of river he knew 216 As above with sea pic 226 Asked if rubbish pic was near my house 244 Was asked if been on boat and said didn't think on one in pic 251-3 Had been to shops previous day but not like ones in pic* 256 Struggled to say why liked wood pic as it was like somewhere he knew	100 Garden in photo was bigger than his at home	158 Whilst drawing river described it as going like this and made curve 185 Tree was like a monster or a plane*	Referred to other children on 2 occasions ; 32 & 51	40 Identified fence round building site for safety reasons 42 Bench in SoE gardens for sitting on when tired* 71 Brick edge around pond to keep croc and snakes in* 107 Large gates in garden to close it in at night	
BETH Durham	60 Talked about riding a real horse whilst on holiday 106 Referred to seeing red leaves somewhere before	43 Flowers a bit like the ones in her garden at home 138 Referred to garden at home 167 Referred to colour of bedroom	42 Flowers by river were like yellow stars*	Referred to other children on 5 occasions: 9, 11, 14, 62 & 70	17 Corner for hiding in* 56 Playground for riding on horse and going on swings 134 Field pic could have a picnic there 157 River pic could have a picnic on grassy bank*	
SOPHIE Durham	178 Compared river in pic to river in Durham 182 Previous experience of seaside was that was always cold*	166-7 Has swing at her house but smaller than one in pic* 170 Brother has buses at home but are red not blue as in pic 205 Has big blue car at home not like cars in pic	16 Tree with big branches looked like arms*	Referred to other children on 2 occasions: 7 & 47	50 Bridge was for getting over river 58 Railings on bridge there to stop people falling in	

TIM Durham	47-51 Recalled story I'd told him about my dog falling into water* 169 remembered going to the swings 195 Struggled to match flowers in the sea pic with something he'd seen the day before 200 Had been to Botanic Gardens recently and saw flowers there*	100 Dad had camera at home 194 His house didn't look like the street house pic	77 Bench back looked like railway* 179 Multi-storey car park looked like toy garage in nursery*	Referred to other children on 6 other occasions; 9, 32,41, 63, 68 & 98		60 Rubbish and broken glass in mud by river 107-118 Talked about above and that people should put rubbish in bin like at nursery*
ROSS Drumlithie	30-34 Recognised farm crops and tractor etc from past experience 143 Recalled falling off swing and hurting knee*	138 At his house can see field and some sheep in a field 170 Has small stream near home like one in wood pic*		Referred to other children on 2 occasions; 48 & 56	30-34 Knowledge about farming and land use for crops and animals	
ANDREW Drumlithie	134 Went on same walk with Dad 195 Thought sea pic was nearby* 214 Brother makes model ships but didn't think could make one like that in pic 222 Wondered if shops were in Aberdeen	9-10 Camera at home 82-3 Talked of garden at home which was bigger and had veg patch* 212 Had den at home where can hide*		Referred to other children on 1 occasion; 87	17 Hotel in Drum where you can stay 77 Use of 'bar' wire (barbed wire) to keep people out of field* 197-9 If sunny could have nice time at seaside, play on sand and go in water 212 Build den under trees – wood pic*	
PATTY Drumlithie	194 Went shopping with Mum in Stonehaven but shops didn't look like those in pic*	158 Has swing at home		Referred to other children on 4 occasions 6, 25, 38 & 93	50-4 Referred to well as for horses and people can fill up buckets* 176 Could paddle at seaside	
GRETA Drumlithie	58 Knew I didn't live in Drum as remembered pics I'd shown her 154 Said her Nan lived in one of the houses in pic*			Referred to other children on 5 occasions; 18, 26, 34, 45 & 58		

GAIL **Fraserburgh**	140 Talked about going on a boat but not like one in pic* 153 Went to shop to buy sweeties	85 Talked about her garden and that it's shared with neighbours* 105 Her garden is nice but different from the one in her photos		Referred to other children on 4 occasions; 15, 27, 33 & 39	142 Suggested could stand on side (quay) if not going on boat	
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**	18 Talked about her photo of school but doesn't go there yet 36 Didn't know house 90 Remembered nursery trip to fire station 141 Went to park and played on swings and climbing frame 149 Referred to bus station pic as she and Mum go on bus to see Gran* 182 Thought boat in pic was in Fraserburgh* 187 Said no motorway in Fraserburgh as the roads weren't big enough* 196 Liked shopping but not at the shops in the pic	39 House photo she took looks a bit like her house but hers is bigger* 71 Said her garden was 'this big'		Referred to other children on 2 occasions; 28 & 44	58 Fire station is where fire engines kept 182 Boats are used for fishing	
MATT **Male** **4.11** **Fraserburgh**	110 Goes to park with friends to play on swings and slide 120 Tried to place street pic in local context*			Referred to other children on 2 occasions; 2 & 5	133 Could play in burn in wood pic	
AMY **Female** **3.5** **Fraserburgh**	87 Didn't often go to beach in Fraserburgh as too cold* 120 Went to park with aunty and went on swings 165 Ref to sea pic; went on holiday to Spain by plane where hotel and swimming pool outside*	39 Had satellite dish at home*	43 It looks like a birdie eating some food (of stone statue)	Referred to other children on 2 occasions; 10 & 32	38 Identified object on side of house for television (satellite dish) 41 Bird table for bird food	28 Noticed rubbish near puddle – yuk!* 120-4 vandalism at park and swing damaged; thought done by older boys*

THEMATIC CHART 6: IMAGINATION

	6.1 Animals	6.2 Traditional myths, stories & folklore	6.3 Developing a story
WILL **Durham**	67 Crocs and snakes in pond 150 Croc 231 Rabbits* 233 Little and very big fishes living in small stream (wood pic) 235 Croc ditto		67-72 Crocs and snakes in pond, kept in by zig-zag edge* 149-52 Very big croc in deep water that comes out and snaps at people so have to keep distance* 233-9 Ever larger animals living in stream from little fishes to crocs
BETH **Durham**			
SOPHIE **Durham**	31 Suggested fish in river		
TIM **Durham**	56 Suggested fish in pond and river 138-46 Spiders and fish in pond		138-46 Drew spiders in pond and talked about fish eating them*
ROSS **Drumlithie**			56-65, 114-32 Talked about the covered drain and the pipes underground*
ANDREW **Drumlithie**		45-51 Told the local story about Drum steeple*	60-72 Developed story of bodies in drain hole – 'there were dead bodies' and how they rot*
PATTY **Drumlithie**		70-2, 98 Jack Frost* 87 On being a fairy 108-110 Jack frost* 127 Wanted to draw a princess 147-8 Jack Frost 182-3 Story of a princess and a witch in the woods protected by fairies* 203 Liked wood pic best as fairies there	
GRETA **Drumlithie**			
GAIL **Fraserburgh**	135 Bear		133-9 Developed story of a 'critter' in a hole in the woods. Maybe a bear and so wouldn't go there as could attack her. *
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**			
MATT **Fraserburgh**	79 Spider		55-9 Growling 'Beastie' hiding down the drain* 79 Drew spider trapped in drain 87-99 Story of window cleaner who was sad as bucket stolen*
AMY **Fraserburgh**			

THEMATIC CHART 7: WATER, ON THE GROUND AND SPEED AND MOVEMENT

|	7.1 Water features	7.2 Ground features	7.3 Speed and movement
WILL **Durham**	11 River 64 Asked if feature in a photo was the pond 67-72, 149-52 Pond central to story about croc** 81 River 92 Liked looking at water under bridge* 154-61 Drew R. Wear 165-9 Drew pond 214 Identified sea in pic 242 Wide extent of water in boats pic	37 Grass 147 Flagstones	24 Cars go down hill very fast*
BETH **Durham**	28, 32 Pond and 'bad' water 39 River 46 River 154 Water in river pic was very cold	12 & 101 Picked up leaves to take home 17 Corner to hide in* 42 Took photo of flowers 142 Black surface under swings 146 Writing on road*	
SOPHIE **Durham**	26 & 27 River 27 Puddles 35 River 82 River 112 River 127 Drew river 186 Sea pic had rough sea	11 Grass 13 & 15 Leaves on floor 21 Pattern of leaves 33 & 41 Mud 64 Path with paving stones 69 Red thing on ground 105 Wanted leaves in photo 133 Drew grass	118 River water was going round* 130 When drew river the water was going very fast*
TIM **Durham**	5 River 14 Drain with water at the bottom 45 Pond 63 River 71 Puddles 133-5 Pond* 197 Seaside 207 Asked if boats on sea in boat pic	14 The drain and underground 60 Rubbish on ground 71 Puddles 73 Grass 109-18 Rubbish on ground 123 Examined dog prints* 161 Grass in field pic	
ROSS **Drumlithie**	21 Burn in hole in ditch 41 and 171 Talked of burn and the one at his house* 56-61 Water underground and pipe system 114-129 Drew pipes 173 'Water again'! in boat pic and was deep*	34 Crop in field 56-61 Drain hole 106 Stones in Millennium Garden (focus on ground)	178 Cars slow on motorway pic*
ANDREW **Drumlithie**	58 Water in burn 60 Water in hole 195 Seaside 199 Can go in sea 210 Saw small stream in wood pic	60-70 Drain hole 82 Garden 112 Photo of tractor prints* 140 Photo of stones on road 180-2 Remarked on road markings*	20 Fast cars
PATTY **Drumlithie**	50 The well and its use by horses and people with buckets* 96 Burn 173 Sea 176 Paddling in sea	11 Saw ground in photo 96 Hole where water came out 77 Ice puddle* 140 Drew grass	96 Water in burn went fast

GRETA **Drumlithie**	31 Water in a hole and the village well	34 Deep hole by well 98 Mentioned playgroup garden	32 Movement of water coming out and down into well*
GAIL **Fraserburgh**	82 During walk talked about empty pond in garden	13-35 Interest in ground ('because it's near')– *pictures of road surface, white lines on road, pavement cracks, children's feet, spot of 'wet' and spot of dry 51 Garden is 'awful plain' as no grass	
CLAIRE **Fraserburgh**	44 Puddle 182 Sea	44 Puddle 47 Fell over on pavement 68 Garden	
MATT **Fraserburgh**	46 Drain with water a long way down 133 Water in wood pic and can play there*	46 The drain	18 Van went real fast* 61 Fire engines go very fast 71 Drew car going fast with wheels spinning*
AMY **Fraserburgh**	28 Puddle dirty and M splashed her coat 63 Thought water in drain was a well	20-21 Photo of road with yellow line* 53 Drain cover and asked what writing said*	

THEMATIC CHART 8: OTHER KEY ISSUES

	8.1 Near and far – issues of perspective	8.2 Non-recognition of places	8.3 Places of special interest	8.4 The unexpected and the unusual
WILL **Durham**	22 rectangle shape on wall of interest not car* 37 Photo 4 'fuzzy' as slightly out of focus* 86 Framed a photo with railings on bridge 118 Wanted specific building in photo* 138 Looked through viewfinder and identified features* 147 Close up of flagstones 154-60 Photo of river looking down 203-6 Could identify elements of river pic near and far* 231 Could identify very small features in wood pic	27 Bollards 61 Initially, the pond 77 Photo of looking through fence 179 Field pic* 227 Rubbish bins pic	40-1 Building site 45-7, 138-47 War memorial detail 67-72, 149-52 Pond 85-93 On bridge 100-5 Large garden 154-60 River Wear artwork 229-239 Wood pic	22 See 7.1* 67-72 Story of pond 86 Framed a photo with railings on bridge 154-60 Drew pic of bend in River Wear *
BETH **Durham**	72 Commented on dark under trees with light overhead 89-90 Talked about near and far whilst taking photos* 97 Looked up to trees overhead 146 See 7.4 160 Picked out very small animal detail in street pic	170 Didn't understand rubbish pic	17 Place to hide 28 Pond 41 Yellow flowers 142 Safety mat under swings 165 Anything pink	111-8 Drew rainbow that saw on walk 146 Saw letter A in road writing and identified it with same in name*
SOPHIE **Durham**	13-24, 103-8 Close up focus on leaves on ground* 27 Close up of puddles 31 Focussed on mud 64 Focussed on paving stones* 73 Focussed on single leaf 117-8 Crouched down to take photo of water then long distance of bridge 172 Picked out detail of green traffic light*	28 Unsure that river was the river 40 Unsure of footprints in mud 159 Didn't recognise sheep in field pic 175 Didn't recognise multi-storey car park 210 Didn't recognise shopping mall	42 Smelly mud 50-61 Railings and shadows on bridge 147-53 River and reflections 64 Pinky paving stones 182-7 Sea and waves	13 Commented that a leaf was hiding in the grass 85 The shadows of the railings and photo of railings* Overall sense of detail
TIM **Durham**	27 Deliberate photo of sign in mid-distance 34 Detail of graffiti on wall* Many close-ups of friends 67 Distant shot of bridge 109-118 Close-up of mud and rubbish 125 Dog footprints	24 Non-recognition of overgrown path 42 Non-recognition of Durham cathedral*	14, 109-118 Drain and depth 27 Specific choice of road sign 45 Pond and story of my dog	14, 109-118 Only child to show interest in drain 60 Environmental concern re: rubbish* 77 Back of bench seen as a railway 178 Compared shape of multi-storey car park to toy garage in nursery

|				
ROSS Drumlithie	5 Long distance shots of road and trees 17 Steeple in distance 30-4 Farmland in distance* 147 Interested more in distant things 168 Confused by perspective of wood pic		30-4, 75-6, 108-112, 138-141 Farming 56-65 The drain	Picture drew of underground pipes
ANDREW Drumlithie	17 Mid-distance photos 42 realised couldn't fit whole of steeple in* 45 Close up of steeple noticeboard* 77 Close up of fence not landscape behind 127 Photos of far distant landscape 137 Been to distant hills	29 Didn't know location of place in village 202 Didn't understand rubbish pic.	Drumlithie steeple in detail and drawing	Knowledge and interest in steeple* 51 Particularly the myth of carrying it inside* 67 Knowledge about death and decay*
PATTY Drumlithie	12 Close –up shoe and then just the sky 16 Steeple looked like it was falling over and too big to get in* 25 Looked up at trees 33 far off trees 40 Liked close-ups of frost and ice* 65 Tall light 91 Stones in shadow Drawing showed both near and more distant perspectives	43 Didn't recognise tractor marks	13, 34 Sky 70 Frost on leaves and grass* 77 The ice puddle* 81 Leaves frozen into puddle 108 Ice puddles and frosty grass 116-123 Ice puddle	Story and detail about Jack Frost and intrigue with ice puddles*
GRETA Drumlithie	20 Mid-distant of houses and steeple 36 The sky 48 Fields in far distance 65 Close up of berries*	24 Didn't recognise beech hedge	13, 40, 46 Interest in shadows	Very active interest in shadows Asked to take photo with my camera of berries*
GAIL Fraserburgh	13-58 Close-up of ground Garden mid-distance	G had problems throughout task	Ground The garden	Story about the bear in the woods Very interested in ground features Pictured self playing in garden
CLAIRE Fraserburgh	Largely mid-distance and especially a garden with things in it	13-37 Had problems with her own photos at first and didn't recognise them*	Very interested in a specific garden we saw and the things in it. Also drew it.	75, 96 Very insistent that Fireman Sam didn't live in fire station as not real*
MATT	44 Mix of perspectives from near drain to fire station in distance 106 Mentioned grass close-up and distant trees in pic*	Had problems due to short attention span and disinterest	10 Interested in window cleaner Drain	60 Comment on walk that wanted to see fire engine and hoped people would die* 87 Story of sad window cleaner*
AMY	Interested in near detail of road, drain cover* Mid-distance details of a house and garden 116 Far details of clouds	17, 24, 46 Thought some of her photos did not belong to her	20 Patterns on ground also seen in artwork 38 House 28-35 Puddle 120-4 Swings as something happened	A drew herself looking at the road*

APPENDIX 12: DURHAM ARTWORK
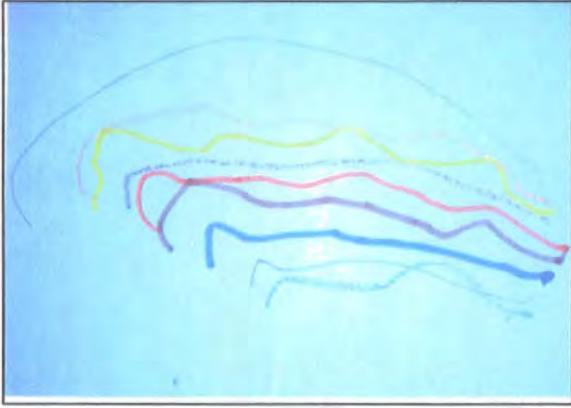
A1: Rainbow by Beth, Durham

A2: River by Sophie, Durham
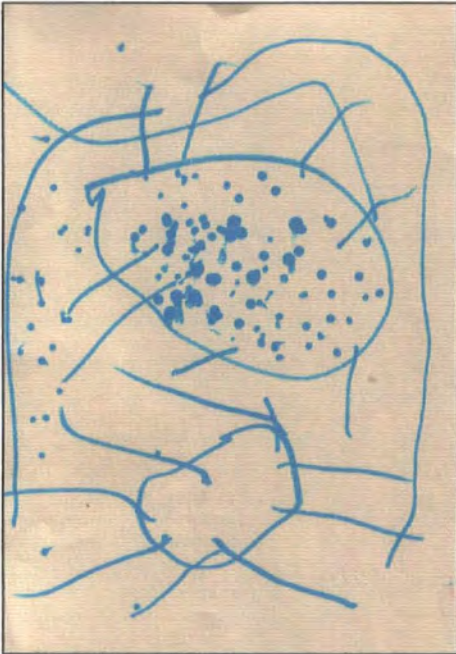
A3: Spiders in pond by
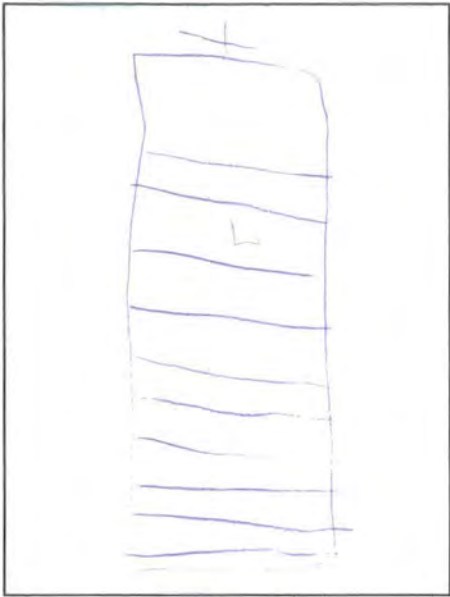Tim, Durham
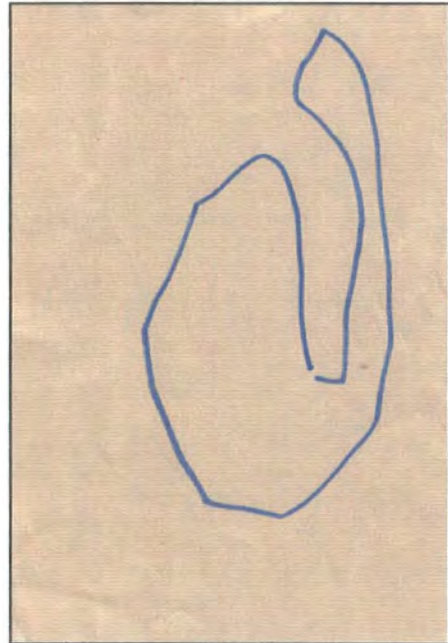
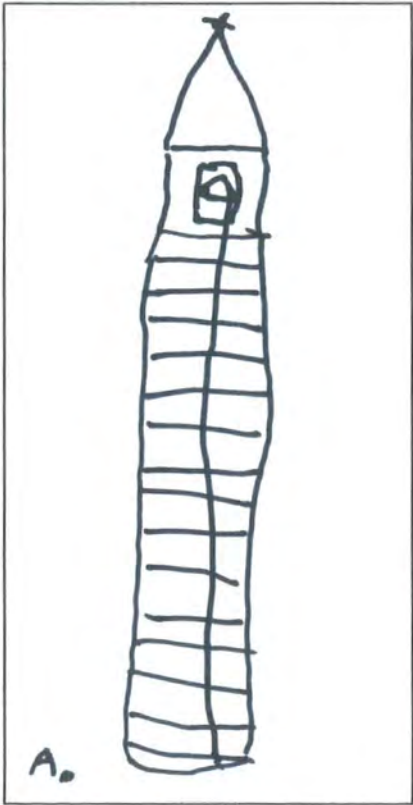A4: Bend in River
Wear by Will, Durham

APPENDIX 12: DRUMLITHIE ARTWORK

A5: Frost by Patty, Drumlithie

A6: Steeple by Greta,
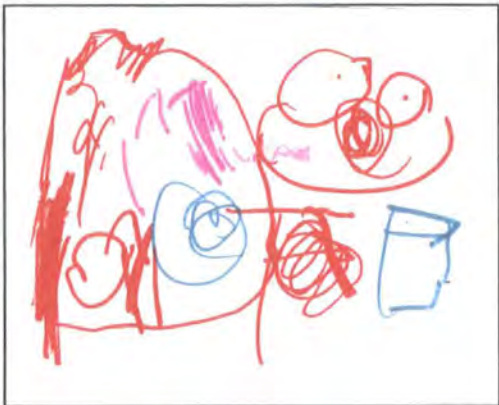Drumlithie

A7: Steeple by Andrew,
Drumlithie

A8: Pipes by Ross,
Drumlithie

APPENDIX 12: FRASERBURGH ARTWORK

A9: Ground by Amy,
Fraserburgh

A10: Taking a picture
by Claire, Fraserburgh

A11: Garden by Gail,
Fraserburgh

A12: Fast car by Matt,
Fraserburgh

APPENDIX 13
DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN

BETH, DURHAM
AGE: 3.10

1. General contribution
Beth was a thoughtful child who stayed on task most of the time but had a couple of lapses of concentration when tired.

2. The affective task
- 4 dislikes; 7 likes
- Favourite place: the sea
- Expressed opinions clearly in terms of like/dislike and reasons why
- Picked out fine details of pictures – letters on road, colour of traffic light, black safety mat under swings

3. Photographs
- Beth's photographs covered the whole range of the walk with pictures in close-up and medium distance
- When viewed as a set the photographs have the following themes – colour, light and shade
- Favourite photograph: friends walking along path

4. Interview
- Great interest and recognition of colours
- Interest in contrasts of light and shade
- Expressed affective responses
- Used facial expressions
- Strong references to colour

5. Artwork
- picture of a rainbow

Chose colours with care and used them for specific purposes

6. Beth's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Colour, darkness & shadows: identifying colours**

Line no.

11	Sophie's got yellow boots on and Tim's got blue
13	All red there
20	They're brown
42	They're a bit like yellow stars
72	…with blue sky
101	It's autumn. We----(?) that's why the leaves go (?) colours
106-7	And some leaves just go a yellowy colour. Those there are brown
111-2	I need *lots* of colours for this. It's going to be a rainbow. There's red and blue and I'm doing the pink
123	I'm putting yellow and orange like that
124	Now purple
126-7	I've got a really big box of felt-tips at home and there are seven pink ones. Not the same pink but different pinks.
138	It's a white table
142	There's some black
148	Blue buses and green there and red. And a blue bit in the sky
163	Do you know what my favourite colour is?
165	It's pink like this…the flowers
167	My bedroom is pink and today I've pink socks on
170	Why is this blue and green thing here?
181	Green (in response to 'what can you see'?)
185	There and here. But not pink
198	The seaside one with the pink flowers

- **Colour, darkness and shadows**

Line no.

18	It was dark there but not too dark
28	It was all dark

69	It's a dark place
72	...and then it's sunny there with blue sky.
132	...the sun isn't shining, is it? It's very cloudy. Is it night time?
174	But I don' think that place is nice and it's a bit black

- **Affective responses**

Line no.

17	We hid there. Janet didn't see us! [laughs]
28	I didn't like it so much
32	The water's bad
34-37	*Did you like this place better?* Yes. *Why do you like it better?* Cos I do
48	It's beautiful
54	[makes very gentle swishing noise] (noise river makes)
58	Yeah I like horses that's why
80	My favourite is *this*
82	[pulls face] (in response to pond picture)
84	No. It was a bit----(?) It wasn't very nice was it?
142	...so when you fall down then it doesn't hurt you
145	I like going on the swings
155	And it's very cold
157	...the water makes you do this [shivers and hugs self]
169	I like it lots and lots
174	But I don't think this place is nice
190	It's nice
194	It's funny

- **Other key issues: the unexpected and the unusual**
- Beth chose to draw a rainbow. We saw a rainbow at the start of the walk but it did not appear in the photographs
- The pre-dominance of colour is very marked to the extent that Beth 'answers' in colours

SOPHIE, DURHAM
AGE: 3.5

1. General contribution
Sophie was a lively, confident participant with a good level of concentration. Sophie was particularly competent at expressing her opinions.

2. The affective task
- 5 dislikes; 6 likes
- Favourite place: the swings
- Expressed opinions clearly in terms of like/dislike and reasons why – happiness, boredom
- Concentrated on fine detail – colour of distant traffic light, mud in wood

3. Photographs
- Sophie was very specific about what she wanted to photograph
- Sophie's photographs covered the whole range of the walk with the majority of pictures in close-up
- Almost half Sophie's photos included the river
- When viewed as a set the photographs have the following themes – pattern, the ground, shadows
- Favourite photograph: leaves on ground

4. Interview
- Interest in near detail – leaves on floor, bit of red on pavement
- Interest in patterns and shadows
- Expressed affective responses confidently – smells, attractive features
- Sense of humour – found smell of mud funny

5. Artwork
- picture of the river with shadows

Chose colours with care and used them for specific purposes

6. Sophie's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Colour, darkness & shadow: identifying colours**

Line no.
19	Reddy. And some are orange sort of.
21	Scattery patterns of red.
65	…pinky colour
67	But they are pinky.
70.	It's a red…
130	The blue's going to run out.
142	I want blue and red. And I want green. Where's the red?
148	Now I need some red for here.
152	Is there purple?
170	His buses are red though.
172	It says go 'cos it's green.
205	What colour's your car? …the car Mummy drives is blue…

- **shadows**

Line no.
32	And my shadow there.
84	This is a shadow of that.
150	It's the shadows on the river

- **Shape, pattern & number: identifying patterns**

Line no.
15	There are leaves on the floor
21	Scattery patterns of red
35	…there's leaves in the mud
42	It's got marks.
64-66	It was stones that---(?) that make the path that were sort of …a…(?) pinky colour. And they go this way and then they go that way. [makes shape with hands] You see that's how they go.
84	That's the lines

- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: ground features**

Line no.

11	And this is grass.
13	It's just grass but, but there's a leaf hiding.
15	...these are leaves on the floor.
32	Look there's my boots in the mud.
35	...and there's leaves in the mud.
42	It's got marks
64	That's the path we---I went on. It was stones...
69	What's this (?)----that? [indicates something on ground]
84	This is a shadow of that.
105	I want those leaves
118	Water's going round.
193	See it's all muddy there...

- **Sensory responses**

Line no.

42	It was smelly there you know, The mud was smelly.
44	[holds nose] Pooh! It was *ve:ry* smelly!
192	Yuk!

- **Affective responses**

75	I'm happy.
77	'Cos I am and it's pretty---(?)
79	Maybe a bird.
90	And I like that.
97	Well this isn't very ...a nice picture. It's only the road and it's not meant to...you mustn't walk on the road as it's dangerous and a car could come.
157	This is a bit boring really.
166	I like swings
166	I can go this high up but if you fall off then you can get hurt
178	I like rivers like here but not really this one.
179	Don't like it.
182-184	You know when we go to the seaside---it's....cold, cold, coldy, *co:ld!*
186	I think it's cold today. And you see this water? Well, you see this white? That means the water's like this [chops hands up and down] and if you go in the water ---- well my Daddy says that you can't go in the water but I can swim you know.
201	Lots of cars on the road and it's very noisy
219	Because they're good fun

Other key issues: places of special interest, the unexpected and the unusual

- range of affective responses
- constructing elements of picture in artwork
- the focus on the ground
- the railings and associated shadows

TIM, DURHAM
AGE: 4.0

1. General contribution
Tim was very keen to take an active part in the research and made a significant contribution during data gathering. He remained on task apart from one break during the semi-structured interview.

2. The affective task
- 4 dislikes; 7 likes.
- Favourite place picture: wood
- Found elements he liked/disliked in a picture – liked buses, cars; disliked street without people
- Tried to put places into context of recent experience – seaside, wood, swings
- If Tim did not understand a picture he opted for the sad face

3. Photographs
- Tim finished his film quickly – before we reached the bridge over the river
- The photos included near and mid-distance perspectives
- When viewed as a set, the photographs have the following themes – colour, water, light and shade
- Favourite photograph: riverbank with friend Will

4. Interview
- frequent mention of best friend
- interest in detail
- used smell, sight, sound to describe places
- identified elements of a place when making sense of it – road sign, green scum on pond, rubbish
- colour was only mentioned in relation to very specific features – slime on pond, red border on road sign,
- Till had an ambiguous response to water which fascinated and alarmed him – Will's tale of crocodiles v my tale of my dog falling into water

5. Artwork
- picture of spiders in pond
- use of one colour (blue)

6. Tim's emergent place themes and quotes:
- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: water features**

Line no.
5	...and we got to the river.
14	That's the drain! There's water down there.
21	...and the water *sploo*:shes like this
45	...it's the pond where there's ---that green on the top that looks like grass
50	and he went right down to the bottom
52-3	That's why we were very *care*:ful else we could fall in and...I wouldn't like to fall into that place. I can swim with armbands.
57	That's where the river...there're fish here
63	The next picture's got the river
71	And puddles
134	The water's like this
138	Now I'm doing another pond
195	This picture is the seaside
207	I think it's sea

- **Colour, darkness & shadows: colour**

Line no.
27	It's a round red
45-6	...green on the top that looks like grass
64	red boots and a red hat
71	Blue, red, green, yellow, brown, red. All colours
132	I need blue
204	It's green

- **darkness /Affective responses: fear and perceived danger**

Line no.

14-5	There's water down there. I saw it but you can't get to it because it's a long way down. [pulls mouth down = fear]
50	//and he went right down to the bottom where it's black
52-3	That's why we were very careful else we could fall in and I wouldn't like to fall into that place
73	There's shadows
84	It's all dark. And…and this is dark.
86	Because you can't see that's why
199	A deep tunnel

- **Context : reference to past experience**

Line no.

77	It's a *rail*:way
169	I went to the park…
193	My house isn't like this
195	I saw some flowers like this…at the…Um yesterday
200	Yesterday I went to the Botanic Gardens and it was like this

- **Shape, pattern & number: shape**

Line no.

27	It's a round red.
177	It's lots of circles
187	…square houses…
209	I can make a rectangle like this one {indicates office block]
211	Yesterday I made a rectangle

- **Context: environmental awareness**

Line no.

60	That's where the rubbish is. The broken glass. I didn't like it really and it was stinky
108	Is it rubbish?
109-112	Is it smelly because of the rubbish? Some bad people have left rubbish everywhere. They should put it in the bin and not leave it everywhere as it's ----it's very bad to leave it and at nursery we have to put it in bins.
115	That bottle's of glass. There's broken glass over there.

- **Other key issues: the unusual/unexpected**
- imagination – wooden seat back became a railway
- spiders in pond
- fish eating up spiders
- Will said there was a crocodile in the pond
- Response to environment

WILL, DURHAM
AGE: 3.6

1. General contribution
Will was a cooperative and responsive participant in the research process. He enjoyed every aspect of his involvement and always showed interest.

2. The affective task
- 4 dislikes; 7 likes.
- Favourite place picture: the wood
- Counted objects such as sheep, buses
- Tried to put places in context of past experiences – seaside, swings, river, shops
- Imagination – crocodile in stream
- Non-verbal responses – shapes and sizes demonstrated through hands

3. Photographs
- During the walk Will took his photographs with care and thought about the elements he wanted to include
- Will's photographs covered the whole range of the walk and included distant perspectives and close-up objects/people
- When viewed as a set, the photographs have the following themes – colour, shape, perspective
- Favourite photograph: bridge over the river

4. Interview
- Non-verbal responses included drawing shapes with hands in air e.g. bollard shape, diamond
- Identified shapes
- Imagination involving crocodile in pond
- Identified components of a photograph – aspects of place such as bridge, garden, building, steps

5. Artwork
- picture of the shape of the river
- picture of a boat in the river

6. Will's emergent place themes and quotes:
- **Colour, darkness & shadows: identifying colour**

Line no.	
37	...the leaves are red...
117	There's red leaves on that tree and yellowy on that.
152	Why's it all green on the water?
247	That's red...that's red and...

- **Shape, pattern & number: identifying shape**

Line no.	
22	...on that wall there's rectangles
30	They're like that [draws shape of bollard in air]
45	...it has a cross on it
46	This is a rectangle
49	This is a triangle [makes shape with fingers] No! Diamond!
55	Maybe squares there
71	It's got ziggy-zaggy teeth.
86-7	I made a square shape with the (?) Can you see the square?
147	These are squares
158	That's what the river does. It goes like this
222	It's like... [arches hands to make tunnel shape]

- **Context: reference to past experience**

Line no.	
100	...much bigger than my garden at home
186	I've been here
207	This is like something...(?) some, something...
214	It's the sea. I went to the sea
226	Is it near your house?
244	Not like this
251	I went to the shops yesterday

253   I don't think I was in this shop.
256   It's like my---it's of this place

- **Imagination: animals, developing a story**

Line no.
67   That's where the crocodiles are! And the snake
70-72   But I think they can't get out because there's this sharp thing [points to brick edge]. It goes ziggy-zag teeth. It's *got* ziggy-zag teeth. Then the croc and the snake have to stay in the water.
149-152   I know what's in that pond and it's huge! You see under the water and it's very deep and there's a crocodile. It comes ----it comes like this [W hinges his hand and snaps them] and it goes snap! So we'd better not go any closer else it'll snap us.
165   This is the pond with the crocodile but it's not there.
185   I think it's a plane or like this [spreads arms] and it's a monster.
231   There's trees and this is where you can find rabbits [points to dark area under trees]
233   Little fishes or ...so you---(?) a big, big fish like this [extends arms]
235   Or a crocodile

- **Sensory responses**

Line no.
25   Vroom! (noise)
107-8   The police car went there [imitates siren] and the road up there was um very busy...

- **Affective responses**

92   It's nice cos you can see all the water under...
100   It was beautiful because of the trees and the big garden
117   That's nice!
151-2   ...we'd better not go any closer
182   I like this picture, yes
194   It's a good---it's a nice one
240   I like boats like this
249   I don't like this one

- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: water**

Line no.
11   Then at the river over the bridge
64   is that the pond
67   Yes I know that---(?) pond. That's where the crocodiles are!
71   then the croc and the snake have to stay in the water.
81   The river and we went on the path. The boat isn't there.
85   It's the river and I---we were on the bridge.
92   cos you can see all the water under---down.
148   Then can we go to the river?
149   I know what's in that pond
152   Why's it all green on the water?
158   That's what the river does
165   This is the pond
166   And...this here is the river
172   I've done a boat instead
214   It's the sea
242   This water's everywhere
256   ...the one with the water too

- **Other key issues: the unexpected and the unusual**
- The photograph of a car was actually focussed on the background brickwork and the shapes of individual bricks
- Will used the bridge railings to make a square shape to frame a photograph
- Will's drawing of the river shows the bend shape of the Wear at Durham
- Range of perspectives and understanding of camera – used viewfinder to select features and wanted to include specific places

ANDREW, DRUMLITHIE
AGE: 4.8

1. General contribution
Andrew was a very responsive participant in the research process and an able communicator. He was able to concentrate for relatively long periods of time.

2. The affective task
- 3 dislikes; 8 likes
- Favourite place: the bus station
- Able to say why he liked/disliked places
- Picked out small detail – road markings
- Related places to places he knew – shops, going to park

3. Photographs
- Andrew took enormous care choosing where to take a photo
- The photos covered near-far distance
- Very clear what he wanted in a photo
- As a set they show great range from landscape to stones on the road
- Interest in steeple

4. Interview
- Very competent communicator
- Used non-verbal language to emphasise point
- Was able to sustain conversation
- Long span of concentration
- Related local tale of steeple

5. Artwork
- Picture of Drumlithie steeple
- Did not want to colour it
- Took great care doing the detail of the tower

6. Andrew's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Affective responses: fear and perceived danger**

Line no.
20	That's the road and it's got fast cars so you have to be careful there
31	…was a dog there and that's why it has the gate to stop it getting out. I don't like big dogs
34	If it was very big then it could jump over
72	…maybe the iron isn't very strong
171	Last time I went to the park I fell down and cut my hand and crashed and I hit my head.

- **Context: reference to past experience, reference to home**

Line no.
17	It's not a house. It's a hotel…but I haven't been in there.
195	I think that's the seaside near here. You know if you go over the big road---over there that way then you can get to it.
197	..in summer then it's like this and then you can have a (?)---have a nice time
199	Well you can play in the sand and go in the water a bit.
212	I've a den back home
214	My brother----(?) he makes ships
220	Sometimes I like going to the shops…We went to Aberdeen on the weekend

- **Other key issues: places of special interest**

Line no.
39-42	This is Drumlithie steeple that I told you about. I took this picture and this [picture 6] so you could see. There's the hole where the bell goes but I can't see it very much. It's only the top bit as it couldn't fit in the picture
45-52	It's about the steeple and it's writing on it. And there's the picture of when it rains and they carry the steeple to a place to stop it getting wet. [shrugs] You get lots of people. But not now. A long time ago. [jumps up and down] No, no! We don't have to carry it! It was a *long* time ago!

146-163   I'm doing Drumlithie steeple. So it's up and then this and down. It's very tall you know. My lines are wobbly. (?) On the top it's got a triangle bit. Then under it where the bell goes it's sort of like this.... The bell's.... that's the bell. And to make the bell ring you have to pull on the rope. [draws another line]. The rope. Now *that's* all wobbly! I'm not very good at lines am I? And there's a door at the bottom so you can go in. I've just got to put some lines going this way. Like it is. [draws horizontal lines] And on the very top there's a ---- there's a cross thing that tells you where the wind comes from. Yeah a weather vane that goes round and round. Is that everything? Does it look like the steeple?
I don't want to colour it in.

- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: ground features**

Line no.

60-1   Is this where there's the place you can walk over the um---on the iron lid? Ross jumped on it and he said there were dead bodies down there.

67-70   And he said they were put there and he could see one. But I told him then that if there were dead bodies there then they'd turn into soil cos that's what happens when you die. Your body turns into soil. Did you know that's what happens?

180   These are yellow diamonds

182   And there's arrows painted on the road.

- **Other key issues: the unexpected/the unusual**
- keen interest and knowledge about steeple
- story of dead bodies and decomposition
- realistic attitude

GRETA, DRUMLITHIE
AGE: 3.8

1. General contribution
Greta was the least talkative of the Drumlithie children and during the walk often followed Patty's lead.
She did not dislike any of pictures in the affective task but this may have been eagerness to please.

2. The affective task
- 10 likes; 1 no response
- Favourite place: none
- Greta possibly wanted to please in this task or was uncomfortable/unsure about being negative
- Not an easy session with Greta very quiet
- One prolonged exchange concerned reference to her grandmother living in house in street picture

3. Photographs
- Most of Greta's photos included the blue sky
- The photos covered near-far distance
- Greta and Patty's photos are quite similar
- As a set can see that shadows appear in about half of them
- Asked to use my camera especially to take photo of berries on a tree

4. Interview
- Interrupted halfway through
- Interested in children and children's shadows
- Did not elaborate on many of her photos

5. Artwork
- Picture of Drumlithie steeple in crayon with some adult help

6. Greta's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Colour, darkness & shadows: shadows**

Line no.

13	I did shadows
15	Maybe it's you!
40	Look! Shadows
42	It's me.
45	That's me and Ross's got one too!
68	Funny! Janet's head's all little

- **identifying colour**

Line no.

36	It's all blue.
64	Yellow and red and green
66	Black, black!
89	The one with the black berries on it.
113	the blue's cos it's rainy
167	There's blue and black and...red on there

PATTY, DRUMLITHIE
AGE: 4.3

1. General contribution
Patty was very willing to be involved and made significant contributions with her photos although she was not so involved with the affective task. She was a competent communicator.
2. The affective task
- 5 dislikes; 6 likes
- Favourite place: the wood
- 6 of the pictures did not seem to interest Patty and she made little comment
- If she could relate it to a place she knew Patty made more comments
- Patty's imagination re: princesses was evident
3. Photographs
- Most of Patty's photos included the blue sky
- The photos covered near-far distance at first and later closer detail
- Patty used her film up quite quickly
- Only 1 picture of other children
- Patty used my camera to take photos of frost and ice at her request
4. Interview
- Competent communicator
- Expanded on features in photos
- Imaginative story of Jack Frost
5. Artwork
- Picture of frost on grass –frost in black as had no white
- Very insistent on the composition of the picture
6. Patty's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Colour, darkness & shadows: identifying colour**

Line no.
13	…it's only blue
28	Little trees and orange leaves
35	It's blue-blue there and then down to whitey-blue
137	Blue, blue, blue! Now I think I'll put on green
148	…anyway the white won't work…

- **shadows**

Line no.
68	here's my shadow look! And I think that's you! Your shadow! *Giant* shadows
87	That's me cos I can see my fairy dress!
91	The stones are in my shadow
102	…my princess shadow

- **Other key issues: places of special interest**

Line no.
69	…and this is a leaf that was all frosty
71	…so it's all icy on it
77	The ice puddle!
77	…is all smooth and slippy…
78	…I did fall after that on some ice…
81	….they're all frozen in
108	…and put ice on things like puddles and frost on the grass
120	It's cracking here where I stamped on it. It's really hard
123	It's so slippery!

- **Imagination: traditional stories & folklore, developing a story**

Line no.
70	..that was all frosty. Jack Frost visited and went nip-nip with his long
71	fingers and nippety on the leaf so it's all icy on it. And he must----well
72	he did nips on the grass then he flew off to do more everywhere.
87	Me, me! That's me cos I can see my dress like a fairy dress! Do you
88	see it?
108	Jack Frost came last night you know. He came and put ice on things
109	puddles and put frost on the grass. See there? On that grass. You can

110	see the frost. It's all sparkling.
147	[makes marks on the green area] Well there isn't white and anyway
148	the white won't work and I want Jack Frost on the floor.
182-6	There's a story and it's in a wood with the fairies and there's a princess and she has this really, really pretty dress. One day the witch comes and she wants to take the princess away. And that's in the wood …and the fairies live here and they protect the princess. I'll put the princess dress on shall I? And we can pretend the wood's here
203	As it's where the fairies are

- **Other key issues: near & far – issues of perspective**

Line no.

11	The sky and the ground
13	I got your shoe! In this one it's only blue
16	…the steeple. It looks like it's falling over! But it wasn't really.
17	I didn't get the top cos it was too high up
25	Greta and me looked up and we took this tree. And in here there's more
26	of it
33	Well they're far off. Them---those on the back are trees
39	I can't see anything
65	That light's really high there
91	The stones are in my shadow!
108	On that grass. You can see the frost.
119	It's all patterndy

- **Other key issues: the unexpected and the unusual**
- Jack Frost story and influence on perception
- Association of wood picture and princess story

ROSS, DRUMLITHIE
AGE: 4.11

1. General contribution
Ross was quite easily distracted and the exchanges with him were often disjointed as he would leave to do something else. He became very animated in anything to do with farming.
2. The affective task
- 2 dislikes; 9 likes
- Favourite place: the boats
- Did not appear to be very interested in task at first but became more responsive

3. Photographs
- Most of Ross's photos reflected his interest in farming
- The photos covered near-far distance
- Ross saved a photo for the very end to take a picture of his taxi

4. Interview
- If interested would expand on subject e.g. farming
- Intrigued by the hole with pipes in it

5. Artwork
- detailed and complex picture of connecting, underground pipes in different colours

6. Ross's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: water**

Line no.

21	that's the burn in that hole. It's way down in the ditch but aye there's the water you can see
26	Real fast
41	there's the burn coming down in this dark bit here
47	It's just a wee un. But it's quite big just now.
59	there was water down it in a pipe. It was like this you ken but it was broken so the water comes like this out of it
170	You ken there's water like this awa' up at my house
172	It's small like this [puts hands close together]
173	Water, water again! This water here is deep but that one [in other pic] was small

- **Affective response: fear and perceived danger**

Line no.

26-7	we didn't go down there cos we mightn't get out again
58	but Janet said we can't go on it as we---we can fall in
64	you have to be careful on it. If you fall down there then I expect you'd not get out

- **Other key issues: places of special interest**

Line no.

30-39	Yeah and the field that had the trailer wi' the bales on it. It's way away an' then the tractor came and it hitched it up and took the trailer to the other field. Nay! It's nay *grow:*ing! It's the old corn that's-----that was harvested way back. Aye. Aye it's nay the same as this 'un has sheep in it.
75	...and it's got the tractor! It's got the trailer an' all. It's taking the bales awa'
108	Hey there's a tractor an' it's taking the trailer. See it's got the bales now
112	Maybes it's awa' to the farm like
138-41	At my house you can see this----(?) this field but I don't think there are sheep in it. Oh aye! Aye there's some sheep in the other field as the man---the farmer put them in. I've been on a tractor and one day we went awa' on the trailer

- **The unexpected and the unusual**
- the drawing of the pipes
- knowledgeable about landscape

AMY, FRASERBURGH
AGE: 3.5

1. General contribution
Amy became fully engaged during the walk and interview but found the affective task more challenging and seemed to lose interest.
2. The affective task
- 4 dislikes; 7 likes
- Favourite place: the sea
- Did not express opinion much
- Lost interest towards end of task

3. Photographs
- More than half of Amy's photos were of the ground
- When viewed as a set the photographs has the following theme – the ground
- Favourite photograph: the garden
- Photos similar to Gail's set

4. Interview
- Had problems at start identifying her own photos
- Became animated about the puddle and the drain
- Opinions about what she liked and did not like

5. Artwork
- picture of the road using specific colours and fine detail

6. Amy's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: ground**

Line no.
20	…is that the road wi' a line? Yellow line going round a bit.
53	What's that say? (of drain cover)
58	That's Matt's shoes on the drain
107	This is me an' I'm just looking at the---the road
114	Sort of, aye, that are yellow on the road

- **Sensory responses**

Line no.
28&30	Yuk!
32	Aye all yuk smell
79	Yuk-yuk-yukky-yuk!
148	But in the dark in there pooh!

- **Other key issues: the unexpected and the unusual**
- picked out satellite dish
- drew picture of road surface with herself looking down at road

CLAIRE, FRASERBURGH
AGE: 4.10

1. General contribution
Claire was a good participant but rarely expanded her responses to questions, giving short answers. Working with her was relatively time-consuming.

2. The affective task
- 11 likes, 0 dislikes
- Favourite place: the swings
- Eager to please and did not want to be negative about pictures
- Made references to past experiences

3. Photographs
- Claire's photographs covered the whole range of the walk with pictures in close-up to distant
- When viewed as a set the photographs do not have a distinct theme
- Favourite photograph: Garden

4. Interview
- Quiet on whole
- Animated about the garden

5. Artwork
- picture of herself taking photos of the garden

6. Claire's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Context: reference to past experience**

Line no.	
18	It's not my school
20	I don't go to that school
36	I don't know that house
40	...an' it's not here
90	That's where the fire engines live. We been there at nursery and saw the engines
141	Uhuh and I go on things. Swings and I think there's a climbing wall
149	Mam and me go on the bus
151	To my gran's and other days we go and see...
182	On the sea and I think there's a boat like this un. The boats go out for fish
187	The roads aren't big enough
196	I like going to the shops but not this shop

- **Other key issues: place of special interest**

Line no.	
64	There's all things---
66	Like toys an' all
69	I wish my garden was like this un.
84	Cos, well I do that's all an' there's all the things there
123	Tha's the house an' over there, well that's the garden wi' the pond in it
126	Aye but I didna do all the garden

- **The unexpected & the unusual**
- Fireman Sam is fictional and didn't live in fire station Fraserburgh
- Perspective in artwork

GAIL, FRASERBURGH
AGE: 3.9

1. General contribution
Gail became upset halfway through the affective task after an incident with another child. She had been quiet up until that point and was more responsive after a break. The interview was relatively short and interrupted when she had to go home.

2. The affective task
- 6 likes, 7 no responses
- Favourite place: the swings and the boats
- Expressed opinions clearly in terms of like/dislike and reasons why
- Picked out details of pictures – letters on road, colour of traffic light, black safety mat under swings

3. Photographs
- When viewed as a set the photographs has the following theme – ground
- Favourite photograph: the garden
- Only 14 of Gail's photos came out – rest were black or out of focus

4. Interview
- Great interest in close up details of the ground
- Expressed opinion on what she could see

5. Artwork
- picture of garden and house with girl playing

6. Gail's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: ground features**

Line no.

11	Road and house
13	Some white
17	Ground. On the pavement
19	Aye this is got cracks
21	Cos it was near
23	Aye on the ground
27	There's nae cracks on this ground
31	It's got some wet on it
34	On the road. there's a spot. It's a spot of---spot of a dry bit
69	Cos it's got grass
131	…that maybe's a hole

- **Affective responses**

Line no.

43	Well its fine
51	It's awful plain
59	But I do!
73	I don't like it that's why
142	I'm nae wanting to go on the boat
146	Aye it's fine
148	It'd be fair noisy
151	It's OK

- **Other key issues**
- detailed examination of ground
- pictured herself playing in the garden
- story of the bear living in the woods

MATT, FRASERBURGH
AGE: 4.11
1. General contribution
Matt's span of concentration was very short and he was easily distracted. During the interview he became frustrated and angry and was unwilling to talk much. He did, however, enjoy the walk itself and took great delight in using the camera.
2. The affective task
- 7 dislikes; 4 likes
- Favourite place: the sea
- More interested in using the stickers
- Seemed to find task uninteresting
- Few spontaneous comments
- Was frustrated on occasion
3. Photographs
- Matt's photographs covered the whole range of the walk with pictures in close-up and medium distance
- When viewed as a set the photographs have the following themes – movement, broad interest
- Favourite photograph: street and cars
4. Interview
- very short – shortest of the 12
- short span of concentration & disruptive behaviour
- most of interview was not transcribed as irrelevant or indecipherable
5. Artwork
- Picture of fast car
- More animated when drawing
6. Matt's emergent place themes and quotes
- **Affective responses**

Line no.

12	That's fine!
19	...see there he's smilin' an' all
85	It's a sad----
129	It's reek. Aye it'd be real stinky! Stinky!

- **Imagination: animals; developing a story**

Line no.

55-9	An' there's beasties doon there. Did you ken that Sue? [makes growling sound] //an' there are! But you never see them as they're hiding.
80-1	It's a spider! See here's his legs an' he's awa doon {down} the drain an' canna get . Aye an' the drain's real deep and it goes doon and doon and doon till it's real dark like.
85-99	It's a sad----(?) This man i' my picture. He's had his bucket taken. [shrugs] Maybe a thief. Aye well it means he canna clean the windaes [windows] and so he doesna ken fit tae do. But maybe he'll find it.

- **Sensory responses: sound**

Line no.

18	..like this [makes car noise]
57	[makes growling noise] (of beastie down drain)
61	[imitated fire engine siren]
137	[imitated car noise and crash]

- **Water, on the ground, speed & movement: speed; water features**

Line no.

18	The van was gang along real fast
61	...and go real fast
71	An' it's gang real fast an' that's why the wheels gae like this [draws circles rapidly]
46-53	Aye an' the water doon there an' all. It's fair a way doon the water. [looks through grating] Aye it's moving but fair slow. It's black doon there an' it's fair deep. I wonder where the water comes from. Fra {from} ---- (?) fra way doon.
133	Maybes you's can gae there and play wi' the water

- **The unusual/the unexpected**
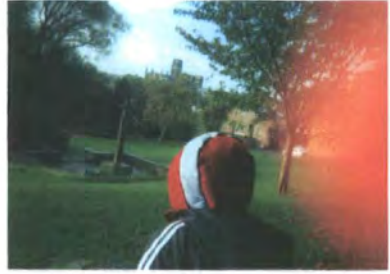- story making and imagination – the window cleaner, the spider and the beasties in the drain

APPENDIX 14: BETH'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DURHAM)

APPENDIX 14: SOPHIE'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DURHAM)
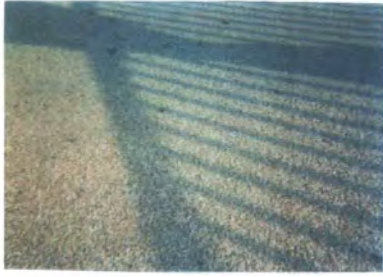
APPENDIX 14: TIM'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DURHAM)
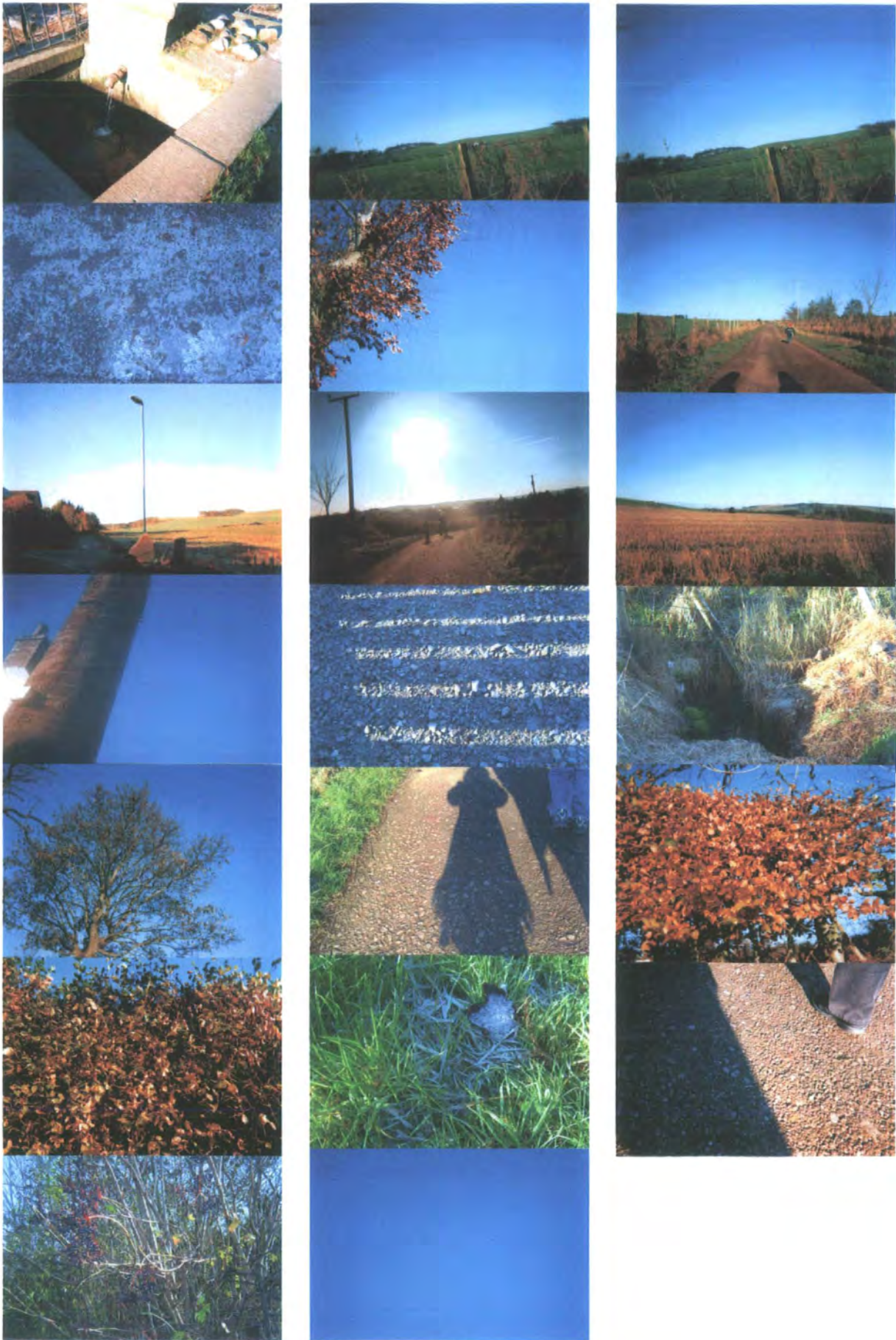
APPENDIX 14: WILL'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DURHAM)

APPENDIX 14: ANDREW'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DRUMLITHIE)

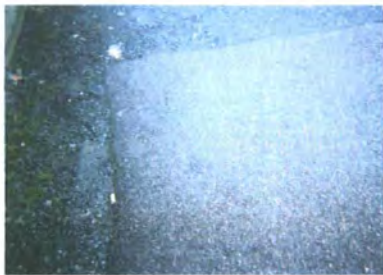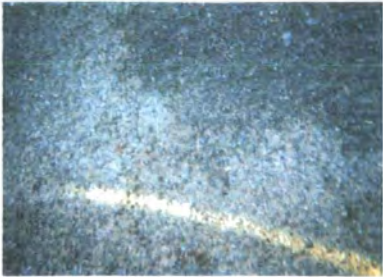## APPENDIX 14: GRETA'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DRUMLITHIE)

APPENDIX 14: PATTY'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DRUMLITHIE)

APPENDIX 14: ROSS'S PHOTOGRAPHS (DRUMLITHIE)

APPENDIX 14: AMY'S PHOTOGRAPHS (FRASERBURGH)

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APPENDIX 14: CLAIRE'S PHOTOGRAPHS (FRASERBURGH)

APPENDIX 14: GAIL'S PHOTOGRAPHS (FRASERBURGH)

APPENDIX 14: MATT'S PHOTOGRAPHS (FRASERBURGH)

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