

Wild Beach Year 2, Autumn report

We've had a great start to the academic year, with sessions filled with adventures, new experiences and wild beach memories for our Wild Beach explorers. Crazy the sunshine followed us too, with only one bit of drizzle on a total of 14 wild beach sessions!

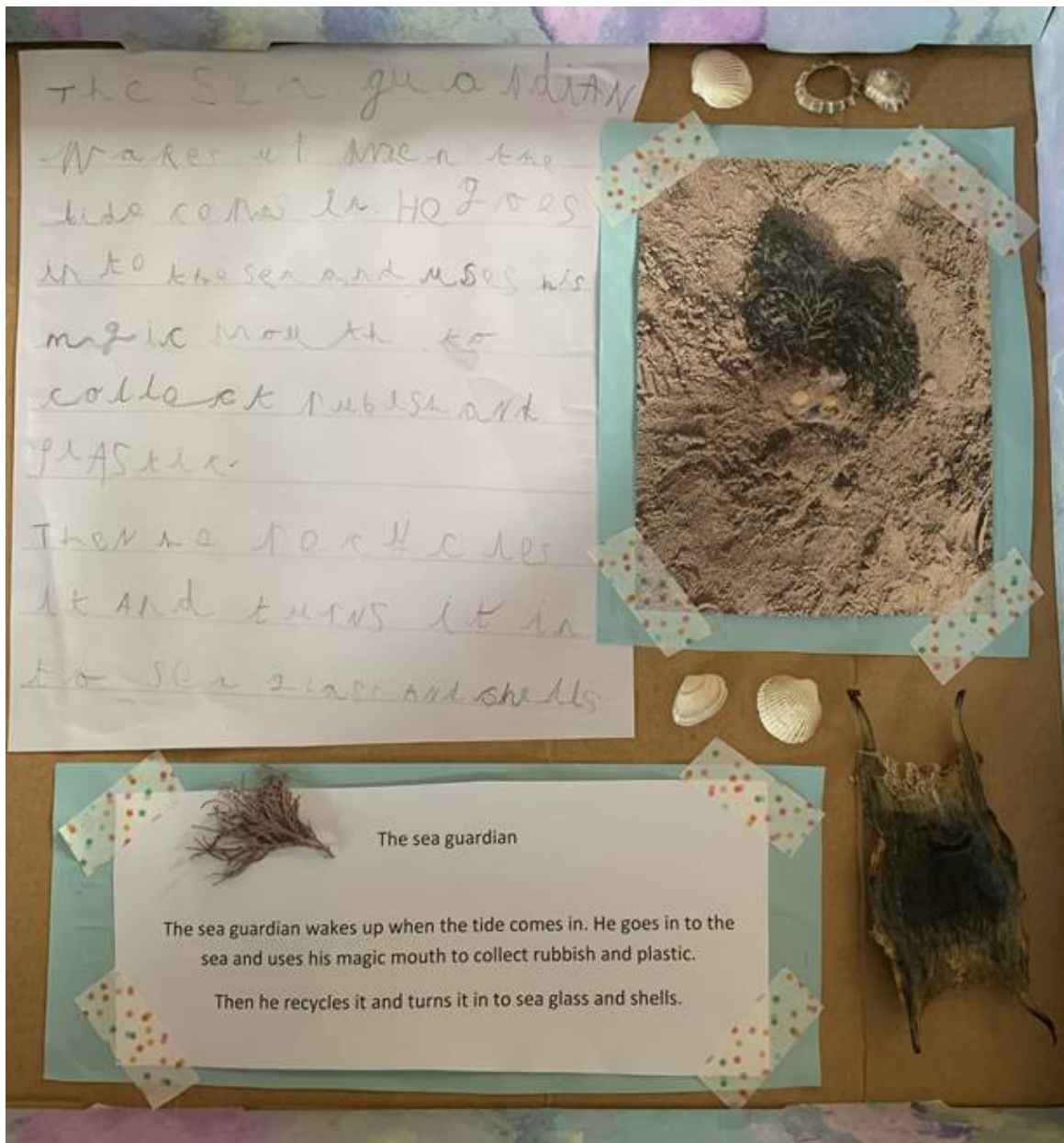
From September to October I worked with Old Cleeve School (West Somerset) and Bridgwater College Academy. For each of the Wild Beach programmes, I worked with the same children over 6 sessions per school, visiting the same beach each week. Each session follows a rhythm and routine, with a loose theme and "spring-board activities and games" to fire up children's imaginations – but as the sessions progress we strive to make the sessions more child-led to enable children to follow their own interests and play-needs. This approach creates a more powerful and meaningful experience for the pupils as well as a greater "ripple" within the school community.

The children from Old Cleeve were a mixture of 5 to 8 year olds, some of whom already visit the beach regularly and some who explore less. This school spent most of their visits at Dunster beach, but we also went to Helwell Bay one morning – where they were very excited to discover Somerset's Jurassic coast and to fill their pockets with fossils, shells and beach glass (which they then turned into keyrings and keepsakes back at school)! Here is some feedback:

"Thank you for this opportunity! The children have all absolutely loved their time on the beach and have made memories as well as learning so much. It was great to be able to have Tilda support this as her knowledge was brilliant and helped the children to explore and learn. "

Year 3 Teacher, Old Cleeve

One of the activities that they took part in was the creation of "Beach Guardians". I told a story about beach guardians who once protected the coast and sea, and children were invited to create their own creature using strandline finds such as pebbles, seaweed etc. they then returned to school to create a story about their guardian's special eco-powers...this is one of them written by a 5 year old explorer...



The sessions with Bridgwater College Academy (BCA) were with year 4 pupils (8 and 9 year olds). The school is based in Sydenham which is in a high level of deprivation and with pupils experiencing high levels of obesity. The school chose pupils who had sadly never or rarely visited the beach, so for this group each visit to Brean had quite an impact. On the final session we walked to the trig point at Brean Down, for most of the children this was the most exercise they had ever done and when sitting on the top drinking a hot chocolate and looking out at the Bristol Channel and Mendips they had a real sense of achievement. Here is some feedback:

“The highlights from the beach trips were the rockpooling and the trip up to the top of Brean Down. The main highlight was the reaction from the children and seeing them trying new things. The children on the trip have had very limited life experiences and the

two highlights (and lowlight at the same time) was when one of the children told me that they have never been for a walk before, and when some of the children got to the top of the hill and said that they are no longer afraid of heights! The sessions were amazing! The children absolutely loved it and want to come back every day.”

Year 4 Teacher, BCA

