Transcript – Understanding form

Form

I am first of all going to speak about form, and, in the first instance I am using Katrina’s book to illustrate how tone is a very important way of learning about form. When I say form I am talking about the volume, the mass, the sense of what you are looking at and the physical presence of it; so it is quite a difficult word to get our head round. What the children use is this word three-dimensional, which I think is a very good way of interpreting it. How you understand something in the sense of its whole volume, that it is not just a flat shape.

And when we first look through books children tend to draw quite frontally, and the drawing is quite flat. And as they get a little bit more adept at using tone, they understand how this creates a more three-dimensional quality in the drawing. So this is an example of an early drawing by Katrina where she has just opted to use line to define what she was looking at, and it retained – although it is a very bold drawing – it does retain its flatness.

And then, in a huge leap between one week and another – I suspect that I spoke to her about this – and then this incredible jump when she went into the Princes Garden’s park, where she has let go of her line altogether – which is actually very unusual at such an early stage, I think – but there is this beautiful relationship between one tone and another; so that we have got very dark tones in the way she has interpreted the trees, then these halftones, and then also using the light of the paper. And the leap that’s made here is that she is not defining the trees by an outline initially and then filling it in, but she is actually thinking in terms of these almost like blocks of tone to build up her tree. She is not thinking about the literal object, but she is seeing it through these tones, so she is actually thinking in terms of volume and mass and not thinking this is a tree, which is a big difference.

[End of Recording]