

'The stars
come out at
night. That's
how you
know when
the chalky
people are
coming'

Elsie [3:5]

'They come alive when we go to sleep'

Alexis [3:7]

Mr Nobody
Mr Aston
Mr Nothing
the chalky people
the big strong baby
the milk monster
the friendly fire
Mr No Legs
the giant
the bodymen
Jellyfish and Thumbelina
the talking listening tree
the small island
the chalky mountains
a monster place
a baby place
behind the door
in the ground
under the ground
the high up place
puppet world
the hospital
the black tower

What makes a story? Do all stories happen somewhere? How does one story grow into a lasting mythology? When we began our nursery-wide *Storying* focus in September 2014 we had many questions. And we discovered many more as we listened for the stories children used in their everyday play and investigations. Sometimes we heard only beginnings of stories, other times just the middle or the end. But however short or long the story, in whatever medium it was being told, it was clear *who* the story was about and *where* it took place. The children's narratives were driven by a powerful sense of character and place.

Each image, character and location on this board represents many stories. Sometimes these were drawn, sometimes constructed. Often they were stories in words, but sometimes they were told only in actions. In the list of children's invented characters many are surprisingly contradictory - Mr No Legs, Mr Nothing, Mr Nobody. They seem to be named in a way that invites other children in; a 'nobody' can be an 'anybody', not just the particular 'somebody' he was to begin with...

Good stories travel. *The Fire Monster* was our first publication from this year of storying, and is now known in New Zealand, California, and Barcelona, even though he also still lives in the Reflections Nursery garden stove. Another publication *The revolutionary baby* has already turned many people's worlds upside down. It follows a year in the narrative life of two year olds, who tell some of the most profound stories we have ever heard.

And right now, in September 2015, we are still listening hard for stories, and we still have questions. *Where do characters come from? Can one sentence be a story? What was the wizard doing in the dragon's mouth?...*

'a wizard in a dragon's mouth'

Charlie [3:5]

'And there is
one, look at this
one, big strong
baby!'

Ella [2:5]

→ stories, characters & locations

