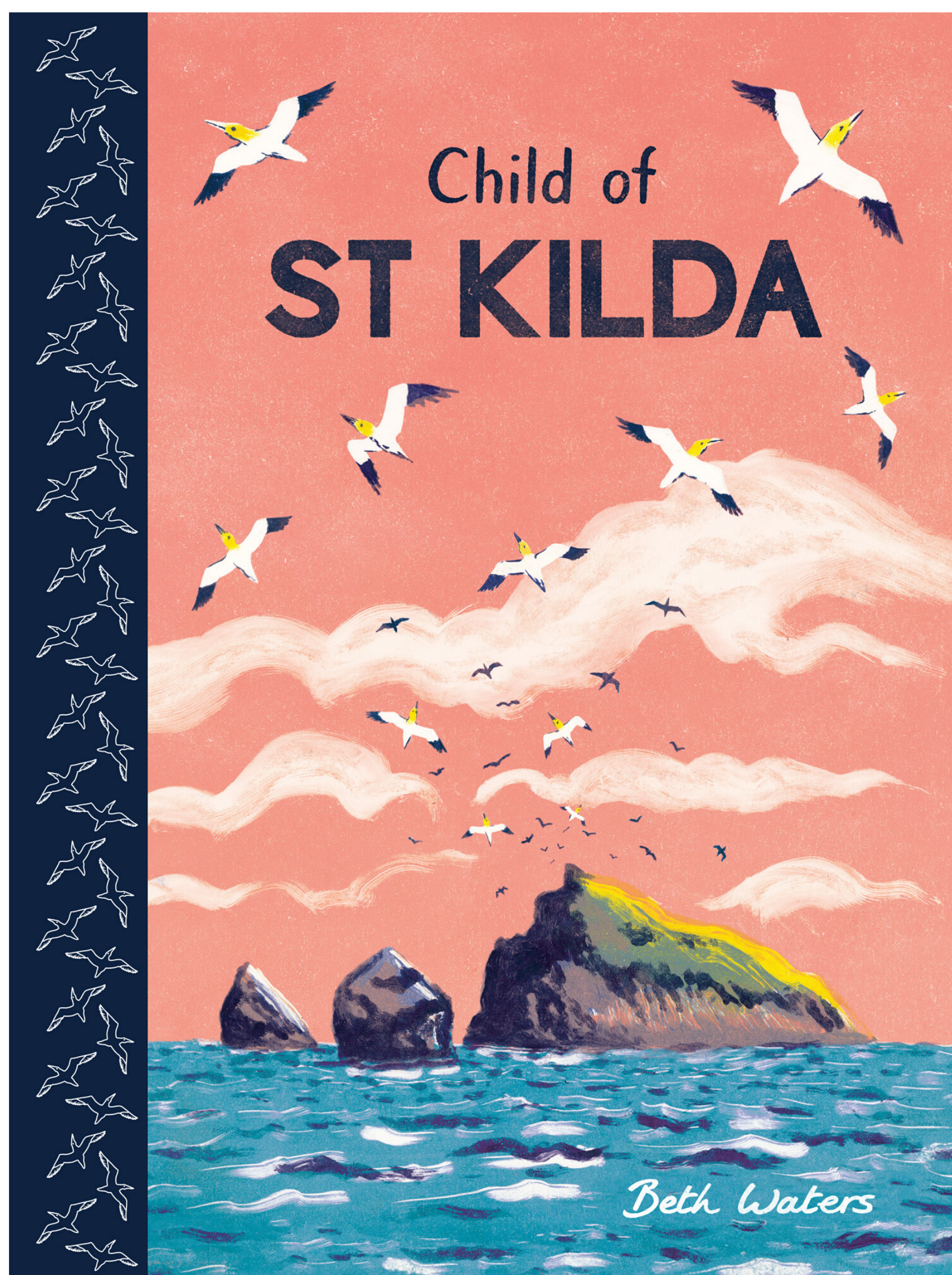


CILIP KATE GREENAWAY SHORTLIST 2020 SHADOWING RESOURCES



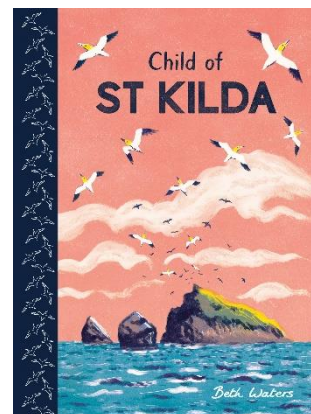
CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020

VISUAL LITERACY NOTES

Title: Child of St Kilda

Author/Illustrator: **Beth Waters**

Publisher: Child's Play



Shadowers' Views

Shadowing the Kate Greenaway shortlist requires you to look very carefully at artwork in order to form a judgment about it. The word **view** can refer to both what can you see, and to your opinions. You are looking for a book that 'creates an outstanding reading experience through illustration'.

First look

Start by looking at the front cover of the book. It shows the group rocky islands in the North Atlantic called St Kilda. The main island is called Hirta. The blurb on the back cover will give you more information. Get a sense of the remoteness of island at the time of this story by watching and listening to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4vaFfE24HU

After looking through the book together, discuss these questions:

- Is this a work of fiction or nonfiction? What is the story? What information does it offer?
- Do the images throughout the book reflect those in other nonfiction books?
- Do the pictures enhance the written text? Is the sketchy style of illustration appropriate to depict difficult lives in a harsh environment?
- Chat in pairs, or as a group, about what you think so far about *Child of St Kilda*. What did you like or dislike and why?

Look again



Turn to the last page of the book. There is a picture of four women. Read the passage printed below the picture to find out how the illustrations were produced using monoprinting. Beth Waters said that, with monoprinting, '*Colours can be built up in layers, and details painted on top.*' How does printing effect the colours and lines of images? There are very few bright colours. Is there a reason for this?

Life on the islands was very tough for all the inhabitants. Discuss which images in the book are most successful at giving the viewer a sense of:

isolation darkness hardship cold danger community



Talk about all the visual aspects of the book i.e. end papers, font choices, title page and layout. How do these 'extras' to the story contribute to the overall impact of the book

Interpreting the texts

It is always beneficial, when studying a book, to introduce tasks which require imaginative responses. This book tells a true story. Nonfiction can inspire curiosity and empathy. The following suggestions may help shadowers to engage with the book.

Life on St Kilda

There were many sorts of sea birds on St Kilda. Look up gannets, fulmars and puffins in a book, or on-line. These birds were very important as a source of food. What else did they eat? What were 'cleits' used for?

Visitors to St Kilda



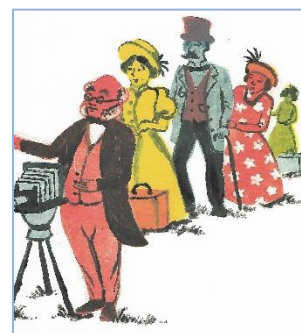
John Sands was a journalist visiting Hirta at a time when shipwrecked sailors managed to reach safety on the main island. Read how Sands saved the islanders from starvation.

Imagine that, having been ship wrecked and you are stuck on St Kilda. Write a letter asking to be rescued. Research the story of the first St Kilda mailboat. Find a map of Scotland that shows the positions of St Kilda and Orkney.

Tourists began to visit at the beginning of the 20th century. We now know that tourism can be a problem as well as a pleasure. What effect do you think tourism would have on the islanders related to:

- health and well-being
- trade and economy
- self-esteem.

Today, tourists often take for granted that their presence is beneficial to the local population. But that is not necessarily true. Tourism can have a damaging effect on people's lives and life styles.



How has Beth Waters shown differences between St Kildans and tourists in the images?

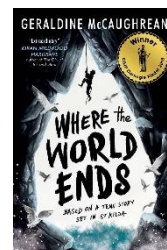


When **Nurse Williamina McIntosh Barclay** visited Hirta in 1930, she was appalled at the unhealthy conditions that the St Kildans were having to endure. She helped the surviving islanders to prepare to leave the island forever.

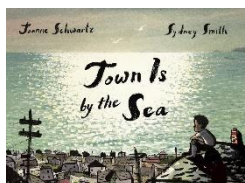
Interested in finding out more about St Kilda?

Read Geraldine McCaughrean's 2018 Carnegie winning book, *Where the World Ends*. As the story of St Kilda is recent, there is plenty of information about it online in films, photographs and recorded sounds. Some websites to explore:

- www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2012/mar/24/last-man-st-kilda-evacuation
- www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2019/february/it-felt-impossibly-remote-beth-waters-on-exploring-the-magical-world-of-st-kilda/
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR5RjwjeQe8



Read more



If you have enjoyed reading *Child of St Kilda*, why not explore 2018 Kate Greenaway winner *Town is by the Sea* illustrated by Sydney Smith and written by Joanne Schwartz, it looks at life in a historic coastal mining town.

FURTHER THINKING

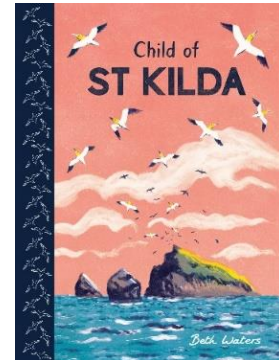
CILIP works in partnership with Amnesty International and Inclusive Minds to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of human rights, inclusion and representation in children's literature. The discussion points below are intended to further stimulate reader's thinking on the themes explored in the shortlisted books.

CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal 2020

Title: **Child of St Kilda**

Author/Illustrator: **Beth Waters**

Publisher: Child's Play



Discussing human rights in this story:

Right to a home; Right to our own way of life; Right to a good life with enough food, clothing, housing and healthcare; Right work and to leisure; Right to safety; Right to education; Freedom of belief and religion.

- What do you think of the way of life which is described? Are there things that you would enjoy?
- Do you think the St Kildans felt free before they had to leave?
- Whose responsibility is it to ensure that communities are safe and healthy?



Discussing inclusion and representation in this story:

- What does the book tell us about understanding different communities?
- How might it have felt as an islander to be treated as a 'curiosity'? Consider how we treat those who are unfamiliar to us? Were the islanders really so different from the tourists? How were they similar?
- The book is set in the early 1900s and shows very traditional gender roles. Consider why these stereotypical roles existed at that time and how and why things have changed.



Teaching Ideas for the CILIP Kate Greenaway Award Shortlist 2020

Title: Child of St Kilda

Author: Beth Waters

Illustrator: Beth Waters

Publisher: Child's Play (2019)

These notes have been written by the teachers at CLPE to provide schools with sessions which focus on the importance of illustration in building a narrative and supporting children's response. They build on our work supporting teachers to use picture books to enhance critical thinking and develop creative approaches in art and writing. The teaching notes show how picture books can be used in schools to enhance children's reading comprehension and composition of their own creative writing. We hope you find them useful.

Before beginning this sequence:

Collect together a range of art materials that will allow the children to engage in the activities exploring illustration, for example: cartridge paper, sketching pencils 2B-4B, watercolour paints, coloured pencils, printing inks, plastic or laminated sheets, plastic rollers, masking tape and a variety of brushes.

In order to engage fully with the layers of meaning and the details within the illustrations, it is advisable to ensure that you have access to a visualiser or similar device to enable you to share images from the text with the pupils on a large scale.

Suggested Activities:

Session 1: Investigating the messages we can read in an illustration

Start by sharing the front cover of the book with the children. You may wish to provide some questions to focus and develop their responses, for example; *what do the children see? What does it make them think? How does it make them feel? What kind of book do they expect it to be? What questions do they have? Where do they think this is? Does it remind them of anywhere that they have seen – in photographs, films or books - or been to? Is this a real location or an imagined one? What makes them think that? What do they notice about the colours chosen by the illustrator? Is there anything unusual or unexpected about them?*

Think now about the title, **'Child of St Kilda'**. *Do the title and the accompanying illustrations give any suggestion of the story that lies ahead?* The children may also comment on the silver embossed seabirds running up the expanded spine protector of the book. *What significance might they have? What do we know about seabirds? Do we know the specific birds that are depicted? Are we left with any questions about the book based on this imagery?* Scribe children's suggestions around a copy of the front cover or allow time for them to scribe their thoughts on post-it notes to stick around a copy of the cover.

Turn to the front endpapers; *what can they see here? How do these illustrations differ from those on the book cover?* Look at the colour, style and use of repeated patterns; *what does this make them think of? What are the patterns made from? How do you think they might have been created? Do they remind you of anything?*

What significance might they have? Have they altered your predictions or early impressions of what the book might be about? Children might note the recurrence of nature imagery in each of the lines – flowers, petals, leaves, thorns – as well as the limited colour palette, and may make comparisons with the decorative lines on vintage crockery, wallpaper, fabrics or knitted items such as sweaters, socks, gloves or hats. Discuss some of the different techniques that might be used to create repeating patterns like this: hand painted, printed, stencilled, digitally manipulated, etc.

Continue to explore the book by turning to the title page. *What can they see in this spread? What can we see that is different from or similar to the illustrations that they have already explored? This is the first illustration that has shown signs of humans or habitation. Who do they think the figure is? What do we know about them? What might they be doing? What relationship might they have with the title of the book? If they are the 'child' of the title, then what might St Kilda be? Have they heard of St Kilda before? Do they think that it is a place or a person? What have they seen in the book so far that makes them think that?* The children may comment on the child's size and place in the composition, the pale, muted colours that have been used and the limited palette – just the orangey-pink and shades of blue; *What do you notice about what the child is wearing, what they are doing and where they are standing? What might this tell us about the character and the setting? Does the small drawing below the dedication on the facing page give us any further clues or insights as to the theme, genre or tone of the book?*

Finally, share the first double page spread entitled 'Islands on the Edge of the World'. If possible, cover or hide all of the text so that children start by responding only to the illustration.



If possible, hand out copies of the illustration for children to explore, discuss and annotate in small groups. *What do they notice in the illustration? What comparisons or connections can they make with the illustrations*

on the cover, endpapers and title page? Are there any similarities in character, object, setting, tone, colour, etc.? Where do you think this scene is taking place? What do they notice about the use of colour? Children might discuss the limited colour palette (yellow, green, red, blue and brown) and the unexpected choices such as yellow for the sky and blue for the ground in front of the buildings. What do they notice about the buildings? What might they tell you about the people who live here or when the book is set? What do they think life might be like in this place? What questions do they have?

Focus on the human figures in the illustration. What do you think they might be doing? How do you think they know each other? How might they be feeling? What can we tell about them from their body language, facial expressions, movement and appearance? Does this allow any further insights into when or where the book might be set?

Read aloud the text from this spread and then allow time for children to respond to what they have heard. Did it answer any of their questions? Now that they've heard the opening, what kind of book do they think this might be? What do they now know about Hirta and St Kilda? What do they know about Norman John? What further questions do they have? Explore any terms that children might be unfamiliar with and work together to find definitions. Draw on children's knowledge of history and world chronology to reflect on how long ago 4000 years was and how long people had lived on these islands. If Norman John 'was to be one of the last' people living on this island, what do you think might have happened? Do you think people have returned to the island now? Why do you think they would stop living there? What factors might contribute to a large group of people choosing to leave their homes, or being forced to?

Discuss the style of illustration that Beth Waters has chosen for this book and why it might have been applied to the setting of this story. The bold shapes, the relative lack of detail in the backgrounds, the simple facial features and limited colour palette are all reminiscent of children's book illustration in the 1920s and 30s (for example, illustrators such as Lois Lenski or Louis Slobodkin). You might explore some examples of this illustration style and allow children to share their response, what do they like or dislike about these illustrations? Does it remind them of anything? How do they think they were made?

If possible, you might finish the session by returning to the repeated patterns depicted in the endpapers and provide children with the opportunity to create their own, perhaps drawing on simplified nature imagery, patterns and shapes important to their own local environment or simple line drawings. They could paint these with watercolours on cartridge paper, perhaps restricting themselves to a similar colour palette to that used by Beth Waters. Explore how to carefully adjust the amount in which the paint is diluted to achieve variations in the colour tone. Children might be interested to explore further examples of these type of patterns which are often a key feature of knitwear known as 'fair isle', a very similar style of which would have been produced by the inhabitants of St Kilda. Searching online for 'Fair Isle knitting' and 'St Kilda' will provide a wide number of pattern examples.

Session 2: Exploring what it means to be an illustrator

Re-read the first spread and review children's expectations of the book. Go on to read the next four spreads (from "Surrounded by the stormy Atlantic Ocean..." to "...in vast underwater caves.").

After reading, allow children time to respond to what they have heard and seen. *How do they feel about the book so far? What more have they learned about the island and its inhabitants? What have they noticed in the illustrations? Does the content of the book so far match with our expectations?*

The text describes the collection of islands as remote: *what does remote mean? How does the book define it? What might we infer about the islanders who choose to live here based on the information we've learnt? What characteristics would an islander need to have to survive in this remote place? Do you feel the illustrations we've seen so far reflect the descriptions of islands in the text? How so?*

Look back through all of the pages explored so far and consider the variety of illustrative choices Beth Waters has made (the child figure against the large expanse of white space on the title page; the repeated patterns on the endpapers and title page; the full double page spread of the children playing in front of the village; the sea stacks depicted against the orange-pink sky reflecting the colour scheme from the cover; the map page and the isolated depictions of the island's wildlife across the next two spreads). *Do the children have a preference or a favourite illustration/page so far? What purposes do those varied choices serve? What other options were available to her? Consider how the 'Sea Birds' and 'Wildlife' pages could have looked different if the animals had been depicted within their environment (in a style more like the spread of the children playing in the village). Why do you think each animal has been illustrated with the white space around it rather than within its environment? What impact does it have on you as a reader? What does it remind you of?* Children might make connections with other, more traditional, non-fiction texts.

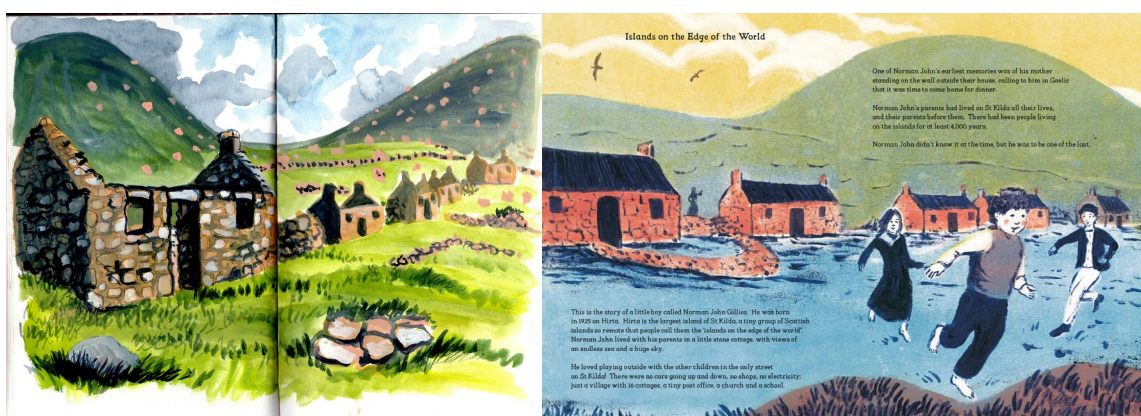
Based on their reading of the text so far, discuss how they think the author and illustrator might feel about this place. *What is there in the illustration and text that tells us that?*

Share Beth Waters' interview with Book Trust (<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/news-and-features/features/2019/february/it-felt-impossibly-remote-beth-waters-on-exploring-the-magical-world-of-st-kilda/>), reading aloud Beth's responses to the first three questions of the interview: *What is Child of St Kilda about? How did you come to write a book about St Kilda? Have you been to St Kilda?* Give children time to discuss and summarise what they learn from the interview about the creation of the book. *Do they think it was important for Beth Waters to visit the island? Why/why not? How might the book have been different if all of her research had taken place online or from other people's books and experiences?*

Turn to the back of the book and share the 4 pages entitled 'St Kilda Sketchbook' and begin to consider the process Beth Waters went through as an illustrator to achieve the finished result. Discuss the different types of drawing media and methods of illustration Beth Waters has used during her visit to St Kilda. They might note the pencil or charcoal drawings of puffins, field mice and the iron age tunnel; as well as other drawings which have been layered over with watercolours or similar; others that may have been painted with gouache

or coloured with pen; and some gannets that might have been drawn in ink before the watercolours were added. In addition to these insights into her research visit, there are further extracts from her sketchbook and photos that can be viewed on her website: <http://www.bethwaters.co.uk/child-of-st-kilda.html>

Having looked at these extracts from her sketchbook, discuss as a class the reasons why they think an illustrator might need to engage with research for a project like this. *How is this similar or different to an author or an illustrator preparing to write a fiction book or picture book? Why do you think she might have utilised so many different kinds of drawing media? Why has she taken photographs as well? Why do you think she didn't just use photographs? How do the colours in her observational sketchbook paintings compare with what we have seen of the book so far? For example, you might compare the painting of the village in the bottom-left corner of the first page of her sketchbook with the first double page spread that we discussed in Session 1. What can they see that is similar? What is different?*



Go on to compare the similarities and differences between further sketchbook illustrations and how the finished illustrations appear in the main section of the book. For example, compare the pencil drawn map from the sketchbook with the map of Scotland and the islands on the second spread; and compare the pencil sketches of the puffins and gannets with the printed versions on the 'Sea Birds' spread. Again look at the differences between the two, discussing their observations and their preferences.

Children could be given the opportunity to engage in their own observational drawings, perhaps being given access and guidance to using a range of sketching pencils to create variety in shade, line and texture. If possible, give children the chance to draw from life – perhaps something in the local environment or objects from the playground or classroom. Alternatively, children might create an observational drawing based on a photograph, perhaps of similar animals to those seen in Beth Waters' sketchbook which would be challenging to attempt to draw from life.

You might share with children an extract from Beth Waters' interview on the Greenaway award website where she talks about the importance of keeping sketchbooks and drawing from life:

"Draw from your daily life if you can. Keep a sketchbook. I think drawing from observation is one of the most important things you can do because then you're building up your own visual

library of things that you've practised drawing. And for me I really enjoy drawing from life. It makes you look at the world differently... it's a different way of looking.... And it doesn't matter if what you draw is no good. I think there's a pressure to create wonderful artworks every time you sit down but the wonderful thing about a sketchbook is it really doesn't matter. It's just yours and it's your tool for interpreting the world and working out how to draw things... You can be as messy as you like... or you can be as simple as you like. That's what I find. If things have got really difficult I try and take it right back to being really simple... I go back to two pencils... and I just find that really simplifies things for me." (Beth Waters, <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/child-of-st-kilda/>, 12:58-14:15)

Encourage children to look very carefully at what they are drawing; at the overall shape, at the shadows and shading, at the colour and the patterns. They might start by lightly sketching the overall form on their cartridge paper and then going on to add in details, shadows, additional lines, patterns and shading. They could go on to add colour to their observational drawings, perhaps using coloured pencils or watercolours. If time and resources allow, they could replicate their initial sketch using a different medium or form as Beth Waters has done, moving from drawing to printing.

Session 3: investigating portraits and what these add to our understanding of the story

Read aloud the next three spreads (entitled 'Settlers on St Kilda' and 'The Families of St Kilda'). Discuss with the children what more they learn about the island – its history, its geography and its inhabitants – from the text. *What do they imagine life was like on the island? How would it feel? Is there anything in this section that surprises you? What might the best things be about living on Hirta? What would be most challenging? How do you think it might have been different to the experience of living in a town or a village on the mainland at that time?*

Reflect on the full-spread and half-spread illustrations of the island. In both cases, Beth Waters has chosen to depict the land and the cottages as they looked in the early part of the 20th Century, drawing on her own visit and existing photographs sources and inspiration for her illustration. *Why do you think she chose to do this? What other options were available to her? How might our response as a reader be different if she had depicted the Bronze Age inhabitants or the earliest dwellings?*

Discuss what the children notice in terms of layout, composition and colour. In the first, she uses soft warm yellows and reds to portray the sky, the ocean, the houses and the animal, while the presence of the blue tones continue in the depiction of the land – both in the foreground and background of the image. In both landscapes the cottages on Hirta arguably provide the focus of the illustration, although they are dwarfed by, respectively, the ocean waters and steep hills beyond.

After these two landscapes, the next five illustrations document some of the families that lived on the island at the time Norman John was born. Focus on the images of these families or residents. *What do you notice in these illustrations? What do you like about them? What do they have in common? What differences are*

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there? Do they remind of anything? How do they compare with the other illustrations we've seen so far? What more might we learn about life on Hirta from these illustrations? How do you think they were produced?

Children might draw on the similarities to their own experiences of formal portrait photography – school photographs or posed sports team portraits or perhaps family portraits. They might comment on the limited colour palette again – mostly shades of blue on a white background, with some limited amount of red again. The limited colours might produce echoes of early sepia or black-and-white photography. They might also compare the manner in which each portrait is 'framed' in the blue paint with a clear thin white rectangle around the image with a picture frame. *How do all of these elements link the families together? How do the illustration choices connect the people to their environment and to each other?*

If you haven't already done so, you might at this point discuss the medium with which Beth Waters has produced the illustrations in this book. As described in a short passage on the penultimate page of the book, the images were all created using a printmaking technique known as monoprinting. The colour ink would be rolled onto a Perspex plate and then rubbed away or brushed to create the desired shape. A piece of paper would then be pressed against the Perspex plate and then peeled back to reveal the mirror image of the shape that had been formed on the plate. If another colour was needed, the process then had to be repeated with the new colour rolled or brushed on to the plate, the paper perfectly lined up and then pressed down again to add the new details or the new colours. In the case of the portrait of the MacKinnons that would mean that before the darker blue details were added, the initial print would have featured one large blue shape depicting the entire family with white spaces left for the families' faces and the baby. While they are many people, they are one conjoined shape delineated only by the details subsequently added during a later stage of the printing process. The Greenaway interview with Beth Waters referenced in the previous session includes her description of the monoprinting process including colour mixing which may support children's understanding (<https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/child-of-st-kilda/> from 7:27-9:56).

As in the previous sessions, consider Beth Waters' role as an illustrator in depicting these families. She wasn't, in this case, able to draw these figures from life as she did with the landscapes and many of the animals, but instead had to use existing photographs from the period as her main source for these portraits. Look at some examples of period portrait photography, including those depicting the St Kilda islanders (There are many examples attached to this article, including a photograph depicting Norman John and other members of the Gillies family: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4709840/Incredible-19th-Century-photos-reveal-British-island-tribe.html>). Explore some of differences and similarities between the photographic form and the illustrations use of paint and printing to portray these families. *For example, to what extent does the use of a single colour mimic the black and white photography of the period? How has she captured the clothing, facial expression, body language of the island's inhabitants? What have you noticed that is different? Why might she have chosen to portray their facial expressions using relatively simple lines and few details?* Much of the existing photography of the inhabitants of St Kilda was produced by tourism organisations who wished to emphasise the exciting exoticism, mythical nature or 'otherness' of the islanders – the idea of a group of people living somehow outside of the current times and experiences of the

rest of the world. *How has Beth Waters allowed the reader to connect with the everyday, familiar similarities between the families in the illustrations and the world that we know?* (For the teacher's information, the National Trust of Scotland has a three-part article examining the history of photography and tourism on the island from the 18th Century onwards: www.nts.org.uk/stories/photography-on-the-edge-part-1).

Give children the opportunity to build on their experience in the previous session of drawing from life to produce their own portraits. They might start with pencil sketches – drawing from photographs of their own families or friends. They should consider how to use their portrayal of the people to demonstrate their attitudes, feelings, interests, or relationships. They could then go on to produce a more stylised image using painting or printing (using watercolours or gouache), perhaps mimicking the single-colour and facial features of Beth Waters' portraits. Even if children don't produce portrait prints, they might layer their work starting with a larger brush to sketch out the overall shape of the person or people before layering on detail with a thinner brush and darker paint. Remind children to let each layer of their painting dry thoroughly before adding the next layer to avoid unintended blurring or mixing of the paints.

Session 4: Exploring the interplay between words and pictures to develop deeper meanings

Return to the book, asking children to summarise what they have discovered so far: what they have learned about St Kilda and Norman John's childhood there as well as any questions they may still have.

Read on from the section entitled 'Isolation' and continuing for the next 12 spreads until "*New families were brought in from nearby islands like Harris and Skye, but it was not enough.*" As you read, pause to allow children time to explore and respond to the illustrations as well as providing opportunities for them to discuss the text, asking for clarification or making observations.

After reading, pause for the children to talk in groups, reflecting on what they have learned, and considering their own personal response to this section: what do they like, how does it make them feel, what would they like to find out?

Consider the illustrations in this section in comparison to those preceding them. *How do the colours, tones and composition of the landscape change over the length of the text?* If possible, you might use a scanner, photographs or the 'screen capture' function on the visualiser to allow the children to compare the different depictions of the island side by side. *How do they differ? What do they have in common?*

Return to the illustration of the island in which it is portrayed only in extremely dark blues – almost black (featuring the text: "*St Kilda is exposed to the worst of the wild Atlantic weather.*"). When the book was being read aloud, how did seeing this image make them feel? How does it differ from the earlier portrayals of the island? Why do you think Beth Waters made this choice at this point in the book?

Debate and discuss the positive and negative aspects to living on the island. *Why do you think the young people began to leave Hirta to move to the mainland?* You might use role-play to imagine the conversation

between a young man or woman and their parents in which they argue their case for moving away for an 'easier' life on the mainland.

Afterwards, consider how successfully they feel Beth Waters has balanced and portrayed both the pleasures and benefits of island life and its significant challenges through her text and illustrative choices. Look back through the book comparing the various depictions of the land. *How is the island portrayed? How does the mood change in terms of layout, colour, texture?*

The children might return to the printing techniques described in the book and explored in the previous session to create their own printed landscape. Discuss how that weathered look with its inbuilt imperfections might be appropriate for the subject matter. Children might depict use the book as an inspiration for their own island landscapes, or they could use photographic references of a range of different environments or they could look at landscapes either rural or urban around the school as a source. Consider Beth Waters use of colour in her landscapes and how they might use colours for emotional impact as well as to reflect what can be seen in reality. Discuss and give children time to explore the techniques of colour mixing through printing – what happens when you overlay one colour on top of another? For example, they might look closely at the colours of the landscape on the spread which starts *"The whole community gathered to divide the catch fairly..."* *What happens when the yellow of the sky meets the blue of the sea on the horizon? Can they see the thin strip of green where the colours overlap? How do you think that Beth Waters created the green of the grass in the lower third of the illustration? Did she use a green ink or paint, or is that created through the merging of the yellow and the blue? What is the minimum number of paint colours Beth Waters could have used to create the colours we see in the book?* Challenge children to try limiting the colour palette in their landscapes just as Beth Water chose to do in many of the spreads. *Is it possible to create an effective and evocative landscape using different shades of just one or two colours?* As well as printing, children could try out different options digitally as well as by using painted paper or coloured paper for collage.

Session 5: How illustration can evoke an emotional response and empathy for a character

Read aloud and share each spread from the remainder of the book. Be aware that there are moments of bereavement and loss depicted that some children could find upsetting and that need handling sensitively. As before, pause on each spread to allow children time to fully explore the illustration and reread the text, considering the choices that Beth Waters has made and their own response to it. They can also be given time and space to ask for clarification around language or subject knowledge, to make observations or to ask questions.

You might return to certain illustrations or spreads that the children find particularly effective or evocative and consider what aspects of the text and/or illustration might have prompted that response. For example, you might return to the illustration of the older islanders waving goodbye to Hirta from the back of the boat taking them away (which starts with the text *"All the houses were left unlocked..."*). *What choices has Beth Waters made in terms of layout, texture, body language? What other options were available to her? How would our response change if we saw the same moment from the shore of the island, or from above?* As the

viewer, we are slightly above the passengers looking down on them, making them seem more vulnerable. Every passenger is in some way connected to the others, nobody is standing alone: they remain a community even as they leave the island. The horizon is not drawn as a flat line across the spread as it would appear in a photograph or a film; instead it curves dramatically as if to mimic the curvature of the Earth, echoing the earlier description of the St Kilda as the “*islands on the edge of the Earth.*” The seabirds which were such a crucial aspect of their survival on the island are depicted following after the boat as if they might choose to leave as well. In contrast to this full double-page spread, the next page makes use of empty white space across almost the whole two pages. *What was the impact of this page turn? How does that empty space make them feel? What does it remind them of? How might it feel to be a witness to that empty deserted row of cottages? What would you see and hear? How does the white space replicate the emptiness of the island now that the islanders have left?*

Having read the whole book, discuss what they think the book is about. Is it about the island, or is it about the people who lived there? Look back through the whole text and consider how Beth Waters depicts the interaction between the land and its inhabitants; the islanders’ relationship with St Kilda. For example, you might return to the final spread that was read aloud (starting “*By the time Norman John was born in 1925...*”). *How does this illustration make us feel? What techniques has Beth Waters used to convey those emotions? What do you think the family are doing in this illustration? Reread the text on the page. What do you think the key words are? What are the main themes and emotions conveyed in this piece of text? In what way does the illustration provide us with a visual representation of those ideas? For example, the text refers to the reduced population, harsh winters, failed crops, the hunger and cold, the isolation, and the lack of resistance to illness. The text finishes with hopes being dashed – “*it was not enough.*” *How are those accumulating challenges and sense of hopelessness echoed in the illustration?**

Compare this with illustrations that depict a more positive relationship between the people and the land (for example, the opening spread of the children playing in front of the cottages, or the islanders on the clifftop dividing the seabirds between the families).

Consider, too, Beth Waters’ decision at times to illustrate the people in such a way that separates them from the landscape (for example, the spread entitled “*What People Did*” or “*Visitors*”). *How does that decision alter the illustration? Does it affect our response? What is our eye drawn to? What do we notice? What does that white space allow you to do as a reader?* Discuss whether they have a preference between those two styles of layout and design. Consider the effect that the work produced has on you as a reader; *which images do you think are most effective? Why?*

Build on the work children have done in exploring observational drawing, portraiture and landscape by giving them time to design and produce their own monoprint, with or without background detail or landscape. Allow them to choose a subject matter that is important to them. They might mimic the illustrative process that they have noted during their discussion of Beth Waters’ work, by starting with observation, research and drawing in a range of media, before working up towards their final print design. Allow time for the

children to plan and work up their ideas to a finished quality, then put these up around the room for the children to explore and reflect on. *Does everyone's look the same? What influenced their choices?*

Re-read and discuss the text as a whole with the children, opening up discussion so that the children can share their likes and dislikes, any questions they are left with and share connections with other stories they have read or seen, as well as whether there might be anything further that they would still like to find out about the island and the people who lived there.

Further information: you can find out more about Beth Waters by visiting her website (www.bethwaters.co.uk), and the Greenaway awards website includes a full interview with Beth Waters talking about her work for this book: <https://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/books/child-of-st-kilda/>. The National Trust for Scotland has a page dedicated to the St Kilda World Heritage Site which features a wealth of information and photographs of the islands: <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/st-kilda>

This sequence of activities was designed by CLPE for the Greenaway shortlist. To access more free resources from CLPE, visit: www.clpe.org.uk/freeresources

In depth teaching sequences for over 200 other high quality texts can be found at:
www.clpe.org.uk/powerofreading

Further resources to support children's understanding of picturebooks for all ages and research on the importance of using picturebooks across the primary years can be found at:
<https://www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures>