

Drama

Drama Whole School Plan

- **Guiding Principles:**

The guiding principles which underpin the teaching and learning of Drama in our school are:

1. Drama is a subject
2. Drama is for all teachers and all children
3. Process Drama explores the real world through the fictional world

Introductory Statement

This plan is intended to facilitate the development of drama on a whole school basis as a subject in the school. The plan is a response to the requirements of the revised curriculum for primary schools and should be seen as a starting point from which the provision of drama, in accordance with curricular requirements, will develop over future reviews and through on going classroom practice. While individually teachers have been including drama in their work, this plan seeks to detail a whole school approach.

Rationale

We believe that drama can make unique contribution to the development of the child. Its purposes, and the particular character of its activity, provide the means by which the child can achieve an enhanced awareness of self and can experience a unique model of learning. This document seeks to review current practice in drama and improvise across the school to develop a coherent and integrated school policy for drama.

Vision and Aims

(a) Vision

Our school recognises that Drama education is part of a balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole spectrum of the child's intelligence. We also seek to develop the child's aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, creative and cultural development through engagement in positive Drama experiences.

(b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for drama

- To enable the child to become drama literate
- To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre
- To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills
- To enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others

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- To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the drama
- To enable the child to understand the structures and modes of drama and how they create links between play, thought and life
- To enable the child to acquire this knowledge of drama through the active exploration of themes drawn from life (past and present), whether they have their source in other curricular areas or in general areas relevant to the child's life
- To enable the child to begin the process of translating a knowledge of drama into the active exploration of life themes from drama literature, leading to the appreciation of world drama culture
- To form the criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Curriculum Planning

Strand

Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding

Strand Units

1. Exploring and making drama.
2. Reflecting on drama.
3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama.

2. Approaches and Methodologies

Belief is central to all Drama and should be characterised by a willingness to believe in the Drama itself, sincerity in playing roles and characters, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of Drama and a willingness to explore. Teachers will focus on the building of belief when beginning a new Drama activity.

Content for Drama will come from life experience. It will be from something that the children have experienced, something that they have read, something that emerged in another subject area, a worry or concern that the teacher might have or something generally that the teacher wants them to explore.

Teachers will carefully select a fictional lens for their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, whose context will allow for the realisation of the content to be explored.

Stimuli such as the following will be used in our school as starting points for the creation of a Drama. These are in keeping with the Drama activities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; pp. 66-91 in the Teacher Guidelines.

- Story
- Poems
- Newspaper Captions
- Pictures
- Painting
- Photographs
- Objects

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Elements are used organically through the Drama. Belief will be built as roles/characters develop. Action, place and time will be developed as the Drama is framed in its fictional lens. The element of tension is the one which teachers will have to think about. Tension will often have to be injected e.g. by adding a mysterious character / secret / surprise / problem / tension of time or urgency / limitations of space / temptation of a dare or a challenge / tension of inappropriate behaviour.

In our school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below is a table showing some suitable strategies for the class level. This is not an exhaustive list rather a suggestion. Teachers have the freedom to introduce other strategies that they might find useful for their own particular class or for a particular dramatic context.

Class Level Suggested Strategies

Junior & Senior Infants

Defining the Space, Still Images, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Whole Group improvisation, Hot seating.

1st & 2nd Classes

Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group Improvisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating

3rd & 4th Classes

Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Ritual, Flashback/flash forward

5th & 6th Classes

Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Hot seating, Ritual, Flashback/flash forward,

The safe environment is important for effective drama work to take place. In our school each class may develop a drama contract. To build confidence and further embed the safe environment, classes will play appropriate warm up games to develop various drama skills necessary for their drama work. Discussion about the contract and the safe environment may be included where appropriate both before and after the drama activity.

We see reflection as being of vital importance to the drama process. We will strive to ensure that reflection takes place at the appropriate points in the drama experience. We will also strive for a balance of methods of reflection using discussion, writing, visual arts, speaking, listening, doing, & questioning.

Presently each year emphasis is placed on a scripted drama for the purpose of performing a class play for the wider community.

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3. Children with Different Needs

It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in Drama activities. Drama activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in individual classes. This will be done by careful grouping of children, consciousness by the teacher of the children's abilities when giving briefs and by providing opportunities for different methods of reflection.

4. Linkage and Integration

Linkage is inherent to the Drama process. All activities in drama will include exploring and making drama, reflecting on drama and communicating in making drama.

Integration of drama is encouraged in other subject areas where it is natural and where children's learning can be maximised. Certain subject areas are amenable to drama activities for example

- Rólímir sa Ghaeilge
- SPHE
- History
- Geography
- Oral language development

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

In Scoil Mhuire we recognise the importance of assessment and record keeping in the delivery of The Drama Curriculum. Much assessment will focus on the children's learning and how best to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Teachers will observe which areas children are achieving in and which areas need further development.

Teachers should approach assessment in Drama by referring to the Curriculum Statement p 43-44 and examine children's engagement in terms of the three strand units. E.g. .see below

- Exploring and making Drama – the extent to which the child enters into a role or a character and develops it in the context of the action
- Reflecting on Drama – the extent to which they use reflection to create alternative courses for the action or the quality of the insights they gain from the Drama experience
- Co-operating and communicating in making Drama – the child's ability to contribute to the shaping of the Drama, both individually and in group in-role and out-of-role discussion about the Drama as the action takes place

Teacher observation will be central to all assessment in Drama. Other forms of assessment will include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, projects, recordings of children's work.

Progress will be recorded and communicated in teachers own notes, Cúntas Míósúil, end of year report and at parent teacher meetings.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, socio-economic status across all strands and activities.

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Organisational Planning

7. Timetable

Infant class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1st to 6th classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of Drama. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the individual teacher. Teachers may also choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year. Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama.

Teachers should ensure that pupils attending supplementary teaching are included for as much of the Drama programme as possible.

Children are prepared for an annual Christmas show featuring acting, drama, dance and music

8. Resources

Resources include Drama books, basic props, suitable stimuli (music, poetry, stories, visual images, newspaper captions). These are all found in the teachers' individual classrooms. There are also two large storage boxes of dressing up clothes available in the Prefab 14; these include costumes for Christmas plays.

Teachers are encouraged to use other adults who may be available to them such as parents who are involved in dramatic processes outside of school, particularly during arts week, to support and enhance children's dramatic experience in school.

Teachers are encouraged to teach their Drama lessons in their own classrooms and to carefully timetable for maximised use of the cleared space.

9. Health and Safety

As with all curricular areas work, the Drama Curriculum will maintain due care to our schools Health and Safety Policy.

Care and attention will be given to the following:

- Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom
- Storage facilities
- Ventilation of the classrooms
- Amount of space for children to sit or stand when engaged in Drama work
- Particular care will be needed when children are setting up the Drama space.
- Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment or when engaged in a very loud activity.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Each teacher will be given a copy of this school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing their long term and short term planning.

The elements of Drama should be carefully considered in the short term planning of Drama.

Teachers in the school are encouraged to approach their teaching of drama either; thematically or integrated with their own class work. Some of the themes that we as a school have chosen as possibilities are

- Halloween
- Autumn

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- Winter
- Christmas
- Spring
- Summer
- The Sea
- A journey

During Arts week children are given the opportunity to engage in drama workshops with professional drama instructors e.g. Pete Moulineaux and John Lucey.

If available, visiting drama and puppet theatres visit the school for class or whole school shows and depending on the particular group class workshops are sometimes provided.

11. Staff Development

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama included at the back of this policy.

Drama will be on the agenda at staff meetings from time to time during the year. This will allow for review of the policy and also give an opportunity for members of staff to share ideas that are working for them.

Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board.

12. Parental Involvement

Where appropriate parents may be involved in Drama within the classroom. If a parent has a particular expertise they may be invited to be part of the classroom process in Drama. Parents may be invited to open classroom presentations of improvisations or other work created in small group settings e.g. during arts week.

Activities such as Christmas plays will naturally be performed for parents and the wider community. Parents with particular skills, e.g. musicians, costume making etc.. will be asked to become involved.

13. Community Links

If opportunities allow children will visit local theatres to view drama productions e.g. Babóro Children's Festival. In recent times children have been involved in animation and film making productions with outside facilitators.

Visiting drama and puppet theatres are invited to the school for class or whole school shows and depending on the particular group class workshops are sometimes provided.

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Success Criteria

Will this plan make a difference to the teaching and learning of Drama in our school?

- How will we know that the plan has been implemented?
 - Teachers' preparation based on this plan
 - Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed
- Has the plan achieved its aims? What are the indicators? (Refer to Aims)
Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include
 - Teacher/parent feedback
 - Children's feedback
 - Inspectors' suggestions/reports
 - Have we sufficient resource materials available to staff in Scoil Mhuire?
 - Acquisition of resource materials and books to assist teachers in their work in this area.

Roles and Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of the school staff to implement the programme.
Board of Management will support the plan.

Review:

Teachers, Principal, Drama coordinator and BOM will be involved in this review.

Ratified by Board of Management on 18th March 2015

Signed:

Date:

This policy will be reviewed in March 2018.