



Whole School Plan for Drama



Introductory Statement

The whole school plan for drama was formulated by the staff of St. Mary's J.N.S in 2015. There were 2 groups– Junior and Senior Infant teachers in one group and First and Second class teachers in the second group. This plan was reviewed in September 2020 by the Drama curriculum team comprised of teachers and SNAs.

Rationale

The essence of drama is the making of story through enactment. Drama provides a unique gateway to learning and affords a dimension of knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible. Drama also provides a holistic experience for all students, encouraging children to express their individuality and creativity.

Vision and Aims

Vision

All the teachers and pupils of St. Mary's J.N.S work together to provide a positive, caring, inclusive, safe and happy learning environment which is both child centered and stimulating. We strive to provide a holistic education allowing each child to reach his/her full potential, thus fostering self-esteem, independence, tolerance and respect for self and others.

Drama captures the imagination of the children and kindles their spirit. It is quite unique as a medium of education. "Drama provides a unique gateway to learning and affords a dimension of knowledge that is otherwise inaccessible." (Drama, Arts Education, Teacher Guidelines p.3)

In St. Mary's Junior N.S. we will endeavour, keeping in mind the key messages below, to communicate with the pupils using the full drama continuum: playing imaginative games, dramatic activities, process drama, children performing, theatre in education and children's productions.

Educational Drama:

"Educational drama, as envisaged in the curriculum, is a creative process that allows children to explore the full potential of drama as a learning process" (Drama, Arts Education, Teacher Guidelines p.2)

We see the key messages in the Primary School Curriculum as:

- Drama is a subject
- Drama is for all teachers, SNAs and children
- Process drama is central to the drama curriculum
- Process drama explores the real world through the fictional world.

Aims

- a) To enable the child to become familiar with drama in all its forms.
- b) To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre.
- c) To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questioning, empowering and empathetic skills.
- d) To enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others.
- e) To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the drama.
- f) To enable the child to understand the structures and modes of drama and how they create links between play and real life.
- g) 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 curriculum areas or in general areas relevant to the child's life.

Objectives

- a) Develop the ability to enter physically, mentally and emotionally into the fictional drama context and discover its possibilities through co-operation with others.
- b) Develop empathy with and understanding of others and the confidence needed to assume a role or character.
- c) Experience and create an atmosphere where ideas, feelings and experiences can be expressed, where conflict can be handled positively, and life situations explored openly and honestly.
- d) Develop personal adaptability, spontaneity, the ability to co-operate, verbal and non-verbal skills, and imagination and creativity, in order to ensure that the drama text reflects real life in a fresh and valid way.
- e) Develop the ability to decide what course is likely to lead to significant drama action.
- f) Develop the ability to steer the drama towards areas that are likely to lead, through whatever genre, to insights into the subject matter to be explored.
- g) Develop the ability to co-operate in solving, out of role, the problems that are presented in making the drama to co-operate with others, in role, in keeping the drama alive, in creating context, and in exploring the problems that are presented in making the drama.
- h) Develop the ability to use drama to promote or express a view on a subject on which he/she may have strong views or feelings.

Curriculum Planning for Junior and Senior Infants:

Strand:

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

Strand units:

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama

Approaches and methodologies

Approaches

- Focus on the practical approach to the teaching of drama in the classroom under the following headings

Make-believe play to process drama

- a willingness to believe that a symbol is 'real' e.g. play house
- sincerity in adopting roles and playing the characters
- an acceptance of the fictional consequences of play
- an impulse to explore
- creating a drama, through language and action, in which children explore possible solutions and outcomes that are inherent in the situation

The prerequisites for making drama

The approaches and methodologies used ensure the drama prerequisites are in place for the drama. These are set out in the Drama Teacher Guidelines p.9

- Content
- The fictional lens
- A safe environment

Content: The content of drama is always some aspect of life e.g. material experienced, imagined or read about; aspects of life from the past or present that will arouse the children's curiosity; needs and concerns of the children; issues that the teacher may want to explore

The fictional lens

- understand, through active participation, the essential nature of fiction and the relationship between plot and theme,
- understand the particular relationship that drama has to life,
- understand the place of myth, fairy-tale and drama,

Create a safe environment through interpersonal and social development. This encourages the child

- to trust, respect and support others,
- to experience openness with others,
- to respect differences in people,
- to value his/her own abilities,

Drama Contract

Class teachers establish a Drama Contract with their new class in September. Ground rules are drawn up with the children and recorded by means of a Drama Contract. Samples of Drama Contracts are available at the PPDS website:
http://www.pcpsp.ie/components/com_mtree/attachment.php?link_id=1124&cf_id=24
The contract should include phrases like: We agree to, Listen to each other, work together and take turns etc.

The elements of drama

We will focus on the following elements of drama:

- Belief: The teacher may be in role while the children may interpret what may emerge from a still picture. Drama takes on its own life.
- Role and character: Through a consistent engagement with a variety of roles and characterisation in a range of challenging situations, children can develop the ability to enter physically, mentally and emotionally into the fictional context
- Action: Encourage children to accept dramatic consequences and ‘stay with’ the character.
- Time: Help children to appreciate features of time
- Place: Encourage children to imagine the place where the action is taking place
- Tension: Encourage children to react to certain situations in drama where the outcome is unknown.

Methodologies- Junior and Senior Infants

Through the use of: Story, Poetry/Nursery Rhymes, Songs, Games and Activities

Examples include

Story (can last 6 weeks)

- We’re going on a bear hunt
- Red Riding Hood
- Three Bears – Goldilocks
- Little Red Hen
- The Hare and the Tortoise
- Three Billy Goats gruff
- The Shoemaker and the Elves
- The Lion and the Mouse
- Farmer Duck
- The Gruffalo
- Monkey Puzzle

Poetry

- Little Bo Peep
- Humpty Dumpty
- There was an old woman
- Jack and Jill
- Hickory Dickory Dock
- 2 Little Dickie Birds

- 5 Little Ducks
- I'm talking big! (Big Book of Poetry)

Extake a line from a rhyme / story e.g. Humpty Dumpty had a great fall "Who am I" – teacher in role

Children have to ask why? Where? When? What? Who? Questions – Hot Seat.

Games

- Who is missing?
- The Hands Dance
- Yes, Lets!
- Popcorn
- Sadly, Happily
- Sip, Zap, Boing
- 1,2,3
- Dia dhuit – Dia is Muire dhuit – Conas atá tú?
- Fruit Bowl
- Chain story (one word each)
- Pass the clap
- Mirror game
- Feelings (happy, sad faces and bodies)
- Word tennis (group names – children 'throw back')
- Strings – puppet and puppet master (mime and movement)
- Mime (Irish lessons)
- Pupils performing for other classes on block / in school.

Methodologies – First and Second class

Examples of:

Story:

- Fionn Mc Cumhail
- We're going on a Bear Hunt (big book)
- Farmer Duck (linked to first steps)
- Irish drama book – Tomás na hOrdaigh – Cochailín Dearg
- All aboard scheme – Ginn (coral reading)

Examples of:

Poetry

- If I should be a crocodile
- It's hot
- Witch poems
- Seasonal poems
- Animal poems
- Humorous poems
- DVD Roahl Dahl

Songs

- **Action rhymes and poems**

Games

- Fruit-bowl
- O'Grady says (Irish and English)
- Introducing themselves

- Guessing games – feeling game
- Your Majesty
- Who am I?
- Circle games – random objects/words, murder wink, fortunately/unfortunately, machine game(mime)

Activities

- Role-play
- Hot seat
- Conscience alley
- Freeze frame

Inclusion

All children in the class participate in drama.

- Teachers decide on drama rules at the start of the year. This helps children realise what is acceptable behaviour during a drama lesson. This is particularly important for children with **emotional and behavioural difficulties**. The teachers constantly reinforce the rules throughout the year.
- Drama is extremely beneficial for all children especially those with additional learning needs. It gives them an excellent chance to participate in group activities and helps build their confidence and self-esteem. It can contribute to the child's language development in extending vocabulary and expressive ability. Teachers differentiate lessons so that all children can participate full

Linkage and integration

Drama is integrated with a number of subjects in the curriculum

- English: - Dramatizing nursery rhymes, stories, songs etc. (Use of Story teller)
- Oral language games: hot seat, conscience alley, chatterbox cards
- Written work: creative writing about a drama lesson in class
- Readers Theatre
- Gaeilge: Bua na Cainte;rannta, dánta, amhráin, scéalta
- History: Dramatizing Irish Legends
- S.P.H.E: problem solving, dealing with feelings, restorative practise etc.
- Music: Dramatizing songs
- P.E: Dance, Drama games/ Mime e.g. Halloween
- Art: Pictures and collages of images from an episode
- Student of the month – choral work/poems 1st & 2^{ns} classes
- Religion – Grow in Love, Christmas play.

Assessment and record keeping

- 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 in discussion about it and as the action takes place

Assessment tools available to teachers include:

- Photographing/filming/recording pupils involved in Activities.
- Teacher observation & questioning

Class teacher's keep information gained from assessment and uses information to help develop lessons further. It is also useful for children's records.

Organisational Planning

Timetable:

Teachers use discreet Drama activities and integrate Drama with other subjects in order to enhance the child's learning experience in those areas.

The suggested minimum framework for Arts Education is:

- 3 hours per week (Full Day – 1st & 2nd)
- 2 hours 30 mins. Per week (Short Day – Infants)

This is achieved through stand alone and integrated drama lessons.

Resources: - Please check with Post Holder with responsibility for Drama.

- Curriculum Book: Hard copies and online resource
- Props: Puppets
- Readers theatre scripts.
- Drama Resources: 100+ ideas for Drama, Tomás na hOrdaigh, Toymakers workshop etc...
- Dressing up boxes and trolleys on each block (also props)
- Suitable stimuli for drama – music, poetry, stories, visual images
- Classrooms and the hall are both used for drama
- Oral language scheme
- Bua na Cainte– Dráma as Gaeilge
- Trips to Theatres / performances – in-school performances

Health and safety:

In keeping with our Health and Safety Policy teachers identify risks where they exist and to suggest ways where risk can be eliminated or properly managed.

Individual teacher's planning and reporting:

- Whole School planning days & Croke Park hours
- Cuntas míosúil – This is referred to for whole school planning
- Fortnightly and termly plans.

Teachers consider the elements of drama when they are preparing their term plans. Some teachers use a thematic approach when planning.

Staff Development:

Staff development for drama is listed as part of the Special Duties posts. Time can be allocated where necessary at staff meetings to allow specific development.

Summer courses are available each year. Details of these are posted in the staffroom. Many staff have been given an opportunity to watch professional drama teachers working with children providing an opportunity to learn new skills and techniques. Appropriate reading material on Drama is available to support teacher's drama activities.

Parental Involvement:

Parents are asked to support school policies at enrolment, this includes the school drama policy.

Children love to perform and parents are given opportunities to come to see children involved in Drama especially at Christmas.

Students perform readings, poem and songs at all 'Student of the Month' presentations and during Grandparents' Day celebrations in school.

Community Links:

Children brought to local theatres

Teacher with responsibility for Drama links in with community projects / groups where appropriate.

Success Criteria:

- Teachers' preparation based on plan
- Procedures outlined in plan consistently followed
- The plan has achieved its aims.

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

- Teacher feedback
- Children's feedback

Review

Curriculum Policies are monitored by relevant post-holders and subject to review as required.

This policy was reviewed and updated on September 25th 2020 by the Curriculum Team for Drama. This team was comprised of; AP1: Mairéad Byrne

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