



# St Mary's Junior School

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## St Mary's Junior School School Plan for Music



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## 1. Introductory Statement and Rationale

### a) Introductory Statement

The Music plan for St. Mary's JNS was reviewed in consultation with the teaching staff and Music post-holder (AP2). The changes were implemented as a result of staff meeting (October 4<sup>th</sup> 2022) to review the current music whole school plan (last ratified 2006). Following feedback at the staff meeting, the school plan was updated.

### b) Rationale

Music contributes to the development of artistic awareness, self-expression, self-growth, self-esteem and multicultural sensitivity and, therefore, to the development of the whole child. An important aspect of music in the curriculum is the way it contributes to the personal, social, mental and physical development of the child.

It was decided to focus on this area for development...

- To benefit teaching and learning of music in our school
- To provide a coherent approach to the teaching of music across the whole school
- To review the existing plan for music in light of the 1999 Primary School Curriculum

## 2. Vision and Aims

### a) Vision

Music provides for sensory, emotional, intellectual and creative enrichment and contributes to the child's holistic development. We seek to assist the children in our school in achieving their potential musically through active engagement with the three strands: listening and responding, performing and composing.

### b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Music

- To enable the child to enjoy and understand music and to appreciate it critically
- To develop the child's openness to, awareness of and response to a wide range of musical genres, including Irish music
- To develop the child's capacity to express ideas, feelings and experiences through music as an individual and in collaboration with others
- To enable the child to develop his/her musical potential and to experience the excitement and satisfaction of being actively engaged in musical creativity
- To nurture the child's self-esteem and self-confidence through participation in musical performance
- To foster higher-order thinking-skills and lifelong learning through the acquisition of musical knowledge, skills, concepts and values
- To enhance the quality of the child's life through aesthetic musical experience

## 3. Curriculum Planning

### a) Strands and Strand Units (*Refer to Curriculum pp. 14-79*)

Teachers are familiar with the strands/strand units/content objectives for their class level.

- Infant classes pp. 14-25
- First and second class pp. 26-40

The post holder responsible for music circulates information to new teachers or teachers changing class level so that familiarity is maintained when teachers change class/classes or if new teachers join the staff.

There is continuity, progression and consistency from class to class.

Teachers are familiar with the musical concepts: a sense of pulse, a sense of duration, a sense of tempo, a sense of pitch, a sense of dynamics, a sense of structure, a sense of timbre, a sense of texture, a sense of style.

The three strands – Listening and Responding, Performing and Composing are comprehensively covered and afforded equal importance.

The school adopts a thematic approach at certain stages of the year. (e.g. Christmas, Hallowe'en, Seasonal)

**b) Approaches and Methodologies** (*Refer to Curriculum and Teacher Guidelines pp. 52 – 127*)

- All children are actively engaged in music education in our school.
- All teachers are actively involved in music education in our school.
- External teachers who are supporting specific aspects of the music curriculum are informed of the 1999 music curriculum. The class teacher will incorporate the external teacher in his/her planning process for music.
- There is a positive musical environment that encourages and values sharing of ideas, skills and resources. (See Teacher Guidelines p. 29)
- A variety of approaches and methodologies are used to foster active enjoyable participation in the music curriculum to meet the needs and interests of the children.
- Opportunities are provided to enhance children's lives through music.

**Listening and Responding** (*Refer to Curriculum pp. 19-21 (Infants); pp. 32-34(1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>)*)

- Children are provided with opportunities to listen and respond to music. They experience a wide range of musical styles, traditions and cultures through a range of recorded music and live performances.
- Teacher provides opportunities for active listening and responding by questioning, prompting suggesting and allowing children to listen to short examples repeatedly (See Teacher Guidelines p. 55)
- Children are given opportunities to respond to music in a variety of ways which may include:
  - Moving
  - Talking about ...
  - Listening for specific instruments and/or specific features
  - Drawing and painting
  - Following/creating a pictorial score of music
  - Writing in response to music
  - Composing
  - Singing or playing along with music
  - Musical games and/or action songs.
- Children are provided with opportunities to work in different groupings (whole group, small groups, pairs, individually). (See Teacher Guidelines p. 29)
- Children are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively/co-operatively.
- Children are provided with opportunities to offer varying and creative solutions to presented problems. (See Teacher Guidelines p.69)
- Opportunities are provided for live performances e.g. Music in the Classroom National Concert Hall, Student of the Month. Garda Band school visit, Traditional Music performance by other children, Classical.
- Listening materials: A broad range of materials is provided.
  - Recorded music on CD or music technology (internet, YouTube etc.)

- Tuned and untuned percussion instruments
  - Environmental objects, such as assortments of metals, wood or fibres
  - Instruments of child/children in the class
  - Melodic instruments – recorder, tin whistle, piano, guitar, etc.
  - Instruments of a musician on the staff, among the parent body or in the locality
  - Performance of a group, ensemble, band, choir, orchestra visiting the school or at another venue.
- Selecting listening materials:
    - recorded music on video, CD or music technology
    - tuned and untuned percussion instruments
    - environmental objects, such as assortments of metals, wood or fibres
    - a child in the class who may be studying an instrument privately
    - other school instruments, which may include a recorder, tin whistle, piano or guitar
    - a musician on the staff, among the parent body or in the locality
    - a group, ensemble, band, choir or orchestra visiting the school or at another venue.
  - Selecting recorded music.  
 Pieces selected as follows: Music from written and unwritten traditions, classical and folk, music from Ireland and other countries, choral and instrumental, solo and ensemble, music for different occasions and purposes. Listening excerpts are short, varied, good examples from the genre. They are played several times, often, on high-quality audio equipment.

**Performing** (*Refer to Curriculum pp. 22-23 (Infants); pp. 35-38 (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>)*)

- In the Performing strand, the following are emphasised...
  - Active, enjoyable participation
  - Development of skills, understanding, knowledge
  - Fostering of children’s attitude and interests
  - Development of creativity.
- Songs are taught with consideration of these issues...
  - Using voice, recording, instrument, sheet music
  - Teaching by ear
  - Selecting the song
  - Matching the vocal range of the children
  - Resources.
- Effective singing skills are developed with consideration of issues around...
  - Methodology of teaching
  - Conducting
  - Improving vocal quality
  - Vocal exercises (*See Teacher Guidelines pp. 76-81*)
  - The following are encouraged - part singing, teaching rounds, partner songs (duet) and part songs through a gradual increase in level of difficulty, use of ostinato and drones. (*See Teacher Guidelines pp. 84-85*).
- The approach on overcoming singing difficulties is through working with individual, group and whole class. (*See Teacher Guidelines p. 88*)
- These approaches to music literacy are used:
  - Graphic Notation

- Simplified Standard Notation
- Stick Notation
- Pitch Notation
- Rhythm Notation

*(See Teacher Guidelines pp.89-103)*

- These opportunities are provided for playing instruments in all classes.  
Playing Percussion Instruments, Melodic Instruments (recorder in 2<sup>nd</sup> Classes) and Homemade Instruments of both types. *(See Teacher Guidelines pp. 104-109)*
- Opportunities are provided to perform for an audience.
  - Within class
  - Other classes
  - Parents
  - Wider community

**Composing** *(Refer to Curriculum pp. 24-25 (Infants); pp. 39-41(1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>); pp. 58-59 (3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup>); pp. 77-79 (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>), Teacher Guidelines pp. 110-127)*

- Opportunities are provided for children to develop their creativity in music.
- Children are encouraged to improvise, discuss, evaluate and record music as part of the Composing strand.
- Opportunities are provided to improvise and/or compose in a variety of contexts.
- For example
  - To accompany a nursery rhyme, song, poem or story
  - To explore the musical concepts/elements
  - To experiment with sound
  - To portray a character, mood or setting
  - To illustrate events
  - To convey an abstract concept
  - To explore melody.
- Children are given opportunities to compose/improvise using vocal sounds, body sounds, instruments and environmental sounds.
- These management issues need to be considered when organising composing activity...
  - A warm-up activity - such as a simple rhythm game, a vocal improvisation or a singing conversation.
  - Structure and shape to children's work through establishing clear start and stop signals
  - A wide variety of sound-making materials, the teacher may need to limit the choice of sounds available to them in the early stages.
- Children given opportunities to contribute to the setting of ground rules for creative music activity.  
Drawing up a few basic rules in conjunction with the children will facilitate smooth organisation and ensure quality learning experiences for all children. These may cover...
  - starting and stopping signals
  - the handling of instruments
  - sound levels
  - time spent at each activity

- movement to and from the music area
- the maximum number of children who may work in the music area at any time.

*(See Teacher Guidelines pp.111-112)*

**c) Linkage and Integration** *(Refer to Teacher Guidelines pp. 19-24, 39)*

**Linkage**

- The strands of the curriculum – Listening and responding, Performing, and Composing are interrelated and interconnected
- For example, a single recording of vocal music may provide a stimulus for listening, a stimulus for responding and performing by singing along, and a stimulus for composing by creating new music using the same structure or theme.

**Integration**

- Music is integrated with another subject in a way that complements curriculum aims and objectives in both subjects. Planning for integrated learning should ensure that the music component is meaningful and consistent with the curriculum. For instance, in choosing a song to fit a theme the teacher should ensure that the range of notes and words of the song are also appropriate for the children.
- A manageable number of strands or subject areas is included.
- Theme based activities are used to support integration.

**d) Assessment and Record Keeping** *(Refer to the school's policy on Assessment, Curriculum pp.82-89, Teacher Guidelines pp. 25-27,124-127)*

Assessment informs the teaching and learning of music by identifying the child's learning needs in music. The teacher can then adjust instruction and plan more appropriate activities.

- Knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes within the strands Listening and Responding, Performing and Composing should be assessed.

Teacher observation of the whole class, groups or individuals is maximised in using observation as an assessment tool by

- Being clear about what aspect of musical behaviour he/she is expecting the pupils to demonstrate.
- Anticipating learning outcomes before making observations.
- Continuous informal questioning by the teacher.
- Using class discussion.
- Using brief conferences to help create dialogue about particular aspects of work and overall development of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Observing collaborative group tasks
- Encouraging the children to perform in twos or threes.

These assessment tools are used.

- Teacher-designed tests and tasks
- Projects
- Curriculum profiles
- Curriculum portfolios
- Recordings of the children's work
- Graphic/pictorial scores.

Progress is recorded using a range of assessment tools, teacher observations, teacher-designed tasks and tests, work samples, portfolios, projects and curriculum profiles.

Progress communicated to parents through the school report card and parent-teacher meetings.

**e) Children with Different Needs** (*Refer to Teacher Guidelines pp. 40-41*)

Activities are adapted and modified so that all children can participate meaningfully in classroom music.

A special needs assistant (SNA) has a wider role/responsibility during some music activities.

The school provides challenges for children of exceptional ability by allowing a child who is musically more able

- to proceed at his/her own pace
- be allowed to withdraw from group activities at crucial points in his/her development to pursue personal projects and teacher-designed tasks.
- To return to group activities easily.
- Specialist help is recommended.

The school provides children from a different cultural background with opportunities to

- see the music from his/her culture recognised and valued along with the music of the other children in the class.
- bring any recordings of music from his/her native country into the classroom,
- see a musician from the child's community perform for the class as part of the listening programme.

Any child with a disability can participate in classroom music, with some modification or adaptation to his/her needs, particularly in the areas of performing and composing.

**f) Equality of Participation and Access** (*Refer to school's Equality Policy, Teacher Guidelines p. 41*)

Gender issues that need to be considered in relation to the teaching of music are..

- Equal opportunities are given to boys and girls to participate in classes/activities.
- Boys and girls have equal access to and opportunities to experience all strands.
- Material chosen is suitable for both genders.

Music class is used as an opportunity to integrate the culture of all pupils.

Children experiencing any form of disadvantage should be given for example...

Poor coordination

- additional time to practise a skill.
- a suitable musical instrument that is easy to play or an instrument that can be played with one hand.
- encouragement to progress musically from playing an instrument with one hand to playing with two.
- suitable support for an instrument, or an instrument that is sensitive to touch, such as an electronic keyboard or a drum machine, or an instrument specifically designed or adapted to his/her specific needs.

Hearing Impaired

- a quiet learning environment.
- a low or high-pitched instrument, according to his/her specific needs.
- Instruments in which vibrations can be felt (for example drum, bodhrán, stringed instrument).

Visually Impaired

- experience with music that can be learned by rote.
- instruments that can be played by touch (for example maracas, castanets or recorders).

- plenty of time to practise a skill.
- a good viewing position in the classroom.
- notation presented as larger than usual or in tactile form (for example magnetic letters or counters on a raised five-line stave).

#### Learning Difficulties

- plenty of encouragement and repetition of instructions will be necessary
- visual symbols and clues (for example hand signs, finger stave, magnetic counters and pictures) can help to reinforce theoretical concepts.

#### Emotional and/or Behavioural Difficulties

- exposure to a variety of enjoyable musical activities.
- Structured and specific rules and clear instructions for activities.
- a choice of instrumental work appropriate to his/her own abilities (ideally an instrument that is easy to play and easy to keep silent).

## 4. Organisational Planning

### a) **Timetable** (*See Primary School Curriculum Introduction p. 70, Teacher Guidelines p. 17,39*)

Refer to page 70 Primary School Curriculum introduction, Teacher Guidelines for time allocation and structure.

Time is allocated in blocks for specific aspects of arts education. (*See Teacher Guidelines p.17*)

### b) **Resources and ICT**

There is an inventory of resources, equipment and instruments available for music. Music resources and equipment are centrally stored in the storage room on the green block.

The post of responsibility for music is responsible for maintaining resources, equipment and instruments.

There are adequate resources for all classes. Resources are maintained and updated on an annual basis. Resources are purchased centrally if required by the post holder. This is managed in consultation with the principal and class teachers.

If possible, resources will be borrowed from local library/education centre.

The Right Note music programme.

### c) **ICT** (*Refer to Curriculum p.10, Teacher Guidelines pp. 122-123, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Teachers*)

ICT will play a role in the music plan through the use of multimedia materials, iPads, CD-ROMs and videos, internet websites and resources.

The use of the school's digital camera or iPads will be useful in recording music activities. The display of these pictures on the school website will give an opportunity to children to see themselves and others in action.

Use will also be made of a digital video camera or iPads from time to time to enable children view their performance of certain activities in the music classroom. The teachers will initiate discussion of same as a positive re-enforcement exercise.

There is a code of practice to ensure safe Internet usage. Appropriate hardware & software will be installed to ensure this safety. Teachers will familiarise themselves with material on websites prior to use by the children. There will be ongoing monitoring of these sites.

Internet will be used to access music websites. Teachers can access music resources and materials at:

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-primary/theme-pages/music/music-in-the-classroom/>

<https://www.rte.ie/culture/music-in-the-classroom/>

**d) Health and Safety** (*Refer to Teacher Guidelines p. 18*)

Consideration is given to the following when planning for music:

- Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom
- Storage facilities
- Access to, and transport of, equipment/instruments
- Ventilation of the classrooms
- Amount of space for children to sit or stand when doing choral or instrumental work
- Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment and instruments.

**e) Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting**

Teachers will refer to the whole school plan and the curriculum documents for music to provide information and guidance for their short- and long-term planning.

Strands, strand unit and a thematic approach are considered.

Work covered will be recorded in the Cúntas Míosúil and uploaded to the shared drive. Cúntas Míosúil serves a practical purpose as a reference document in reviewing and developing individual/whole school plan for the following years at block and staff meetings.

**f) Staff Development**

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, instruments, equipment and websites dealing with music.

School personnel can research new methodologies and can arrange for demonstrations/ opportunities to try out materials/instruments and assess whether or not they should be purchased.

If external teachers are supporting specific aspects of the music curriculum, they are included in staff development for music.

Information about in-service courses, school visits, musical events is communicated to all.

Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses. There is a sharing of the expertise acquired at these courses.

Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the music curriculum.

Teachers can avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and upskill the school community on these issues.

Colleagues who need assistance are given help and advice on the preparation and implementation of the music curriculum.

There are opportunities for team-teaching.

Opportunities are identified for whole school engagement with particular strands.

**g) Parental involvement** (*Refer to Teacher Guidelines pp. 30-34, Primary School Curriculum, Your child's learning, Guidelines for Parents*)

Parents can support their child in fostering an interest in music and be involved in supporting the music programme in the school by...

- singing together songs learned at school, or elsewhere
- listening to music together
- playing with 'found' sounds.
- encouraging active listening
- discussing attitudes towards and taste in music
- allowing time and space to practise or improvise on an instrument
- encouraging positive attitudes to music in general and to school-based activities in particular.

Parents are invited to view the children's performances in music.

There are events held such as the Christmas play and Student of the Month.

Pupils perform for each other.

#### **h) Community links**

Members of the community can be involved in supporting the music programme (e.g., Music Generation, North Clondalkin Library).

There are musicians in the locality who could work with the children, perform for the children or upskill staff (e.g., Music Generation, Garda Band etc.)

There are venues where the children could be brought to listen to and appreciate music e.g., The Helix, The NCH, The Ark, The Civic Theatre, Ballyfermot Community Arts Centre.

### **5. Success Criteria**

This plan will make a difference to the teaching and learning of music in our school. These are the criteria that will indicate success.

- **The Plan is implemented.**
  - Teachers' preparation based on this plan
  - Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed
  - Feedback from teachers
  
- **The Plan has achieved its aims.**

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

  - Teacher/parent/pupil/community feedback
  - Inspectors' suggestions/report
  
- **The Plan has enhanced pupil learning.**
  - Children have a positive attitude and appreciation of music
  - Children have an interest in expression through music
  - Children engage in listening and responding, performing and composing music
  - Children have explored sound including vocal sound, body percussion, instruments and environmental sounds
  - Children have listened and responded to music from a wide variety of genres and cultures in a variety of ways
  - Children sing songs appropriate to their vocal range from a wide variety of genres and cultures
  - Children play a variety of instruments
  - Children experience a variety of ways of recording music which may include graphic, pictorial, ICT and traditional music notation
  - Children improvise and create music using a variety of sound sources
  - Children talk about, evaluate and record their work.

### **6. Implementation**

#### **a) Roles and Responsibilities**

Individual teachers are responsible for the implementation of the music plan. It will be supported by the post holder with responsibility for music. The plan will be developed by the whole staff.

#### **b) Timeframe**

Plan will be implemented by **January 2023**.

## 7. Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the music curriculum in the school.

### a) Roles and Responsibilities

The following groups are involved in the review.

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Post holders/coordinators
- BOM/DES/Others.

Music post holder has responsibility for co-ordinating the review. Refer to tasks in the Action Plan and check that they have been completed in accordance with the agreed timeframe.

### b) Timeframe

Plan will be reviewed by School Year 2025/2026.

## 8. Ratification

Reviewed / Ratified by:

	Date:
Teaching Staff	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
Board of Management	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2022