

Visual Arts Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale:

Introductory Statement – this plan was drawn up by the full staff of Letterfrack NS in February 2015.

Rationale – we believe that visual arts activities expand children’s ways of exploring, expressing and coming to terms with the world they inhabit, in a structured and enjoyable way. It provides the sensory, emotional, intellectual and creative enrichment and contributes to the child’s holistic development.

Vision and Aims:

Vision – our school makes a serious attempt to develop the whole child and thus a great emphasis is placed on art and artistic expression. Art permeates the whole school curriculum and children are encouraged to express themselves through paint, print, sculpture, model making and working 2d and 3d forms. We are also lucky to have Jessica Kane on our staff, a person who has special expertise in this area.

We are also very lucky that the school is situated in what is now becoming a fast growing artistic community due in part to the influence of the GMIT Fine Woodwork and Design College. We are also privileged to have close links with this exciting and expanding Educational Centre. We believe that art offers a very special way for children to express themselves with confidence. It also allows every child to excel whether or not they are academically gifted.

Aims – we endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for the visual arts. We believe that the strategies to best achieve these aims should be to:

Integrate art into all subjects;

Encourage ‘making and doing’ at home to involve parents;

Encourage parents to be a resource in the development of arts and crafts in our school;

Content of Plan

CURRICULUM

Strands and Strand Units:

Teachers should familiarise themselves with the six strands (Drawing, Paint and Colour, Print, Clay, Construction, Fabric and Fibre) and ensure each strand and both strand units are given equal prominence during the visual arts programme for the year. The content objectives are divided between the two classes at each level.

Children With Different Needs:

The visual arts programme should provide opportunities for all children to experience success. Particular support will be given to children with special needs where discovery and experimentation in visual arts can be very rewarding and may lead to the development of other skills and talents. The resource teacher, when devising learning profiles, shall consult with the class teachers involved as to the visual arts activities that best suit the children with special needs in our school.

Linkage and Integration:

Since many of our activities in art will be multi-faceted, linkage between the 6 strands will occur on a regular basis e.g. work with clay will include paint etc. Teachers must plan for opportunities for linkage and integration of visual arts activities. A thematic approach may be taken for linking strands e.g Spring display, incorporating all strands of the curriculum. The visual arts will be integrated with subjects – English, Gaeilge, Music, Religion and SESE.

Assessment and Record Keeping:

Assessment in art will show how children are learning to perceive, explore, respond to and express their world through the curriculum strands. The primary form of assessment in our school is teacher observation where the teacher notes the quality of imagination, inventiveness and involvement of the child. The child's ability to use materials and tools, the child's contribution to group activities and the quality of his/her responses to artwork can be observed and recorded. Use will also be made of teacher designed tasks to assess areas of development. Projects, work samples and child portfolios will also be used to look at the progression of skills development and as a record of achievement.

Equality of Participation and Access:

All children shall have equal access to all visual arts activities. In line with our inclusive school policy different cultures are affirmed through discussion, activities and displays. No child will be excluded from the visual arts programme for failure to pay the arts and crafts contribution as listed in the Book and Materials list given out each year. Visits to galleries and exhibitions may be arranged during the year.

ORGANISATION

Timetables:

Teachers shall be encouraged to place visual arts as an intrinsic part of their timetable. Infant classes should show 2 hours and 30 minutes per week for arts education, to include Visual Arts, Music and Drama and other classes should show 3 hours per week. At certain times of the year teacher may block time when they are working on particular projects or preparing for special occasions. This scheduling should be reflected in individual teachers planning. The timetables should be devised to maximise the available resources, equipment and assistants.

Displays:

Inside School - Children's work is displayed in each classroom and should be regularly updated to ensure that the children are inspired by a colourful and constantly changing classroom environment. The school corridors, the entrance hall, notice board and general purpose room are used to display artwork complete by the children. Teachers may keep a sample of finished work or resources used, to aid future planning another year.

Outside School – Artwork may be displayed in Letterfrack/Tullycross Churches for the Sacraments. On Occasion posters for competitions.

Resources and ICT:

Stocks of all art materials and resources are regularly reviewed and replenished. Books in relation to the visual arts and art appreciation are available in classrooms, library and staff resource shelf in art press. There are a number of books on famous artists in the school library and in Art Room. Teachers accessing the internet must follow the school's Acceptable Use Policy and check proposed websites in advance of the class going on line. At the start of the school year teachers are requested to send a list of materials required to the office. A bulk order will be made to ensure best value in terms of purchasing.

Health & Safety

School personnel are mindful of the health and safety issues associated with the visual arts. Every care will be taken in using glue, scissors, craft knives, clay and other materials used should be non toxic and safe for children to work with. The children will be encouraged to wear old clothing during practical classes to protect their clothes. It might also be necessary for children to wear latex gloves when using glues, fabric paints or glass paints.

Teachers must pay particular attention to the floor area near the sink when children are changing water. Plastic containers must be used for water. Lighting should be adequate and the room well ventilated while working is drying.

For visits outside the school the procedures applicable to school tours apply. Guest speakers are invited with the approval of the principal. Teachers must remain with the class for all talks and the speaker must adhere to the agreed format for the presentation/discussion.

Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting:

Each teachers planning reflects a balanced approach to the six strands in relation to Making and Doing. A thematic approach for some aspects of the programme – the seasons, school events. the school calendar, cross-curriculum activities, celebrations and festivities have been agreed. This thematic approach should be reflected in each Teachers long and short term planning. Following consultation, it was decided by staff that the Looking and responding strand unit be incorporated into each lesson, either as the 'Stimulus' for the lesson (based on children's experiences,

environment, local and national events) or in the Looking and responding and Concepts and Skills section at the end of the lesson. We record work completed in the Cuntas Miosuil.

Staff Development:

Teachers are supported, where possible by the Board of Management to develop range of skills and expertise in the visual arts. Attendance at courses in the Galway/Castlebar and the sharing of knowledge and skills facilitated at staff meetings, at school planning days or Croke Park hours. Teachers talented in the visual arts are invited to lead workshops in particular strands at staff meeting or at other times suitable to staff members. Teachers working on particular strands are encouraged to invite other teachers and their classes to view their work in classrooms/outside experts/skilled parents are invited to upskill staff in visual arts activities. Costs incurred in this area are met by Board of Management funds and through voluntary contributions.

Teachers are aware of the theory of Multiple Intelligences and the different ways that may be used to activate learners diverse intelligences. Further work will be undertaken in the school year.

Parental Involvement:

Parents with particular skills and interest are invited to support the visual arts programme. They may also be invited to assist in other school events such as the Clifden Arts Week, Conamara Bog Week and Conamara Sea Week, Infant Open Day, St. Patricks Day etc.

Community Links:

Links may be forged with the local community and artists and crafts people who are invited to visit classes. The visual arts programme is also linked with the study of local history, geography, traditions and folklore. The children's attention is also drawn to interesting aspects of the local landscape. Teachers are encouraged to devote some lessons to internationally recognised artists and art artefacts. This may involve a visit to a gallery, museum, exhibition, use of CD rom, posters or resource books/powerpoint/ internet.

The After School Club will work with 5th and 6th classes annually in the 2nd / 3rd term. They will also work with another class of their choice.

Letterfrack National School

Drama Whole School Plan

Guiding Principles

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

- Drama is a subject
- Drama is for all teachers and all children
- Process Drama explores the real world through the fictional world

Introductory Statement

This plan was developed in consultation and collaboration with

Rationale

This plan is a record of our decisions regarding Drama. It reflects the Primary Curriculum, 1999. It is intended to guide teachers in their individual planning for Drama.

Vision

In line with the mission statement of Letterfrack NS, through the teaching of Drama as part of a balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole spectrum of the child's intelligence, it is hoped that the child will have an opportunity to develop his/her aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, creative, expressive and cultural development through engagement in positive Drama experiences.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Curriculum for Drama

- To enable the child to become a 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
- 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 the 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.

Curriculum Planning

The Strand and Strand Units

Drama has one strand at each class level- Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.

The strand is divided into three strand units

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

The objectives for each strand unit are details in the tables below

Exploring and Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop the instinct for make-believe play into Drama• Develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action• Experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world• Experience how the fictional past and desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action• Develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action• Develop awareness of tension in the Drama
1 st & 2 nd Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in Drama• Use his/her emerging awareness of the differences in people in order to begin to develop an understanding of the relationship between role and character• Experience how context is built and a Drama reality created through the use of space and objects• Experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action• Develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action• Begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants
3 rd & 4 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enter into the fictional Dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play• Understand the relationship between role and character and develop the ability to hold on to either role or character for as long as the dramatic activity requires• Discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and signifying Dramatic themes• Explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present and Dramatic action• Begin, as a member of a group, to include in Drama activity the elements of tension and suspense• Begin with the process of using script as a pretext

5 th & 6 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional Dramatic context • Extend playing in role and in character to include the ability to accept and maintain a brief that has been decided on by either the teacher, the group or himself/herself • Discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and signifying the Drama theme • Explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action • Become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in Dramatic action • Help to plan Dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored • Distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy and fantasy • Become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action
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Reflecting on Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses • Experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience • Share insights gained while experiencing the Drama
1 st & 2 nd Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflection on a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action • Experience, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience • Share insights while experiencing the Drama or insights that arise out of the Drama
3 rd & 4 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use reflection on and evaluation of a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action • Learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience • Use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people
5 th & 6 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on a particular dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action that will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined • Learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience • Use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people

Co-operating and Communicating in Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama
1 st & 2 nd Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made • Re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work
3 rd & 4 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made • Enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class, a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work
5 th & 6 th Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama • Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made • Enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the drama, or share with the rest of the class, a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work

The school recognises that the strand units and the content objectives for Drama are interlinked and therefore we encourage all teachers at each class level to plan for all of the objectives.

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 fictional consequences of drama and a willingness to explore.

Building a safe environment based on trust and mutual respect

(a) Drama Contract

Each teacher is also encouraged to use a drama contract to establish a safe environment. 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

(b) Warm up activities

Warm-up games should be seen as an integral part of the drama process and are essential in allowing children the opportunity to develop the three C's:

- Concentration
- Communication
- Co-operation

The development of these skills contributes to the creation of a safe environment, as well as deepening the children's ability to engage in the dramatic process.

Content for Drama

The strand 'Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding' will be important for teachers in this school in informing the content they choose for Drama activities. Content for drama will come from life experience. It will be from something:

- That the children have experienced
- Something they have read
- Something that emerged in another subject area
- A worry or concern that the teacher might have
- Something generally that the teacher wants them to explore.

The Fictional Lens

The fictional lens is the story used through which specific themes or content are explored. Teachers will carefully select a fictional lens for their chosen content. A character or story will be selected in which the children will easily believe, whose context will allow for the content to be explored i.e

Goldilocks and The Three Bears – content covered:-

Number Three: The ritual of setting the table;

Respect for other people's property;

Telling the Truth.

Reflection

We see reflection as being of vital importance to the drama process. We still 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

A list of drama reflection methods is to be found in the appendix.

Strategies

In this school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below is a table showing some suitable strategies for the different class levels. This is not an exhaustive list, rather a list of suggested strategies. 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
Jun. & Sen. Infants	Defining the Space, Still Images, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Whole Group Improvisation, Hot Seating.
1 st & 2 nd Classes	Defining the Space, Mimed Narration; Teacher in Role; Whole Group Improvisation; Still Images; Thought Tracking; Paired Improvisation; Improvisation in Threes; Hot Seating.
3 rd & 4 th 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
5 th & 6 th 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; Flashback/flashforward.

An explanation of each strategy is contained below.

Still Image

Groups use their bodies to create an image of a moment(s) in the Drama e.g. the moment the bears see Goldilocks asleep in the bed. The older groups may depict a more complex or abstract idea ('winning', 'fear'). Similarly an individual can act as a sculptor to another student or group.

Thought-Tracking

This technique involves the teacher freezing the action and tapping her hand on the shoulder of some student (or students) in the still image or drama. This student-in-role then reveals publicly her private thoughts/reactions at that specific moment e.g. one of Christopher Columbus' sailors thoughts when they finally sight land.

Mime

The class mime action as the teacher describes what a character or occupation or as she narrates a story. Older students may develop more abstract mime sequences.

Narration

The teacher can narrate in or out of the lesson text. Narration has many uses. These include: providing a link or commentary between drama moments; creating an atmosphere; initiating a drama; moving the action on; create tension. Similarly the participants might report back in story form, providing narrative to accompany or bridge action – ‘We came to the river and saw that the bridge has been destroyed, so we...’

Hot-Seating

This involves students questioning a character (teacher-in-role or student-in-role). The students who are questioning the character may be working as themselves or in role as journalists. Hot-Seating can be used to start a drama or improvisation may be frozen at any point so as in-role characters are released to answer questions often formally seated facing questioners.

Caption-Making and Headlines

This strategy can be used at any point of action. Individuals or groups are asked to give a title or caption or newspaper headlines/slogans to a piece of drama. They summarize their own scene or another group’s scene and when used with still images several headlines can be given to the same still image in order to highlight points of view or bias.

Conscience Alley

A character that has a difficult decision to reach, walks down a corridor of people who, one after another from either side, give conflicting advice about a given situation. This can be done in role by other characters in the lesson and by voices in the character’s head played by other members of the group. It is possible to develop this convention by allowing the character to engage in conversation with the voices and thus challenge the advice being offered.

Defining Space...

Available furniture, objects, clothing are used to represent the ‘ship’, ‘castle’, ‘bears’ and ‘house’ where the drama is happening. They may also represent the physical scale of someone (Daddy bear) or something (the beanstalk) in the drama. Also they may be used to fix the position or proximity of rooms, houses, places where events have taken place.

Soundtracking...

Sound may be used in different ways in the drama; narration can be devised to accompany some mime; animal sounds, human sounds, environmental sounds can be devised to accompany a moment of action. Voices or instruments are used to create a mood.

Living Picture

The teacher asks the group to bring their improvisation alive for a few moments. She does not necessarily add tension by briefing some students. The living picture, however, may develop into an improvisation – the difference being that ‘living picture’ has no particular tension in it whereas the improvisation usually features some tension.

Briefing

Before a whole group improvisation, the teacher takes aside an individual or a number of individuals, and gives him/them a set of instructions that create tension. This will drive the drama forward. The teacher may choose to give another set of further conflicting instructions to a different individual/individuals. As the children develop their drama skills, they will begin to offer their own briefs. Briefing is a key strategy in creating tension in a drama. The teacher can build tension by suggesting any of the following – ‘You have a secret...; ‘Something strange and mysterious has

happened', 'You are planning a surprise', 'You are in a hurry', 'You are all crowded together', 'You have an unusual object' or through a challenge.

Small-Group Play-Making

Small group and whole group improvisation constitute the heart of the drama curriculum. The children make up the story as they go along. This story usually explores a character(s) in a dilemma. Small groups plan, prepare, sequence and present their improvisations to their understanding of that moment in the drama. Briefing (See above) helps to drive the improvisation forward. The teacher can greatly enhance the drama by adopting a role herself.

Flashback Flashforward

The children select and depict a moment through such strategies as still image, mime, and narration or improvisation. They can then move backwards and forwards in time creating other such moments in time in the drama. This enables the children to reflect on the characters and their dilemmas.

Ritual

Ritual in Drama is a stylized activity that shows a special occasion or some daily routine that shows that a character is part of a community. Some rituals in drama include; a meal, saying goodbye, the night before a battle, praying.

Teacher-in-Role

The teacher takes on a role in the drama. This allows her to do a number of things. She can manage the learning opportunities within the drama by adopting a suitable role in order to excite interest, control the action, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative, create possibilities for the group to interact in role.

3. Children with Different Needs

In line with the underlying principles of this curriculum, we believe drama to be for all children and all teachers. Therefore, each child in this school will be involved in all drama, regardless of difference or ability.

It is the policy of our school that all children in mainstream classes or in special classes will participate in Drama activities. Based on a teacher's professional judgement, and in co-operation with other teachers and special needs assistants, drama activities will be differentiated as necessary in order to meet the needs of the children in a particular class. This will be done by careful grouping of children, consciousness by the teacher of children's abilities when giving briefs and by providing opportunities for different methods of reflections.

4. Linkage and Integration

Drama can be integrated with many curricular areas e.g. English, Gaeilge, SESE, SPHE, Music, Visual arts

Exemplars

English/Gaeilge

- Using story or poetry as a fictional lens, or exploring themes from class novel. E.g., the story of Goldilocks, with, e.g. the social theme of learning how to set a table

SESE

- Dramatising actual historical events, e.g. the Famine, through a fictional lens in order to explore specific themes, e.g. family loyalty, making difficult choices, poverty.

SPHE

- SPHE issues can be explored, e.g. bullying, relationships, healthy eating.

Music

- Music can be used as a stimulus to draw the children into a drama activity, to create a scene.

Visual Arts

- Visual art can be used by the children themselves to help create a scene, and is also useful as a means of reflecting on the drama.

Linkage occurs naturally throughout the 3 strand units. Each lesson will include aspects of exploration, reflection, co-operation and communication.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

As been outlined in our schools Assessment and Record Keeping Policy we recognise the importance of assessment and record keeping in the delivery of the Drama Curriculum.

Teachers will use teacher observation as a primary tool when assessing drama work in class. Other forms of assessment can include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, projects, recordings of children's work, and graphic/pictorial scores.

Teachers should approach assessment in Drama by referring to the Curriculum Statement and examine children's engagement in terms of the three strand units.

- 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 the 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

The table below outlines how the teacher might begin to observe the development of the elements in class

Elements in Drama	How the elements might look...
Belief	How can the child be encouraged to enter into the drama with full belief? <i>Evident in the child's trust in and ease with make-believe play</i>
Role and Character	How will the child move from role playing to entering into character? <i>Taking on the characteristics, attributes and thought process of another person</i>
Action	What is happening in the drama? <i>Action in drama comes from the interaction between characters and situations in which they find themselves in the drama</i>
Tension	How will tension drive forward the action of the drama? <i>The characters will be faced with choices, desires and uncertainties. Such tension causes characters to make decisions and moves the drama forward</i>

Significance	What is the relevance of the drama to the child's life? In what way can the child relate to the drama?
Place	Where is the action taking place? How is real place and space used to represent this?
Time	When is the action taking place? <i>The fictional past and fictional future will have a bearing on the drama</i>
Genre (Fifth and Sixth Classes only)	Is the drama naturalistic, absurd, tragic, comic or fantasy? <i>Genre is the style of the drama</i>

6. Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunity of access to Drama will be given to all children

7. Timetable

Infant classes will have a maximum of 50 minutes Drama per week while 1st to 6th classes will have a maximum 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 to particular times of the year.

Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama.

8. Resources

Books

A selection of Drama books have been sources

Internet

A selection of short videos dealing with all curricular areas and teaching issues: www.teachers.tv
 Association for Drama in Education in Ireland: <http://www.ict.mic.ul.ie/adei/>
www.creativedrama.com

Props

Teachers will source a variety of props for use in their class rooms.

9. Health and Safety

As with all curricular areas, the Drama Curriculum will maintain due care to our school's 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 Resources

Long term plan

Each teacher will be given a copy of this school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing their own long term and short term planning. Teachers teaching the same level are encouraged to plan together.

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

Themes

As mentioned in the integration section, teachers in the school approach much of their thematically and are encouraged to do so with drama also. A list of possible themes may include:

- Everyday situations requiring social skills
- Halloween
- Autumn
- Winter
- Christmas
- Spring
- Summer
- Pirates
- The Sea
- Food
- A Journey

Cúntas Míósúil

The Cúntas Míósúil is an important indicator and record of work carried out in Drama. teachers will record their work in Drama for a particular month under two headings.

- Fictional Lens Used
- Content Covered

11. Staff Development

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. We will continue to add to this in the coming years.

Drama will be on the agenda at one staff meeting per 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. This arrangement will be subject to review.

Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board. Over the coming years we will, if possible, engage with the PCSP cuiditheoireacht service to come to the school to aid individual teachers with planning, to model lessons and to target the weaker identified areas of the curriculum.

12. Parental Involvement

The subject of Drama should be introduced to, summarized for, parents at welcome meetings at the start of the year and in the course of parent-teacher meetings. Where appropriate and with managerial consent, parents may be invited to assist the teacher with the process of Drama within the classroom.

13. Community Links

The local community, actors, theatre professionals living locally, local arts centres and education officers, theatre, local Drama events and national support structures will all be considered as valuable resources as support for The Drama Curriculum.

Events in which the school will consider participation:

- External Children's theatre productions, e.g. Theatre in Galway
- Invitation of theatre productions to the school, e.g. Cups 'n' Crowns, Branar.

Relevant education packs to deepen the children's experience of such theatre productions will be provided where possible. Use of such packs is strongly recommended.

Success Criteria

The teacher's classroom planning will be based on this plan. The aims and objectives of this plan will be followed with the emphasis on developing a whole school programme that allows for development and progression. Based on this, we hope that our Drama plan will prove successful in its implementation. Success of this plan will be based on teacher/pupil feedback and also inspector's reports and recommendations.

Implementation

a) Roles and Responsibilities

Each teacher has the responsibility to implement the Drama Curriculum in his/her classroom. Letterfrack NS will support staff in implementation, encourage feedback and update the plan again, if necessary.

b) Timeframe

Upon completion, this plan will be presented to staff before the end of the 2014/2015 school year. It will be implemented by the end 2015/2016 school year, at which time it will be reviewed.

Review

Roles, Responsibilities and Timeframe

After the initial review at the end of the 2015/2016 school year, each teacher and the staff as a group will evaluate the progress in Drama by referring back to our set of stated objectives as stated in this plan once every three years. A short session at staff meetings will be allocated to this work.

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be ratified by the Board of Management in Feb. 2015. A copy of the plan is also available in the school for perusal by individual parents. The plan was drawn up in Feb. 2015 and will be reviewed again in two years.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Introductory Statement:

This policy was formulated in April 2010 by Laura Griffin in conjunction with all staff members.

This plan was formulated, keeping in mind the nature of Music in the new curriculum. Music education in Letterfrack National School is concerned fundamentally with developing the child's understanding and appreciation of the arts. Arts education encompasses a range of activities in the visual arts, in music, in drama, in dance and in literature. These activities and experiences help the child to make sense of the world; to question, to speculate and to find solutions; to deal with feelings and to respond to creative experience.

Rationale:

Music is so much part of everyday life and is a diverse and lifelong activity. As a universal part of all cultures, music exists in a great many forms, for a great many purposes and at many levels of complexity.

Music is a non-verbal form of communication that can convey ideas, images and feelings through selected sounds and symbols.

Music involves people in both making music and listening to music. Music making is also a kinaesthetic activity, requiring the body and the mind to co-ordinate and interpret simultaneously.

Music is an art that combines many concepts and techniques and uses them to inspire, imagine, invent and to express feeling. These are the features of listening and responding, performing and composing, on which the curriculum is based.

Music contributes to the personal, social, mental and physical development of the child. Co-ordination of mind and body is achieved through action songs, moving to music and playing in time while listening to others.

Speech development is fostered through vocal sounds, & learning to control breathing.

Language development is enhanced through exposure to a wide variety of songs.

Listening skills are developed through exploration of sound.

Long and short-term memory are developed through performing.

Opportunities to development imagination arise when the child listens to pieces of music or composes using a variety of sounds. Music develops social skills through group work and fosters verbal and non-verbal communication.

Vision:

We seek to assist the children in Letterfrack N.S to foster an appreciation of music, to contribute to the development of artistic awareness, self-expression, self-growth, self-esteem and multicultural sensitivity and therefore, to the development of the whole child.

We also seek to deepen the child's sense of humanity, teaching him/her to recognise beauty and to be sensitive to and to appreciate more fully the world in which they live.

Aims:

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 feeling 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 to musical creativity.

To nurture the child's self-esteem and self-confidence through participation of musical knowledge, skills, concepts and values.

To enhance the quality of the child's life through aesthetic musical experience.

Broad objectives

Our objectives are that the children should:

Explore the expressive possibilities of a variety of sound sources including the voice and home-made and manufactured instruments.

Listen to, enjoy and respond to a wide range of music including various genres and styles from different periods, cultures and ethnic groups, both live and recorded.

Develop sensitivity to music through making physical verbal, emotional or cognitive responses.

Demonstrate and describe differences between sounds and silences showing a sense of pulse, tempo, duration pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture and style.

Perform vocally and instrumentally from a range of musical styles and traditions relevant to the class level with particular emphasis on Irish music.

Acquire the musical skills that enrich musical understanding and are necessary for creative expression.

Imitate with accuracy rhythmic and melodic patterns using the voice gestures (hand signs), body percussion and manufactured and home made instruments.

Recall and perform expressively musical phrases and pieces using tuned and untuned percussion or melodic instruments from memory or from notation as appropriate.

Develop confidence and independence through taking the initiative, making decisions and accepting responsibility for learning individually and as a member of a group through composing activities.

Select and structure sounds to create their musical ideas

Improvise rhythmic and melodic patterns in response to music, movement, ideas, poems, stories and art works.

Talk about the appropriateness & effectiveness of his composed or improvised music.

Devise and use a range of graphic and standard notations.

Record compositions using electronic media.

The Music policy for Letterfrack N.S is addressed under the following headings:

Curriculum Planning:

Strands and strand units

Approaches and methodologies

Linkage and integration

Assessment and record keeping

Children with different needs

Equality of participation and access

Organisational Planning:

Timetable

Resources and ICT

Health and Safety

Individual Teachers' planning and reporting

Staff Development

Parental involvement

Community Links

Curriculum Planning:

Strands

Strand Units

Listening & Responding

Exploring Sounds

Listening & Responding to Music

Performing

Song Singing

Literacy

Playing Instruments

Composing

Improvising & Creating

Talking about & Recording Compositions

Musical Concepts:

A Sense of pulse

The underlying 'throb' in music. Beats may be strong or weak or grouped together in threes (waltz) or fours (reel).

A Sense of duration

The length of a sound – whether long (gong) or short (woodblock).

A Sense of tempo

The speed or pace of the music.

A Sense of pitch

The height and depth of sound in a melody. (how high or low notes sound)

A Sense of dynamics

The level of sound – how loud or soft.

A Sense of structure

How a piece is organised. Structure is achieved through the use or repetition, pattern and contrast.

A Sense of timbre

The quality and variability of sound. eg instruments produce different sounds.

A Sense of texture

The layers of sounds and how sounds are put together.

A Sense of style

This is the application of all the other elements.

These musical concepts are based on the musical elements and will be developed as work is completed on the curriculum strands and strand units.

1.Strands & Strand Units:

The strands/strand units and content objectives for the class levels are in the Curriculum book on the following pages:

1 / 2 pp. 26-41 ;

3 / 4 pp.42-59 ;

5 / 6 pp. 60-79

There is continuity and progression in the music programme from class to class. We recognise that it is important that each strand unit and sub-unit be explored each year to ensure continuity, depth and breadth in the music programme. The strands and strand units offer teachers a sequenced, comprehensive programme on which to base the teaching and learning of music in the classroom.

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

2. Approaches and Methodologies

Listening and responding

Children are provided with opportunities to listen and respond to music by experiencing a wide range of musical styles, traditions and cultures This can be achieved by listening to: Performers (eg popular (U2); Jazz (L. Armstrong); Rock n Roll (eg Beatles); Folk singers (eg Patsy Cline); Country (eg Patsy Cline); Blues (eg Billie Holiday); Film Music eg J. Williams themes from ET, Superman, Jaws

Music From Other Cultures: Aborigines;

The teacher can provide opportunities for active listening and responding e.g. questioning, prompting suggesting, listening to short examples repeatedly.

When selecting listening materials these may include listening to and discriminating between environmental sounds and describing them in terms of their source, pitch, dynamics, duration and tempo.

When selecting recorded music listening excerpts should be short and varied. They should be played several times, often and on high quality audio equipment.

Children should be 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 should be provided with opportunities to work in different groupings, e.g. whole group, small groups, pairs, individually and to work collaboratively/co-operatively

Are children provided with opportunities to offer varying and creative solutions to presented problems

What opportunities are provided for live performances?

Listening Materials - Is a broad range of materials provided?

Recorded music on video, audio tape, CD or music technology

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 - What materials are selected for listening to and discriminating between environmental sounds and describing them in terms of their source, pitch, dynamics, duration and tempo?

Selecting recorded music - Pieces can be selected under various categories. e.g. 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.

Performing – Song Singing

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 by taking the following into consideration:

Using voice, recording, instrument, sheet music

Teaching by ear

Selecting the song – it must appeal to the teacher and children. It should form part of a selection of styles within the yearly scheme and the words should be appropriate to the child's stage of development and emotional understanding.

Matching the vocal range of the children

Resources.

Effective singing skills are developed by considering issues around:

Methodology of teaching (The teacher should always give a comfortable starting note from a pitched instrument. The tempo should be given by counting the children in at the correct speed on the correct beats, or else some verbal indication should be given eg 'Are you ready?' The teacher may accompany the children by playing an instrument in a key to suit the children's voices.

Conducting – simple conducting gestures can stimulate and inspire confident performing.

Teacher can count in 2, 3, or 4 time.

Improving vocal quality – Children should sit or stand 'tall' for good posture; the mouth must be open for good singing, more than for speech; Children should practice filling the lungs fully, taking a good breath quickly and controlling the escape of the breath. The children should get into the habit of taking a deep breath before they sing, not to release it too quickly,

and to encourage them to sing with the phrases of the music, that is, to take breaths at the sensible points.

Vocal exercises – humming exercises should start at a high but comfortable pitch and work downwards. Eg Joy to the World hummed or sung to ‘maw’. High notes should be sung softly. Vowel sounds should be exaggerated so that they are distinct and pure.

Part singing, teaching rounds, partner songs (duet) and part songs are encouraged in our school.

Performing–MusicLiteracy

Various approaches to music literacy are used. These can include graphic notation where the child represents sounds by means of a picture or symbol. Standard notation can be used to compliment graphic notation. Rhythm and pitch must be fully understood separately before attempting them in combination.

Note Value

Note Name

Rhythm Syllable

Staff Notation

Stick Notation

1 beat

Crotchet

Ta

L

½ beat

Quaver

Ti (ti-ti for two)_

1 beat rest

`crotchet rest

(gesture)

2 beats

Minim

Ta-aa

Four beats

Semibreve

Ta-aa-aa-aa

Three beats

Dotted minim

Ta-aa-aa

1 ½ beats
Dotted crotchet
Ta-i

1 ½ beats + ½ beat
`dotted crotchet, quaver
Ta-I ti

1 beat + ½ beat
Crotchet, quaver
Ta ti

Rhythm notation can be learned through games such as echo clapping, detecting a rhythm from a number of options given and rhythm dictation.

Pitch notation can be learned through tonic solfa, (doh, re, mi, fah, soh, lah, ti, doh) hand signs, absolute pitch names (fixed pitch names given to notes eg c major is represented as C D E F G A B C) and finger stave (each finger and thumb represents a line of the stave).

Performing – Playing Instruments

At Letterfrack N.S outside music teachers are brought in to teach musical instruments
Mary Finn every Wednesday for one hour – 2nd to 6th class

-Teaches tinwhistle, accordian, concertina,
banjo, flute

Liz Keane every Thursday for one hour – Teaches fiddle

All children should be given the opportunity to playing various instruments in all classes.

Percussion instruments should be used at all class levels to represent a given pulse, rhythm or pitch; to improvise pulse, rhythm or pitch or add a contrasting phrase.

When selecting instruments it is important to consider variety of timbre, quality of instrument and the number of instruments. When children are handling instruments, they must be taught to respect them and to play them softly.

Melodic instruments are introduced to some classes if the teacher so desires to teach the class a musical instrument such as the tin whistle. A tin whistle in the key of D is the most appropriate for using in primary school. When teaching a class, it is worthwhile making sure that every child uses the same brand of tin whistle, so that the tone will be consistent. The teacher should ensure that the mouthpiece is fully pushed down before playing. This affects the instrument's tuning. Also, the instrument should be warmed, either in the hand or by blowing lightly through it.

Opportunities can be provided to perform for an audience during a school concert / talent show etc. This can be within class, to other classes or to parents and the wider community.

3. Linkage and Integration

Engaging children in activity that encompasses a number of objectives from different subject areas is an effective means of teaching and an important principle of the curriculum.

Planning for integrated learning should ensure that:

The music component is meaningful and consistent with the curriculum. eg when 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 are included.

Linkage within music can easily be achieved by the interrelated nature of the three strands of the curriculum. Eg 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 can be achieved through English (oral language vocabulary when responding orally to a piece of music); SESE (eg sound as a form or energy in science)

4. Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is central to the effective teaching and learning of music. It is related to the sequence in which musical knowledge and understanding are acquired. Eg a child needs to know note values before reading a particular rhythm pattern from sight.

A number of assessment tools are available:

Teacher observation – pupils may be observed working in groups or individuals in the following contexts:

Listening attentively to music

Talking about what has been heard as part of class discussion

Illustrating or writing about what has been heard

Listening to the responses of others

Moving in music

Singing a favourite song

Playing a musical instrument

Reading a simple rhythmic or melodic pattern

Sharing ideas for composing

Selecting instruments for composition

Attempting to record compositions – either on tape or invented graphic notation.

Teacher-designed tasks and tests – can range from writing about a piece of music, taking a rhythm dictation, playing a tune, singing a song etc.

Work samples and portfolios – display depth and breadth of the child's learning in music.

The portfolio should encompass the three strands of the curriculum. It can heighten the significance of the child's self-assessment and reflection on their work sample or portfolio collections.

Projects – these allow students to work collaboratively in a shared musical experience.

Examples of projects could include:

Composing music to tell or accompany a story

Designing a musical instrument

Inventing a form of notation for a piece

Composing a dance sequence

Comparing and contrasting different pieces of music.

5. Children with Different Needs

Letterfrack N.S recognises that the teacher must be flexible in classroom planning and preparation to cater for children with differing needs. In most cases the 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. Where a child experiences a learning difficulty, plenty of encouragement and repetition of instructions will be necessary. Visual symbols and clues and reinforce theoretical concepts.

The more able musical child should be encouraged at his pace while a child from a different cultural background needs to see the music from his culture recognised and valued along with the music of the other children in the class.

Use a mixture of whole-class teaching and focused group work. A common lesson content might be used with all pupils but different groups of children could be set tasks of various complexities.

Provide opportunities for children to record their work using drawing, modelling or ICT rather than just written.

6. Equality of Participation and Access

Letterfrack N.S recognises that a 'good' education cannot be based on one culture only, and where ethnic minorities form a permanent and integral part of the population, we do not believe that education should seek to iron out the differences between cultures, nor attempt to draw everyone into the dominant culture. We believe this at our school whole valuing our own cultures and traditions also.

All children should have access to a wide range of instruments – loud and soft instruments; big or small ones.

Children who learn an instrument outside school should be encouraged to accompany classroom singing & playing & to enrich the class programme in listening and performing. (Banjos, fiddles etc)

The strands of the curriculum provide a number of opportunities to develop an intercultural music perspective. The use of a wide range of musical styles will naturally extend into the three strands of the music curriculum. Below is an example (taken from the Department of Education & Science Intercultural Education In the Primary School Guidelines for schools) of how music could be incorporated as part of intercultural education in our school.

Organisational Planning

7. Timetable

Three hours per week is the minimum time allotted for Arts education which encompasses Music, Visual Arts and Drama. The blocking of time for Arts Education is at the discretion of the teacher. Allocating time over the course of a month or term and identifying opportunities for integration well in advance is the best approach for time allocation to music.

Teachers could decide to concentrate the available periods on one aspect of arts education at a time. Eg the concentration of the work for two or three weeks might be on dance, with a focus on listening to music, to be followed by a period in which the focus would be largely on visual arts (eg making percussion instruments) or on drama (eg composing and presenting music that tells a story).

8. Resources and ICT

For weekly music lessons children have their own musical instrument or else they can rent one from the school. There is an inventory of resources available for music of which each teacher is aware of.

With regard to ICT, there is a code of practice to ensure safe Internet usage. Appropriate hardware & software should be installed to ensure this safety and that undesirable website addresses are blocked. Individual teachers are aware of the importance of familiarising themselves with material on websites prior to use by the children.

Current Resources in Letterfrack N.S

Instruments:

Percussion instruments

Tin Whistles

Wooden whistles

Concertinas

Accordians

Fiddles

Banjoes

CD's / Tapes:

The Right Note for all classes

The use of much supplementary music

ICT / Technology:

Internet

Flip - Digital Video Camera (recording)

Set of CD Players

Speakers

TV and DVD players

9. Health and Safety

Letterfrack N.S recognises that when organising a music lesson, it is important to consider the following health and safety issues:

Hidden dangers if children are moving around the classroom

The level of sound in the room when using audio equipment and instruments.

Ventilation

The amount of space available for children to sit, stand or move

Access to and transport of musical equipment

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

The policy for music in Letterfrack N.S will aim to provide help to the teacher. Teachers will plan using the strand and strand units in line with the school plan. They may use a thematic approach in their teaching. Teacher reports, plans and the Cuntas Miosíúil can be used to review and develop the whole school plan for the coming years.

Each teacher will strive to:

Establish the work covered with the class through liaison with the previous class teacher/consultation with class records and use this information in planning the year's work.
Select appropriate strands and strand units to devise a balanced programme
Use a wide range of teaching methods and approaches
Devote an appropriate amount of time to strands and strand units
Consider integration with other subjects when planning.

11. Staff Development.

All teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, instruments, equipment and websites dealing with music. Information about in-service courses, school visits and musical events are communicated to all through the staff notice board. Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses

A number of music courses take place each Summer. Staff members are encouraged and supported if they wish to avail of these.

Staff members share any expertise acquired during planning days, staff meetings or through sharing notes received at such courses.

Help is given to colleagues who need assistance and advice on the preparation and implementation of the music curriculum through informal discussion with other staff members – if they so wish.

Opportunities are provided for team-teaching in our school. This can be managed by way of arrangement between the individual teachers concerned.

Whole school engagement in music takes place:

School concerts

Mol an Oige Concerts

Granny & Granpa's Day

Sea Week

Bog Week

Choir for school mass

Communion and Confirmation ceremonies

12. Parental Involvement

Parents can support their child in fostering an interest in music 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.

Attending school or classroom events, playing the role of critical listeners or supportive audience members or assisting in the supervision of movement of children.

13. Community Links

Members of the community can be involved in supporting the music programme e.g. Mol an Oige concerts, local old age home visits, Sea week and Bog week events, grupa ceol and local musicians.

Success Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assess the success of the plan. We will know the plan is being implemented if:

Teachers' preparation is based on this plan

Procedures outlined in this plan are being consistently followed

Indicators Teacher, parent and community feedback

Children's feedback regarding enjoyment and skills and concepts development.

Inspector suggestions/ reports.

We will know that the plan has promoted the key considerations of a broad and balanced music education programme and that it has enhanced pupil learning if:

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

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The plan will be supported, developed and implemented by all teachers. Laura Dunne will coordinate the progress of the plan and will encourage and accept feedback on its implementation. We will also report back to the staff on findings.

Timeframe

It is our aim that the music plan will be implemented in September 2015.

Review

Roles and Responsibilities

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

Teachers

Pupils

Parents

Postholders/planco-ordinator

Board of Management

Ratification and Communication

This plan will be presented to the Board of Management for ratification. It will be communicated to members of the school community as appropriate.