

# Visual Arts Policy

## Introductory Statement and Rationale:

**Introductory Statement** – this plan was drawn up by the full staff of Letterfrack NS in February 2015 and is reviewed regularly.

**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 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 ATU 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. 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 Galway/Castlebar Education Centre and online** 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 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes annually in the 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> term. They will also work with another class of their choice.

**Creative Schools.**

**Quiet area on yard with tables allows children to engage in creative arts & carfts activities during break times eg crochet, loombands, knitting etc.**