



Whole school plan for

Drama

St. Ronan's National School - Cloonloo

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This document outlines the whole school drama plan for St. Ronan's N.S. This plan is for the information of all teachers and staff, BOM and other relevant members of the school community.

Rationale

In St. Ronan's N.S we recognise that Drama enables our pupils to express themselves creatively and imaginatively through exploring emotions, communicating effectively with others and helping to make sense of the world they live in. We aim to give our pupils opportunities to use Drama in many areas across the curriculum.

Vision and Aims

Vision

Drama activities enable the child to make connections between the imaginative life and the real world, to organise and express ideas, feelings and experiences in dramatic form. Through the use of drama we aim to promote strong communication and social skills and help children to deal with day to day experiences in a positive way.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Irish Primary Drama Curriculum:

- To enable the child to become drama literate.
- To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art form of theatre.
- To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questing, empowering and empathetic skills.
- To enable the child to develop the social skills necessary to engage openly, honestly and playfully with others.
- To enable the child to co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in the drama and through the drama.
- To enable the child to understand the structures and modes of drama and how they create links between play, thought and life.

- To enable the child to acquire this knowledge of drama through the active exploration of themes drawn from life (past and present), whether they have their source in other curriculum areas or in general areas relevant to the child's life.
- To enable the child to begin the process of translating a knowledge of drama into the active exploration of life themes from drama literature, leading to the appreciation of world drama culture.
- To form the criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Curriculum Planning

Strands and Strand Units

The curriculum is delineated at four levels - infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes. It is the aim of St. Ronan's N.S. to teach all strand and strand units of the drama curriculum every year.

Junior Infants to Sixth Class

Prerequisites for making drama	Elements of drama
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • The fictional lens • Creating a safe environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief • Time • Role and character • Tension • Action • Significance • Place • Genre
Strand	Strand Units
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring and making drama • Reflecting on drama • Cooperating and communicating in making drama

Exploring and Making Drama

- Engage in the drama, either watched or unwatched
- Play in role/character and accept a brief
- Use space and objects to build the drama context
- Explore how the fictional past and future influence present drama
- Maintain focus through the agreements set out in the brief of the lesson
- Plan drama to include tension and suspense
- Distinguish between different genres - comedy, tragedy, fantasy, pantomime, horror
- Use script and understand basic processes by which script becomes action

Reflecting on Drama

- Reflect on a piece of drama to create alternative outcomes
- Draw conclusions about situations, life and people/characters
- Learn through drama the relationship between story, theme and life experience

Cooperating and Communicating

- Co-operate and communicate with others out of role
- Interact with the other characters during the drama
- Small groups share their work and creations and listen and respond critically and positively to the work of their peers.
- Develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small group or whole class scenes

Approaches and Methodologies

The strand '*Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding*' will be important for teachers in St. Ronan's N.S. in informing the content that they choose for Drama activities.

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

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

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

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

We as a staff, aim to become more familiar with the elements of drama - belief, time, place, role and character, tension, genre, significance.

Elements are used organically through the Drama. **Belief** will be built as roles/characters develop. **Belief** is central to all Drama and should be characterised by a willingness to believe in the Drama itself, sincerity in playing roles and characters, a willingness to accept the fictional consequences of Drama and a willingness to explore. Teachers will focus on the building of belief when beginning a new Drama activity. **Action, Place and Time** will be developed as the Drama is framed in its fictional lens. The element of **Tension** is the one which teachers will have to think about. Tension will often have to be injected e.g. by adding a mysterious character / secret / surprise / problem / tension of time or urgency / limitations of space / temptation of a dare or a challenge / tension of inappropriate behaviour.

All children and class teachers will engage actively in drama education in our school.

A positive approach will be taken while engaged in a drama lesson. The children will be encouraged to imagine, create and share their drama work. For this to take place, a safe learning environment is essential. All pupils will be provided with opportunities to work in different groupings e.g. whole class, small group, pairs, individual.

In St. Ronan's N.S. we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below is a list showing some suitable strategies. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a suggestion. Teachers have the freedom to introduce other strategies that they might find useful for their own particular class or for a particular dramatic context.

Drama Strategies

- Defining the Space
- Still Images
- Teacher in Role
- Children in Role
- Mime
- Mimed Narration
- Whole Group improvisation
- Paired Improvisation
- Improvisation in threes
- Small Group Improvisation
- Hot seating.
- Thought Tracking
- Briefing
- Conscience Alley
- Ritual
- Flashback/flash forward
- Forum Theatre
- Mantle of the Expert
- Role on the Wall
- Visualisation

The safe environment is important for effective drama work to take place. In St. Ronan's N.S. each classroom is encouraged to develop a drama contract. To build confidence and further embed the safe environment, classes will play appropriate warm up games to develop various drama skills necessary for their drama work. Discussion about the contract and the safe environment may be included where appropriate both before and after the drama activity. We see reflection as being of vital importance to the drama process. We will strive to ensure that reflection takes place at the appropriate points in the drama experience. We will also strive for a balance of methods of reflection using discussion, writing, visual arts, speaking, listening, doing, & questioning.

Linkage and Integration

Linkage is inherent to the Drama process. All activities in drama will include exploring and making drama, reflecting on drama and communicating in making drama. Integration of drama is encouraged in other subject areas where it is natural and where children's learning can be maximised.

Drama is a subject which also lends itself easily to integration across other curriculum subjects including the following:

- SPHE
- Language
- History
- Geography
- Irish
- PE
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Aistear

Multi-Grade Teaching

St. Ronan's N.S. is a two teacher rural DEIS school. Drama is taught to the whole classroom together in the Junior and Senior Rooms.

Assessment and Record Keeping

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

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

- 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.
- Cooperating and communicating in making Drama - the child's ability to contribute to the shaping of the Drama, both individually and in group in-role and out-of-role discussion about the Drama as the action takes place.

Teacher observation will be central to all assessment in Drama. The teacher may notice if the child is absorbed or not during drama lessons. The teacher might also observe if the child's attitude to role-work seems genuine and sincere. The teacher can informally observe how the student's role-play/drama work correlates with the strand unit objectives specified above.

Other forms of assessment may include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, projects, recordings of children's work (photographs and video), and graphic / pictorial scores. Teachers use information gained from assessment to inform future classroom planning and teaching. Teachers share this information with parents at parent teacher meetings and in the end of year report.

Children with Different Needs

It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in Drama activities. Drama activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children in 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 reflection. The S.N.A. supports particular children and groups as directed by the class teacher.

Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities are given to all pupils regardless of gender, ethnic background or socio-economic status across all strands and activities. Drama class may also be used as a means of integrating different cultural backgrounds. Children with special needs will be included in all activities.

Organisational Planning

Timetable

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction, a minimum of two and half hours per week is devoted to arts education in the infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes for 1st to 6th.

Time may be allocated in blocks for specific aspects of arts education.

Resources and Digital Technologies

There are many resources which a teacher can consider when planning the drama curriculum for a class. Some examples are as followed:

- Recorded stories - video or audio streaming websites to access drama performances.
- Suitable stimuli - this can include music, poetry, stories, visual images or newspaper captions.

- Costumes or props - these could include clothing or items to assist in drama activities.
- Drama practitioners within the school community - if there are members of staff or a parent who is involved in drama, involving them in classroom activities can be a great opportunity for the children's learning experience
- Technology in the classroom - use of online resources via an interactive whiteboard, speakers and recording devices.
- Dabbledoo - This is an online program which provides lesson plans, interactive resources, teachers' manuals, and planning content for all drama curriculum activities from Junior Infants through to 6th class
- School Trips and Tours to drama performances

Health and Safety

Teachers are constantly aware of health and safety when conducting lessons. When planning and during drama lessons, consideration will be given to the following:

- Hidden dangers when pupils 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. Community hall may be used for drama performances and practices.
- 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.

Individual Teacher's Planning and Reporting

- Teachers will consult this whole school plan and the curriculum documents for Drama for the purpose of long and short term planning.
- Where appropriate Drama will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with other subjects.
- Long term plans will be drawn up for each classroom and from these, each teacher will tailor fortnightly/monthly short-term plans according to the individual needs of their own classes.
- In St. Ronan's, the cúntas míosúil is linked to short-term planning.

- Parents are informed of children's progress in drama at parent-teacher meetings and in end of year report cards.

Staff Development

- Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses e.g. Dabledoo
- St. Ronan's N.S. is always looking for opportunities for staff with expertise in the areas of drama to share their ideas with other staff members e.g. co-operative teaching.
- Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the drama curriculum.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are encouraged to foster an interest in drama as well as attending events and enrolling their child in after school activities.
- Parents and community members may be invited to attend and assist with drama events throughout the year.
- Any parents who have a skill or interest in drama are invited to get involved in classroom learning and set up workshops where possible.
- All progress in the drama curriculum will be discussed with parents/guardians at the annual PT meetings and in the end of year report.

Community Links

- We, as a school, are open to any member of the local community who wishes to share their drama talent/skill with the pupils, and will facilitate this where possible.
- Community members may be invited to attend school events e.g. Christmas Concert.
- Local people who hold workshops or classes for school age pupils may be invited to come to the school to work with the children.
- School Trips and Tours to local drama performances

Success Criteria

The success of this whole school plan will be monitored and assessed, through the following means:

- Staff/pupils/parent feedback.
- Cuntas Míósúil and Individual Plans - teachers will have used this plan as a guide for planning.
- Inspectors Reports - procedures in the plan have been followed consistently.

We will know if this plan has been a success if:

- Teachers use this plan as a guide for their own short and long term planning.
- Linkage and Integration of drama takes place more easily and naturally.
- We can observe the pupils' all round enjoyment of the drama process in general.
- All pupils have the opportunity to use drama to explore their world in a safe, creative manner during each year.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The whole staff is responsible for the implementation of the plan. The Principal and Deputy Principal will coordinate the progress of the plan and will look for feedback on its implementation.

Review

This Drama plan was reviewed in September 2024 and will be further reviewed as necessary.

19. Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Ronan's N.S. on: 7th October 2024.

Fr. Joseph Caulfield
Chairperson
Board of Management