



Whole school plan for

Visual Arts

St. Ronan's National School - Cloonloo

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This document outlines the whole school Visual Arts 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. As a whole school plan it will inform teaching and learning of this subject area and will serve as the basis for all long term and short term planning on Visual Arts.

Rationale

This policy was formulated to benefit the teaching and learning of Visual Arts within our school and ensure that all the strands and strand units of the curriculum are taught at the appropriate age and in the appropriate quantity throughout the academic year. It is to be used by the staff as a framework for more specific and guided long and short term plans. It is also formulated to conform to the principles of learning outlined in the Primary School Curriculum. In St. Ronan's N.S., we wish to enable all pupils to have a creative experience through exploring, investigating, designing, inventing and making a range of media.

Vision and Aims

Vision

As stated in our mission statement and as part of our school's ethos, we are committed to the holistic development of all pupils. This plan ensures the development of all pupils' creativity through visual arts, while being aware of, and encouraging, each pupil's unique talents and skills in this area of the curriculum. It aims to promote confidence and competence through the medium of visual art which will in turn facilitate learning in other areas of the curriculum. It aims to allow all pupils the opportunity to excel in and enjoy an area which varies academically to most other subjects in the curriculum.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Irish Primary Visual Arts Curriculum:

- to enable the child to explore, clarify and express ideas, feelings and experiences through a range of arts activities

- to provide for aesthetic experiences and to develop aesthetic awareness in the visual arts, in music, in visual arts, in dance and in literature
- to develop the child's awareness of, sensitivity to and enjoyment of visual, aural, tactile and spatial qualities in the environment
- to enable the child to develop natural abilities and potential, to acquire techniques, and to practise the skills necessary for creative expression and for joyful participation in different art forms
- to enable the child to see and to solve problems creatively through imaginative thinking and so encourage individuality and enterprise
- to value the child's confidence and self-esteem through valuing self expression
- to foster a sense of excellence in and appreciation of the arts in local, regional, national and global contexts, both past and present
- to foster a critical appreciation of the arts for personal fulfilment and enjoyment

Curriculum Planning

The curriculum is delineated at four levels - infant classes, first and second classes, third and fourth classes, and fifth and sixth classes. The Visual Arts Curriculum comprises of two parts:

- Concepts and Skills Development
- Strands and Strand Units

Concepts and skills are derived from the visual elements and are listed in the table below. They will be developed as work is completed on the strands and strand units.

There are six strands in the Visual Arts curriculum, which are organised to ensure a balance between making art and looking and responding to art. It is the aim of St. Ronan's N.S. to teach all strand and strand units of the visual arts curriculum every year.

Junior Infants to Sixth Class

Concepts and Skills Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An Awareness of line• An Awareness of shape• An Awareness of form• An Awareness of colour and tone• An Awareness of texture

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Awareness of pattern and rhythm • An Awareness of space 	
Strand	Strand Units
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Drawings • Looking & Responding
Paint & Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Painting • Looking & Responding
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Prints • Looking & Responding
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Form in Clay • Looking & Responding
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Constructions • Looking & Responding
Fabric & Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating in Fabric & Fibre • Looking & Responding

Each strand's activities are interrelated and involve perceiving and exploring the visual world and making art and looking and responding to the visual world and works of art.

Teachers can choose a range of activities from each strand for their yearly plans. In choosing thematic content, teachers will draw on children's experience, imagination, observation and curiosity.

Children should be given the opportunity to look and talk about his/her work, other children's work and artist's work. This results in the Making Art and Looking and Responding structure in each strand. By discussing the children's work and the work of other artists the teacher can informally draw attention to the visual elements of line, shape, colour and tone, texture, pattern and rhythm, form and spatial organisation.

Below are some of the questions we use to help develop the children's sensitivity to the visual elements:

- Line: What kind of line do you see? Are they straight /curved? What effects are created by the lines?
- Shape: What shapes do you see? Are they curved? What effects do these shapes create?
- Colour and Tone: What colours do you see in the picture? Why? What effects are created?
- Texture: What does the surface feel like? What materials are used?
- Pattern and Rhythm: Can you see any patterns? Where are the patterns?
- Form: Can you see any 2-D shapes (triangle, square etc.) 3-D shapes?
- Spatial Organisation: Is there a lot of space/depth in the picture?

Approaches and Methodologies

We support the recommendation that Guided Discovery is the most appropriate teaching method for the Visual Arts as it encourages the pupils to:

- Explore the expressive potential of various media and experiment with them.
- Cultivate their own artistic interpretation of their world.
- Observe their visual environment.
- Express significant aspects of their lives in visual form and to appraise art works.

The teacher's awareness and acceptance of a broad range of visual imagery, both in children's work and in the work of artists is also important. Emphasis will be placed on process rather than product. The uniqueness of each pupil's art work or their response to the work of other artists will be encouraged and celebrated.

Visual arts activities should be structured to show sequence and growth in complexity and should build on earlier experiences and skills acquired. A balance must be met between making and doing and looking and responding Pupils will be exposed to a wide range of materials and techniques. As with all subjects in a multi class setting, the teacher should be aware of what is appropriate for each pupil in each strand and strand unit, for their class level. They should also be aware of each pupil's individual ability within the area of visual arts and having all this knowledge, they should group pupils for each lesson accordingly. The beauty of a visual arts lesson is that it often gives those pupils who may not excel academically in other areas of the curriculum, a chance to be enabled to work at

a higher level creatively than others at their class level. Equally in a multiclass setting, pupils who may not excel creatively can be grouped with those at a lower class level and maintain good self-esteem and confidence in what they are creating.

Looking & Responding - Children should have opportunities to question and reflect on what they see and to become more discriminating and critically aware. The emphasis, however, should be on appreciation and enjoyment. Children will be given ample opportunity to experience a wide variety and range of art images both representational and non-representational. They will be encouraged to look and talk about his/her work, other children's work and artist's work with openness and sensitivity and will understand there are no definitive answers in art. Emphasis will be placed on discussion of qualities rather than judgement.

In St. Ronan's N.S. teachers employ a range of methodologies and approaches for teaching in the Visual Arts to include:

- Talk and Discussion;
- Active Learning;
- Guided & Discovery Learning;
- Collaborative Learning;
- Problem Solving;
- Skills through content;
- Using the environment;
- Drawing;
- Painting;
- Printing;
- Developing Form in Clay;
- Making Constructions;
- Creating in Fabric & Fibre;
- Looking & Responding;
- Use of ICT;
- Playful approaches

Linkage and Integration

Teachers must plan for opportunities for linkage and integration of Visual Arts activities.

Different strands and strand units will be linked during the course of individual lessons where and when appropriate. Certain topics may be dealt with using a mixed media approach which incorporates different strands and strand units of the Visual Arts curriculum.

The school encourages integration as appropriate due especially to the multi-class setting. Teachers are encouraged to integrate Visual Arts with other subjects in a way that compliments curriculum aims and objectives in the subjects. Integration is encouraged, where it is natural and where children's learning can be maximised. Well planned, integrated topics provide a variety of contexts for developing concepts and skills and are added opportunities for creativity and inventiveness. A thematic approach may be taken for linking strands as visual arts lends itself very well to other curricular subjects.

Some examples could include:

- History- Aztecs, Vikings, Ancient Egypt.
- Gaeilge- seanfhoclacha, rainn, eadaí, daoine.
- English- stories, poetry, advertisements.
- Music- responding to music, constructing musical instruments.
- Geography- map drawing, sketching of local area.
- Science- diagrams, plant and animal life.
- Maths - data, 2/3 D shapes, symmetry, area.
- Drama- designing and making costumes, set design.
- P.E.-orienteeing.
- SPHE - drawing pictures based on feelings, colours associated with feelings

Initiatives and Projects

In St. Ronan's N.S, we endeavour to provide our pupils with opportunities to engage in initiatives and projects which will further enhance their participation and engagement in and with the Visual Arts curriculum. Examples include:

- Participation in residencies such as 'Blast'
- Participation in Creative Clusters
- Participation in art competitions such as the Texaco Art Competition, Credit Union Art Competition, Community Games Art etc.
- Participation in Design a Christmas Card initiative

Displays

Pupils work will be displayed where possible both inside and outside the classroom throughout the school year. This is important so that the pupils are surrounded by a colourful and creative environment that they gain a sense of pride in their own achievements, and so they can respond to the visual art of both themselves and others in their class. Photographs of the pupils work and them engaging in the process may be displayed on the school website. At any available opportunity, the pupils work will be displayed for the wider community e.g. Credit Union competitions.

Multi-Grade Teaching

St. Ronan's N.S. is a two teacher rural DEIS school. visual arts is taught to the whole classroom together in the Junior and Senior Rooms. In the Junior Room, art activities may be undertaken in smaller groups.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment is an integral part of the teaching and learning processes in Visual Arts education in St. Ronan's N.S. Teachers continuously assess children's learning and their own teaching strategies, informally, as they observe, discuss and make judgements on work in progress and on completed work. As a way of looking at teacher and pupil performance, assessment makes an important contribution to the overall evaluation of our Visual Arts programme's effectiveness.

The assessment tools that our teachers use in Visual Arts include:

1. Teacher observation; This could include:
 - The child's ability to choose and use materials, tools and media for a particular task or project, effectively and with originality.
 - The child's expressive use of visual media in compositions and in developing form.
 - The quality of the child's responses to art works, and his/her ability to make connections between his/her own work of others.
 - The child's approach to and level of involvement with a task.
 - The child's contribution to group activities.
2. Teacher DesignedTasks - Task could be designed to facilitate children's creative thinking, problem solving and skills development.
3. Samples of children's artwork;
4. Portfolios of children's artwork;
5. Collaborative (pupil and teacher) looking and responding to/at completed artwork

One of the main assessment tools used in our school for Arts Education will be teacher observation. Teacher's observations feed directly back into the teaching and learning process, emphasising the need and/or strength in the children's learning and in providing useful summative information and guidelines for planning future learner experiences and differentiated practice.

The teacher may also digitally photograph any class art projects or art work and these may be displayed in the corridors or on the school website.

In looking at the children's work in each of the six strands, the teacher will also discern the development of the specific visual elements:

- An awareness of line;
- An awareness of shape;
- An awareness of form;
- An awareness of colour and tone;
- An awareness of texture;
- An awareness of pattern and rhythm;
- An awareness of space

The information gathered will be shared with parents at parent/teacher meetings and in report cards at the end of the school year.

Children with Different Needs

It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in visual arts activities and each individual pupil is helped to develop to his/her full artistic potential. This will be achieved by teachers differentiating learner experiences in the Visual Arts as a means of ensuring that all children can access, benefit from and experience success in and with the Visual Arts curriculum in its truest and fullest sense. Differentiation strategies that will be employed include

1. Varying the level of instruction;
2. Varying the structure of instruction;
3. Varying the mode of instruction;
4. Varying the pace of instruction;
5. Adapting lessons to take account of pupils'
6. Matching learner experiences and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs;
7. Adapting and utilising different resources e.g specialised scissors.

The S.N.A.s supports particular children and groups as directed by the class teacher. Those pupils who are 'more able' will be challenged accordingly to ensure that they are reaching their full potential within the Visual Arts curriculum.

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. Where feasible and required, language will be simplified and used to assist pupils whose first language is not English. Visual arts 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, 50 minutes per week is devoted to visual arts in infant classes and one hour per week for 1st to 6th.

Teachers will strive to ensure that equal time allocation will be dedicated to each strand over the course of the school year. Time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the teacher. Teachers may also choose to block times for Visual Arts at particular times of the year. Teachers should ensure that pupils attending Special Education teachers are included for as much of the Visual Arts programme as possible.

Resources and Digital Technologies

A supply of different art materials for each of the six different strands and associated strand units of the curriculum will be purchased by the school for each teacher for use in their individual classrooms. Teachers will source different images and artefacts etc. for the Looking & Responding strand unit which is common to all six strands of the curriculum

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

- Art Books
- Artists within the school community - if there are members of staff or a parent who is involved in visual arts, 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,.
- Dabbledoo - This is an online program which provides lesson plans, interactive resources, teachers' manuals, and planning content for all visual arts curriculum activities from Junior Infants through to 6th class
- School Trips and Tours to Art Galleries

Health and Safety

Teachers will at all times be mindful of the school's 'Safety Statement' and the procedures and protocols therein. Children will be encouraged to safeguard their own welfare and that of others by following class rules at all times. When planning for Visual Arts consideration is given to the following as a means of ensuring the Safety, Health and Welfare of all of our pupils:

- Appropriate and safe resources being provided
- Close supervision of the pupils at all times by teachers and SNAs, where relevant, when engaged in Visual Arts learner experiences;
- Safe/correct use of art materials, resources and equipment e.g. scissors
- Safe storage facilities for Art materials, resources and equipment;
- Access to and transport of Art materials, resources and equipment;
- Ventilation of the classroom e.g. hairspray. glue
- An adequate amount of space for children to sit and stand when engaged in Visual Arts learner experiences.

Individual Teacher's Planning and Reporting

- Long-Term planning by teachers covers all strands and strand units of the Visual Arts curriculum, as outlined above.
- Teachers will ensure that children have opportunities to undertake work in the six strand units of the Visual Arts curriculum across the school year and that all strands and strand units are given adequate time and attention.
- Teachers will consult this whole school plan and the curriculum documents for visual arts for the purpose of long and short term planning.
- 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.

- When planning for the Visual Arts, teachers will consider the following:
 - Themes and topics that are relevant to the children's lives;
 - Opportunities for meaningful integration with other subject areas that will enhance learning in both the Visual Arts and the other subject areas
 - Children's experience and imagination;
 - Seasonal themes and topics;
 - Using the work of artists and craftspeople as a stimulus;
 - Using materials and tools as a stimulus e.g focusing on the visual and tactile qualities of materials and tools can be an exciting starting point for an art activity;
 - Working from observation and curiosity which will incorporate playful approaches to teaching and learning.

Staff Development

- Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses e.g. Dabbledoo, courses at Education Centers etc
- Time is set aside when needed at staff meetings for Visual Arts planning/decision making. Sharing of information and expertise etc. is done at these meetings.
- Any staff member who has a particular skill or talent in this area is encouraged to organise whole school events or undertakings e.g. exhibitions or mural painting etc. which will enable them to pass on their knowledge to both the pupils and the other teachers.

Parental Involvement

As is the case with the delivery of all curriculum areas, parents are regarded as being key partners in the delivery of the Visual Arts curriculum. To this end, parents will be encouraged to

- facilitate visits to galleries, museums and exhibitions for their children;
- draw their children's attention to interesting landscape and streetscape features etc.

In terms of home-school communication regarding the Visual Arts curriculum, the following will apply:

- Parents are updated regarding their children's progress in the Visual Arts at parent teacher meetings and in end of year reports;.
- This Visual Arts Whole School Plan is available to view on the school website

- The pupils' work in the Visual Arts is on display throughout the school both in classrooms and in communal areas;
- The pupils' work in the Visual Arts may also be displayed (with parental consent) on the school website, Seesaw, Google Classroom etc.
- Parents are encouraged to foster an interest in visual arts 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 visual arts events throughout the year.
- Any parents who have a skill or interest in visual arts are invited to get involved in classroom learning and set up workshops where possible.

Community Links

- We, as a school, are open to any member of the local community who wishes to share their artistic talents/skills with the pupils, and will facilitate this where possible.
- Community members may be invited to attend school events e.g. Art Show
- 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 art displays/galleries
- Taking part in initiatives such as Creative Clusters, art competitions etc

Success Criteria

The success of this plan will be viewed based on the following criteria:

- That teachers have based their short and long term plans on this whole school plan
- That, from viewing the Cúntas Míósúil, the principal can clearly see that procedures and approaches have been followed
- That feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils is positive
- That through teacher assessment and observation, each pupil, is working at their best at the appropriate level.
- 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 visual arts takes place more easily and naturally.

- We can observe the pupils' all round enjoyment of the visual arts process in general.
- All pupils have the opportunity to use visual arts 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 visual arts plan was reviewed in November 2025 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: 24th November 2025. A copy of the Visual Arts Plan will be put on the school's website.

Fr. Joseph Caulfield
Chairperson
Board of Management