

St. Andrew's N.S.



Drama Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other school policies.

Policy Ratified

January 8th 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory statement

This policy was formulated through staff collaboration co-ordinated by the Principal/ Deputy Principal, in consultation with the Board of Management and parent representatives, following in-service training of teachers as part of the implementation process of the revised Primary Curriculum (1999) and their feedback on curriculum implementation.

1.2 Rationale

Drama provides children with ways to explore our cultural heritage (in an inclusive manner) and new dimensions of a changing world. The essential elements of make-belief in drama help the children to test their hypotheses about all sorts of aspects of their family, community and the wider world – exploring what it is like and what it could be like.

The school has a tradition of including Drama throughout its curricular implementation programme, especially in the areas of SESE, SPHE and language. Dramatic productions may also be presented annually in various classes throughout the school, usually at Christmas time.

The purpose of this policy is:-

- To benefit teacher planning, teaching and ultimately pupil learning through the medium of drama.
- To provide a whole school approach to the teaching of drama in order to ensure that pupils may develop skills as envisaged in the Primary School Curriculum.

2. Vision and aims

2.1 School characteristic spirit / ethos

The Drama programme in our school is informed by our school's ethos which endeavours to nurture each pupil within a caring and supportive learning environment thereby enabling our children to recognise their many gifts and talents.

2.2 Aims and objectives

We endorse the aims of the Primary Curriculum (ref *Drama Curriculum*, pp. 8-10)

- 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 questioning, 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 and through 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 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 an appreciation of world drama culture;
- to support the child in the development of criteria with which to evaluate the drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed;

- to help the child derive the maximum benefit from the extensive facilities and resources provided through the school.

3. Content of Drama plan – curriculum

3.1 Strand and strand units

<i>Strand</i>	<i>Strand units</i>
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring and making drama • reflecting on drama • co-operating and communicating in making drama

Infant Classes

(ref Curriculum, pp 13-17 and Aistear)

First and Second Class

(ref Curriculum, pp 19-23)

Third and Fourth Class

(ref Curriculum, pp 24-31)

Fifth and Sixth Class

(ref Curriculum, pp 32-39)

A thematic and cross curricular approach may be used. Examples of these may include stories, poetry, pictures/photographs, objects, issues from SPHE/SESE curriculum, aspects of life in the past/present/future, or the needs/concerns of pupils.

3.2 Approaches and methodologies

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 37 – 99).

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
- a willingness to explore.

The prerequisites for making drama are

- content
- the fictional lens
- a safe environment

Content

(ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 39 – 40)

The content of drama lessons is chosen from a combination of aspects of life, whether experienced, imagined, or read about. This may be from the past, present or future, and may involve the needs, concerns or preoccupations of the children (e.g. relationships). The content may also derive from other curricular areas such as SESE, SPHE, RE and Language (English and Gaelige)

The Fictional Lens

What's the story?... What's the real situation? What's the fiction?

(ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 41 - 42)

An appropriate and effective fictional lens is chosen to reflect the content, suitable to the age and ability of each group.

In the **Infant classes and First Class**, this will involve stories closely related to the children's own experience (e.g. family, pets, toys, friends, local environment). Through drama and Aistear in the Infant classes, the children can try out real-life situations, in a safe and secure environment.

From Second Class onwards, factual stories from history or current affairs may be included more regularly, as the children understand that the framing of the drama distinguishes the dramatic representation from the factual situation.

By the end of Sixth Class, it is envisaged that the children will have a sense of how different genres (eg tragic, comic and absurd) can act as distinctive lenses on reality. The process of drama also involves creative story making, as well as adapting existing material to meet the needs of a particular group as well as teaching/learning objectives.

A safe environment

(ref Teacher Guidelines, p 43 - 46)

Age-appropriate rules and guidelines are devised on a class-by-class basis to ensure that a safe environment is created for Drama activities. These include fostering respect for the contribution of others as well as ensuring a safe physical environment.

The elements of drama, as defined in the Curriculum are

- belief
- role and character
- action
- place
- time
- tension
- significance and
- genre

In improvised drama, various combinations of elements are used to enrich the drama.

Drama Strategies and Conventions

(ref Teacher Guidelines, pp 97-98).

There are many strategies and conventions that are used in drama, allowing creativity within a controlled situation. Teachers include the following drama strategies in their implementation of the curriculum. They are used selectively and thereby avoid classes being merely a series of drama strategies rather than encouraging the flow of productive dramatic action.

Drama Games

They are helpful in establishing confidence and a sense of drama, (e.g. blind man's buff).

Still image and montage

Groups compose a still picture to illustrate an idea or capture a moment, set against a contrasting image/soundscape so as to question the content of the still picture (e.g. a still picture of emigrants with a sound-track of sounds from home, reaction to a goal being scored – before and after).

Hot-seating

A character sits in the centre while the others ask questions about his/her life and he/she answers as the character. As a variation/development, the others can also sometimes ask the questions as their own characters.

Thought-tracking

Some of the class do actions silently or make still images while the others speak their thoughts aloud about them, either simultaneously or individually.

Sound-tracking

Some of the class do actions silently or make stills while the others make the soundtrack to go along with them (ref Teacher Guidelines, p 83, activity 4).

Review and reflection

Children are encouraged to reflect on drama both within the drama itself and after the drama experience, e.g. through writing, visual arts, speaking, listening, doing, questioning, etc.

Differentiation

Teachers use various methods to ensure that all children are provided with opportunities to access the drama curriculum and by offering opportunities for involvement at various levels, e.g. through story-line or character development, production and direction opportunities.

3.3 Children with Special Needs

Teachers and SNAs work together to support and ensure participation of children with special needs in drama, both through differentiation and by providing useful support during tasks e.g. the use of puppets, differentiating roles, items to hold, careful pre-planning of groups.

3.4 Assessment and Record Keeping

(ref school's policy on Assessment and record keeping, *Curriculum*, pp 42 - 46, *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 99 - 101)

Through consideration of the objectives in Drama, assessment in this area involves monitoring the development of the children's drama skills and concepts and the success with which they may learn through engagement within the three strand units i.e.

- 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 making drama (the ability to contribute to the shaping of the drama, both in discussion about it and as the action takes place).

The assessment tools used may include:-

- teacher observation
- teacher-designed tasks
- photographs and recordings (these are not to go outside school)
- checklists

The information gained from assessment will inform all planning, e.g. to enable the teacher to approach particular challenges that pupils may encounter in a sensitive manner.

Teachers *may* keep written and photographic records of classroom-based activities and productions, in accordance with our school policies on child protection and Data Protection.

3.5 Linkage and integration

Linkage of the three strand units (exploring and making drama; reflecting on drama and co-operating and communicating in making drama) is addressed by teachers in their planning. Drama is integrated with the other subjects of the curriculum. For example: Language, SESE, SPHE, etc.

The strand units are integral in nature, thereby allowing for linkage.

- within lessons, e.g. reflection on a poem, dramatisation of history story, bringing art images to life;
- through possible extensions and development of aspects of various lessons, e.g. developing sound track and movement for a story, reading body language and movement, dealing with emotions explored in SPHE.

3.6 Equality of participation and access

As stated in our School Booklet:-

St. Andrew's N. S. values each member of our school community equally, irrespective of:

- Gender
- Social background
- Family circumstances
- Educational achievement
- Physical or intellectual ability
- Ethnicity
- Creed

Drama is considered to be an excellent vehicle for use in providing opportunities to integrate the varying culture and backgrounds of all pupils. Authentic materials from other cultures can be used for drama activities, when possible, and can include costumes, props and musical instruments. All children have equal rights to access services, facilities, and amenities in the school environment. Teachers may invite parents/guardians who are from a different cultural/ethnic background to contribute to activities in drama.

4. Organisational planning

4.1 Timetable

The official allocated time for Arts Education (i.e. Music, Drama and Visual Arts) is

- Infant classes: 2 hours per week
- Other classes: 3 hours per week.

(Ref *Curriculum Introduction*, pp 67 - 70)

However, as Drama is often integrated with other subjects throughout the curriculum, this allocation may be exceeded regularly. Blocked time is regularly used, e.g. for project work, preparation for Christmas play productions.

4.2 Resources and equipment

These include a hall, portable stage and seating as well as props, costumes and drama books. It is the responsibility of all staff and pupils to keep them in good condition for future use. Props and costumes have a designated storage area in the main store room, while text and audio visual resources are kept and catalogued in the staff library. A range of stimuli for drama includes music, poetry, stories, visual images, etc, and is available in the main library and online.

The school recognises the value of specialised support in particular curricular areas. We are fortunate to have some parents who are particularly talented in various elements of Drama, and we warmly welcome their contribution to our curriculum implementation whenever possible.

Curriculum support websites:

PDST	www.pdst.ie
Other Resources:	dramaresource.com
	bbcpres.com/dramagames

4.3 Health and safety

(ref Health and Safety policy)

All Drama activities are organised in accordance with the school's *Health and Safety policy*.

4.4 Individual teachers planning and reporting

This policy is available to all teachers, who are required to refer to it when planning, as it aims to provide information and guidance to individual teachers when completing their long and short-term planning.

Monthly progress reports play a valuable role in the review and development of whole school/individual preparation for future activities. In order to ensure continuity, and to avoid repetition etc, cúntais míosúil are available for reference by colleagues when doing long-term planning.

4.5 Staff development

Teachers are encouraged to engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and to share the expertise acquired at professional development courses with colleagues. Opportunities for team-teaching are welcomed as they arise from time to time, e.g. including pupils with special needs.

Staff members who have particular expertise and experience are encouraged to share this with colleagues.

The In-School Management (ISM) Drama co-ordinator, is responsible for monitoring developments in the subject, for co-ordinating staff resources/ training in this curricular area and for arranging that time be allocated at staff meetings to discuss issues related to Drama, as required. This is done in consultation with the principal teacher.

4.6 Parental involvement

(ref Drama Curriculum and Guidelines for Parents - Your Child's Learning booklet which is available from The School Office)

All curricular areas may be discussed with parents individually during the on-going home/school consultation process which applies throughout the year.

Parents support the implementation of the Drama curriculum through hands-on help in a variety of ways including productions, costumes and technical support. Parents are on occasions invited to view their children's work by attending presentation of school productions and performances. They also regularly join Drama excursions where they are part of the supervisory support team for the class teacher.

4.7 Community links

Visits to the Mermaid theatre in Bray enrich and support the Drama programme.

5. Success criteria

This policy supports both teaching and learning of and through Drama on a whole school basis as outlined within the aims of the Primary Curriculum (ref *Drama Curriculum*, pp. 8-10). Its implementation is monitored through:-

- teacher preparation and record keeping
- ensuring that procedures are consistently followed
- the end product, as seen directly through the children's work.

The outcomes of the plan are assessed through:-

- feedback from teachers/parents/pupils/community
- inspectors' suggestions/reports

6. Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **8th January 2020**. It was immediately given to all teaching staff and made available to parents on the school's website.

7. Implementation

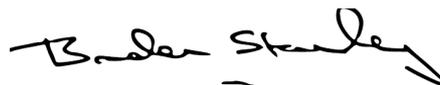
7.1 Roles and responsibilities

This plan was developed by the Principal and Deputy Principal, in consultation with other teaching and support staff, Board of Management and parent representatives. The policy must be implemented by all staff throughout the school and be reflected in both long and short-term planning by teachers.

7.2 Timeframe for implementation and further review

The revised policy was implemented immediately following its ratification by the Board of Management. Further reviews and self evaluation will be coordinated by the ISM coordinator for Visual Arts in 2022 or as the need arises.

Approved by The Board of Management:



(Chairperson)

Dated:

8th January 2020