**Drama**

**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 and Rationale**

Introductory Statement: The original plan was composed in response to teacher in service received in the subject in 2006/07. This plan was reviewed by the staff during Croke Park hours in October/November 2017. Parents were also consulted on the plan via a short questionnaire in the November 2017 newsletter.

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 and Aims**

Vision:

Our school recognises that Drama education is part of a balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole spectrum of the child’s intelligence. We also seek to develop the child’s aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, creative 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 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 emphatic 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 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**

1. **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.

**Exploring and Making Drama**

**Junior and Senior Infants:**

* 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 the 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.

**1st and 2nd classes**

* 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
* Begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants.

**3rd and 4th classes**

* 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 in signifying Dramatic themes
* Explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action
* Begin, as a member of a group, to include in Drama activity the elements of tension and suspense
* Begin the process of using script as a pre-text

**5th and 6th classes**

* 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 in 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, fantasy
* Become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action.

**Reflecting on Drama**

**Junior and Senior Infants:**

* 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 Drama

**1st and 2nd Classes:**

* 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.

**3rd and 4th classes:**

* 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.

**5th and 6th classes:**

* 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 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:**

* Develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate 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.

**1st and 2nd classes:**

* 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.

**3rd and 4th class:**

* Develop, out of 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 that has already been made in simultaneous small group work.

**5th and 6th classes:**

* Develop, out of 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 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.

Specific activities at each class level will be added in an appendix at the end of this document. This appendix details stimuli and specific content suggested for each class level.

1. **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 the fictional consequences of Drama and a willingness to explore. Teachers will focus on the building of belief when beginning a new Drama activity.

The strand “Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding” will be important for teachers in this school 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.

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.

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
* Paintings
* Photographs
* Objects

The suggested uses of these stimuli are outlined in Appendix 1 at the back of this document.

Elements are used organically through the Drama. Belief will be built as role/characters develop. 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.

In this school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below is a table showing some suitable strategies for the class level. This is not an exhaustive list 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.

**Suggested Strategies**

**Junior and Senior Infants**

* Defining the space, Still Images, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Whole Group improvisation, Hot seating.

**1st and 2nd classes**

* Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group improvisation, Still images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating.

**3rd and 4th classes**

* Defining the space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, and Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Ritual, and Flashback/flash D forward.

**5th and 6th class**

* Defining the space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Ritual, and Flashback/flash D forward.

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 ember 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 and questioning.

1. **Children will Different Needs.**

It is the policy of our school that all children in mainstream classes or in special classes 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.

1. **Linkage and Integration**

Linkage is inherent to the Drama process. All activities in Drama will include exploring and making Drama, reflecting on Drama and co-operating and communicating in making Drama.

The school has an active policy on integration. Teachers are encouraged to integrate Drama with other subjects in a way that complements curriculum aims and objectives in both subjects. Integration is encouraged where it is natural and where a child’s learning can be maximised. With this in mind a thematic approach for integration is a model supported by the school.

The school sees particular opportunities for integration across the three arts subjects.

1. **Assessment and Record Keeping**

As has 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. 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.
* Co-operating 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 and note taking will be central to all assessment in Drama. Other forms of assessment will include basic teacher-designed tests and tasks, projects, recordings of the children’s work, and graphic/pictorial scores.

Progress will be recorded and communicated in teachers own notes, Cuntas Miosuil, end of year report and at parent teacher meetings.

1. **Equality of Participation and Access**

Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background, and socioeconomic status across all strands and activities.

1. **Timetable**

One hour of the week is set aside for Drama. This time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the individual teacher. Teachers may also choose to block times for Drama at particular times of the year.

Timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama. *The school community (teachers, parents and pupils) take great pride in the School Show which takes place at Christmas. Parents were surveyed for their opinions on how the school administers the Drama curriculum and the Christmas Show’s place within the Drama curriculum. 87% of families responded to the survey. 100% of respondents expressed the view that it was important/very important to hold a Christmas Show every year. It was felt by all respondents to the survey, that the show meets the aims which are set out in the 1999 curriculum.*

*As preparation for such a show is time consuming, teacher planning of
Drama is blocked heavily in the months of November and December. With such volumes of time being used to facilitate Drama in these months, Drama (discrete time) will be taken from the timetable at other times of the year. For eg., If Drama results in taking 3hrs per week of the timetable during these months, this will result in Drama in ‘discrete time’ not being on the timetable in a discrete sense during other parts of the year. In the survey parents were asked; were they satisfied with so much time of the Drama curriculum being used around the Christmas Show. 97% of respondents expressed no difficulty with this. The 3% who did express difficulty did so on the basis that they wanted more time assigned to Drama*

 *( outside of the Christmas Show) throughout the year.*

1. **Resources and ICT**

Teachers are encouraged to use other adults who may be available to them such as a parent or a teacher who is working with the class to facilitate the delivery of the curriculum where appropriate.

Teachers are encouraged to teach their Drama lessons in their own classrooms and to carefully timetable for maximised use of the cleared space. Drama may also be taught in the GP room.

1. **Health and Safety**

As with all curricular areas work, the Drama Curriculum will maintain due care to our schools 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 classroom
* 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.
1. **Individual Teachers Planning and Reporting**

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 Drama should be carefully considered in the short term planning of Drama.

As mentioned in the integration section, teachers in the school approach much of their teaching thematically and are encouraged to do so with Drama also. Some of the themes that we as a school have chosen as possibilities are:

* Halloween
* Autumn
* Winter
* Christmas
* Spring
* Summer
* Pirates
* The Sea
* Food
* A Journey

The Cuntas Miosuil is an important indicator and record of work carried out in Drama. Teachers will record their work in Drama for a particular month .

1. **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.

Teachers will be informed about upcoming courses in the education centres and other bodies providing professional development through the staffroom notice board.

1. **Parental Involvement**

Where appropriate, parents may be involved in Drama within the classroom. If a parent has particular expertise they may be invited in to be part of the classroom process in Drama. Parents may be invited to open classroom presentations of improvisations or other work created in small group settings.

1. **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.

1. **Success Criteria**

The following areas will be considered when reviewing our drama plan:

* Will this plan make a difference to the teaching and learning of Drama in our school? List the criteria that will indicate success
* How will we know that the plan has been implemented?

Teachers preparation based on this plan

Procedures outlined in this plan consistently followed

* Has the plan achieved its aims? What are the indicators? (Refer to Aims)
* Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include

Teacher/parent feedback

Children’s feedback

Inspector’s suggestions/reports

1. **Implementation**

Roles and Responsibilities

All teachers have responsibility for the implementation of the Drama curriculum.

1. **Review**

Roles and Responsibilities

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.

Timeframe

The content of this whole school plan for Drama will be reviewed during the school year 2019/20.

1. **Ratification and Communication**

This school plan for Drama was ratified by the Board of management of Seir Kieran’s N.S. at a meeting on the 7th of November 2017.