

# St. Mary's National School, Croom

## Whole School Development Plan For Drama

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## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles which underpin the teaching and learning of Drama in our school are:

1. Drama is a subject
2. Drama is for all teachers and all children
3. Process Drama explores the real world through the fictional world.

## 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:

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 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 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.

The objectives at each for each strand unit are detailed in the tables below.

Exploring and Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• develop the instinct for make-believe play into Drama</li><li>• develop the ability to play in role as an integral part of the action</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience how the use of space and objects can help to create the reality of the make-believe world</li> <li>• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop awareness of tension in the Drama</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use the ability to play at make-believe to enter fully into participation in Drama</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• experience how context is built and a Drama reality created through the use of space and objects</li> <li>• experience how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the Dramatic action</li> <li>• begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter into the fictional Dramatic context with the same spontaneity and freedom that he/she has earlier applied to make-believe play</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• discover how the use of space and objects can help in building the context and in signifying Dramatic themes</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• begin, as a member of a group, to include in Drama activity the elements of tension and suspense</li> <li>• begin the process of using script as a pre-text</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional Dramatic context</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the Drama theme</li> <li>• explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present Dramatic action</li> <li>• become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in Dramatic action</li> <li>• help to plan Dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored</li> <li>• distinguish between various genres, such as comedy, tragedy, fantasy</li> <li>• become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action</li> </ul>

Reflecting on Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the ability to reflect on the action as it progresses</li> <li>• experience the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• share insights gained while experiencing the Drama</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use reflection on a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• share insights while experiencing the Drama or insights that arise out of the Drama</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use reflection on and evaluation of a particular Dramatic action to create possible alternative courses for the action</li> <li>• learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> <li>• learn, through Drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience</li> <li>• use the sharing of insights arising out of Dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people</li> </ul>

Co-Operating and Communicating in Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the ability, out of role, to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> </ul>
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul>
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop, in role, the ability to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the Drama</li> <li>• develop fictional relationships through interaction with the other characters in small-group or whole-class scenes as the Drama text is being made</li> <li>• enact spontaneously for others in the group a scene from the Drama, or share with the rest of the class a scene that has already been made in simultaneous small-group work</li> </ul>

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.

## 2. 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 or for their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, who's 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.

- o Story
- o Poems
- o Newspaper Captions
- o Pictures
- o Painting
- o Photographs
- o 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 roles/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.

Class Level	Suggested Strategies
Junior & Senior Infants	Defining the Space, Still Images, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Whole Group improvisation, Hot seating.
1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> Classes	Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group Improvisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Classes	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, Flashback/flashforward
5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> Classes	Defining the Space, Teacher in Role, Mimed Narration, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Improvisation in Pairs, Briefing, Conscience Alley, Whole Group Improvisation, Small Group Improvisation, Hot seating, Ritual, Flashback/flashforward,

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 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. A list of drama reflection methods is to be found at the end of this plan.

### 3. Children with 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.

### 4. 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 children'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.

### 5. Assessment and Record Keeping

As has been outlined in our schools Assessment & 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. E.g .see below

- o 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
- o 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
- o 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 children's work, and graphic / pictorial scores.

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

### 6. Equality of Participation and Access

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

## 7. Timetable

Infant class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> classes will have a minimum of one hour per week of 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.

There is discretionary time available each week (Infants: one hour, First to Sixth Classes: two hours) that teachers can occasionally use to support The Drama Curriculum.

Teachers should ensure that pupils attending supplementary teaching are included for as much of the Drama programme as possible.

## 8. Resources and ICT

An inventory of all equipment suitable for the delivery of The Drama Curriculum has been compiled and is included in the appendix to this document. This includes Drama books, basic props, suitable stimuli (music, poetry, stories, visual images, newspaper captions). Teachers are provided with a copy of this at the start of each school year.

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 school hall or in the spare classroom. (if available).

## 9. 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 classrooms
- 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.

## 10. 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.

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

## 11. 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.

Drama will be on the agenda at some staff meetings per year. This will allow for review of the policy and also give an opportunity for members of staff to share ideas that are working for them.

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

Over the coming years we hope to engage with the PCSP cuiditheoireacht service to come to the school to aid individual teachers with planning, to model lessons and to target the weaker areas of the curriculum.

## 12. 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.



## Success Criteria

Will this plan make a difference to the teaching and learning of Drama in our school?

- 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?
  - Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan include
    - Teacher/parent/community feedback
    - Children's feedback regarding the activity level, enjoyment and skill development of the classes.
    - Inspectors' suggestions/report
    - When pupils have the opportunities to participate in drama activities
- Has the plan promoted the key considerations when implementing a programme of 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 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 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.

## Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Drama curriculum in the school.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Those involved in the review

- Teachers
- Pupils
- Parents
- Post holders/plan co-ordinator
- BoM/DES/Others.

The teacher with POR for Drama has responsibility for co-ordinating the review.

Timeframe

This plan will be reviewed in 2017

### Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management of St Mary's National School, Croom.

On Monday June 9<sup>th</sup> 2014

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Very Rev. J. Kennedy P.P. Chairperson of BOM

Appendix 1  
Individual Class Plans

## Appendix 2

### Some methods of Reflection

## Appendix 3

### Inventory of equipment