

Scoil Mhuire U.R. 11894I

Policy on Drama

The process of planning for a school is a work constantly in progress, comprising research, practice and evaluation at all times. The initial stage of drawing up or customising the curriculum to suit our own needs was perhaps the most valuable and while we have updated the programmes since then, we have not completely deleted all of our original work. Rather we have sought to develop each of our policies and subject programmes, to create a framework from which each teacher can draw, a rich source of topics and methodologies rather than a rigid programme from which no one can deviate. Our approach has been that we must first and foremost value and acknowledge what is already established good practice or content and not bring in change merely for the sake of change.

We hope in this way to remain responsive to the needs of each child, the dynamics of each class group, the talents of each teacher, the current events of each year and the rich tapestry of life as it affects Scoil Mhuire.

The Cuntas Miosúil remains the tool with which we plan for each year and avoid unnecessary overlap and repetition.

In this way we hope to keep adding to or altering our Plean Scoile through constant evaluation and enthusiastic teachers meetings, thereby maintaining an energy and freshness in everything we do.

Introductory Statement

All teachers of Scoil Mhuire were involved in drawing up this plan. Prior to creating this plan, all staff attended two days of In-Service training on Drama.

Rationale

At Scoil Mhuire, we believe that Drama provides children with ways to explore our cultural heritage and new dimensions of our changing world. It also helps children to explore their own emotions and how they relate to the world around them. Language plays a critical role in drama. The Drama curriculum contributes to developing the child's confidence in English, Irish and also in other languages.

Vision

We are committed at Scoil Mhuire to the all-round development of each child in our care. We hope through Drama to help the child develop confidence and enable each child to explore their emotions and engage with their environment in a safe and creative manner.

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 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 children to participate in drama and respond to drama as an element of lifelong interest
- 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.

This Drama Plan will be addressed under the following headings:

1. Curriculum Planning:

Strand and strand units
 Approaches and methodologies
 Children with different needs
 Linkage and integration
 Assessment and record keeping
 Equality of participation and access

2. Organisational Planning:

Timetable
 Resources
 Health and safety
 Parental involvement
 Community links

1(a): Strand and strand units

There is only one strand in the Drama Curriculum.

It is through Drama "to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding."

This strand is sub-divided into three units:

- Exploring and making drama
- Reflecting on drama
- Co-operating and communicating in making drama.

For a list of objectives for strand units as taught in each class, please see glance cards in the appendix of this document.

1(b): 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. Each year the teacher will agree the ground rules with the class, so as to ensure the conditions described above, i.e. a willingness to enter into the drama, to work with others in sincerity and with respect, and to explore together situations which may arise. Children will be taught to understand that when the drama lesson is ended so too is the world of make-believe that is created. This

allows children to explore a wide range of topics, some of which in other circumstances may be too sensitive to bring up.

Each class will produce a school play at least once a year, as this always increases self-confidence, gives children the opportunity to express themselves in public, and to experience being on stage. However, the main focus of our drama curriculum is process drama, where children will explore topics as wide as life itself. Exploring these topics will involve children in such activities as:

- The spontaneous making of drama scenes (improvisation)
- Entering into other lives and situations
- Engaging with life issues, knowledge and themes through drama as part of wellbeing
- Honing and shaping drama scenes for the purpose of communicating them to others
- Living through a story, making it up as they go along. Solving problems in the real and fictional worlds, co-operating with others and pooling ideas
- Thinking about and discussing the patterns in life so that the outcome of encounters and plots will reflect their perception of how life is or might be.

All of this will take place at a level suitable to the age of each child.

Because drama is a holistic activity it is difficult to separate the form from the content, the affective from the cognitive, and the social development from the personal.

Nevertheless we believe that educational outcomes will derive from two main sources:

- The knowledge and insights gained from bringing the child's experience to bear on the examination of a particular aspect of life through drama
- The personal skills, social skills and drama skills that children gain when they enter effectively and create the world of drama.

These skills are as natural to the child as playing, the teacher has only to act as facilitator pointing out possibilities of certain directions and avenues but leaving much of the responsibility for the exploration and its enjoyment, to the child.

1(c): Children with differing needs:

We feel that Drama offers children with special needs an opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the work of the class, to learn in a team and to excel. Teachers will ensure that these children are not over-looked in group work and that they are encouraged to engage fully with the topic being covered. Other children will also learn from the special needs child and teachers will look for opportunities to point this out.

1(d): Linkage and integration

All three strands in drama are normally covered in each lesson and are so closely linked as to be difficult to be taught as separate units. Drama is fundamentally about exploring and creating, all work is always reflected on and reviewed and this can only be best achieved in an environment of co-operation and clear communication. Drama is very often linked to other subject areas particularly English, Gaelic and languages as well as History, R.E. and SPHE.

1(e): Assessment and Record-Keeping

Assessment will help the teacher to monitor children's learning and development. It provides the teacher with the means of identifying the needs of individual children and enables her to create the drama contexts and to modify curriculum content in order to facilitate effective learning.

Most assessment is done in drama through teacher observation. It will also be done through teacher-designed tasks and tests or projects. Recordings of children's work may occasionally be made.

1(f): Equality of participation and access

All children have equal access to drama within our school. When parts are being chosen for school plays preference will always be given to children who have not had a main part before.

2. Organisational Planning:

2(a): Timetable

Each class is time-tabled to have half an hour formal teaching time in Drama each week. In addition to this, Drama is integrated into the Curriculum in English, Irish, History, R.E. and S.P.H.E.

Plays or shows to be performed for parents normally take place towards the end of each term.

As the numbers in Scoil Mhuire have increased, the hall is not large enough to accommodate all parents and visitors. It is decided at the beginning of each year when the various classes will perform and in what grouping. Junior Infants perform at lunch time at the end of May or the beginning of June.

2(b): Resources and ICT

We have a good stage and hall, and sound system, available for formal drama. We sometimes invite touring companies into school. There are good Drama books available near the Staff Room and teachers have shared their expertise in this area following summer courses and their own personal interest.

Teaching and learning drama is supported by the vast amount of resources available on line and in Scoil Mhuire this is done in accordance with our ICT policy and acceptable usage of same.

With the help of a grant from Covanta, a new stage was purchased in October 2018. It is a modular design, constructed of birch ply, which is stored on bespoke trolleys in the hall. This has meant that we have been able to get rid of one of the sheds in the storage courtyard and the aim to is to free up that courtyard completely. The StackaStage system is easily put together even by the girls in the older classes, under supervision of staff.

2(c): Health and Safety

The safety and well-being of our children is, as always, of paramount concern. Children are never unaccompanied while constructing or deconstructing the stage, or while on stage. There is always a teacher present, and no child may attempt anything in drama which might pose a threat to her own health or that of anyone else. Everything is done in accordance with our Health and Safety Statement, Supervision policy and others and this applies not only to Drama during core school hours but also to Drama that takes place as an After school activity.

2(d): Individual teachers' planning and reporting

Planning reflects the drama objectives, as is evidenced in the cúntas miosúil which is handed to the Principal at the end of each month.

2(e): Staff development

Teachers work closely together and share their talents and strengths generously with each other – something which enriches practice throughout the school. The school also welcomes any PCSP support which is available.

2(f): Parental involvement

The school always welcomes parental involvement and they have always been supportive especially in providing or making costumes for concerts. They also provide an amazing and very appreciative audience for plays which is an important experience for children and a time that enhances their self esteem.

2(g): Success criteria

This plan will be deemed successful when all classes enjoy drama and all children have the opportunity to explore their world in a safe creative manner. We believe that Drama helps to create confident children and success is evident in the children themselves.

Roles and Responsibilities

The responsibility for implementing this plan lies with the Principal as well as with every class teacher.

Timeframe

This plan itself will be reviewed as required.

Ratification and Communication;

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management in October 2018

Signed: _____
Chairperson, BOM.