

Drama

School Plan

St Josephs NS, Kilcock

Introductory Statement and Rationale

This Drama Plan was developed collaboratively by the staff of St. Joseph's N.S. and is intended to guide both long-term and short-term planning in Drama across all class levels. It outlines a shared understanding of the aims, content and approaches to Drama in the school and supports consistency and continuity in teaching and learning.

The plan also serves as an information and support document for new and substitute teachers, ensuring a common approach to Drama throughout the school. It reflects the principles of the Primary School Curriculum (1999) and has been informed by staff experience, previous practice and ongoing reflection on teaching and learning in Drama.

Drama is recognised as a discrete subject within the curriculum and provides valuable opportunities for children to explore feelings, ideas and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Through Drama, children develop confidence, creativity, empathy, language and social skills, all of which contribute to their holistic development.

Vision

Our vision is to provide all children with rich, inclusive and meaningful drama experiences that support their personal, social and emotional development. We aim to foster creativity, confidence and self-expression while encouraging respect, cooperation and understanding of others.

Aims

In line with the Primary School Curriculum for Drama (1999), the aims of Drama in St. Joseph's N.S. are:

- To develop children's drama literacy and expressive skills
- To bridge imaginative play and the art form of theatre
- To enable children to engage physically, emotionally and intellectually in drama
- To foster cooperation, communication and problem-solving skills
- To develop understanding of drama structures, elements and genres
- To encourage reflection on life themes through drama

Curriculum Planning

Curriculum planning in Drama is informed by the Primary School Curriculum (1999) and supports a balanced, progressive and coherent programme from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Teachers plan collaboratively and individually to ensure that Drama is taught in a structured yet flexible manner, appropriate to the needs and abilities of each class.

Strands and Strand Units

STRAND	STRAND UNITS
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Exploring and making drama2. Reflecting on drama3. Co-operating and communicating in making drama
Prerequisites for making drama: Content, the fictional lens and creating a safe environment	
Elements of drama: Belief, Role and character, Action, Place, Time, Tension, Significance and Genre	

All three strand units are interrelated and are addressed in an integrated way during Drama lessons. Teaching and learning are underpinned by key prerequisites such as the creation of a safe environment, the use of a fictional context and carefully chosen content. Teachers also explicitly develop children's understanding of the elements of drama: belief, role and character, action, place, time, tension, significance and genre.

A thematic approach is adopted across the school. Themes are drawn from pupils' experiences, literature, other curricular areas and relevant social and cultural contexts. This approach supports continuity, progression and meaningful learning.

Progression Across Class Levels

Progression in Drama is achieved by revisiting skills, concepts and elements of drama at increasing levels of complexity as children move through the school. Teachers select objectives that are developmentally appropriate and ensure that children experience all three strand units on a regular basis.

In **Junior and Senior Infants**, emphasis is placed on imaginative play, belief, simple role-play, cooperation and the use of space. Children are encouraged to explore feelings and ideas through play-based drama activities.

In **First and Second Classes**, children further develop their ability to work in role, explore character and context and begin to understand how tension and action drive drama. Reflection becomes more structured, and children are supported in sharing ideas and responses.

In **Third and Fourth Classes**, pupils engage in more sustained drama experiences. They develop a clearer understanding of role and character, explore dramatic structure and theme, and use reflection to make connections between drama and real-life experiences.

In **Fifth and Sixth Classes**, children refine their drama skills through extended role-play, exploration of script and genre, and deeper reflection. They are encouraged to analyse characters' motivations, consider alternative outcomes and explore complex themes.

Approaches and Methodologies

Teaching and learning in Drama are characterised by active participation, collaboration and experiential learning. Children learn through doing, exploring and reflecting, with the teacher acting as facilitator and guide.

A safe and supportive classroom environment is essential for effective drama practice. Clear expectations and agreed ground rules promote respect, trust and positive participation. Teachers establish and maintain these expectations in collaboration with pupils and revisit them as necessary.

A wide range of drama strategies is used to support learning across all class levels. These strategies are selected to suit the learning objectives, the needs of the pupils and the context of the lesson. Detailed descriptions, practical guidance and classroom examples are maintained separately in the school's Drama Resource Folder.

Children with Additional Educational Needs

Drama lessons are inclusive and designed to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers differentiate by varying grouping arrangements, levels of support, roles assigned and the pace of activities. Drama provides opportunities for children with different learning needs to participate actively and express themselves in a variety of ways, including non-verbal communication.

Teachers are mindful of individual strengths and challenges and adapt activities to ensure that all children experience success, enjoyment and a sense of belonging.

Linkage and Integration

Drama supports and enriches learning across the curriculum and also maintains its status as a discrete subject. Through planned integration, children are given opportunities to explore themes, concepts and issues encountered in other curricular areas in a creative and meaningful way.

Drama has strong links with Gaeilge, English, SPHE, History, Geography and Visual Arts. These links are identified during planning and are used where they enhance learning and support curricular objectives. Integration is purposeful and ensures that learning in Drama remains focused on the development of drama skills, concepts and elements.

Assessment and Record-Keeping

Assessment in Drama is an integral part of the teaching and learning process and is primarily formative in nature. Its purpose is to support children's learning, inform future planning and contribute to the evaluation of the Drama programme.

Teachers assess children's engagement, participation and progression within the three strand units. Particular attention is given to children's ability to enter into role, contribute to dramatic action, reflect on drama experiences and cooperate and communicate effectively with others.

Assessment methods include teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks, discussion and reflective responses. Assessment information is recorded through short-term planning, Cuntas Míosúil and informal notes and is used to inform individual teacher practice and whole-school review.

Equality of Participation and Access

The school is committed to ensuring equality of participation and access for all pupils in Drama. Drama provides an inclusive learning context in which children can participate at a level appropriate to their ability and express themselves in a variety of ways.

Teachers employ a range of organisational and teaching approaches, including whole-class, group and paired work, to ensure active participation. Differentiation, positive classroom management and flexible grouping support inclusion, particularly in multi-grade settings. All children are encouraged to engage fully and experience success in Drama.

Organisational Planning

Organisational planning supports the effective and consistent implementation of the Drama curriculum across the school. Clear structures are in place in relation to time allocation, resources and responsibilities to ensure sustainability and continuity.

Timetable

Drama is taught on a regular basis in all classes in line with curriculum time allocations. It may be taught as a discrete subject or integrated with other curricular areas, depending on learning objectives.

Additional time may be allocated for whole-school activities such as performances, celebrations and thematic projects. These experiences complement classroom drama and support the development of confidence, cooperation and performance skills.

Resources

A range of resources supports the teaching of Drama in the school. These include appropriate spaces such as classrooms and the school hall, as well as books, music, visual stimuli and simple props and costumes.

Resources are stored and maintained centrally where possible. Practical teaching materials, strategy descriptions and classroom examples are organised in the school's Drama Resource Folder to support planning and implementation.

Health and Safety

All Drama activities are planned and conducted with due regard for the health and safety of pupils and staff. Teachers ensure that spaces are suitable, clear and safe for movement and that activities are appropriate to the age and ability of the children.

The school's Health and Safety Policy underpins all Drama work, and any potential risks are identified and managed appropriately.

Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Teachers use the Whole School Plan and the Primary School Curriculum to inform their long- and short-term planning in Drama. Long-term planning ensures coverage of strands and strand units, while short-term planning identifies specific objectives and learning intentions.

Teachers teaching the same class level collaborate to agree on objectives and approaches, ensuring continuity and progression. Planning and reporting support reflection on practice and inform future teaching and learning.

Staff Development

The school recognises the importance of ongoing professional development in supporting high-quality Drama teaching. Teachers are encouraged to engage in relevant courses, workshops and in-school

Parental Involvement

Parents are kept informed of Drama activities and performances through regular school communication. Where appropriate, parents may support Drama-related initiatives and whole-school events. Parental involvement is encouraged in a manner that supports pupils' learning and engagement while respecting the professional role of the teacher.

Community Links

The school recognises the value of links with the wider community in supporting children's engagement with Drama. Many pupils participate in local drama groups and cultural activities. Where appropriate, community-based opportunities are acknowledged and supported as a means of extending pupils' experiences of Drama beyond the classroom.

Success Criteria

The effectiveness of this Drama Plan will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. In reviewing the plan, consideration will be given to:

- the extent to which teachers' preparation, planning and classroom practice reflect the agreed approaches outlined in the plan;
- the effectiveness of methodologies used in supporting teaching and learning in Drama;
- the adequacy and use of resources;
- progression and development of pupils' drama skills and confidence.

The success of the plan will be judged through teacher reflection, pupil engagement, parental feedback, inspection reports and relevant advisory or support services.

Implementation

The Principal and teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of this Drama Plan. All teachers are expected to engage with the plan and to reflect its principles and agreed approaches in their classroom practice.

Review and Ratification

This Drama Plan will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the school's cycle of whole-school planning and self-evaluation to ensure its continued relevance and effective implementation.

The plan will be ratified by the Board of Management following consultation with staff and will be communicated to all members of the school community.

Ratified by BOM on 5/02/26.

Chairperson BOM: Jane Doherty.

Principal: Ana O'Kelly.

Review Date: 2028

Appendix 1

Elements in Drama	How the elements might look ...
Belief	How can the child be encouraged to enter into the drama with full belief? <i>Evident in the child's trust in and ease with make-believe play</i>
Role and Character	How will the child move from role playing to entering into character? <i>Taking on the characteristics, attributes and thought process of another person</i>
Action	What is happening in the drama? <i>Action in drama comes from the interaction between characters and situations in which they find themselves in the drama</i>
Place	Where is the action taking place? How is real place and space used to represent this?
Time	When is the action taking place? <i>The fictional past and fictional future will have a bearing on the drama</i>
Tension	How will tension drive forward the action of the drama? <i>The characters will be faced with choices, desires and uncertainties. Such tension causes characters to make decisions and moves the drama forward.</i>
Significance	What is the relevance of the drama to the child's life? In what way can the child relate to the drama?
Genre (5&6 only)	Is the drama naturalistic, absurd, tragic, comic or fantasy? <i>Genre is the style of the drama</i>

Reference Section

- Primary School Curriculum: Drama (1999)
- Primary School Curriculum. Your Child's Learning: Guidelines for Parents (*available on the NCCA website www.ncca.ie*)
- The What, Why and How of children's learning in primary school, NCCA (2006)

Useful Websites

Primary Curriculum Support	www.oide.ie
Irish National Teachers' Organisation	www.into.ie

Appendix 2

DRAMA STRATEGIES

Still Image

Students use their bodies to create a frozen picture of a moment in the drama. It can show a specific event or an abstract idea (e.g., fear, victory). One student may also “sculpt” others into position.

Thought-Tracking

The teacher freezes the action and taps a student on the shoulder. The student speaks the character’s thoughts at that moment.

Defining Space

Furniture and objects are used to represent places, size, and distance (e.g., a house, a giant beanstalk, different rooms).

Mime

Students act without words while the teacher narrates or describes actions. Older students may create more abstract mime.

Narration

The teacher or students describe events during the drama to link scenes, build atmosphere, move the story forward, or create tension.

Hot-Seating

Students question a character in role (student or teacher). Questioners may be themselves or in role (e.g., journalists). Can be used at the start, during, or end of a drama.

Improvisation

Students create and act out scenes without a script, usually based on a problem or dilemma. They plan and present short scenes to show understanding.

Briefing

Before improvisation, the teacher gives secret instructions to individuals or groups to add tension or conflict and move the drama forward.

Flashback / Flash-forward

Students show moments from the past or future of the story using still image, mime, narration, or improvisation.

Conscience Alley

A character walks between two lines of students who give different advice. The character listens and may respond before making a decision.

Sound scaping

Students create background sounds (voices or instruments) to build mood and setting (e.g., forest, battle, factory).

Ritual

Students perform a stylised repeated action that shows daily life or special events (e.g., a meal, farewell, prayer, preparation).

Captions

Students create a title or headline for a scene or still image to summarise or show a point of view.

Teacher-in-Role

The teacher takes on a character to guide the drama, build tension, and deepen thinking.

Simple steps:

- Use an object to show you are in role
- Enter role briefly and give a clue or problem
- Exit role and discuss with students

Possible teacher roles include: authority figure, devil's advocate, reporter, victim, or absentee.

Carousel Technique

Students work in pairs or small groups to prepare short scenes. Groups perform one after another on a signal while others remain still and quiet. Each student may begin with one word or line. After all groups perform, the class discusses what worked well.

