



Drama Policy

Rationale

Drama provides children with ways to explore our cultural heritage and new dimensions of a changing world. Language plays a critical role in drama. The drama curriculum contributes to developing the child's competence and confidence in English, Irish and other languages.

The purpose of this plan is to provide practical guidance for teachers, parents and other relevant persons on the provision of effective drama education in our school.

Vision

We are committed 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. We envisage that in drama each child will be given the opportunity to develop their drama skills and competencies to their full potential, appropriate to their age and ability in a safe and supportive environment.

Aims

We endorse the aims of the Primary School Drama Curriculum:

- To enable the child to become drama literate.
- To enable the child to create a permanent bridge between make-believe play and the art of form theatre.
- To develop the child's ability to enter physically, emotionally and intellectually into the drama world in order to promote questioning, empowering and empathic 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 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 explore, clarify and express ideas, feelings and experiences through a range of arts activities
- To provide for aesthetic experiences and to develop aesthetic awareness in the visual arts, in music, in drama, in dance and in literature

- To develop the child's awareness of, sensitivity to and enjoyment of visual, aural, tactile and spatial environments
- To enable the child to develop natural abilities and potential to acquire techniques, and to practise the skills necessary for creative expression and for joyful participation in different art forms
- To enable the child to see and to solve problems creatively through imaginative thinking and so encourage individuality and enterprise
- To value the child's confidence and self-esteem through valuing self expression
- To foster a sense of excellence in and appreciation of the arts in local, regional, national and global contexts , both past and present
- To foster a critical appreciation of the arts for personal fulfillment and enjoyment.

Curriculum

Strand	Strand unit
Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding	Exploring and making drama Reflecting on drama Co-operating and communicating in making drama.

Pre-requisites for making drama

Content
The fictional lens
Creating a safe environment

Elements of Drama

Belief	Time
Role and character	Tension
Action	Significance
Place	Genre

All teachers are familiar with the strands, strand units and content objectives for their class levels. Curriculum objectives are at the core of each drama lesson, and teachers refer to the curriculum objectives in their own planning. The content objectives are laid out on the following pages in the Curriculum Handbook:

- Infant Classes pgs. 14-17
- First and Second classes pgs. 20-23
- Third and Fourth classes pgs. 26-31
- Fifth and Sixth classes pgs. 34-39

Methodologies

- It was agreed by all teaching staff in September 2018 that drama will be taught while being used as a teaching methodology. This decision was made in line with the literacy and numeracy strategy (*Circular 0056/2011*). Drama will be integrated through Gaeilge, S.P.H.E and R.E in order to prioritise the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. Drama activities will be incorporated into these subject short term plans.

We will use a combination of the following approaches:

- A practical approach incorporating the pre-requisites, strand and strand units and the elements of drama
- Many strategies can be used in the drama. Some of the more familiar ones are listed below, with comments on their usefulness to the teacher.
- Drama games
- Many drama games are useful in helping to establish trust, confidence and a sense of playfulness, and some are used to help the children experience some aspect of the drama (for example blind man's buff, to equate with searching for a friend in a big city).
- Games can promote the social integration of the class, but if used indiscriminately they can become a substitute for drama.
- *Still image and montage*
- Groups compose a still picture to illustrate an idea or capture a moment. In montage such an image is set against a contrasting image or a contrasting soundscape so as to question the content of the still picture (for example, a still picture of emigrants with a sound-track of sounds from home).
- This strategy can help greatly in reflection and in slowing down the drama but if overused can lead to talk about drama rather than action.
- *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 the others can also sometimes ask the questions as their own characters.
- Hot-seating can help to clarify aspects of character for all concerned, but it has limited usefulness in primary school drama.
- *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.
- This can be useful for reflection on the meaning of particular significant moments but should not be used as a substitute for entering into the drama.
- *Sound-tracking*
- Some of the class do actions silently or make stills while the others make the sound-track to go along with them. This can be seen in Drama activity 4 (p. 83) when half the class make the soundtrack for the other half.
- This strategy is useful in situations where the teacher is working towards a loosening of control but unsure about how far to go. It is also a useful substitute for 'showing' a particular section of small-group work. However, if overused it can lead to intellectual rather than physical drama, to staying outside the drama rather than entering playfully into it.
- *Voices in the head*

- At a moment of choice for a particular character others in the group articulate the conflicting voices the character can hear in his/her head.
- This can lead to reflecting on the meaning of a moment for a character. It should not be used as a substitute for putting the characters in situations where such considerations are articulated spontaneously as part of the action.
- Integration

We will use methods that encourage maximum participation by the child through group, paired and individual participation.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Teacher observation

This is the form of assessment most consistently used by teachers at Boolavogue N.S. and the most effective in relation to children's engagement with drama. It involves the informal monitoring of children's progress as the drama process takes place. In observing the varying degrees of success with which children acquire drama skills and concepts and learn through the drama process, the teacher can adjust his/her methods and approaches and modify the drama contexts in order to maximise its learning benefits for individual children.

Much of this observation is concerned with detailed and immediate drama activity and is unrecorded. However, it can be useful to make brief notes from time to time about particular learning requirements. This can be a further help to the teacher in taking account of the progress of the class, a group or an individual at any particular juncture, and can inform his/her planning of short-term and long-term drama approaches.

Teacher-designed tasks and tests

A further dimension of this type of continuous assessment is the monitoring of children's performance in various tasks arising from their engagement with the drama. These arise continually in the course of drama activity, as, for example, when a pair of children is asked to play two characters in order to explore a particular issue, or a group of children is asked to work together to solve some problem or to arrive at a decision about the course the drama should take. The assessment of children's ability to perform particular tasks such as these will to a great extent involve teacher observation in a way that is focused on a particular aspect of children's engagement with drama.

Work samples, portfolios and projects

In drama these would be made up of writing, art work and other examples of children's response to, reflection on, and extension of their drama experience. For assessment purposes, a representative sample of a child's work that includes some of the best examples would be of greatest use. Decisions about what might be included will be made variously by the teacher, by the child and the teacher together, and by children in consultation with each other. In this way a valuable dimension of self-assessment will be given to the assessment of the child's progress in drama and in learning through drama.

The question of manageability will be a significant factor in deciding how much of the child's work might be included, although in drama this will be less problematical, since the portfolio will consist mainly of items in written form. However, since the child will have similar portfolios in other areas of the curriculum, the question of storage will arise. Obviously, circumstances will vary from school to school, and the nature, size and management of portfolios will be a factor in school planning.

We will assess:

- Willingness to participate in activities
- Readiness to engage with a certain activity
- The level of competence of a child in carrying out an activity
- Interest in and attitude to activity
- Willingness to cooperate in individual, pair and group activities

Our assessment tools are:

- Teacher observation
- Teacher-designed tasks

Differentiation

At Boolavogue N.S, All children will have equal access to drama education. The drama programme will ensure equal access for boys and girls in our mixed school. It is crucial for positive reinforcement to be given to all children to build up their confidence and self-esteem in the area of drama.

ICT

Information and communication technology may be integrated with drama through the use of the interactive whiteboard, photo-copier, CD's, iPads, relevant apps and Chromebooks. Children may watch still images of themselves, videos of themselves in the drama lesson back on the IWB to assist with the reflection session. Children may create power points/ photo stories writing the script to accompany the ICT resource.

Organisational planning

The allocation of time to drama will have two sources:

- in the time allocation given to Arts education
- in its integration with other subjects and curriculum areas
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In accordance with the DES guidelines Arts Education (Visual Art, Drama and Music) is allocated the following time:

- Infant classes – 2 hours 30 minutes per week
- 1st-6th classes – 3 hours per week

*Refer to the note under the title '*methodologies*' for the time allocation given to drama in Boolavogue National School.

Resources

The following facilities are available to the children and staff for drama education:

1. Parish hall
2. Classroom

Teachers keep literature, CDs, books and lesson ideas in their own individual classrooms.

Linkage and integration

Every attempt will be made to integrate the drama curriculum to other subject areas where appropriate, **especially through Gaeilge, S.P.H.E and R.E. Some examples of integration may include:**

Drama and History – Titanic

Drama and English- diary entry of a steerage passenger on the Titanic as it sank

Drama and Gaeilge – ag dul go dtí an bhialann

Drama and Geography- making the trip with Tom Crean to Antarctica

Code of ethics

All teachers and coaches working in the school context will be expected to adhere to the school Child Protection Statement. They should always ensure that they treat children with integrity and respect and that the self-esteem of children is enhanced. All adult actions should be guided by what is best for the child and carried out in the context of respectful and open relationships.

Health and Safety

Should an accident occur in a drama lesson we will follow the procedures outlined for accidents in our Health and Safety statement.

Individual teachers' planning and reporting

Individual teachers will plan specifically for the use of drama in their own class. The Cúntas Míósúil will be very relevant in recording what has been covered and in reviewing and developing the school plan for the following years.

Ongoing Professional Development

Staff will be made aware of courses in Co. Wexford Education Centre and are encouraged to attend. Knowledge and skills are shared freely amongst staff members, at staff meetings, during Croke Park hours and informally among staff.

Community links

Local organisations are invited to provide information on the services that they provide. We are very much aware of the school's role in the community and we are also conscious of the fact that the expertise of people in the community is an invaluable resource to any school.

Evaluating the policy

Means of assessing the outcomes of the plan may include;

- Teacher/parent/community feedback
- Children's feedback regarding activity levels, enjoyment and skill development
- Inspectors' suggestions/WSE recommendations

The criteria for evaluating the success of this policy will be:

- The level of enjoyment exhibited by the children
- The maximum participation by all children
- The development of skills and understanding
- A balance between competitive and non-competitive activities
- A balance between contact and non-contact activities
- The provision of opportunities for achievement for each child
- The level of teacher satisfaction in teaching a broad, balanced curriculum.

Ratification and communication

This drama policy was reviewed in September/October 2020 and ratified by the Board of Management on 15th October 2020. The plan will be communicated and distributed to teachers and implemented in classes and will be available to view on the school website.

Signed Rev. Morgan L White
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: Noife Bennett
Principal

Date: 16th Oct 2020

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