



Drama Plean Scoile



St. Louise de Marillac Primary School
Drumfinn Road
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St Louise de Marillac Primary School

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

■ Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement:

The staff and parents of St Louise's Primary School have collaboratively drawn up this whole school plan in Drama. This plan is for the information of teachers, others who work in the school, parents, the Board of Management, the Department of Education and other interested parties in the school community.

Rationale:

- to benefit the teaching and learning of drama in our school.
- to provide a record of our decisions regarding Drama.
- to draw up a whole school plan for Drama
- to guide teachers in their individual planning for Drama.

■ Vision and Aims

(a) 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.

(b) 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. Curriculum Strands 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 for each strand and strand unit are detailed in the tables below:

Exploring and Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the instinct for make-believe play into Drama through Aistear in the socio-dramatic area and small world thus enhancing co-operation and communication skills • 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
1 st & 2 nd classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • develop the ability to help maintain the focus in the dramatic action • begin to see how tension adds to Drama the suspense that ensures the interest of the participants
3 rd & 4 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop their ability to enter fully into a fictional dramatic context • develop the ability to stay in role or in character for as long as required • experience how space and objects can create context and signify dramatic themes • explore how the fictional past and desired future influence the present dramatic action • become aware of the rules that maintain dramatic action • include the elements of tension and suspense into the drama activity • begin to use script as pre-text
5 th & 6 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enter appropriately and with facility into the fictional dramatic context • extend role and character to accept an already agreed brief from teacher or group or self • discover for themselves how space and objects build context and signify dramatic themes • explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future relate

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • influence the present dramatic action • implement the rules that maintain focus in dramatic action • plan dramatic action to include particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme explored • become comfortable with script and how it becomes action • distinguish between different genres, such as comedy, tragedy and fantasy.
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Reflecting on Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 the Drama • use of play reviews in Aistear either whole- class or individually in their play diaries
1 st & 2 nd classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people
3 rd & 4 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting on the dramatic action to create alternative courses of action and outcomes that reflect more closely life patterns • learning, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience • developing the ability to draw conclusions and hypothesise about life and people through drama
5 th & 6 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting on the dramatic action to create alternative courses of action and outcomes that reflect more closely life patterns and issues being examined • learning through drama the relationship between story, theme and life experience • developing the ability to draw conclusions and hypothesise about life and people through drama

Co-Operating and Communicating in Making Drama	
Junior and Senior Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop the ability, out of role, 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
1 st & 2 nd classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>Drama text is being made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work
3 rd & 4 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing the ability in and out of role to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama • developing fictional relationships with the other characters as the drama text is being made • re-enacting for others a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work
5 th & 6 th classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing the ability in and out of role to co-operate and communicate with others in helping to shape the drama • developing fictional relationships with other characters as the drama text is being made • enacting spontaneously for others a scene from the drama and sharing a scene already made in simultaneous small group work

The school recognises that the strand units and the content objectives for Drama are interlinked.

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, 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
- Painting
- Photographs
- Objects

The suggested uses of some of these stimuli are outlined in Appendix 1.

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 junior class levels. 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 st & 2 nd Classes	Defining the Space, Mimed Narration, Teacher in Role, Whole Group Improvisation, Still Images, Thought Tracking, Paired Improvisation, Improvisation in threes, Hot seating

An explanation of each strategy is contained in Appendix 2.

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 and questioning. A list of drama reflection methods is to be found in Appendix 3.

3. Children with Additional Needs

It is the policy of our school that all children will participate in Drama activities. Drama activities will be differentiated in order to meet the needs of the children. 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 the children's learning can be maximised. With this in mind, a thematic approach for integration is a model supported by the school. As a staff we see particular opportunities for integrating our work in drama with the following aspects of other subject areas:

English: Drama has a major role to play in the development of a child's oral language and literacy through expressing thoughts, feelings and views at a fictional and real level. The child may use the language of problem-solving, using and reading body language, developing speaking and listening skills.

Gaeilge: Cómhra Gaeilge, ag usáid rannta, dánta agus scéalta.

P.E: Increased physical control, dance based on drama, body performance, extension, body tension and clarity of body shape.

S.P.H.E: Encouraging positive social interaction, safety, empathy, understanding of diversity, handling emotions and objectivity, problem-solving, thinking laterally.

Geography: Explore environmental issues, mapping, scale and distance

Visual Arts: Use of materials, making, responding to artist's work

Mathematics: Counting, measuring, timing

History: Freeze frame key moments in history and create a life time-line, improvisation on important historical events

Music: Soundscapes, sound tracking, vocal sounds, body percussion, composing

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

5. An Ghaeilge agus Drámaíocht

The greatest benefit of drama in Irish is that it can bring fluency in the language to the speed of life. Drama activity in Irish should not, therefore, be inhibited by continued interruption from the teacher to ensure accuracy. Any common mistakes can be referred to later and corrected. More than anything else, a lack of vocabulary can inhibit the success of the drama. To counteract this, the child should be encouraged to use whatever language is most effective and appropriate in order to retain the spontaneity of the drama.

The content of drama in Irish sometimes needs to be simpler than that used in English drama and is often slightly restricted to allow the child to create freely within a language range with which he/she is reasonably comfortable. A pleasant drama game is to ask the children to create playlets around groups of words supplied by the teacher. This can form the *tréimhse réamhchumarsáide* (pre-communicative phase) and lead to the teaching of the vocabulary.

Using different short improvisations in Irish to build up a day in the life of a certain character is another useful strategy. The pre-text for this activity can be four six-line scripts supplied by either the pupils or the teacher. The integration of Irish and drama in ways like these will assist the child's drama education and at the same time help him/her to achieve greater fluency and expressiveness in Irish.

6. Assessment and Record Keeping

As has been outlined in our schools Assessment 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.

- 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 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.

7. 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.

■ Organisational Planning

8. Timetable

Infant class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week while 1st to 6th 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. Teacher timetables will all record the time allocation for Drama.

There is some discretionary time available each week that teachers can occasionally use to support the implementation of the Drama Curriculum. Teachers should ensure that pupils attending supplementary teaching are included for as much of the Drama programme as possible.

Whole-School approach – We will include some drama work in our assemblies from time to time. This may include a performance by a particular group or class on something they have been working on in their classrooms e.g. drama beag as gaeilge, historical drama, recitation of a poem etc. We will hold a Christmas, Easter and Summer concert each year and class levels that will perform will be decided at a staff meeting. This gives the children the opportunity to perform on stage to an audience. During Seachtain na Gaeilge all classes will perform at our whole-school concert.

9. Resources and ICT

A list of suggested websites suitable for the delivery of the Drama Curriculum has been compiled and is included in Appendix 4 of this document. Drama books and plays which have been purchased by the school are located in the resource library. All basic props and some costumes are located in the old prefab.

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 (if available).

10. Health and Safety

As with all curricular areas work, the implementation of the Drama Curriculum will be cognisant of our school's 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.

11. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

Each teacher will have access to this school plan and will be encouraged to refer to it when doing his/her own long term and short term planning. Teachers teaching the same level are encouraged to plan together where possible and use the Aistear planning framework. 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

In planning for drama teachers will need to take into account the following:

- The age group, experience, ability, strengths/weaknesses, concerns, interests and level of thinking
- The purpose of the drama
- Teaching methods and approaches
- The drama skills and concepts that have to be taught
- The topics/theme to be dealt with
- Integration with other subjects
- Allocation of time and resources
- The learning needs and styles of each individual pupil
- Inclusion of all pupils with disabilities
- Differentiation for pupils with additional needs

The Cúntas Miosuil is an important indicator and record of work carried out in Drama. Teachers may record their work in Drama for a particular month under two headings, namely Content Covered and Fictional Lens Used.

12. Staff Development

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, equipment and websites dealing with Drama. Drama will be on the agenda at staff meetings regularly. 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. Also staff will discuss the school's performances. Refer to Appendix 5.

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

13. Parental Involvement

Where appropriate, parents may be involved in Drama within the classroom. Parents may be invited to attend classroom presentations of improvisations or other work created in small group settings.

14. 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. The school receives invitations from, for example, the theatrical group based in the local civic centre to attend various drama projects, pantomimes and shows. These invitations will be considered on a case-by-case basis for their educational merit and suitability for the children.

■ Success Criteria

Self – assessment

Have I/we covered the strand units? What do I/we need to change?

Pupil assessment

Teacher observation

Teacher designed tasks and tests

Portfolios

■ Implementation

(a) Roles and Responsibilities

The teacher who holds the special duties post for Drama will be responsible for overall development of the Drama curriculum. He/she will delegate tasks as appropriate to the drama interests of members of staff. It will be his/her remit to liaise with others within the school community on the matter of drama development.

(b) Timeframe

The content of this whole school plan for drama will be implemented following ratification by the Board of Management.

■ Review

(a) 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. A session at staff meeting will be allocated to this work.

(b) Timeframe

In line with the school's systematic cycle of review, the content of this whole school plan for Drama will be reviewed in three years, during the school year 2027/28 unless the Principal or Board of Management request an earlier review. All teachers on the staff will be responsible for informing the drama post holder of any amendments they think should be made to the content.

■ Ratification and Communication

This school plan for Drama has been ratified by the Board of Management of St. Louise de Marillac Primary School on 8th April 2025.

Signed:


(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date:

8-4-2025

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Appendix 1

Suggested Uses of Drama Stimuli

Great drama can arise from using an interesting and stimulating base for the work. Below are various ideas for what to use to stimulate a drama lesson or scheme of work:

Poems

Search around for anything which has a central character or which highlights an issue strongly, or has good physical or comedy potential.

Pictures/Photographs

Find pictures in books or magazines or bring in photographs from home to use as a starting point. Use old photographs to develop a drama lesson based on an era in history. Pictures from newspapers also work well. Keep an eye out for anything which is interesting, unusual or which sparks your imagination.

Newspaper

Headlines

These can be excellent for exploring a range of topical issues.

Objects

Search your cupboards for something old, very interesting or unusual. Everyday objects can also have 'a story' built around them if approached in the right manner.

Quotations

Any quote which sparks your imagination can be a good basis of a lesson-historical or current. Could also use seanfhocail as Gaeilge.

Music

Any piece of music ranging from classical to pop can be used in sound-tracking or students may improvise what they feel is happening in the composition.

Stories

Reading extracts and then exploring central characters, or 'what happens next', can instigate a variety of drama work. Encouraging the children to invent their own stories can also become the basis for drama work.

Fables,

Bible

Stories,

Myths

Highlight one small aspect or explore in full detail. Central characters can be used to highlight personal dilemmas. Themes and issues can be linked to the pupil's own experience.

Curriculum

Subjects

All subjects can provide a stimulus for Drama lessons.

Appendix 2

Drama Strategies

Below are some suggested drama strategies that teachers can use:

Visualisation

Imagine the setting in which the drama takes place or imagine what a character or a scene looks like.

Soundtracking

Using sounds to accompany an action. Can use dialogue, voices or instruments to create a mood or paint a picture

Freezes /Still Images

Using their own bodies, members of a group create an image of an event, idea or theme similar to a waxwork or still photograph. Still images can be brought to life through improvisation. Can be combined with flashbacks and flashforwards.

Hot-Seating

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation.

Teacher-in-Role

The teacher assumes a role in relation to the pupils. A role signifier is usually used to help the transition from teacher to the role.

Small Group Improvisation

Small group plan, prepare and present improvisations as a means of expressing understanding of a situation, idea or experience.

Forum Theatre

A situation or improvised piece is enacted by a small group whilst the rest of the group (including the teacher) observe. Action may be frozen at any time by both the actors and the observers. Observers may step in and take over roles or add to them. Proceedings may be controlled by the teacher if necessary. Excellent for assessment.

Mime to a narration

The teacher reads aloud instructions or an extract to the class and children mime what is being said.

Briefing

A suggestion or instruction may be given to one character, of which the other characters may or may not be unaware, which gives a new direction to the drama.

Hidden Brief

One group of pupils is given a piece of information, while the remainder of the group are given a conflicting piece of information or set of instructions. In this way when the two characters come together to play the scene, their objectives may clash dramatically.

Conscience Alley

The class are formed into two lines between which a character can walk. As (s)he walks down the 'alley' the lines form, individuals offer various opinions (as when listening to one's own conscience) as a character tries to make a decision.

Thought Tracking

The private thoughts or reactions of a character are spoken publicly by the character. It might be used when the action is frozen or used in conjunction with still images.

Role on the wall/role on the floor

An important role is represented on paper through drawings or words identifying key facts and exploring attitudes, relationships, feelings, etc.

Character profiling

Similar to role on the wall – children fill out a profile sheet on a character including details such as name, age, likes, dislikes, eye colour.

Writing in role

Similar to character profiling, the children write about their character in the first person.

Collective role

A character is improvised by a group, any one of whom can speak as that character.

Appendix 3

Drama Reflections

-Reflecting on a particular dramatic action in order to create possible alternative courses for the action.

Questioning: What has happened, Where the situation is leading, How his/her character is developing?

-The relationship between story, theme and life experience.

Story is at the heart of the drama process and the themes the story explores are drawn from the child's general experience, from concepts, knowledge and experiences encountered in the various curriculum areas and from other contexts.

-Using insights arising out of dramatic action to draw conclusions about people and life.

As well as the children discussing the ideas, feelings and knowledge gained they can explore the ways in which drama has given them new insights into human attitudes and a greater understanding of people and life.

Appendix 4

Suggested Websites for Drama

General reading on Drama

www.childdrama.com/mainframe.html

www.creativedrama.com

www.dramaineducation.com

www.artsonthemove.co.uk

www.drama-education.com/site/

Planning for Drama

www.oide.ie

www.sdps.ie

www.ncca.ie

Drámaíocht agus an Ghaeilge

www.pcsp.ie

www.into.ie

www.tobar.ie

Theatre in education companies

Drama Games

www.ark.ie

www.creativedrama.com/theatre.htm

www.artsonthemove.co.uk

www.aspa.asn.au/projects

www.bced.gov.bc.ca

www.learnimprov.com

www.teamtheatre.ie

www.unicorntheatre.com

www.baboro.ie

www.graffiti.ie

www.barnstorm.ie

www.youthdrama.ie

Appendix 5

Performing Guidelines

Staff will ensure that all children in St. Louise's school get to experience performing in front of an audience at regular intervals throughout their years of education. In order to be certain all children receive this opportunity, it will be decided each September, as a staff, which classes or class levels will perform at Christmas, Easter and Summer of that year, taking into account what opportunities classes have had in previous years.

In addition to this, the school will endeavour to put on a musical/show with the senior classes every two to three years. However, this will depend on availability and willingness of teachers, staff, volunteers and resources.