Ballymore National School

Ballymore, Dunfanaghy, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.



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Under the Patronage of the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.

Drama Policy

"The teaching of drama leads to greater social and emotional intelligence, where we learn that the world is ever changeable through our own actions." - (Professor Jonathan Neelands, May 2007)

Introduction

The staff of Ballymore National School formulated this plan in 2020 to ensure a balanced approach to Drama throughout the whole school year. Our school recognises that Drama is part of a balanced curriculum which aims to develop the whole spectrum of a child's intelligence. A collaborative approach was adopted when writing this plan to ensure that all staff have a shared sense of ownership in the planning process and the finished plan. This ensures a consistent development of the Drama curriculum through the whole school.

Rationale

This plan was formulated to benefit the teaching and learning of Drama in our school, to provide a coherent approach to Drama across the whole school and to ensure that pupils are given adequate opportunities to engage in the strand and strand units of the Drama curriculum.

Relationship to Schools Ethos

Drama may be used as a means to encourage the child's social development. Values such as honesty, truthfulness, justice, fairness, sensitivity to others and civic responsibility may and will be explored through Drama.

Vision

- We aim through this plan, drawn up in accordance with the Drama curriculum, to set out our approach to the teaching and learning of Drama.
- This plan will form the basis for teachers' long and short-term planning.
- We are committed to fostering the strand and three strand units of the Drama curriculum appropriate to the needs and age level of the pupils.
- We envisage that when the children's differing abilities, talents and varying styles are considered, Drama can facilitate learning in many areas of the curriculum.

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 co-operate and communicate with others in solving problems in Drama and through 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 curriculum 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.
- To form the criteria with which to evaluate the Drama texts, written or performed, to which he/she is continually exposed.

Curriculum Planning

In planning our yearly programmes, we have taken into account the following:

- All strand units will be covered on a yearly basis from infants to sixth class
- The full range of objectives will be covered over a two-year period.
- Equal emphasis is given to each strand unit.
- We will endeavour to integrate Drama with other areas of the curriculum.
- We will allocate both discrete and non-discrete time from drama.

Strands and Strand Units

We would hope that all children would have a balanced curriculum in all Strands and Strand Units of the Drama curriculum. 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 unit are detailed in the tables below:

Junior and Senior Infants

Junior and Se	enior intants
Exploring and Making Drama	 develop the instinct for make believe play into Drama develop their 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 an awareness of how he/she, as part of a group, helps to maintain focus in the dramatic action

Deflection on Drawn	develop awareness of tension in the drama
Reflecting on Drama	 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
Co-operating and communicating in making Drama	 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

First and Second Class

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Exploring and Making Drama	 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
Reflecting on Drama	 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
Co-operating and communicating in making Drama	 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 drama text is being made re-enact for others in the group a scene that has been made in simultaneous small-group work

Third and Fourth Class

Exploring and Making Drama	enter into the fictional dramatic contact with the
	dramatic context with the same spontaneity and
	freedom that he/she has
	earlier applied to make-
	believe play
	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 requiresdiscover how the use of space
	and objects can help in
	building the context and in
	signifying dramatic themes
·	explore how the fictional past
	and the desired fictional
	future influence the present
	dramatic action
	 become aware of the rules
	that help maintain focus in
	the dramatic action
	begin, as a member of a
	group, to include in drama activity the elements of
	tension and suspense
	 begin the process of using
	script as a pre-text
	, ,
Reflecting on Drama	 use reflection on and
	evaluation of a particular
	dramatic action to create
	possible alternative courses
	for the action

	 learn, through drama, the relationship between story, theme and life experience use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action to develop the ability to draw conclusions and to hypothesise about life and people
Co-operating and communicating in making Drama	 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 to 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 drama text is being made 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

Fifth and Sixth Class

Exploring and Making Drama	 enter appropriately and with facility, whether watched or unwatched, into the fictional dramatic context 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 discover how the use of space and objects helps in building the context and in signifying the drama theme explore how the fictional past and the desired fictional future influence the present dramatic action become adept at implementing the 'playing rules' that maintain focus in dramatic action help to plan dramatic activity to include the particular tension and suspense appropriate to the theme being explored become comfortable with script and understand the basic processes by which script becomes action distinguish between various genres, such as comedy,
	tragedy, fantasy
Reflecting on Drama	reflect on a particular
	dramatic action in order to
	create possible alternative
	create possible alternative

	courses for the action that
	will reflect more closely the life patterns and issues being examined
	 learn, through drama, the relationship between story,
	theme and life experience
	 use the sharing of insights arising out of dramatic action
	to develop the ability to draw
	conclusions and to
	hypothesise about life and people
Co-operating and communicating in making Drama	develop, out of role, the ability to co-operate and to
	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
	drama text is being made • 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

The school recognises that the strand units and the content objectives for Drama are interlinked and therefore we encourage teachers to plan for all objectives.

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.
- 'Drama to explore feeling, knowledge and ideas leading to understanding' will be an important strand in informing the content choice for drama activities.
- The content for Drama will come from life experience. It will be from something that the children have experienced, something they have read, something that emerged in another subject area, a worry or concern that the teacher might have or something generally that they teacher wants them to explore.
- Teachers will carefully select a fictional lens of their chosen content. A character or story will be selected that the children will easily believe in, the content of which will allow for the realisation of the content to be explored.

All of the following <u>elements of Drama</u> will be covered and utilised by all teachers on a regular basis:

Belief

Belief will be built as roles/ characters develop. A combination of environment, stimulus, encouragement and example will ensure that all children believe in the Drama lessons.

Role and Character

Role and Character will be fostered through such strategies as role on the wall and hot seating. Children in senior classes will be encouraged to explore characters in detail and identify and explore roles within the Drama.

Action

Action, place and time will be developed as the Drama is framed in its fictional lens. Using an extensive range of warm up games and Drama strategies will ensure that action in the Drama is highly motivated.

Place

A sense of place in the Drama will form from the stimulus and strategies employed.

Time

A sense of time will be developed in Drama according to the topic being approached and will be utilised at times to increase tension and action.

Tension

The element of tension is the area that teachers will have to work on developing. 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 etc. Tension will be provided in the Drama lessons through carefully constructed scenarios, problem solving activities and the involvement of children in teamwork and planning.

Significance

Drama should in so far as possible be relevant to the children and have a very clear purpose or possible outcome. Children will understand the reasons behind Drama and fully partake in the lessons.

• Genre

Different genres will be employed by all teachers to foster and develop the Drama programme in the school.

Content Objectives for Drama are to be found in the Primary School Curriculum and will form the basis for all teacher and whole school planning in Ballymore National School. These objectives are a basis for promoting Drama and encouraging the emotional development of children through Drama.

Other sources which will form the basis for Drama planning are:

- The children's own experiences and ideas/opinions.
- Stories and Poetry.
- Local School/ community issues which need to be/are interesting to address.
- Other Curriculum areas and the topics being covered.

Drama environment

- A safe, comfortable, motivating environment will be developed for children during Drama time in the school, throughout all classes.
- Children will be involved in drawing up rules/considerations for Drama time.
- Children will understand the conventions of discrete Drama time and adhere to Drama rules.
- Warm up and cool down activities will be used to further create a positive,
 vibrant, safe and fun atmosphere for Drama.

Stimuli that will be used for Drama will include:

- Warm-up Games
- Stories and Poetry
- Song
- Other Curriculum Subjects
- Discussion
- Problem Solving Scenarios e.g. puzzles
- Aistear, in the junior classroom

In this school we recognise the usefulness of Drama strategies. Below are some suitable strategies for use across all 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 class or particular dramatic context.

Still Image/ Freeze Frame	 Groups use their bodies to create an image of a moment(s) in the Drama e.g. the moment the bears see Goldilocks asleep in the bed. Older groups may depict a more complex or abstract idea ('winning', 'fear.') Similarly, an individual can act as a sculptor to another student or group.
Thought-Tracking	This technique involves the teacher freezing the action and tapping his/her hand on

	the shoulder of a student/ a number of students in the still image or Drama. The student/ students in role then reveals publicly his/her/ their private thoughts/ reactions at that specific moment e.g. one of Christopher Columbus' sailor's thoughts when they finally sight land.
Mime	 The class mime action as the teacher describes a character, occupation or as he/she narrates the story. Older students may develop more abstract mime sequences.
Narration	 The teacher can narrate on or out of the lesson text. Narration has many uses. These include: providing a link or commentary between Drama moments; creating an atmosphere; initiating a drama; moving the action on; creating tension. Similarly, the participants might report back in story form, providing narrative to accompany or bridge action-'We came to the river and saw that the bridge had been destroyed, so we'
Hot Seating	This involves the students questioning a character (teacher in role/ student in role.)

	 The students who are questioning the character may be working as themselves or in a role as journalists. Hot-seating can be used to start a Drama or improvisation may be frozen at any point so as in-role characters are released to answer questions often formally seated facing questioners.
Caption-Making Headlines	 This strategy can be used at any point of action. Individuals or groups are asked to give a title or caption or newspaper headline/slogan to a piece of drama, they summarise their own scene or another group scene. When used with still images several headlines can be given to the same still image in order to highlight points of view and bias.
Conscience Alley	 A character who has a difficult decision to reach, walks down a corridor of people who, one after another from either side, give conflicting advice about the given situation. This can be done in role by other characters in the lesson and by voices in the character's head played by other members of the group.

	It is possible to develop this convention by allowing the character to engage in conversation with the voices and thus challenge the advice being offered.
Defining Space	 Available furniture, objects, clothing are used to represent the 'ship', 'castle', 'bears' house', where the Drama is happening. This may also represent the physical scale of someone (Daddy Bear) or something (the beanstalk) in the drama. They may also be used to fix the position or proximity of rooms, houses, places where events have taken place.
Sound tracking	 Sound may be used in different ways in a drama; narration can be devised to accompany some mime; animal sounds, human sounds, environmental sounds can be devised to accompany a moment of action. Voices or instruments are used to create a mood.
Living Picture	 The teacher asks the group to bring their improvisation alive for a few moments. He/she does not necessarily add tension by briefing some students.

	The living nicture
	The living picture, however, may develop into an improvisation - the difference being that 'living picture' has no particular tension in it whereas the improvisation usually features some tension.
Briefing	 Before a whole group improvisation, the teacher takes aside an individual or a number of individuals, and gives him/her/ them a set of instructions that create tension. This will drive the drama forward. The teacher may choose to give another set of further conflicting instructions to different individual/ individuals. As children develop their drama skills, they will begin to offer their own briefs. Briefing is a key strategy to creating tension in drama. The teacher can build tension by suggestion any of the following -'you have a secret'; 'Something strange and mysterious has happened'; 'you are planning a surprise'; 'you are in a hurry'; 'you are all crowded together'; 'you

	have an unusual object' or through a challenge.
Small Group Play Making	 Small group and whole group improvisation constitute the heart of the drama curriculum. The children make up the story as they go along. This story usually explores a character(s) in a dilemma. Small groups plan, prepare, sequence and present their improvisations to show their understanding of that moment in the drama. Briefing (see above) helps to drive the improvisation forward. The teacher can greatly enhance the drama by adopting a role.
Flashback/ Flash Forward	 The children select and depict a moment through such strategies as still image, mime and narration or improvisation. They can move backwards and forwards in time creating other such moments in time in the drama. This enables the children to reflect on the characters and their dilemmas.

Ritual	 Ritual in drama is a stylised activity that shows a special occasion or some daily routine that shows that a character is part of a community. Some rituals in drama include; a meal, saying goodbye, praying, the night before a battle etc.
Teacher in Role	 The teacher takes on a role in the drama. This allows the teacher to do a number of things. He/she can manage the learning opportunities within the drama by adopting a suitable role in order to excite interest, control the action, invite involvement, provoke tension, challenge superficial thinking, create choices and ambiguity, develop the narrative, create possibilities for the group to interact in role etc.
Role Play	 The children take on a character from a drama or story and act out the role of this person. They may also represent in actions the thoughts or feelings of these characters.

 This methodology is frequently used especially
during Aistear.

Reflection on Drama

Children will be actively encouraged to reflect on their own and others experiences of Drama. This reflection will include the forms of discussion, recording, comparing, analysing, predicting, questioning and drawing.

Children with additional needs

Teachers support and ensure the participation of children with additional needs in drama through careful planning, differentiation and taking into account the levels and abilities of the children in question encompassing pupils with varying physical capabilities, emotional, intellectual and creative abilities. This is achieved through the use of various teaching styles and strategies, the use of various supports, including the Special Needs Assistant (when and where applicable), questioning according to ability, gauging the pace at which the children are learning and teaching to that pace, differentiated activities, learning objectives and expectation of outcomes according to the ability of the children, using differentiated groups (when and where applicable) and providing provisions for children with additional needs when attending drama related events and activities.

Multi Class Considerations

Ballymore National school is a small three teacher school, comprising of two class teachers and a Special Education Teacher, with 4 class levels in each classroom. As a result, the following will be part of Drama effectiveness and enrichment:

- Mixed-ability groupings will be utilised.
- Children's individual strengths in Drama will be utilised above their class level or age.
- Varying levels of difficulties may be used within Drama activities and Drama lessons.
- Topics covered in Drama will be made relevant to all the class levels involved.

Linkage and Integration

 Linkage, within the Drama curriculum, e.g. the strand and strand units to be taught through an integrated approach with elements and conventions of Drama and integration with other curricular areas. Drama is suitable to be integrated with Gaeilge, Music, Art, English, History,
 P.E., SPHE, SESE, Religion and Aistear.

Assessment and Record-Keeping

Assessment in Drama is concerned with children's acquisition of knowledge and the balance of that with the development of the elements of Drama. Consequently, a broad range of assessment tools and approaches are necessary.

The following assessment tools may be utilised when assessing Drama:

- Teacher Observation
- Teacher Designed Tasks
- Class discussion
- Work Samples
- Self-assessment
- Peer-assessment

Teachers are encouraged to use teacher observation when assessing drama work in class. The following will be assessed through teacher observation:

- How and to what extent children participate in the Drama lessons.
- Children's appreciation and understanding of a particular character and role.
- Children's ability to reflect on the process of Drama.
- Children's ability to use their reflections in order to inform their practice in future Drama activities.
- How children enrich the Drama experience within a group and the level to which they contribute to the discussion and action.

Equality of Participation and Access

- All children in our school participate in Drama and are given equal opportunities in class.
- Equal opportunities will be given to all children regardless of gender, ethnic background and socio-economic status across all strands and activities.
- Gender issues will be addressed as part of Drama and stereotypes will be actively challenged, in order to promote an open and equal atmosphere for all children in the school.

Different cultures will be explored through Drama and presented in a
positive light. Stereotype here again will be challenged and increased
understanding and empathy will be encouraged.

Organisational Planning

Timetabling

- Junior Infants-Second Class will have a minimum of 50 minutes of Drama per week and the Aistear Framework (learning through play) facilitates many of the elements of drama.
- Third -sixth Class will have a minimum of one hour per week of drama.
- Time allocation may be broken down at the discretion of the teacher.
- The teacher may also choose to block timers for Drama at particular times of the year. For example, in the run up to the Christmas concert.
- Drama will also flow through other subject areas at many times.

Resources

A wide range of varying resources will be used for Drama time and these include the following:

- Online resources
- Curricular topics
- Range of stimulus poetry
- Range of stimulus story
- Newspaper and magazine images
- A range of music on c.d. for use in Drama
- Puppets
- Drama Books
- Drama Task cards
- Props e.g. blindfold, hotspot chair, dress up clothes, magic boxes and hats etc.
- Chatterbox Oral Language Programme
- Scripts for Christmas Nativity and other plays
- Personal resource banks, notes, activities, photocopies and ideas
- www.drama.ie

Health and Safety

• Teachers will at all times be mindful of the schools Health & Safety Policy.

• Children will be encouraged to safeguard their own wellbeing by following the rules and structures in place.

ICT

ICT will be used to enrich Drama time in the following ways:

- The production of task cards and activities.
- Reflective Journals/ pieces of writing.
- Research into a non-fiction character.
- Research into a particular role.
- PowerPoint Presentations
- Script Writing
- Research for resources on given topics,

Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

- This plan will form the basis for teachers' planning and reporting.
- Long term planning by teachers will ensure that all strand units of the Drama curriculum are being delivered consistently in lessons.
- Discussion between the teachers, both formal and informal will ensure that Drama planning is consistent and sequential throughout the school.
- Teachers consider and utilise all elements and strategies of the Drama curriculum in their planning and teaching.
- Team teaching is a possibility where a teacher has strength in a particular Drama strategy or element.
- A thematic approach may be used at different times in Drama and other subject areas could form the stimuli for these themes.
- Using their Cuntas Míosúil, teachers will reflect on the implementation of this Drama plan and inform their future planning and teaching.

Staff Development

- Team teaching will be used when necessary, as detailed above.
- Teachers will endeavour to complete relevant Drama courses being offered by various organisations in the area of Drama.
- Details of relevant courses will be displayed in the staff room and staff will be encouraged to attend.
- PDST support may be sought for assistance with implementation.

Parental Involvement

- Assessment results and outcomes are made available to parents at parent/ teacher meetings and through summer reports.
- In conjunction with this school policy teachers are available by appointment to discuss any drama related concerns with parents.

Community Links

- The Christmas concert/ Nativity/ Carol Service is attended by members of the community every year and is enjoyed by all.
- The school will attend plays and events in the local area, where feasible.
- Occasionally a Drama teacher, an actor or a playwright may be invited in to complete a workshop or assist in the teaching of Drama.

Success Criteria

The success of this school plan will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Teacher's preparation in accordance with the plan.
- The consistent adherence to the procedures and suggestions outlined in this plan.

The success of this plan in achieving the aims will be assessed by:

- Teacher/parent feedback
- Children's reflections and feedback
- Assessment tools and recordings
- Inspectors' suggestions and reports (if applicable)
- Board of Management feedback

Implementation

This policy supersedes previous policies and is effective from April 2020.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to parents thereafter in April 2020.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed in two years' time and amended, as necessary, by means of a whole school collaborative process.

Signed:	W. George IRWM	Date: 09 09 2020
Signed:	Chairperson Eart Mi Chuireain Principal	Date: 9 9 70
Review:		
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