

Visual Arts

Introductory Statement and Rationale

- (a) **Introductory Statement:** The school plan for the visual arts was drafted by the staff of Holy Family N.S., Newport, Co. Mayo on a school based planning day in June 2007. Alterations and improvements have been made since this date. The subsequent consultation with all staff members are reflected in this document.
- (b) **Rationale:** This plan is a record of our good practice in this subject and also conforms to the principles of the curriculum statements on visual arts.

Vision and Aims

- (a) **Vision:** In our school, we recognise the potential of every child in our care and endeavour to develop those qualities that make each child unique. We promote creativity, imagination and aesthetic understanding in line with the school's vision statement and as outlined in the curriculum statements.
- (b) **Aims:** We endorse the aims and objectives of the Curriculum visual arts and, in addition, we aim:
- To provide the activities that promote shared exploration and discovery of the elements and aspects of visual arts education
 - To create an atmosphere of enjoyment, and allow a sense of fun to permeate our visual arts classes

- To exploit the positive effect that purposeful visual arts activities can have on the child's learning in other areas of the curriculum.

N.B. It is worth mentioning, at this point, that the concept of **process rather than product** is emphasised, and that the individual child enjoys and engages in each curriculum strand and strand unit, as opposed to creating purely for display and effect.

Content of the Plan

Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

Teachers have familiarised themselves with the six strands (Drawing, Paint & Colour, Print, Clay, Construction, Fabric & Fibre). During the staff planning days, it was agreed that the strands of clay and fabric and fibre were perhaps the more complicated elements within the curriculum to attempt with large classes. It was agreed that these strands may be covered in block work. It was also suggested that teachers (i.e., Mary O'Donnell and Maureen Smith), with a particular interest in fabric and fibre, could accompany a class teacher in teaching crafts such as knitting, sewing and other hand crafts, such as bead work, should the need for assistance arise.

Content objectives for Visual Arts for Junior and Senior Infants:

| Strand | Junior and Senior Infants |
|-------------------------|--|
| Drawing | <p>The children will be enabled to make drawings using various instruments (pencil, chalk, crayon, felt tip, pen, pastels, etc.) to create figures, line, form, shape, pattern, etc. The children in Senior Infants make daily drawings in their own copy pertaining to the daily "News".</p> <p>Stimuli such as story, songs and nature are employed during the execution of this strand.</p> <p>Before other strands are embarked upon, such as construction and clay, the children make rough 2-D sketches of what they hope to achieve in 3-D.</p> |
| Paint and Colour | <p>This strand is probably the most regularly employed during visual art classes. The main emphasis is on colour mixing within the paint palettes, to produce often new and unexpected colours. How a colour was achieved may be discussed. White paint is the most copiously used for mixing and creating lighter hues and black, which is used more sparingly, creates shades.</p> <p>Apart from various sized and textured paint brushes, other objects are often used, such as drinking straws (blow painting), lollipop sticks (palette effect), sponges, etc.</p> |
| Print | <p>The element of pattern producing is mostly explored during printing for the infant classes. The concept of pattern must be developed firstly, and then children are encouraged to identify patterns in the environment.</p> <p>The children are encouraged to collect items which may produce a good, clear print, such as leaves, twigs, small boxes, spools, sponge, corks, lollipop sticks, coins, etc.</p> <p>Over-printing or repeat printing often produces interesting shapes and colour mixes.</p> <p>Stencil work (shapes cut out of small, stiff card) can prove most satisfying.</p> |
| Clay | <p>Children are, firstly, given ample time to manipulate the clay, in order to become more familiar with its abilities and texture.</p> <p>Vocabulary is developed, using terms such as, squeeze,</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| | <p>squash, press, pull, roll, ball, pinch, flatten, etc. In this strand the children will be working in 3-D.</p> <p>After this stage, the children may be provided with stimulus to create something from the clay, for an example, an imaginary monster, a jewellery container, a plate of vegetables, etc.</p> <p>Later, tools, such as lollipop sticks, pencils, spools etc., and perhaps shop-bought clay tools, can be used to make further pattern and shape in the clay.</p> |
| Construction | <p>Pupils are asked to donate to the construction materials collection (<i>also used for the Design and make element of Science</i>). This pool of resources may include, for example, various shaped and sized boxes, plastic containers, wool, etc. These collections occur on a continuous basis throughout the school year.</p> <p>N.B. <i>This exercise is also in line with the school's green awareness and the entire element of recycling.</i></p> <p>Methods of joining containers are explored. For example, if strong glue is not available, or indeed, safe, then perhaps binding with string or elastic could be employed.</p> <p>Again, stimulus is provided and design drawings or sketches made before attempting work.</p> <p>Constructing using lollipop sticks and straws, for example, are other enjoyable ways of approaching this strand in the infant classes.</p> |
| Fabric & Fibre | <p>As with construction, an array of material needs to be collected in order to resource this strand, so each child is encouraged, on a continuous basis, to collect objects around their house for taking to school.</p> <p>Strong glue may be required, so the teacher exclusively may have to administer this.</p> <p>An enjoyable way of approaching this exercise is on a whole-class basis, where all members of the class undertake a group project to provide one large collage of work, e.g., the town of Newport.</p> |

Content objectives for Visual Arts for First and Second classes:

N.B. *Computer technology can easily be employed during this strand. The Microsoft Paint accessory can be used for free-hand drawings, patterns (copy and paste) and many other designs.*

| Strand | First and Second classes |
|-------------------------|---|
| Drawing | <p>The pupils are enabled to further develop their spatial awareness during this strand. For example, the human body in action (references to sports and games activities) could be explored.</p> <p>Silhouette drawings of simple objects enable the children to explore shape in natural and manufactured objects, e.g., fruit, various sized bottles, etc. Children are encouraged to take note of shadow at this stage, during still life drawings.</p> <p>Experimentation with the various marks, lines, shapes, textures, patterns and tones can be made using a wide variety of drawing instruments and materials, such as pencils of varying strength and softness, crayons, pastels, chalk, textured paper and fabric.</p> |
| Paint and Colour | <p>The children are enabled to create paintings using a variety of materials and media, using print, collage and fabric and fibre.</p> <p>Colour mixing is greatly encouraged, with the children “inventing” their own colours. As with all elements of Visual Arts, class discussion, whereby the children share their suggestions and critique (positively!) other children’s work is essential.</p> <p>Moments from poems and stories, songs and music can be interpreted by the children.</p> <p>Natural and man-made objects are painted for their colour possibilities. Colour and tone can be explored by examining, e.g., stormy or sunny sky.</p> <p>The ways in which the texture of an object affects its colour is also explored.</p> |
| Print | <p>The children are encouraged to experiment with the effects that can be achieved with simple print making techniques, e.g., making rubbings of various textured objects such as leaves, branches and coins.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | <p>Simple stencils can be made and used by daubing paint with large brushes or sponges. This sponge painting is also used on a wax crayon background to explore the effects of oil versus water based media.</p> <p>The area of pattern in maths integrates perfectly with this strand. Shapes and lines of various size and thickness are repeated.</p> <p>Computer technology lends itself very well to this strand. The Microsoft Paint tools and copy and paste can be used to create endless possibilities.</p> |
| Clay | <p>Initial experimentation time with clay is employed. The children spend time tearing off pieces of clay and sticking them back together. Forms of different sizes and shapes are made.</p> <p>Following teacher instruction, a simple ball of clay is changed to take the form of a provided stimulus, such as a bird or animal or an imagined creature. Clay figures based on those from stories, poetry, music and drama can be made.</p> <p>Simple pottery is attempted, making pinch pots or coil built pots.</p> <p>The children are encouraged to use provided tools to experiment with textural effects, such as lines, shapes, texture and pattern.</p> |
| Construction | <p>The properties and characteristics of various materials are explored in the making of structures.</p> <p>Children are enabled to examine how structure and balance are achieved, how materials can be joined together and how some materials can add colour, pattern, texture and interest.</p> <p>The children are encouraged to make imaginative structures and to design for example, a desk tidy, a monster, a robot, etc. from waste material.</p> |
| Fabric & Fibre | <p>The children are encouraged, using a store of collected materials (to which they have contributed) to make small, inventive pieces.</p> <p>Weaving (kept simple) is also attempted at this level, using strips of two, possibly three, different textured or coloured</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>fabrics to make, for example, coasters or place mats.</p> <p>Costume is invented, and ways of holding these together are explored. These costumes can be used during school performances, drama lessons or for dressing up during free play time.</p> <p>In class groups, the children design and make a theme-based collage.</p> |
|--|--|

Content objectives for Visual Arts for Third and Fourth classes:

At this level, the children are encouraged to discuss their own work, explaining their choices and methods used and giving titles to their own work. The valuable exercise of looking at and responding to the art is incorporated into all the strand units. Work is, as with all class levels, displayed on classroom walls and school corridors and is valued equally.

| Strand | Third and Fourth Classes |
|-------------------------|---|
| Drawing | <p>The children are enabled to look closely at specific objects and discover qualities of line, shape, shade and textures.</p> <p>Aspects of the environment are viewed from different angles, e.g., stones, shells, bark etc.</p> <p>Stories, songs, poems, imaginary creatures are used to inspire drawings, as are recalled experiences.</p> |
| Paint and Colour | <p>Children are encouraged to use colour and tone to create background, middle ground and foreground in simple landscapes, still life and cityscapes.</p> <p>Children make life paintings (sketching and drawing first) of classmates. Again, emphasis is on colour mixing to create realistic tones and the use of shading is employed.</p> <p>The colour wheel is explored and studied. The children are then enabled to discover both harmony and contrast in natural and manufactured objects and through themes chosen for their colour possibilities, such as, and underwater adventure, the Children of Lir, etc.</p> <p>Themes, such as the seasons, are used, as mentioned before, and also story, poems, recalled experiences and familiar locations.</p> |
| Print | <p>The children are enabled to make printing blocks for relief prints, stencils and mono prints.</p> <p>The concept of overlapping prints is explored, using a wide variety of print- making techniques.</p> <p>Computer art programmes are used to create original images and layouts are then organised for a computer design involving pattern and repetition, perhaps in posters or wrapping paper.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Clay | <p>As with previous class levels, initial experimentation time with clay occurs. The children spend time tearing off pieces of clay and sticking them back together. Forms of different sizes and shapes are made.</p> <p>Children are enabled to create figures based on their own imagination and experiences. Characters or scenes from a class novel may be made.</p> <p>Items such as simple clay pots, fruit bowls, a dinner plate, etc. are created.</p> |
| Construction | <p>Before embarking on a project, children are encouraged to make drawings or sketches of how they intend to construct, using a wide variety of materials.</p> <p>The school's materials resources are maintained by a collective effort involving pupils and what they salvage from home and also by any visits staff members' may make to the local Resource Centre in Castlebar.</p> <p>Projects that may be attempted at this class level include making a 3D map of the local town (creating a historical artefact), designing a model for a building complex, etc.</p> <p>Papier mache can also used to construct forms and structures, such as Halloween masks.</p> |
| Fabric & Fibre | <p>Again, the pupils are allowed time to explore the properties of various materials, such as their texture, thickness, gluing ability and flexibility.</p> <p>The children are enabled to design and make a collage using fabric, e.g., a Bible scene, a landscape.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to make costumes to suit characters, perhaps from a class novel or for a Christmas concert performance.</p> <p>Soft toys and puppets are made using soft fabric that can be glued or stitched in a simple way.</p> <p>Sewing begins at this level. The emphasis is on needle safety. A simple blanket stitch is introduced when making items such as felt Halloween pumpkins and ghosts and Christmas tree decorations. Depending on the class' aptitude for sewing, more complicated stitches could be later introduced. Again, Mary O'Donnell and Maureen Smith could be made available to assist or instruct during such lessons.</p> |

Content objectives for Visual Arts for Fifth and Sixth classes:

| Strand | Fifth and Sixth Classes |
|-------------------------|--|
| Drawing | <p>The children are encouraged to discover how line could convey movement and rhythm, particularly in relation to responding to music.</p> <p>Drawings from observation and drawing imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail are created.</p> <p>Children make drawings based on themes reflecting broadening interests, experiences and feelings.</p> |
| Paint and Colour | <p>Again, colour is explored using a variety of colour drawing implements, media and techniques.</p> <p>Children's sensitivity to increasingly subtle colour differences and tonal variations in both natural and manufactured objects is further increased.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to paint from observation and to discover ways of achieving spatial effects.</p> <p>Exploration of the relationship between how things feel and how they look is assisted.</p> <p>Children are enabled to discover harmony and contrast and also pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects.</p> |
| Print | <p>Children are enabled to experiment with more complex print-making techniques and to employ these to make theme-based or non-representational prints.</p> <p>Computer print programme is used to create original images that are not dependant on clip art.</p> <p>Prints are made for functional uses (e.g., wrapping paper) as well as for their own sake.</p> |
| Clay | <p>Children are enabled to use clay to analyse and interpret form from observation. Essential characteristics of 3-dimensional work are explored.</p> <p>The children are enabled to make simple pottery and sculpture.</p> <p>A suggested exercise could be the construction of an imaginative slab-built structure.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | The work of sculptors and potters is looked at and discussed. |
| Construction | <p>The properties and characteristics of materials in making structures is explored and experimented with.</p> <p>The children are enabled to make imaginative structures.</p> <p>Spatial arrangements, balance and outline in collections or photographs of natural and manufactured structures are looked at, investigated and discussed.</p> <p>Children are enabled to look at and talk about impressive examples of buildings created in the past in different parts of the world, as well as nationally and locally.</p> |
| Fabric & Fibre | <p>The children are encouraged to explore and discover the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression, as well as investigating characteristics and properties of those materials.</p> <p>Children are encouraged to make small inventive pieces in fabric and fibre.</p> <p>Tactile, visual and spatial qualities are experienced by looking at, handling and talking about a variety of fabrics and fibres.</p> <p>Children are enabled to design and make a costume (perhaps for a school performance), and make simple character toys.</p> <p>Children are enabled to look at and talk about woven, embroidered, knitted and other fabrics, including interesting items of clothing from different times (<i>Museum of Country Life, Turlough</i>) and cultures and explore the role of textiles in culture (<i>ancient civilisations and the Industrial Revolution/ Michael Davitt in history</i>).</p> |

2. Children with Different Needs

The visual arts programme should provide opportunities for all children to experience success. Particular support will be given to children with special needs where discovery and experimentation in visual arts can be very rewarding and may lead to the development of other skills and talents.

Children who display a particular ability in the area of visual arts will be encouraged to develop this talent further. The child's talents will be emphasised at the annual parent teacher meetings and this information will also be recorded in the report card. These children will be encouraged to avail of opportunities to engage with visual arts, e.g. to enter competitions, attend extra-curricular classes, develop portfolios, etc.

3. Linkage and Integration

Teachers must plan for opportunities for linkage and integration of visual arts activities. A thematic approach may be taken for linking strands, e.g., at Christmas, construct a crib, make figures from clay, use fabric and fibre to dress figures. Visual arts also lends itself very well to other curriculum subjects. Some example could include:

- History – Aztecs, war and rebellion, characters, clothing
- Gaeilge – Seanfhoclacha, rainn, eadai, daoine
- English – Story, poetry, graphic description
- Music – responding to music; songs, musical instruments, rhythms
- Geography – landscapes, maps, animal habitats, national flags
- Science and Maths – engineering within construction

- Drama – designing and making costumes to befit a character

4. Assessment and Record Keeping

It has been agreed that the assessment tool employed within the visual arts programme will be that of teacher observation. The teacher may also digitally photograph any class art projects which are stored on a school disk.

The teacher notes the quality of imagination, inventiveness and involvement of the child.

Each child's progress is recorded in the end of year report, a copy of which is kept in the child's file.

Samples of the children's art work are also continuously sent home with each child.

5. Equality of Participation and Access

All children shall have equal access to all visual arts activities. In line with our inclusive school policy, different cultures are affirmed through discussion, activities and displays. Children of ethnic minorities are encouraged to contribute to the learning experience of the other children by sharing elements of their own culture.

No child will be excluded from the visual arts programme (including use of materials, trips to exhibitions and/ or galleries) for failure to pay the arts and crafts contribution requested each school year. Alternative funding will be sourced following discussion with and direction from the principal.

Organisational Planning

6. Timetable

Teachers understand the necessity of placing visual arts as part of their timetable. In the Infant classes, 2 hours and 30 minutes per week is to be spent between Visual Arts, Music and Drama. In other classes, the time to be spent is 3 hours per week. At certain times of the year, teachers may block time when they are working on particular projects or preparing for special occasions.

It is at the discretion of the individual teacher as to what day visual arts are scheduled.

The strand unit of 'looking and responding' within all visual arts strands may be timetabled for a later time during the week, due to time constraints during practical sessions.

7. Displays

Children's work is displayed in each classroom and is regularly updated so that the pupils experience an inspiring, colourful and constantly changing environment. The school corridors, the entrance hall and notice boards are used to display artwork completed by the children. As mentioned previously, the class teacher may take digital photographs of any artwork projects, which are stored on disk and can provide valuable resources to other teachers.

Digital photographs to Powerpoint, school website?

Projects and artwork from 2nd to 6th classes are displayed in the church for the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist. Artwork has also been provided, on previous occasions, for example, to the local Marine Institute, local businesses and the Tuam Diocesan Assembly.

8. Resources and ICT

An agreed sum is requested to be paid by each child at the start of the school year. With these funds, teachers purchase all materials necessary to fulfil the needs of the class. A very successful system of sharing and swapping materials between all teachers is in operation within the school.

As mentioned above, the children are encouraged to contribute to a pooled selection of materials and containers to be used particularly within the strands of construction and fabric and fibre. This area is in the upstairs hallway shelving of the school.

The school's digital cameras are used to keep a record of completed projects and stored on disk for future reference.

A large collection of books pertaining to the visual arts programme are stored in the staff room for the use of all staff members.

All classrooms are furnished with at least one computer which may be utilised for visual arts classes and projects. The Microsoft Paint program can be used, for example, when creating repeated patterns for a wrapping paper design.

9. Health and Safety

School personnel are mindful of health and safety issues associated with the visual arts. Every care will be taken in using glue, scissors, craft knives, clay and other materials. All art material used should be non-toxic and safe for children to work with. The children will be encouraged, particularly at infant level, to wear old clothing during practical classes to protect uniforms. It might also be necessary for children to wear latex gloves when using glues, fabric paints or glass paints.

Teachers are mindful of the state of the floor area near the sink when children are changing water. Plastic containers must be used for water. Glass jars are not permitted. Lighting should be adequate and the room well ventilated while work is drying.

For visits outside the school the procedures applicable to school tours apply. Guest speakers are invited with the approval of the principal. Teachers must remain with the class for all talks and the speaker must adhere to a previously agreed format for presentation/ discussion.

10. Individual Teachers' Planning and Reporting

A thematic approach for some aspects of the visual arts programme may be employed. This may include topics such as, the seasons, school events, cross-curricular activities, celebrations and festivities. This thematic approach may be reflected in each teacher's long and short-term planning.

Following consultation, it was decided that the 'Looking and Responding' strand unit be incorporated into each lesson, either as the 'stimulus' for the lesson (based on children's experiences, environment, local and national events), at the end of the lesson, or, if time is limited, at a time later in the week, as mentioned previously.

We record work completed in the Cuntas Miosuil and this record is available to the next teacher of the class at the end of the school year. This ensures that concepts and skills are developed from year to year and that the looking and responding activities are not repetitive for the children.

Children's progress within visual art is recorded in the individual school report cards.

11. Staff Development

Teachers are supported, where possible, by the Board of Management to develop their range of skills and expertise in the visual arts. Attendance at courses in the Education Centre is promoted and the sharing of knowledge and skills facilitated at staff meetings or at school planning days.

Teachers, talented in the visual arts, are invited to guide staff in particular strands at staff meetings or at other times suitable to staff members. Teachers working on particular strands will also be encouraged to invite other teachers and their classes to view their work in the classrooms. Outside experts/ skilled parents may be invited to facilitate staff in visual arts activities. Any costs incurred in this area shall be met by Board of Management funds and through voluntary contributions.

Teachers are aware of the theory of Multiple Intelligences and the different ways that may be used to activate learners' diverse intelligences.

Implementation - Roles and responsibilities

Class teachers are responsible for the implementation of the visual arts programme for their own classes. A designated teacher, Mary O'Donnell, supports the implementation of the visual arts programme.

12. Parental Involvement

Parents with particular skills and interests may be invited to support the visual arts programme. They may also be invited to assist in other school events such as parents open days, art weeks, etc.

Children's interest in the visual arts can be stimulated by visits to galleries, museums, exhibitions and, where possible, to see artists and craftspeople at work. Parents are encouraged to avail of such learning opportunities for their children. Parents can encourage their children to enter local exhibitions and community events. Information on these events may be circulated via the school.

13. Community Links

Links are forged with the local community and artists and craftspeople may be invited to visit classes. The visual arts programme is also linked with the study of local history, geography, traditions and folklore. The children's attention is also drawn to interesting aspects of the local landscape and streetscape features. Teachers may draw on information on local history from Mr Mac Eoin.

Teachers may dedicate lesson time based on internationally recognised artists and art artefacts. This may involve visits to galleries, museums, exhibitions, use of CD Rom, pictures, posters and/ or resource books.