



Avoca National School

S. N. PHADRAIG NAOFA

Scoil Náisiúnta Phadraig Naofa,
Avoca,
Co. Wicklow.
Roll No 18198A

Whole School Music Plan

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

This document outlines the whole school music plan for Avoca NS. This plan is for the information of all teachers and staff, BOM and other relevant members of the school community.

a) Rationale

As music is a diverse and lifelong activity, enjoyed by people of all ages, we in Avoca NS consider music to be an indispensable part of the child-centered curriculum. It is a discrete body of knowledge, another form of communication and means that assists in the development of the child's imagination and listening skills. It assists in the personal, social, mental and physical development of the child. Music offers lifelong opportunities for the development of imagination, sensitivity, inventiveness, risk-taking and enjoyment.

1. Vision and Aims

a) Vision

As a subject, music is unique in its range and scope across the three domains of learning: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. It has been proven to benefit cross curricular learning, particularly with literacy. Most importantly, music is something that all students will be surrounded by for the rest of their lives.

Our school vision for music education is to encourage children to appreciate and enjoy the hugely positive benefits that music can have on their lives and their relationship with the world around them.

We understand that music has the potential to develop a child's individual self-esteem and creativity as well as enabling them to share profound experience with others that fosters empathy, communication and collaboration.

b) Aims

We endorse the aims of the Irish Primary Music Curriculum to:

- Enable the child to enjoy and understand music and to appreciate it critically.
- Develop the child's openness to, awareness of and response to a wide range of musical genres, including Irish music.
- Develop the child's capacity to express ideas, feelings and experiences through music as an individual and in collaboration with others.
- Enable the child to develop his/her musical potential and to experience the excitement and satisfaction of being actively engaged in musical creativity.
- Nurture the child's self-esteem and self-confidence through participation in musical performance.
- Foster higher-order thinking-skills and lifelong learning through the acquisition of musical knowledge, skills, concepts and values.
- Enhance the quality of the child's life through aesthetic musical experience.

3. Curriculum Planning

At Avoca NS we use the program Dabbledoo Music to ensure all aspects of the curriculum are covered.

Dabbledoo Music, through its online program, provides the school with lesson plans, interactive resources, teacher's manuals, and planning content for all music curriculum activities from junior infants through to 6th class.

4. Approaches and Methodologies

The musical concepts, as prescribed in the curriculum, are the same for all ages. These are laid out fully in the schemes of work for each class group and include the following:

- A sense of pulse - performing at a steady pulse or beat.
- A sense of duration - exploring long and short sounds.
- A sense of tempo - understand and differentiate between fast and slow.
- A sense of pitch - understand and differentiate between high and low sounds.

- A sense of dynamics - understand and differentiate between loud and soft sounds.
- A sense of structure - understand 'start' and 'stop' in terms of group performance.
- A sense of timbre - play with and explore a variety of sound-making materials and classify sounds by the way they are produced.
- A sense of texture - listen and respond to sounds from both one source and multiple sources.
- A sense of style - listen and respond to music in different styles.

The development of the students through each year is assessed by their progress in understanding and implementation of these musical concepts. For example:

- An infant class would be encouraged to listen to a march rhythm and clap or march in time.
- A first or second class would use instruments to play this march rhythm and display confidence in keeping time.
- A third or fourth class would develop the idea of weak and strong beats in a march (1 2 3 4), and play with increased confidence and awareness of weak and strong beats.
- Fifth and sixth class students would show confidence in performing and identifying music in 4 time and use both weak and strong beats in performance and composition.

With DabledooMusic, this progress is achieved through practical and accessible activities that encourage the child to learn through active participation. These include:

- Group Performances
 - Instrumental and vocal performances using online visual scores with DabledooMusic.
 - Combination of full class performances and smaller group work.
- Group Compositions
 - The class will undertake regular composition exercises to reinforce musical concepts and explore creativity and collaboration.
 - Individual and small group work.
- Class Discussions
 - Critical appraisal of music with the opportunity to verbalise their understanding of musical concepts.
 - Discussions will help the teacher assess student engagement and progress.
- Teacher-Led Activities
 - Teachers will lead all performance, listening and composition activities through a combination of presenting starter material and helping class develop musical concepts throughout activities.
 - All activities will encourage the students to explore through critical and creative means with the teacher providing focus and guidance throughout.

a) Listening and Performing

Through the listening and responding strand, the children are encouraged to explore a wide variety of different sounds. These include everything from the sounds we hear in nature to basic percussion and melody instruments.

An important part of this section is for children to be exposed to lots of different genres of music with a particular emphasis being placed on Irish traditional music. There is also a focus on the importance of moving to music which includes dancing or simply clapping along.

To achieve the delivery of this strand, recorded music whether through CD or an online streaming or video website will be used. Experiencing live music whenever possible will be encouraged.

To summarise, the child will be enabled to:

- Listen to, identify and imitate familiar sounds in the immediate environment from varying sources.
- Recognising the range and versatility of the voice for exploring and imitating sounds.
- Recognise a range of sounds using body percussion.
- Explore ways of making sounds using manufactured and home-made instruments.
- Listen to a range of short pieces of music or excerpts and discuss in terms of musical concepts (loud, soft, fast, slow, etc.).

b) Performance

Through the performance strand, the importance of active music-making is emphasised firstly by using the voice and then through the use of instruments. Children should be able to perform music without having to read music. This means that while musical literacy is important and beneficial, particularly in the earlier years, it is not a requirement.

The children will also be encouraged to perform in different settings; both as an individual and as part of a group within the class. Again this can be achieved firstly, by using the voice through song-singing and then by introducing melodic and percussive instruments.

Exploring ways of varying performances through dynamics, tempo, instrumentation etc. will also be encouraged.

To summarise, the child will be enabled to:

- Explore the use of vocal sounds for making musical sounds.
- Show the steady beat in listening to and accompanying songs or rhythmic pieces.
- Recognise and imitate short melodies in echoes to help them develop a sense of pitch.
- Play a range of simple percussion instruments.

c) Composition

Finally, through the composition strand, a child will be able to develop their creative abilities even further. Here a child gets to make the decisions on the direction and form of the music they want to produce. They'll have to decide everything from the rhythm and melody to the instruments they want to use in their piece.

We understand that the more the children practice their composition skills the greater confidence they will have to add in additional elements and complexities. The listening and performing of relevant pieces will also help to inspire the composition process.

Graphic notation, invented notation, simplified notation, or standard notation may all be used to record ideas, in addition to electronic recording.

To summarise, the child will be enabled to:

- Select sounds from a variety of sources to create simple sound ideas, individually and in groups.
- Explore the use of graphic notation to organise sequences of sounds.
- Select sounds and distribute them in a group performance setting.
- Invent and perform short, simple musical pieces with some control of musical elements.

d) School Choir

The school has a choir which the children can join when they are in 3rd class upwards. The choir rehearse once a week (more time is given prior to school events) in the hall. The choir is an enjoyable activity for the children and gives them a chance to sing for fun and to perform. They may also participate in all/some of the following events:

- Arklow Music Festival
- The Big Sing (a local event to promote mental health)
- Communion and Confirmation
- Open days
- Peace Proms
- Fundraising events
- Christmas/school concerts
- Performing in local shopping centre at Christmas time

The choir teachers are Ms. Van Eesbeck, Mrs. McGrath and/or Ms. Roche.

The school also holds monthly events organised by 6th Class and the children are given an opportunity to sing and perform at these events.

Classes, at different times, may choose to participate in Action Song in Arklow Music festival.

The school also attend a musical in a local secondary school and this is held every two years.

5. Linkage and Integration

We recognise that there is a natural linkage across the strands of the music curriculum. For example, when pupils are engaged in a performing and composing lesson, they will also be listening and responding.

Music is a subject which also lends itself easily to integration across other curriculum subjects including the following:

- PE - dance/action songs
- Language - through sounds and symbols
- History - musical history and folk music
- Irish - Amhráin Gaeilge
- Science - instrument making and performance
- Drama – performing Action songs/attending musicals
- Geography – music from different countries

6. Assessment and Record Keeping

The purpose of assessment in music is being able to point out areas a class or individual can improve to help them with their overall skills and enjoyment of the subject. It is also important so that the children are adequately prepared as they move from year to year.

There are a number of ways the school will assess a child's progress with music:

- Teacher observation - assess the development through performance, composition and group discussions.
- Teacher-designed tasks and tests - these may involve performances with instruments or the voice or could be based on the task of composing within a specific theme.
- Questioning the class - this helps assess musical concept development and identify weak or strong areas within each lesson.
- Collaborative learning - assessment will be made through the response to group exercises and activities.

7. Children with different needs

At our school all pupils participate in music within the classroom. Teachers will, if required, vary the pace, content, and methodologies to ensure learning and success for all pupils. Every effort

will be made to simplify the language and technology for non-Irish pupils. Equally, where a teacher recognises a musical talent within a pupil, this will be nurtured as far as possible and the teacher will communicate this with the parents/guardians so that they may nurture the talent e.g. after school class.

Teachers will use a mixture of whole-class teaching and group work, with different groups being set tasks of various complexities. Teachers will be conscious of any physical and/or emotional restrictions that may inhibit any pupil from partaking in the experience.

8. Equality of Participation and Access

Equal opportunities are given to all pupils regardless of gender, ethnic background or socio-economic status across all strands and activities. Music class may be used as a means of integrating different cultural backgrounds, which may exist in the class at the time.

9. Timetable

Time will be allocated in blocks for specific aspects of arts education.

In keeping with the recommendations in the Primary School Curriculum Introduction, a minimum of two and half hours per week is devoted to arts education in the infant classes and a minimum of three hours per week for classes for 1st to 6th.

10. Resources and ICT

There are many resources which a teacher can consider when planning the music curriculum for a class. Some examples are as followed:

- Recorded music - use CD, video, or online streaming websites to access music recordings.
- Available instruments - use of different types of tuned and untuned instruments for group performances in the classroom.
- A child in the class who plays an instrument - encourage the child to bring in the instrument to demonstrate it and, if possible, play along or accompany the class during a performance.
- Musician within the school community - if there is a member of staff or a parent who is a proficient musician, this can be a great opportunity for a live performance in the classroom.

- Technology in the classroom - use of online resources via an interactive whiteboard, speakers and recording devices.

11. Health and Safety

Teachers are constantly aware of health and safety when conducting lessons. When planning and during music lessons, consideration will be given to the following:

- Hidden dangers when pupils are moving around the classroom
- Storage facilities
- Access to, and transport of, equipment and instruments
- Ventilation of the classrooms
- Amount of space for pupils to sit/stand when doing choral or instrumental work
- Appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment and instruments.
- Safety is an important consideration when children leave the school for the performance strand of the music curriculum. Children travel to the Music Festival by pre- arrangement on a hired bus unless otherwise stated.

12. Individual Teacher's Planning and Reporting

- Teachers will consult this whole school plan and the curriculum documents for music when they are drawing up their long and short term plans.
- Each teacher will have a long term plan.
- Music will be a regular and evident element of the child's classroom experience.
- Where it is meaningful and suitable, music will be taught in a thematic way to integrate with the other subjects.
- Cuntas Míósúil will assist in recording work covered in evaluating progress in music and in informing future teaching.

13. Staff Development

- All teachers will have access to online training content through Dabbledoo Music's online program.
- Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses.
- Our school is always looking for opportunities for staff with expertise in the areas of music to share their ideas with other staff members e.g. co-operative teaching.
- Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the music curriculum

14. Parental Involvement

- All parents will have free access to Dabbledoo Music parents' course which enables parents and families to reinforce the classroom music learning at home.

- Parents are encouraged to foster an interest in music as well as attending events and enrolling their child in after school activities.
- Parents and community members are invited to attend and assist with musical events throughout the year.
- Any parents who have a skill or interest in music are invited to showcase this skill to the pupils and set up workshops where possible.
- All progress in the music curriculum will be discussed with parents/guardians at the annual PT meetings and in the end of year report.

15. Community Links

We, as a school, are open to any member of the local community who wishes to share their musical talent/skill with the pupils, and will facilitate this where possible. Community members are invited to attend school events. Local people who hold workshops or classes for school age pupils are invited to come to the school for a period of time timetabling permitting.

16. Success Criteria

The success of this whole school plan will be monitored and assessed, through the following means:

- Staff/pupils/parent feedback.
- Cuntas Míosúil and Individual Plans – teachers will have used this plan as a guide for planning.
- Inspectors Reports – procedures in the plan have been followed consistently.

We will know if the plans have enhanced pupil learning if:

- Children have a positive attitude and appreciation of music.
- Children have an interest in expression through music.
- Children engage in listening and responding, performing and composing music.
- Children have explored sound including vocal sound, body percussion, instruments and environmental sounds.
- Children have listened and responded to music from a wide variety of genres and cultures in a variety of ways.
- Children sing songs appropriate to their vocal range from a wide variety of genres and cultures.
- Children play a variety of instruments.
- Children experience a variety of ways of recording music which may include graphic, pictorial, ICT and traditional music notation.
- Children improvise and create music using a variety of sound sources.
- Children talk about, evaluate and record their work.

17. Implementation

The Principal/Deputy Principal are the people responsible for the overseeing and implementation of this school plan.

18. Review

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the music curriculum in the school.

Those involved in the review are teachers, pupils, parents and board of management.

19. Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified by the Board of Management of Avoca NS on: 12th January 2021

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management: Marion Canavan

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Principal: Mary Cahill

Date: _____