

Visual Arts Plan

Introductory Statement and Rationale

Introductory Statement

The school plan for the visual arts was drafted by the staff of St Michaels N.S. during 2007. The plan was reviewed in 2012 and again in 2017 following a subject specific inspection (November 2016). Changes required are reflected in this document.

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. This plan will inform teaching and learning of this subject and will serve as the basis for all long term and short-term planning in Visual Arts.

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.

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.

Curriculum Planning

1. Strands and Strand Units

During the review of this plan, it was agreed that the strands of clay, 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 could seek the help of parents, with a particular interest in fabric and fibre to provide assistance. Also parental assistance may be provided in teaching crafts such as knitting, sewing and other hand crafts, such as beadwork.

During the course of their Visual Arts education in St. Michael's, children will engage in the following strands and strand units.

Strands	Strand Units
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Making Drawings o Looking and Responding
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Painting o Looking and Responding
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Making Prints o Looking and Responding
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Developing form in clay o Looking and Responding
Fabric and Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Making fabric prints o Looking and Responding
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Making constructions o Looking and Responding

Junior and Senior Infants

Strands	<i>The child should be enabled to:</i>
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the marks that can be made with different drawing instruments on a range of surfaces. • Make drawings based on vividly recalled feelings, real and imaginative experiences and stories. • Discover and draw lines and shape as seen in natural and manufactured objects and discover that lines can make shapes. • Explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look.
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with a variety of colour drawing instruments and media to develop colour awareness. • Use colour to express vividly recalled feelings, experiences and imaginings. • Discover colour in the visual environment to help develop sensitivity to colour. • Discover colour, pattern and rhythm in colourful objects. • Discover the relationship between how things feel and how they look.
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the effects that can be achieved with simple print- making. • Use a variety of print-making techniques making a variety of relief prints.
Fabric and Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression. • Make simple collages.
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of clay as a medium for imaginative expression. • Make a clay form and manipulate it with fingers to suggest a subject.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials in making structures. • Make imaginative structures.

First and Second Classes

Strands	<i>The child should be enabled to:</i>
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the marks, lines, shapes, textures, patterns and tones that can be made with different drawing instruments on a range of surfaces. • Make drawings based on his/her personal or imaginative life with a growing sense of spatial awareness. • Explore shape as seen in natural and manufactured objects and become aware of the shape of shadows cast by objects. • Draw from observation.
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore colour with a variety of materials and media. • Use colour expressively to interpret themes based on his/her personal or imaginative life. • Paint objects chosen for their colour possibilities. • Discover colour in the visual environment and become sensitive to tonal variations between light and dark and to variations in pure colour. • Discover harmony and contrast in natural and manufactured objects and through themes chosen for their colour possibilities. • Discover colour, pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects and interpret them in his/her work. • Explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look.
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the effects that can be achieved with simple print- making techniques. • Use a variety of print-making techniques to make theme based or non- representational prints.
Fabric and Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression. • Make small inventive pieces with fabric and fibre. • Invent a costume.
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of clay as a medium for imaginative expression. • Change the form of a small ball of clay using the medium expressively. • Work inventively with cubes or oblong blocks of clay and add details to suggest a solid structure. • Make simple pottery. • Experiment with and develop line, shape texture and pattern in clay.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials in making structures. • Make imaginative structures.

Third and Fourth Classes

<i>Strands</i>	<i>The child should be enabled to:</i>
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the marks, lines, shapes, textures, patterns and tones that can be made with different drawing instruments on a range of surfaces. • Make drawings from recalled experiences, emphasising pattern, detail, context and location. • Express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail. • Draw from observation.
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore colour with a variety of materials and media. • Make paintings based on recalled feelings and experiences, exploring the spatial effects of colour and tone, using overlapping, and with some consideration of scale. • Express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using colour expressively. • Discover colour in the visual environment and become sensitive to colour differences and tonal variations through colour mixing. • Discover harmony and contrast in natural and manufactured objects and through themes chosen for their colour possibilities. • Discover pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects and use them purposefully in his/her work. • Explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look.
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with a widening range of printmaking techniques. • Use a widening range of print-making techniques to make theme-based or nonrepresentational prints. • Make prints for functional uses. • Use a computer art program to create original images that are not dependent on clip art.
Fabric and Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression. • Make small inventive pieces in fabric and fibre. • Make soft toys, emphasising individuality and variety.
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of clay as a medium for imaginative expression. • Make simple clay pots. • Make sturdy figures in clay using the medium expressively and with imaginative detail. • Work inventively and expressively with cubes or oblong blocks of clay. • Develop line, shape, texture and pattern in clay. • Work inventively and expressively with papier mache.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials in making structures. • Make drawings from observation to analyse the structures of buildings and the natural environment. • Make imaginative structures.

Fifth and Sixth Classes

<i>Strands</i>	<i>The child should be enabled to:</i>
Drawing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with the marks, lines, shapes, textures, patterns and tones that can be made with different drawing instruments on a range of surfaces, demonstrating increasing sensitivity and control. • Discover how line could convey movement and rhythm. • Make drawings based on themes reflecting broadening interests, experiences and feelings. • Draw imaginative themes using inventive pattern and detail. • Draw from observation.
Paint and Colour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore colour with a variety of colour drawing instruments, media and techniques. • Make paintings based on recalled feelings and experiences, and discover ways of achieving spatial effects. • Express his/her imaginative life and interpret imaginative themes using colour expressively • Paint from observation. • Become sensitive to increasingly subtle colour differences and tonal variations in natural and manmade objects. • Discover harmony and contrast in natural and manufactured objects and through themes chosen for their colour possibilities. • Discover pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects. • Explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look.
Print	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with more complex print-making techniques. • Use more complex print-making techniques to make theme based or non- representational prints. • Make prints for functional uses. • Use a computer art program to create original images that are not dependent on clip art.
Fabric and Fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of fabric and fibre as media for imaginative expression. • Make small inventive pieces in fabric and fibre. • Make simple character toys. • Design and make a costume.
Clay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and discover the possibilities of clay as a medium for imaginative expression. • Use clay to analyse and interpret form from observation. • Explore some of the essential characteristics of 3-D work. • Make simple pottery and sculpture. • Experiment with and develop line, shape, texture and pattern in low relief.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work inventively and expressively with papier mache.• Make an imaginative slab built structure.
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore and experiment with the properties and characteristics of materials in making structures.• Make drawings from observation to analyse form and structure.• Make imaginative structures

Each strand's activities are interrelated and involve perceiving and exploring the visual world and making art and looking and responding to the visual world and works of art.

Teachers can choose a range of activities from each strand for their yearly plans.

In choosing thematic content, teachers will draw on children's experience, imagination, observation and curiosity. Children should be given the opportunity to look and talk about his/her work, other children's work and artist's work.

This results in the **Making Art** and **Looking and Responding** structure in each strand. By discussing the children's work and the work of other artists the teacher can informally draw attention to the visual elements of line, shape, colour and tone, texture, pattern and rhythm, form and spatial organisation. Below are some of the questions we use to help develop the children's sensitivity to the visual elements:

Line: What kind of line do you see? Are they straight /curved? What effects are created by the lines?

Shape: What shapes do you see? Are they curved? What effects do these shapes create?

Colour and Tone: What colours do you see in the picture? Why? What effects are created?

Texture: What does the surface feel like? What materials are used? **Pattern and Rhythm:** Can you

see any patterns? Where are the patterns? **Form:** Can you see any 2-D shapes (triangle, square etc.) 3-D shapes?

Spatial Organisation: Is there a lot of space/depth in the picture?

2. Methodologies and Approaches

We support the recommendation that **Guided Discovery** is the

most appropriate teaching method for the Visual Arts as it encourages the pupils to:

- Explore the expressive potential of various media and experiment with them.
- Cultivate their own artistic interpretation of their world.
- Observe their visual environment.
- Express significant aspects of their lives in visual form and to appraise art works.

The teacher's awareness and acceptance of a broad range of visual imagery, both in children's work and in the work of artists is also important. Exposure to work from different eras, traditions and cultures as well as the Western Classical Tradition will be included in the arts programme.

Emphasis will be placed on *process* rather than product. The uniqueness of each pupil's art work or their response to the work of other artists will be encouraged and celebrated. Visual arts activities should be structured to show sequence and growth in complexity and should build on earlier experiences and skills acquired. A balance must be met between making and doing and looking and responding

Looking and Responding

Children should have opportunities to question and reflect on what they see and to become more discriminating and critically aware. The emphasis, however, should be on appreciation and enjoyment. Children will be given ample opportunity to experience a wide variety and range of art images both representational and non-representational. They will be encouraged to look and talk about his/her work, other children's work and artist's work with openness and sensitivity and will understand there are no definitive answers in art. Emphasis will be placed on discussion of qualities rather than judgement.

A spirit of enquiry may be encouraged by posing questions such as:

- How was the object or image made?
- What was it made from?
- Who made it and what did he /she intend?
- Where, when and in what social and cultural context was it made?
- What was it made for?

Children with Different Needs

The visual arts programme should provide opportunities for all children to experience success. Differentiation will occur in art lessons according to the needs of the children in the class and activities chosen by the teachers will be appropriate to the child's ability and age. Differentiation in terms of *resource* (eg. a larger paint brush), or teaching *methodology* (eg. steps in process presented visually as well as aurally), or *outcome* will be employed by the teacher as necessary. The visual arts programme should provide opportunities for all children to experience success. 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. The staff at St Michael's will make every effort to integrate the teaching of Visual Arts with other subjects in the curriculum. We encourage linkage of the 6 strands as linkage emphasises the inter-related nature of art activities. Visual arts plays an important role in the development of language through talk and discussion-the development of a visual vocabulary for looking and responding is encouraged. Aistear also provides us in St Michael's with another valuable opportunity to participate in the Visual Arts curriculum. "The use of a construction station, in keeping with the play methodologies recommended in Aistear, supports pupils' learning." 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

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. In St Michael's we consider assessment in Arts Education important as it helps to identify

learning potential and also areas of difficulty. It further enables the teacher to rate the effectiveness of the teaching programme and to choose appropriate teaching strategies. Inspection Report November 16 stated “the quality of assessment is commendable with consistent use of portfolios and pupil self-assessment approaches”

Teachers will continue to assess the progress of children by using a selection of the following assessment tools:

Teacher observation: Emphasis will be placed on observation and assessment of the child’s engagement in the art *process* rather than the product. Teachers will observe, question and monitor children during the art process. Areas for assessment might include:

- The child’s ability to choose and use materials, tools and media for a particular task or project,
- The ability to work effectively and with originality.
- The child’s expressive use of visual media in compositions and in developing form.
- The quality of the child’s responses to art works, and his/her ability to make
- The ability to make connections between his/her own work of others.
- The child’s approach to and level of involvement with a task.
- The child’s contribution to group activities.

Teachers will also monitor

- Levels of pupil participation
- Levels of pupil enjoyment
- Pupil self- assessment
- Peer assessment
- Teachers will report re progress in this subject in each pupil’s annual report.
- Inclusion of work in SALF folders
- Samples of the children’s art work are also sent home with each child. Children in all classes have an art portfolio.

As recommended by Inspectors Report “it is advised that the practice of dating work samples should be consistently observed “.

5. Equality of Participation and Access

All children shall have equal access to all visual arts activities. It is the policy in our school that all children will participate in visual art activities within the mainstream class situation. Lesson content and activities will be differentiated to meet the needs of all children.

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.

Some discretionary time may also be allocated periodically to work in the visual arts, particularly in the context of integrated project work or celebration occasions.

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 and the G.P room are used to display artwork completed by the children. As mentioned previously, the class teacher may take digital photographs of any artwork projects. Children's artwork will be displayed in the greater community when opportunity allows either through school exhibitions or involvement in Community projects. Photographs of children engaging in visual art activities will also be displayed on the school website.

8. Resources and ICT

Teachers are encouraged to purchase required art/craft materials in June each year. 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.

A collection of books pertaining to the visual arts programme are stored in Mrs Kelly's room and for the use of all staff members.

All classrooms are furnished with laptops which may be utilised for visual arts classes and projects. As highlighted in inspection report

“sufficient and appropriate concrete materials and manipulatives are available to support pupils’ learning”.

I.T. plays an important role in the development of this visual arts plan. “ The effective use of information and communications technology and the outdoor environment are praiseworthy features of provision” (Inspection Report November 2017).Digital cameras will be used to keep a record of completed projects. The internet is also a valuable resource for the teaching of visual arts, e.g. virtual tours of galleries etc. Children will also have access to the following I.T. based activities as part of the programme:

- Paint and Draw programmes.
- MS Publisher.
- Accessing gallery websites for virtual tours.
- Websites dedicated to famous artists.
- Websites for Educational Art resources.

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. 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. The layout of the classroom will be conducive to ease of movement with no dangerous objects in the way. Lighting should be adequate and the room well ventilated while work is drying.

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.

Recommendation from inspection report that pupils in every classroom should have a variety of starting points that arise from their experiences and imagination, and from observation and curiosity will be implemented.

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. According to inspection report "the whole-school focus on oral language development through visual art and on looking and responding to visual art is impacting positively on pupils' learning"

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. As highlighted in inspection report "all teachers should reference the curriculum statements for Visual Arts in their planning"

Children's progress within visual art is recorded in the individual school report cards. Individual portfolios also are a record of the children's creative and aesthetic development.

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 Sligo Education Centre is promoted and the sharing of knowledge and skills facilitated at staff meetings.

Teachers 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. The skills and expertise of all staff members will be shared in Visual Arts as in other curricular areas, through input at staff meetings, as well as on an informal basis.

Implementation - Roles and responsibilities

Class teachers are responsible for the full implementation of this visual arts plan.

12. Parental Involvement

Parents with particular skills and interests are invited to support the visual arts programme. This was successful during 2012 when a group of parents were actively involved in implementation of fabric and fibre strand. Parents 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. During 2011 and 2013 children in senior classes visited the Niland Art Gallery. 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 e.g. during 2012 two classes worked with Craft Ed Pottery which was facilitated by Sligo Teachers Centre. 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. Artists living locally or those with talent in the visual arts in the local community will be asked to support the school in our efforts to develop arts education in St Michael's N.S.. Teachers may dedicate lesson time based on internationally recognised artists and art artefacts. This may involve visits to galleries and museums.

Success Criteria

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

- Implementation will be evident in teaching and learning in the classroom.
- Continuity of content and methodology will be evident in teachers planning and monthly reports.
- Implementation of recommendations from Inspection Report November 2016.
- Teacher's preparation has been based on this plan.
- On-going evaluation should demonstrate that pupils are acquiring an understanding of the visual arts concepts and an increasing awareness of visual arts skills
- Procedures outlined in this plan have been consistently followed.

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

- Teacher feedback.
- Children's feedback.
- Parental feedback
- Inspectors' reports (most recent November 2017) and recommendations.
- Board of Management feedback.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibility:

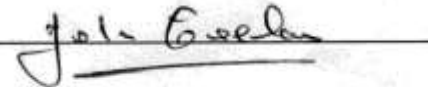
Each teacher and the staff as a group will evaluate the progress in Visual Arts by referring back to our objectives as stated in this plan. A short session at one staff meeting per year will be allocated to this work. This plan was reviewed during 2011 and 2017, subsequent changes were made to the plan.

Ratification and Communication

This plan was ratified in 2007. It was communicated to all parents and subsequently ratified. It was reviewed in 2011 and 2017.

During review 2011 the contribution made by parents who volunteered to implement this plan was noted. It is hoped that we can continue to successfully involve parents in this subject area. Review 2017 was based on findings from Inspection Report November 2016.

This plan is due to be reviewed in 2020

Signed : 
Fr Geelan