



ST. PATRICK'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Arts Education

Music



school policy

REVISED: 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 Introductory statement

This policy review was co-ordinated by the Principal, and formulated by a team of teachers within the school who share a particular interest and expertise in Music. It was developed through collaboration with all teaching staff, in consultation with the Board of Management and parent representatives.

1.2 Rationale

(ref *Curriculum, Teacher Guidelines* pp 2-3)

Music is an indispensable part of the child-centred curriculum as one of the range of intelligences and as a special way of knowing and learning. Musical activity challenges the child to act in unique ways to listen discerningly to his/her own music and the music of others, to sing, play or read sensitively and accurately, and to evaluate critically. In posing these challenges, music contributes to the development of artistic awareness, self-expression, self-growth, self-esteem and multicultural sensitivity and, therefore, to the development of the whole child.

St Patrick's National School has a tradition of nurturing and celebrating Music, and a whole-school music programme has been put in place that provides scope to maximise musical input throughout the school.

This plan, drawn up in accordance with the *Music Curriculum* (NCCA, 1999), sets out our approach to the teaching and learning of Music. It forms the basis for teachers' long and short-term planning in the school and informs teachers on the approaches and methodologies used in the school. Throughout this policy document, references are made to other school policies that may have a bearing on this plan eg Additional Educational Needs (AEN) Support, Arts Education (Visual Arts and Drama), SPHE, SESE, etc.

2. Vision and aims

2.1 School characteristic spirit / ethos

The Music programme in our school is intended to help children to develop their creativity, expressiveness and understanding through a range of activities that explore feelings, knowledge and ideas.

As noted in the school's *Mission Statement*,

... Uniqueness is valued through each child's personality, intelligence and development potential. Throughout the curriculum and beyond, individual talents, interests and potential are recognised, encouraged and celebrated, while children are taught the value of mutual support and encouragement.

... pupils are encouraged to reach their full educational potential, by developing intellectual skills combined with a spirit of inquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively, while developing expressive, creative and artistic abilities.

2.2 Aims and objectives

We endorse the aims of the *Primary Curriculum* (ref *Music Curriculum*, pp 12-13)

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

3. Planning – curriculum

3.1 Approaches and methodologies

(ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 52 - 127)

All children are actively engaged and involved in Music education throughout the school, and there is a positive musical environment that encourages and values sharing of ideas, skills and resources (ref *Teacher Guidelines*, p 29).

The approaches used to foster active, enjoyable participation in the Music curriculum and provide opportunities to enhance the children's lives through music, include

- practical in-class use of instruments and other resources;
- lessons led by specialist tutors from the *Music Generation* programme;
- whole-school assemblies;
- school choir;
- potential musical drama performances and productions;
- Seachtain na Gaeilge, and other theme weeks;
- the option of participating in after-school lessons organised through *Music Generation*, using instruments that may be rented from the school (eg violin) or purchased through *Music Generation* subsidies (eg bodhrán).

3.1.1 Listening and responding

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 53 - 69; *Music Curriculum*, Infant classes: pp 19 - 21, First and Second Classes: pp 32 - 34, Third and Fourth Classes: pp 48 - 51, Fifth and Sixth Classes: pp 66-70)

The children are provided with opportunities to listen and respond to music, experiencing a wide range of musical styles, traditions and cultures.

Teachers provide numerous opportunities for active listening and responding, including

questioning, prompting, suggesting, listening to short examples repeatedly and responding through art, literacy, drama and dance (ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 55).

The children are given opportunities to respond to music in a variety of ways that include

- moving
- talking about ...
- listening for specific instruments and/or specific features
- drawing and painting
- following/creating a pictorial score of music
- writing in response to music
- composing
- singing or playing along with music
- musical games and/or action songs.

The children work in various groupings - whole class, small groups, pairs and individually (ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 29). They are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively and co-operatively, and to offer varying and creative solutions to presented tasks (ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 69).

Opportunities for presenting through music, and for performances include

- weekly assembly
- class-led special assemblies
- seasonal musical and drama productions
- seasonal concerts and performances organised through the Music Generation programme;

Listening materials

A range of materials are available, including

- recorded music on CD, DVD, on-line etc
- percussion instruments
- environmental objects, such as assortments of metals, wood or fibres
- instruments of child/children in the class
- melodic instruments – recorder, tin whistle, piano, violin, guitar, etc
- performance of a group, ensemble, band, choir, or orchestra visiting the school or at another venue, when possible.

Selecting listening materials

A wide variety of materials are chosen for listening to, and discriminating between, environmental sounds and describing them in terms of their pulse, pitch, dynamics, duration, texture, timbre, tempo, structure and style.

Selecting recorded music

Pieces are selected according to class level and the relevant musical elements (ref p 10).

Examples include music from written and unwritten traditions, classical and folk music, music from Ireland and other countries, choral and instrumental, solo and ensemble and music for

different occasions and purposes.

3.12 Performing

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 70 - 88; *Music Curriculum*, Infant classes: pp 22 - 23, First and Second Classes: pp 35 - 38, Third and Fourth Classes: pp 52 - 57, Fifth and Sixth Classes: pp 71 - 76)

In the performing strand, emphasis is placed on the following

- active enjoyable participation
- development of skills, understanding, knowledge
- fostering of children's attitude and interests
- development of creativity.

When teaching songs, the following issues are considered:

- using voice, recording, instrument, sheet music
- teaching by ear
- matching the vocal range of the children
- resources.

Effective singing skills are developed by

- improving vocal quality through posture, mouth shape and breath control
- vocal exercises.

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 76 - 81)

The following singing skills are practised

- part singing
- teaching rounds
- partner songs (duet) and
- part songs.

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 84 - 85)

The whole-school approach on overcoming difficulties in singing or performing with an instrument is to

- work with the individual
- work within a group
- work as a whole class.

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 88)

The following approaches to music literacy may be used when performing

- graphic notation
- standard notation

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 89 - 103)

There are opportunities provided for playing instruments in all classes (ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 104 - 109), e.g. percussion instruments (all classes), hand-crafted instruments (all classes), and recorder (1st to 4th Class).

Occasions on which children may perform for an audience include

- within own class
- for other classes / whole school
- for parents
- for the wider community.

3.13 Composing

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 110 - 127; *Music Curriculum*, Infant classes: pp 24 - 25, First and Second Classes: pp 39 - 41, Third and Fourth Classes: pp 58 - 59, Fifth and Sixth Classes: pp 77 - 79)

Many opportunities are provided for children to develop their creativity in Music, when they are encouraged to improvise, discuss, evaluate and record music as part of the composing strand.

Occasions for improvisation and/or composing arise in contexts such as

- accompanying a nursery rhyme, song, poem or story
- exploring the musical concepts/elements
- experimenting with sound
- portraying a character, mood or setting
- illustrating events
- conveying an abstract concept
- exploring melody.

Children are given opportunities to compose/improvise using vocal sounds, body percussion, instruments and environmental sounds. These compositions can be recorded using both non-standard and standard notation methods as part of a whole-class, group or individual activity. Children are also given opportunities for reflection and response, based on their own personal compositions and the compositions of others.

Management issues to be considered when organising composing activities include

- allocation of space within the classroom
- the distribution and sharing of resources such as percussion instruments
- appropriate division of pupils into groups
- ensuring that appropriate guidance has been given and continues to be made available

The children help to set ground rules for creative music activities (ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 111 - 112). This, along with the management issues above, can contribute to meaningful and enjoyable composition activities for both pupils and teachers.

3.2 Strands and strand units

(ref *Curriculum* pp 14 - 79)

The three strands should be comprehensively covered and afforded equal importance.

Infant classes	
Strand	Strand units
Listening and responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring sounds • listening and responding to music
Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • song singing • early literacy • playing instruments
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvising and creating • talking about and recording compositions

First to Sixth Classes	
Strand	Strand units
Listening and responding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring sounds • listening and responding to music
Performing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • song singing • literacy • playing instruments
Composing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improvising and creating • talking about and recording compositions

Individual strands, strand units and content objectives are referenced in the *Music Curriculum* document on the following pages

- Infant Classes pp 14 - 25
- First and Second Classes pp 26 - 40
- Third and Fourth Classes pp 41 - 59
- Fifth and Sixth Classes pp 60 – 79.

Teachers seek to develop a range of musical concepts (as defined in the *Music Curriculum*):

- a sense of pulse
- a sense of duration
- a sense of tempo
- a sense of pitch
- a sense of dynamics
- a sense of structure
- a sense of timbre
- a sense of texture
- a sense of style.

In order to help to ensure continuity, progression and consistency from class to class, teachers are encouraged to plan for Music through

- discussion with the previous Class Teacher
- accessing previous long and short-term plans and reports (available from the Principal)
- referring to this whole-school policy
- referring to the *Music Curriculum* documents.

3.3 Linkage and integration

(ref *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 19 – 24; p 39)

The *Teacher Guidelines* state

The interrelated nature of the three strands of the curriculum (listening and responding; performing; and composing) lend themselves readily to integrated learning and are positively enhanced by it. For instance, the strand unit *Exploring sound*, in the *Listening and responding* strand, may lead directly to improvising in the *Composing* strand.

Teachers are encouraged to link the three strands when planning for Music, as explained above. Individual teachers adopt their own thematic approach to the teaching of Music in his/her own planning to ensure integration with other curriculum subjects.

Music is integrated in a way that complements curriculum aims and objectives in all subjects, e.g. by developing a soundtrack and movements for a story in Gaeilge, English or History; reading body language and movement; addressing emotions explored in SPHE; developing language skills through song.

Clár Ghaeilge

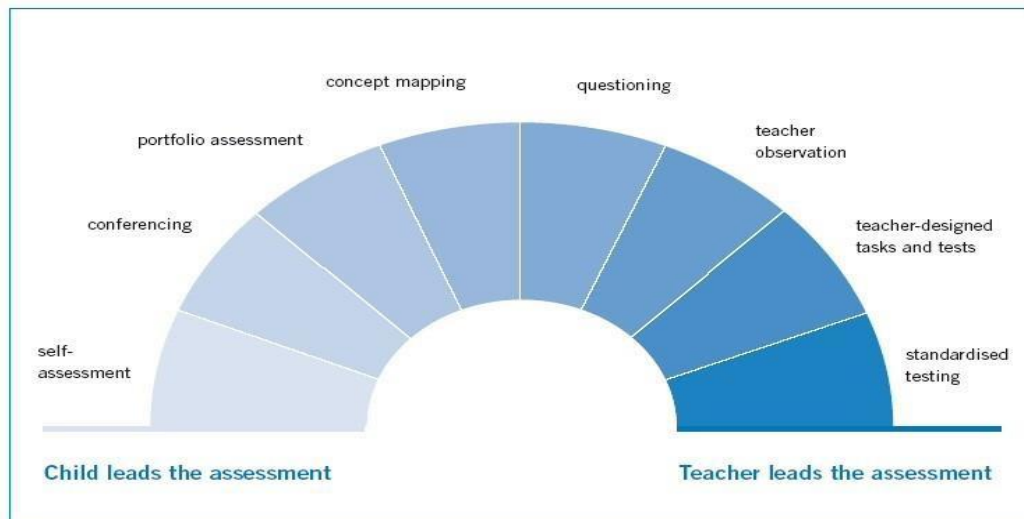
Mar chuid den Clár Ghaeilge sa scoil, bíonn seans ag gach rang taispeántais a chur le chéile sa halla do daltaí ó na ranganna eile. Bíonn reimse leathan ar na tionscadail mar shampla, le hamhráin, rince, filíocht, agus rl. Baineann gach duine an-taitneamh as na hócáidí speisialta seo.

3.4 Assessment and record keeping

(ref *Assessment and Record Keeping Policy, Assessment in the Primary School, Teacher Guidelines* (<http://www.ncca.ie/uploadedfiles/publications/assess%20%20guide.pdf>); *Primary Curriculum*, pp 82 - 89, *Teacher Guidelines*, pp 25 – 27; 124 - 127)

Assessment informs the teaching and learning of Music

- by ensuring the needs of pupils are met in building on their understanding of Music, and developing their musical ability
- by identifying both strengths and weaknesses in pupil achievement in Music
- by summarising what has been achieved so far and using this to aid future planning.



ref *Assessment in the Primary School, Teacher Guidelines*, Figure 2: A continuum of assessment methods

With reference to *Assessment in the Primary School, Teacher Guidelines*, p 13, all aspects of the Music curriculum are assessed through the use of the assessment tools, including

- teacher-designed tasks
- projects
- recordings of the children’s work
- observation.

Observation of the whole class, groups or individuals can be maximised by the teacher by

- watching their behaviour as they sing, play an instrument or create their own music
- listening to the children as they talk about the music they have listened to.

(ref *Teacher Guidelines*, p 25)

Progress is recorded by Class Teachers through

- records of classroom-based and school-based activities and productions – e.g. plays, assemblies and class performances, in accordance with the school policy on record keeping.

It is communicated to parents during individual mid-year consultations, through written end-of-year reports and in on-going communication.

The information gained from teachers’ assessment informs future planning in Music.

3.5 Children with additional educational needs (AEN)

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 40 – 41)

All children are encouraged to participate and to succeed in the acquisition of musical skills. Music activities are differentiated in order to meet individual educational needs, as appropriate. Equal opportunities will be given to all children, across all strands and activities. Where possible, activities are adapted and modified so that all children can participate meaningfully in Music

lessons and projects. It is acknowledged that some children find Music-based activities challenging in various ways, and this is addressed in individual teacher's planning and differentiated curriculum implementation, e.g. a child may have the option of being involved in the technical support element of a project, rather than performing.

A Special Needs Assistant (SNA) may have a wider role/responsibility during some musical activities, e.g. helping a child who has gross motor difficulties in the playing of instruments.

The school encourages children of exceptional ability in Music to proceed at their own pace. Such children are encouraged to develop their own projects, and teachers may aid this by designing individual or group tasks/challenges. If children are exceptionally able, the Class Teacher may encourage extra-curricular Music activity through liaison with parents.

Where special provision is required for a child with a specific disability, advice is provided (ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 40 – 41).

3.6 Equality of participation and access

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 41; school's *Equality of Participation and Access Policy*)

Music, like all Arts subjects, is considered to be an excellent vehicle for use in providing opportunities to integrate the varying culture and backgrounds of all pupils. Authentic material from other cultures is used for music activities, when possible, and includes traditional song and dance music, as well as festival/celebration music.

4. Planning – organisation

4.1 Timetable

(ref *Curriculum Introduction*, pp 67 – 70; *Teacher Guidelines* p 17 and p 39)

The official allocated time for *Arts Education* is:

- Infant classes: 2½ hours per week
- 1st-6th classes: 3 hours per week

The minimum time devoted to Music each week is one hour for 1st to 6th Classes, and 40 minutes for Infant classes. However, this allocation may be exceeded due to wide-ranging cross-curricular projects. The way in which the time is structured is dependent on the content being taught.

While Music is taught on its own, often it is integrated with other elements of Arts education. When large projects are being undertaken, it is possible that the formal time allocated for Music may be in block-form (ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 17).

4.2 Resources and equipment

Each Class Teacher has resources appropriate to their class level, and musical instruments are readily available and kept in communal storage. If more equipment or resources are required, individual teachers may request them, by applying for funding to the Board of Management or the Parent Teacher Association. Suggested supplementary resources are listed in *Teacher Guidelines* pp130 - 131, pp139 - 147.

4.3 ICT

(ref *Music Curriculum* p10, *Teacher Guidelines* pp122-123, *Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Teachers*; *ICT Acceptable User Policy* (AUP))

ICT plays an important role in the implementation of the school's Music plan. There is a high standard of ICT facilities and support within classrooms and through a dedicated ICT room, and teachers have a high standard of IT literacy. On-line resources are used to listen to instrumental sounds and musical excerpts, and to see illustrations of instruments and instruments being played. The internet is a valuable resource used as a resource in developing school musical projects, downloading songs and sheet music, and accessing musical websites.

The school has an *e-Learning and Acceptable User Policy* (AUP) to ensure safe internet usage, which must be signed by parents of all children on enrolment. Appropriate hardware and software have been installed to ensure a high safety standard, and teachers familiarise themselves with material on websites prior to its use by the children. Websites that can be accessed in the school are centrally monitored by NCTE.

Support websites:

DES	www.education.ie
Internet Safety	www.internetsafety.ie
NCCA	www.ncca.ie
NCTE (PDST)	www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie
PDST	www.pdst.ie

4.4 Health and safety

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* p 18; school's *Health and Safety Policy*)

All Music activities are organised in accordance with the school's *Health and Safety Policy*.

Consideration is given to the following when planning for Music:

- access to, and transport of, equipment/instruments;
- ventilation of the classrooms;
- amount of space for children to sit or stand when doing choral or instrumental work;
- appropriate volume levels when using audio equipment and instruments;
- provision for any additional needs.

4.5 Individual teachers' planning and reporting

This policy is available to all teachers, who are encouraged to refer to it when planning, as it aims to provide information and guidance to individual teachers for their long and short-term planning. As with all curricular areas, strands and strand units form the basis of planning in Music.

Monthly reports serve a valuable role in the review and development of whole-school and individual long-term (annual) preparation for following years. In order to ensure continuity and to avoid repetition etc, teachers' monthly reports are available for reference by colleagues when doing long-term planning.

4.6 Staff development

Teachers are encouraged to engage in professional development (CPD) courses, and to share the expertise acquired with colleagues at School Development Planning (SDP) sessions, staff meetings, etc.

Opportunities for team-teaching and other collaborative work are welcomed, e.g. in instrumental tuition such as recorder or tin whistle, and when in preparing for joint class assemblies.

The school recognises the value of specialised support curricular areas, and it is fortunate that some teachers are especially talented in various elements of Music. Staff members who have expertise and experience are encouraged to share their expertise with colleagues. Such contributions to curriculum implementation are greatly appreciated. If an individual teacher needs help and advice on the preparation and implementation of the Music curriculum, it is hoped that such support would be available within the school. Teachers may avail of internal and/or external expertise to inform and up-skill in this area, and teachers have access to reference and resource materials, instruments, equipment and relevant websites.

4.7 Parental involvement

(ref *Teacher Guidelines* pp 30-34; NCCA, *What? Why? and How?* also at www.ncca.ie; *Primary School Curriculum, your child's learning - guidelines for parents*)

Parents are aware of the nature and purpose of the Music curriculum through class-based briefings at the beginning of the school year, and through publications such as the NCCA publication on the curriculum entitled *What? Why? and How?* This is also available on-line at www.ncca.ie. All curricular areas may be discussed with parents individually during the on-going home/school consultation process that applies throughout the year.

Parents are invited to view their children's work by attending occasions such as church assembly, class/school concerts, etc. Through attending these events, parents are involved in supporting the music programme in the school.

Parents may support their children in fostering an interest in Music in the following ways

- exposing the children to various genres of music
- encouraging them to practise their instrument if one is played
- encouraging involvement in choirs, musical productions etc.

4.8 PTA Music/Arts Committee

A PTA Music/Arts Committee provide invaluable assistance in the promotion of Music throughout the school. This is provided through support for individual and small-group tuition as part of the school’s extra-curricular programme through the national *Music Generation* programme that has flourished in the school in recent years, as well as organising 2 concerts each year (Christmas and summer). These concerts provide opportunities for the children to perform in front of a full audience of school families and friends.

4.9 Community links

Community involvement in supporting the school’s Music programme is nurtured through charity and community links. Guests performers and/or tutors are always welcome, as are visits by local artists/musicians. Visits to musical productions/events are among the options for annual excursions (e.g. the Mermaid Theatre in Bray and the Pavilion Theatre in Dún Laoghaire).

5. Music Generation programme



The establishment of a PTA Music/Arts Committee coincided with the introduction of the national *Music Generation* programme (co-funded by the Ireland Fund and U2). St Patrick’s NS was one of the first applicants to *Music Generation (Wicklow)* and was successful in setting up an in-school programme as well as extra-curricular options, thanks to this support. This programme has grown and developed and now offers a comprehensive programme:

Whole-Class tuition (in-school programme)	
Programme:	Classes involved:
Foundation Music	Junior & Senior Infants
Instrumental (Recorder)	1 st - 4 th Class
Choral Music	5 th & 6 th Class
Small Group Instrumental Tuition (extra-curricular)	
Programme:	Classes involved:
Bodhrán	1 st – 6 th Class
Guitar	2 nd – 6 th Class
Recorder Orchestra	3 rd – 6 th Class
Violin	1 st – 6 th Class

6. Ratification and communication

This policy was presented for ratification by the Board of Management. Teachers receive the revised policy immediately following ratification, and the policy is available to parents through the School Office. The policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the school's Patron, on request.

7. Implementation

7.1 Roles and responsibilities

This plan was developed by a team of teachers, co-ordinated by the Principal, and developed through collaboration with all teaching staff, in consultation with the Board of Management and parent representatives. The policy is implemented by all staff throughout the school, and is reflected in all individual teachers' long and short-term planning. The policy is actively supported by the Board of Management and the Parent Teacher Association.

7.2 Timeframe

This policy was implemented immediately following its ratification by the Board of Management.

8. Success criteria

This policy supports the teaching and learning of Music throughout the school, as outlined in the aims of the Primary Curriculum (ref *Music Curriculum*, pp 12-13). Its successful implementation is monitored through:

- teachers' preparation and record keeping;
- ensuring that procedures are consistently followed;
- the end product, as seen directly through the children's work.

The outcomes of the plan are assessed through:

- feedback from teachers/parents/pupils/community
- inspectors' suggestions/reports
- feedback from second level schools

It is hoped that the plan will help to enhance pupil learning. The following indicators will be used to determine its success

- 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.

9. Review

9.1 Roles and responsibilities

Under the leadership of the Principal, those involved in the review will include representatives of ISM team, teachers, member of the Board of Management, parents, and pupils (where appropriate). Pupils' work will assist in informing the review process, and feedback from parents will help in informing the review. Subject coordinator(s), in consultation with the Principal, are responsible for checking that tasks have been completed in accordance with the agreed timeframe.

9.2 Timeframe

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the Music curriculum in the school. However, a full review of the policy is scheduled for 2023.

Signed: _____

Canon D Mungavin
Chairperson
Board of Management

Signed: _____

R Harper
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____