



Thythorn Field  
Primary School

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# Drama Policy

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# THYTHORN FIELD

## DRAMA POLICY

### Introduction

Through drama pupils are given the opportunity and encouragement to develop and demonstrate their creative talents. As with all arts, drama involves imagination and feeling, and helps children make sense of the world. It does this through the creation of imagined characters and situations, and the relationships and events that they encounter. Through engagement in drama, pupils apply their imaginations and draw upon their own personal experiences. Their increasing knowledge and understanding of how the elements of drama work enables them to effectively shape, express and share their ideas, feelings and responses, making use of language, space, symbol, allegory and metaphor. Good drama teaching will result in pupils learning about dramatic form and the content it explores.

Drama offers opportunities for participation and entertainment as well as learning and development. Across the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of drama activities, including theatre visits to develop cultural appreciation, dance workshops and clubs, and musical workshops.

At Thythorn Field, we aim to celebrate pupils' drama work in various performances each year; Christmas Nativities staged by Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils; and the End-of-Year Summer Performance staged by the Years 6 pupils. All pupils are actively involved in these performances and take on their own role, whether this be through acting, singing, creating props or aiding adults with ideas for staging and direction. We believe that creativity should be encouraged and nurtured and that drama is an excellent way for children to share their learning.

### Aims

*Like theatre, drama in schools can unlock the use of imagination, intellect, empathy and courage. Through it, ideas, responses and feelings can be expressed and communicated. It carries the potential to challenge, to question and to bring about change.*

**Jude Kelly, Theatre Director**

At Thythorn Field Community Primary School we teach drama to:

- Develop pupils' self-confidence and sense of self-worth by creating a supportive and constructive learning environment.
- Develop pupils' respect and consideration for each other by encouraging turn-taking, acknowledgement of ideas, appropriate and safe behaviour, and focused listening.
- Develop imaginative and creative processes and responses by involving pupils in a range of drama methods and activities.
- Develop the capacity to express ideas and feelings through drama by encouraging constructive responses to drama work, sharing ideas and selecting appropriate drama methods
- Provide opportunities to see and hear different types of performance and drama.
- Develop the ability to work constructively as a member of a group using skills of leadership, discussion, negotiation and the blending of different people's ideas.

- Develop oral and physical skills, including using language and movement appropriate to role, through drama activities and responding to drama.
- Enable pupils to build on skills attained and to progress their emotional and practical achievements.
- Offer pupils the opportunity to experience aspects of theatre by rehearsing and presenting their work to others.
- Develop script reading and script writing skills through structured activities and lesson plans.
- Encourage a positive school ethos.

This Policy is designed to:

- Provide a framework for the teaching of drama which ensures that each child receives his/her entitlement in the subject.
- Secure progression, both within and between the Key Stages represented in the school.
- Provide a means of achieving consistency in the way in which drama is taught throughout the school.

## **Drama and the 2014 National Curriculum**

The revised National Curriculum has a clear focus on the development of spoken language from Years 1 to 6, whilst children in the Foundation Stage follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has continued to develop its emphasis on speaking and listening, play, role play, rhyme and song. Drama skills are taught as an integral part of the English Curriculum and in a range of subjects beyond Literacy.

## **Spoken Language**

The National Curriculum for English reflects the importance of spoken language in pupils' development across the whole curriculum – cognitively, socially and linguistically. Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing. The quality and variety of language that pupils hear and speak are vital for developing their vocabulary and grammar, and their understanding for reading and writing. Teachers should therefore ensure the continual development of pupils' confidence and competence in spoken language and listening skills. Pupils should develop a capacity to explain their understanding of books and other reading, and to prepare their ideas before they write. They must be assisted in making their thinking clear to themselves as well as to others, and teachers should ensure that pupils build secure foundations by using discussion to probe and remedy their misconceptions. Pupils should also be taught to understand and use the conventions for discussion and debate.

At TFPS, all pupils are enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils are taught to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Statutory requirements which underpin all aspects of spoken language across the six years of primary education form part of the National Curriculum. These are reflected and contextualised within the reading and writing domains which follow.

Many of the activities in the framework do not specify the content or topic of the talk, so literacy or other areas of the curriculum may be the subject matter of the work set. Given the significance of speaking and listening, and language development, it is important to identify adequate curriculum time and to maximise opportunities in existing provision. Set time is set aside to develop language and communication skills through PSHE lessons, Word of the Day foci, Word Aware sessions and role play. Subject-specific vocabulary is taught in topic and stem sentences are used to develop the use of new words.

### **Drama in The Foundation Stage**

Children in Foundation Stage are introduced to drama through simple games, activity poems, role play areas, structured play, character exploration and other activities based on traditional stories, simple speaking and listening activities and the opportunity to present and respond to improvisation. Pretending to be others in imagined situations and acting out situations or stories are important activities in the dramatic curriculum for the Foundation Stage. The imaginative role-play area and other play situations provide many opportunities for very young children to experience and develop their early drama skills and knowledge, and to learn about the world.

Drama supports the development of Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals in many ways. Children can suggest their own ideas for planning and creating a role-play area. Then, as they play, the teacher or other adult can intervene sensitively as an active participant. This validates and extends the narrative of the play, supports appropriate language and allows the children to explore the power of their roles. Creative drama develops alongside imagination, confidence and language. As children engage in these drama activities they become increasingly aware of the use of space and the way body language communicates meaning.

Drama is an ideal context for children to retell and understand traditional and contemporary stories, as well as for sharing their own personal responses and ideas. They may use a stage block to represent a bridge or pretend the classroom is a giant's cave, while taking on the roles of characters they have met in the story. Good drama gives children a living context in which they can create narratives, draw on patterns of language and speak confidently. The teacher (or other adult) can support the drama's development by taking the part of a relatively low-status character in the story (teacher-in-role).

The children in our Foundation Stage has access to role play areas, lessons including teachers modelling role play activities, imaginative play and story time. Children are given opportunities to broaden their learning through active play and apply their knowledge independently. They may use their own experiences or imagine their own stories. This is facilitated by our knowledgeable practitioners, who intervene when appropriate in order to allow the play to develop further.

### **Drama in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two**

Drama at TFPS is taught as part of English and Topic lessons, where applicable, in order to allow children to make links in learning and develop further understanding of the subject or topic being taught.

During Key Stage 1, pupils move from make-believe dramatic play for themselves to a more consciously planned form of drama, which may involve communicating with an audience. Good practice at Key Stage 1 involves pupils in activities such as exploring their ideas through devising scenes or scenarios. They can work with a teacher-in-role, enacting their own stories for others

through small group playmaking, using symbolic 'costumes' and props to stimulate drama narratives. Pupils become increasingly aware of their audience and act out stories using voice, movement, gesture and basic sound effects. When they talk about dramas they have seen or in which they have taken part, they can differentiate between them and explain how effects were achieved. Hot seating with either the teacher or pupils in role is an effective way to allow children to empathise with characters in stories or from History and so, in turn, broaden opinions and language in writing.

During Key Stage 2, pupils use a wider range of dramatic devices and techniques. Increased control of voice and body means that they portray more precisely defined characters. Pupils produce work with a clear story line and structure. They become familiar with forms such as shadow puppets, mime and chorus work, and those in other media, like animation. Pupils may learn lines and write short scripts which grow out of practical exploration of a story. They make connections between broader dramatic traditions and their own work, suggesting improvements. They may also experiment with simple technical effects and equipment, such as digital camera and video.

Both improvised and scripted drama provides a strong stimulus for writing. By writing from the point of view of a particular character (writing in role) children are enabled to express their understanding of the roles, events or situations they have experienced. They can also write as young playwrights, developing their improvised drama into scripts. As a result of teachers' skilful intervention, drama helps children's writing come alive, resulting in written work that features more effective vocabulary, striking imagery, pace and style.

Exploring a story imaginatively in drama can include what may happen before the story begins or at the end, as well as beyond the events of the story. The opportunity to act out a story to others can be a highlight of the school experience for some pupils, particularly if they find other means of expression more difficult.

Drama teaching often explores issues, ideas and dilemmas relevant to pupil's lives and investigates the behaviour of individuals and the nature of relationships. It therefore makes a particular contribution to personal, social and moral education. Drama is a social activity requiring pupils to communicate, co-operate and collaborate. It fosters creativity and thinking skills, raising pupils' self-esteem and confidence through self-expression.

## **Curriculum Organisation**

Drama is occasionally taught through direct subject teaching, but more often integrated within a topic or other curriculum subject. General teaching objectives for drama activities are provided in the National Curriculum for English, with a suggested focus for teaching plus ideas for extending and reinforcing.

Drama games and other simple, discrete drama activities provide a strong basis for teachers to introduce drama to pupils. These will develop appropriate responses, an awareness of drama rules, speaking and listening skills, interpersonal skills and self-confidence whilst also ensuring that teachers' skills and confidence with the subject are being developed.

The learning of drama skills is enhanced in a variety of ways:

- By visits from touring theatre companies and Theatre in Education practitioners.
- Visits to theatres for backstage tours and to watch performances.
- Opportunities to perform in local and national theatre festivals.

- Opportunities to perform at school in assembly, for celebrations and at the end of term.
- Opportunities to attend external drama workshops.
- The use of audio-visual and IT equipment (for watching or listening to plays).

Drama is taught progressively through and across each key stage, building upon previous learning. The three interrelated activities of making, performing and responding provide a useful framework for identifying and assessing progression and achievement, and match similar categories in music: composing, performing and appraising, and in dance: creating, performing and evaluating. For the purposes of planning and assessment, making, performing and responding are treated separately, although they are frequently integrated in practice. Pupils improvising, for example, are simultaneously making, performing and responding. Similarly, the emphasis placed on each can change across the key stages. However, the principle of balance is important and teachers should aim to include aspects of each activity in their schemes of work:

**Making:** Encompass the many processes and activities employed when exploring, devising, shaping and interpreting drama.

**Performing:** Covers the skills and knowledge displayed when enacting, presenting and producing dramas, including the use of theatre technology.

**Responding:** incorporate reflecting on both emotional and intellectual reactions to the drama. This reflection is deepened as pupils gain a knowledge and understanding of how drama is created.

### **Cross Curricular Links**

There are strong links to other subjects including English, history, music, PE, PSHE and Citizenship, geography, art and religious education. Drama methods can be used within these subjects to explore a variety of roles, topics, feelings, situations and facts.

Specific aspects of all subjects can be explored using drama, such as character motivation, scenes and situations, roles, emotions, pivotal moments, debates, decisions and personal choices, and reactions or responses.

It is necessary to ensure that appropriate drama methods are selected to develop learning and enhance subject awareness.

### **Planning**

The National Curriculum for English makes specific reference to speaking and listening in Key stages 1 and 2 and provides the starting point for all schemes of work.

Additional resources, such as drama books and specialist websites, can be utilised as a source for method applications, additional lesson plans and ideas for projects.

Learning objectives are highlighted in planning and ideas and activities are noted, allowing sufficient flexibility to meet the needs and skills of individual classes and teachers

Drama-based lessons are often very flexible; teachers explain and model the activity and the children are given time to develop, rehearse, perform and reflect.

Teachers will have access to the Drama for Writing to support planning. This scheme is not to be used prescriptively as the books noted are not necessarily in line with planned topics for each year

group. However, the ideas and planning suggestions can be used and adapted so the techniques can be taught to link to current themes. The resources have been printed and will be available to all in the staff room and on the server.

## **Dimensions**

The curriculum at TFPS is designed to provide equal opportunities for all pupils regardless of differences in race, sex, religion, social or economic class. We strive to achieve cohesion and continuity in the curriculum in order to allow each child to progress easily from stage to stage.

During the course of Key Stage 2 pupils should be offered the chance to extend their drama knowledge and skills through participating in performances and school drama sessions, both of which can be offered either during or after school hours.

It is our policy to ensure inclusion and equality of opportunity. For the most part we are able to do this by:

- Providing experiences which are appropriate to the individual child.
- Ensuring that the child has the resources necessary to carry out the work.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development**

Through the vast subject that English is, there are great opportunities to develop opportunities for SMSC. For example:

- The studying of different texts - classical, contemporary, serious, funny can provide challenging starting points and give an appreciation of the beauty of great language and literature.
- Exposure to great literature and poetry and its place within a culture can lead to appreciating moral or social aspects, for example Dickens social commentary or knowing that we can learn a lot about other cultures from its writing.
- Drama and stories which create opportunities for moral judgements.
- Shared activities – shared reading, group drama, corporate writing that lead to an understanding of an appreciation of the importance of the group and other people's point of view.
- Knowledge of our language and its influence on our culture and the importance and value of other languages and cultures.
- Awareness of traditional tales and their cultural background.

## **Teaching and Learning**

Much of the work in drama is rooted in the children's own experiences of early and structured play. Pupils are helped to draw on these experiences in order to develop skills, concepts, knowledge and understanding in drama.

Drama is taught through a variety of conventions which achieve the general teaching objectives of writing and performing drama, improvisation and role play, and responding to drama. Methods to be used include working in role, hot-seating, freeze frame, communal voice, conscience alley and teacher-in-role.

All children are encouraged to learn and use correct drama terminology when discussing ideas and expressing opinions on drama they have experienced or observed, including improvisations and performances given by other children.

All Key Stage 2 pupils have the opportunity to take part in extra-curricular groups and the chance to perform in full-scale productions. Shakespeare Club will take place one a week in the Autumn Term in preparation for the Shakespeare School Festival in November of each year. As part of this, children in Key Stage 2 develop and rehearse an abridged version of a Shakespeare Play and then perform it at a professional theatre.

In class drama, children may work in groups, pairs, or as individuals during drama activities such as improvisation and role play. The class teacher may work with these groups/individuals, but more often will use a whole-class approach.

### **Assessment and Recording**

Assessment will take the form of classroom observation whilst children are devising, performing or assessing drama in order to determine the quality of their work and to what extent they are meeting learning outcomes. It will also take the form of questioning, during and after the drama, in order to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of a concept.

Where appropriate pupils should be involved in their own assessment in order that they develop a capacity to appraise, reflect upon, respond to and talk about their own learning using appropriate drama terms.

To ensure progression in each key stage, pupils should be able to:

- Explore and research ideas, issues, plays and other texts such as diary entries, poems, photographs, films and a variety of drama skills and techniques.
- Devise, improvise paintings, using, shape and structure dramas of different kinds.
- Use drama skills and knowledge to interpret a range of texts, for example play-scripts, pictures or stories.
- Prepare and perform both scripted and devised dramas for various audiences, using a selection of media.
- Use and develop their knowledge of drama from different times and cultures, as well as classic and contemporary practice.
- Reflect on, evaluate and analyse the structure, meaning and impact of their own work and the work of others as both participant and audience.

The National Curriculum for English is used to inform teacher assessment at the end of the academic year.

Progress will also be seen through linked work in Topic and English.

All work is assessed according to the school's marking policy and this includes rewards for achievements through the school's award system for individual pupils.

### **Resources**

All children should have equal access to a range of basic drama equipment, to be collected by the subject co-ordinator. This could include bean bags, blindfolds, a shoe, a bunch of keys, a tambourine, a whistle, an empty box, a comb, a large piece of material, a hand puppet, a selection



of hats, a letter or postcard, a character costume, an interesting prop - such as a walking stick - and a selection of photographs.

Classroom teachers also collect items which may be used as a stimulus for drama activities, such as poems, stories, fables, myths, songs, musical extracts, play-scripts, historical documents and photocopies of works of art.

Additional staff members will be available to provide support during rehearsals and performances of school productions and presentations.

All children should have access to appropriate hall or studio time for practical drama sessions.

Teachers should speak to the Drama Co-ordinator if they require any supporting texts, resources or scripts in order to deliver lessons effectively.

### **Monitoring & Review**

Individual teachers are responsible for the standard of children's work and for the quality of their teaching in English. Staff meetings often focus on teaching in learning in various subjects and Drama will be reviewed as part of English. Examples of planning can be shared and reflected on. Monitoring of progress will be undertaken by both the English and Drama co-ordinators and findings will be shared with teachers and support staff swiftly.

### **Extra-Curricular Opportunities**

Each year the children in Key Stage 2 will be given the opportunity to audition to be part of the Shakespeare Club. This group of children will take part in a performance at a professional theatre as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival and gain first-hand experience of what goes into a professional production. The focus will be on Pupil Premium children as there are many studies which indicate that drama ameliorates engagement and attainment in Pupil Premium children.