**SCHOOL MUSIC PLAN** 

At our in-school planning day, all staff agreed that:

* Music is for all teachers and for all pupils;
* The three strands of the Music Curriculum (listening and responding, performing, and composing) are equally important;
* Active enjoyable participation is fundamental to the music curriculum;
* Music enhances the child’s life.

We agreed as to how these messages relate to current practice in our school:

* All of our teachers are involved in music education in our school.
* All children are included.
* Teachers and children enjoy music in our school.

**Staff Reflection:**

The teachers reviewed the teaching in our school of the three strands of the Music Curriculum –i.e.(i) Performing, (ii) Listening and Responding, and (iii) Composing. All teachers are following The Right Note Music series, level one to level four(Junior Infants – Sixth class). All teachers agreed that this music series provides a range of enriching activities that embody the three strands of performing, listening and responding and composing, as prescribed by the Revised Music Curriculum for primary schools. The Right Note series is based on a thematic approach, using a different theme for each month of the year.

Teachers felt that all strand units are satisfactorily dealt with throughout the whole year and all teachers follow The Right Note music series planning template in the Teacher’s Manual throughout the year. Some teachers may also use their own music material to supplement teaching of The Right Note and also teach their own class an instrument such as Tin Whistle during the school year.

Approaches and Methodologies:

**Performing: Song Singing**

Children will generally sing as a whole group in the performing strand. The teacher’s voice or a c.d. will be used to guide the children in learning new songs. Children may also be divided into groups to sing songs with rounds/ two parts/ three parts/ two parts with melodic instruments playing the third part/ melody and harmony. Children may sing individually if they wish to do so and if they are comfortable in doing so. Our teachers are aware that the range of notes of a song should be within the range of children’s voices. Some of our teachers teach a song by ear—i.e. using their own voice—which is seen as the best method. Others use a melodic instrument, which also works very well. Some teachers use a recording to teach songs. Teachers are aware of the fact that some of the songs in the Alive-O Religion programme are pitched too high for the children’s voices.

**Performing: Playing instruments/ Literacy**

In the case of early music literacy, playing instruments and literacy, it is felt that direct teaching is initially vital. When sufficiently familiar with the material, the children will then be encouraged to devise their own rhythm patterns. Improvising and creating will involve team work and group activities designed by the pupils themselves. It was decided to introduce both tonic solfa and staff notation into the school in a phased manner in accordance with The Right Note Music series, to facilitate music exercises and develop pupils’ music literacy. All children are given the opportunity to use the percussion and melodic instruments which are available in the school. Opportunities are also provided for children to perform for an audience, in their own class and for other classes.

**Listening and Responding:**

Teachers’ will use the guided discovery approach in this strand. Children will learn about the four families of instruments in accordance with the Right Note Music series plan for each class. Children in our school are provided with opportunities to listen and respond to music by experiencing a wide range of musical styles, traditions, and cultures. Our teachers provide opportunities for active listening and responding by questioning, prompting, suggesting, listening to short examples repeatedly, etc. in line with Teacher Guidelines p.55. Children are given opportunities to respond to music in a variety of ways which include: moving, talking about it, 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 action songs. Children are provided with opportunities to work in different groupings: whole groups, small groups, pairs, and individually; children are especially encouraged to work collaboratively and co-operatively.

**Composing:**

Initially teachers will introduce the composing strand as a whole class activity and pupils will engage in collaborative learning. In time pupils will learn to compose their rhythms, melodies, lyrics, sequence, body percussions sequences and rhythms, in groups, pairs and individually. Children are encouraged to improvise, discuss, evaluate, and record music as part of the Composing Strand. Opportunities are provided to improvise and/or compose in a variety of contexts—e.g. to accompany a rhyme, song, poem, or story; to explore the musical concepts/elements; to experiment with sound; to portray a character, mood or setting; to illustrate events; to convey an abstract concept; to explore melody. Children are given opportunities to compose/improvise using vocal sounds, body sounds, instruments, and environmental sounds.

Children are given opportunities to contribute to the setting of ground rules for creative music activity: when organising composing activities, teachers refer to pp.111-112 of Teacher Guidelines.

**Integration:**

Gaeilge (le amhráin, rannta, scéalta);

English (oral language, new music vocabulary, stories);

Mathematics (number songs and rhymes);

History (development of music and instruments through the ages, lives of famous composers, different traditions);

Geography (origins of instruments, music from different countries, cultural links);

P.E. (dance: appreciation of various genres of music and dance styles).

R.E.(songs for assembly, schools masses, Communion, Confirmation, graduation mass)

Through actively completing the strand units of the music curriculum, the children should be enabled to develop a deeper understanding of the musical concepts.

Children in the middle and senior end of the school may learn a musical instrument. Tin whistle is the main instrument that children may learn in our school. Children also have access to playing piano in room 9 and 10, both rooms have pianos in the class.

Teachers may decide to have plays/ musicals either at Christmas or at the end of the school year. Children will be involved in the performing and composing strands by participating in these plays/musicals.

Sixth Class children may compose and perform songs for their end-of-year Mass, and the students will be encouraged to play instruments and sing for that event.

**Whole School Reflection**:

Teachers felt that there was continuity, progression, and consistency from class to class in what we have planned. When passing on their class, each teacher verbally informs the new teacher of children’s ability and progress in music over the previous year.

The school adopts a thematic approach at certain stages of the year: e.g. the seasons of Autumn, Winter, Spring, and Summer; Halloween; Christmas; St. Patrick’s Day; Green Flag Day. These occasions provide ready-made opportunities for integration and cross-curricular activities. Music is integrated with other subjects in ways that complement curriculum aims and objectives in both subjects.

We have a good bank of resources built up in the school. There is a piano in room 9 and 10. A keyboard is also stored in the school if any teacher wishes to use it. Boxes of percussion instruments are stored in Ms. Sadleir’s room and all classes have access to these instruments whenever they wish. More instruments may be added to the percussion box every so often if instruments are broken or are in need of repair.

All teachers agree with the aims and objectives of the Music curriculum as stated on pages 12 and 13 of the Curriculum Book, and add one more aim: to use music as a learning tool/aid in our school.

All teachers are familiar with the musical concepts of pulse, duration, tempo, pitch, dynamics, structure, timbre, texture, and style.

The Role of our Teachers: Our teachers establish a musical environment that embraces the approach to music in the school and that links naturally with other areas of the curriculum. We devise a programme of work that seeks to meet the needs of all the children in the class. We provide a range of musical experiences through a variety of approaches. We provide linkage between the three strands. We facilitate, motivate, and respond to the children’s work. We evaluate the programme and assess the children’s work. We participate in listening, singing, playing, and improvising activities. The teachers have taken responsibility for the general organisation of the teaching of music in the school. Their co-ordinating roles include functions such as: creating a positive musical environment; assisting colleagues in the preparation of schemes of work and in subsequent implementation; school visits and tours and musical events; maintaining and monitoring resources in the school.

**Assessment:**

Teachers are aware that assessment is needed to determine where adjustments are needed in instruction: that assessment for learning goes hand-in-hand with assessment of learning. The assessment tools that our teachers use include: teacher observation, teacher-designed tasks and tests, projects, curriculum profiles, recording of the children’s work, graphic/pictorial scores. Our teachers understand the importance of having clear learning objectives for each music class.

Teacher’s observations feed directly back into the teaching and learning process, emphasising areas of weakness or strength in the children’s achievement, providing useful summative information and guidelines for future planning.. When assessing the three strands, teachers refer to pp.125-127 of Teacher Guidelines.

**Children with Different Needs**:

Our teachers adapt and modify activities so that all children can participate meaningfully in classroom music, and they refer to pp.40-41 of Teacher Guidelines.

**Equality of Participation and Access**:

In planning and implementing the music programme, our teachers promote equal access to music-making among boys and girls. They work in accord with our school’s Equality Policy, and Teacher Guidelines p. 41.

**Timetable:**

The time allocated to music is spread over number of days, rather than as a single block.

**Resources:**

Every class has their own c.d. player, laptop, interactive whiteboard**,** The Right Note music series level one – four. Teachers may have built up their own bank of musical resources also. Percussion instruments are stored in Ms. Sadleir’s room.

**Information and Communications Technology:**

The teachers realise that children’s understanding and experience of music can be broadened and enriched in various ways through the use of ICT. Many programmes encourage active listening, musical playing and meaningful composing, and heighten the relationships between the Listening and Responding, Performing, and Composing strands.

Interactive Whiteboards in all classrooms supply high-tech support for a range of graphic, textual, and sound sources which can greatly enhance understanding in music.

**Health and Safety:**

When planning for music, consideration is given to the following:

* Hidden dangers if children are moving about the classroom;
* Storage facilities;
* 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.

**Individual Teachers’ Planning and Reporting**:

Teachers refer to the whole school plan, the music curriculum and The Right Note music series to provide information and guidance for their long and short term planning. They plan using the strands and strand units, and a thematic approach as in The Right Note Music series plan. The Cuntas Míosúil plays a part in reviewing and developing the whole school plan and individual planning, by the Principal’s monitoring of work completed by individual teachers and suggesting improvements.

**Staff Development**:

Teachers have access to reference books, resource materials, instruments, equipment, and websites dealing with music. School personnel are encouraged to research new methodologies, try out materials /instruments, and assess whether or not they should be purchased. Information about in-service courses, school visits, and musical events are communicated to all. Time is allocated at staff meetings to discuss aspects of the music curriculum. Colleagues, who may need assistance, are given help and advice on the preparation and implementation of the music curriculum.

**Parental Involvement**:

Parents are asked to give support to their children’s music activities by encouraging active listening, discussing attitudes towards and taste in music, allowing time and space to practise or improvise on an instrument, and by encouraging positive attitudes to music in general and to school-based activities in particular. Parents are sometimes invited to attend school or classroom music events, playing the role of critical listeners or supportive audience members for children’s performance, or assisting in the supervision of movements of children. At times, the skills of parent-musicians are included when planning for live performances or when creating a class composition. At times also, the Parents’ Association are involved in the organisation of workshops by visiting musicians.

**Community Links:**

There are musicians in the locality that can work with the children and/or perform for the children, and, on special occasions, if they are invited to do so. Children may be brought to such places as the University Concert Hall in University of Limerick to listen to and appreciate music.

**Success Criteria**:

This plan is intended to make a difference to the learning and teaching of music in our school. We will know that the plan has been implemented when teachers’ preparations are based on this plan, and when procedures in this plan have been consistently followed.

We will know that the plan has achieved its aims when:

* 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 range 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, I C T, and traditional music notation;
* Children improvise and create music using a variety of sound sources;
* Children talk about, evaluate, and record their work.

**Implementation:**

Roles and Responsibilities—

The plan will be implemented and developed by the teachers, and supported by the Board of Management. The principal will co-ordinate and monitor the progress of the plan in the classrooms by formal and informal discussions with the teachers, encourage and accept feedback on its implementation, and report to staff on findings.

**Review:**

It will be necessary to review this plan on a regular basis to ensure optimum implementation of the music curriculum in the school. The review will provide an opportunity to report on findings and to take feedback from staff. The

Reviewed September 2017.

Ratified by BOM October 2017.

Signed: Patrick O’Toole

Chairperson (B.O.M)

Signed: Miriam Foley

Principal

Date: 4/10/2017