

## What is listening and responding?

Children's exploration of a variety of sounds and genres of music is central to the Listening and Responding strand of the Music curriculum. Emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for children to become 'active listeners' and enabling them to respond to and create sounds.

Music is a unique way of knowing, whose medium is sound. In the Primary School Curriculum 1999, the Listening and Responding strand seeks to provide opportunities for children to be immersed in sound and to have frequent 'sound' experiences. It aims to enable the child explore the nature and quality of sounds and how sound can be produced. Children are provided with structured opportunities which will enable them develop increasing awareness of different types of sounds.

Such awareness requires and develops the skills of active listening. As children engage with activities in the Exploring Sounds strand, they begin to imitate, identify and describe the sounds. They apply what they have experienced by creating their own sounds from the sound sources, all of which are the building blocks for composing.

The listening skills which are developed here encourage increased sensitivity to musical works and permeate the other strands of the curriculum such as the development of skills in literacy, song singing and playing instruments. Children bring these active listening skills to experiences in listening and responding to music. They are encouraged to listen to a wide range of music, incorporating music from different traditions and sources. The key focus is on children's response and they are afforded opportunities to respond to the music in a variety of ways, including moving, talking, illustrating or by composing in response.

The Listening and Responding strand comprises two strand units:

- Exploring Sounds
- Listening and Responding to Music

**Exploring Sounds** involves listening to, and creating sounds from a wide variety of sources including the environment, the voice, the body and instruments.

**Listening and Responding to Music** focuses on active participation by the child in experiencing an extensive range of music and responding to the music in a variety of ways.

The actions of listening and responding are not confined to this strand or strand units. IT can be rooted in a meaningful and relevant context when incorporated into activities in the other strand units, such as listening to songs being sung or to compositions which children have created.

(See articles and suggested activities below on each of the two strand units)