

Let's play!

Very significant dimensions are added to music learning through playing both percussion and melodic instruments and children gain access to a wider realm of musical experiences.

Music learning is enhanced by giving children opportunities to play instruments. Experiences in other areas of the Music curriculum can be consolidated as children engage with instrument playing and many skills learnt can be applied in this context.

Playing Instruments supports development in musical literacy. As the Teacher Guidelines state (p104), 'Very significant dimensions are added to music learning through playing instruments as the child sees, hears and feels rhythm and pitch relationships'. Objectives from the Playing Instruments strand unit focus on playing instruments to accompany songs and (beat or rhythm) and on identifying and performing simple tunes by ear or from notation, complementing skills being learnt under the Literacy strand unit.

Musical experiences are broadened as children engage with Playing Instruments. Children, whether playing from memory or from notation, can express the music in a personal way and experience the musical intentions of a wide variety of composers. They can use instruments as vehicles for improvising and creating their own music. In addition to learning the craft of playing a particular instrument, they also have opportunities to explore the sound possibilities of instruments in Exploring Sounds and in Composing.

The Playing Instruments strand unit refers to both percussion and melodic instruments.

Percussion instruments may be tuned or untuned. Melodic instruments at primary level may include tin whistle, recorder, keyboard, chime bars, among others.

Care should be taken in the selection of these instruments and in their use in the school. Many approaches to teaching children to play instruments are outlined and it is important for schools to adopt a consistent approach throughout the school. In choosing approaches, the Teacher Guidelines (p105) suggest that 'Ideally, approaches to teaching and learning should aim to be musical rather than mechanistic..'. It goes on to state that 'the teacher should aim to integrate the skills, concepts and understanding already acquired in other aspects of the Music curriculum with the instrumental programme'

(See Teacher Guidelines appendices p130- list of Musical Instruments Suitable for Primary Schools)

(See PPDS Website- Note on Playing Tin Whistle; Activities for Percussion Instruments; Sound Files-Marches and Waltzes)