



## Music completes the child

**T**he Primary Music Curriculum advocates that children develop musical concepts in an age appropriate manner. It advocates that they sing, play instruments, listen to music, compose music, and play musical games throughout their primary school education. Yet for many teachers this proves a real challenge. They get the theory behind the music curriculum. They understand its particular holistic value especially as a creative art. Nonetheless, lack of self-perceived personal musical ability inhibits them from fully embracing music in their classroom.

However, help is at hand from Ceol Ireland, a not-for-profit organisation, working across the four provinces of Ireland. Ceol is currently working with over 160 teachers who teach 4,500 children, enabling them to learn and to teach music of the highest quality within their classrooms. Their children are thriving, not just in music, but in language, maths and science. This supports international research which shows evidence of the co-relationship between early music education and competencies in creative thinking and the sciences.

Having tried and tested many approaches, since 1998, and wanting to reawaken the dormant musical heritage of its home town in West Dublin,

Ceol started to record what worked best. Following research and piloting, in 2006 and 2007, Ceol began to offer professional development training to classroom teachers (from junior infants up), bringing on board a team of experts to create new and innovative teaching methods. These innovations gave birth to the Giusti Approach to music education, which focused on the development of musical fluency, teaching children to listen, speak, read and write the language of music, from the youngest age.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland challenged Ceol to take the Ceol model and to roll it out across the country. The results of national piloting were outstanding, showing stunning success. Teachers who had once been fearful of teaching music were now enjoying their music class, through the use of the Ceol scripted lesson plans and materials, and through the regular professional development sessions, provided by the Ceol team.

The Ceol Giusti approach has two elements:

1. training; and
2. lesson plans and materials.

The training session for teachers is ideally done in geographic clusters. Junior teachers come together, in an area, for two hours in September, where the Ceol trainer introduces them to



Children enjoying making music with Ceol

the 'Curriculum focus' and the 'How to' and takes them through the first six weeks of lesson plans. They are then given the lesson plans, CD of songs and all resource materials to be implemented in the following six weeks. The trainer returns to the cluster of teachers in November, reviews the past six weeks, troubleshoots and trains for the following six weeks. This process continues every six weeks, totalling five training sessions and 30 weeks of lesson plans and materials. This completes stage one, foundation level. This is suitable for junior infants up to second class.

The following year, stage two is conducted in the same way as

stage one and is designed for teachers of children who have completed stage one. Ceol does not train or supply stage two until the children have completed stage one. Teachers who have not done the stage one training and are training for stage two, receive a booster, up-skilling session, before starting stage two.

The weekly materials and plans build slowly, week-on-week, in small incremental steps, focussing on each strand of the curriculum. Training and lesson plans are in both Irish and in English.

Endorsements and very positive feedback have been received from all schools using Ceol. For example, Ena Morley, St Ultan's NS, Dublin 10, says that Ceol has had an astonishingly profound and comprehensively positive effect on her children; Anne Dempsey, St Conleth's, Newbridge, Co Kildare, wrote to the Minister for Education and Science, listing the virtues of the Ceol programme; Marita Kerin, Head of Music Education Department, TCD, wrote a glowing assessment of the Ceol programme; and, Eibhlin Grant, CIT Cork School of Music, has been a great champion of Ceol in Cork.

For further information on Ceol see [www.ceolireland.ie](http://www.ceolireland.ie) or contact the Ceol support team on 087 9036139.