

Cremin, Nora, 1999, *Music Education in Irish Primary Schools: Issues and Challenges*.

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation undertakes a study of music education in Irish primary schools. It is an opportune time to conduct such a study as the revision of the 1971 curriculum is due within the year. A strong case is being made in this study to justify the inclusion of music and its proper implementation on the primary school curriculum. The role of music in children's education is explored extensively and the reasons why music is fundamental in achieving the aims of the 1971 curriculum are identified.

The historical background to the teaching of music, before and after Independence and the introduction of the new child-centred 1971 curriculum is dealt with. The music programme in the 1971 curriculum with its integrative properties is described in detail. The implementation of the curriculum, teacher education both pre-service and in-service and music consultancy as practised in England are investigated. The Preview of the music programme in the revised curriculum is dealt with briefly. This Preview shows that the teaching of music in the primary schools is taking new directions. A study is then conducted to investigate the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers of music in primary schools in the Munster area. The instrument used is a questionnaire which was sent to 185 teachers in 25 schools in Munster.

It is clear from the results that there are many inadequacies in the system, and a compelling need to get it right now that we are on the threshold of the launch of the revised curriculum. The problems, challenges and recommendations are all detailed in chapter five. The goodwill is there among the teachers, but unfortunately the subject is not, in general, receiving satisfactory attention for a variety of reasons. The survey indicates clearly that unless recommendations such as those mentioned in chapter five are implemented, the revised programme in music will also fail.

The Expert Advisory Group on the content and duration of pre-service teacher education in the colleges of education (including teaching practice) invited submissions from interested groups in a notice in the daily newspaper on 6th May 1999 (Appendix E). This writer responded and photocopied the relevant findings of the survey in chapter four and all of chapter five and submitted them to the Department of Education on 10 June 1999. It is to be hoped that the findings of this and similar studies might be instrumental in creating a climate of opinion in Irish primary education where music would, at last, receive its due recognition.