

Musical washing lines are a popular acoustic addition to the school grounds. Composed simply of a washing line strung with home-made musical instruments, they are a colourful, cheap and easy feature for any school to make, and offer opportunities for informal learning through play. The instruments themselves can be made from almost anything that makes an interesting noise – copper piping, old tin cans, plant pot trays, saucepans, buckets, shells, dried gourds or natural seed pods.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Foundation Stage 1,2,3,6

Art & Design

KS1 – 1ab, 2ab, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS3 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

Design & Technology

KS1 – 1abcde, 2abcde, 3ab, 4ab, 5abc

KS2 – 1abcd, 2abcde, 3abc, 4ab, 5abc

KS3 – 1abcdefgh, 2abcde, 3abc, 4abcd, 6ab, 7b

Music

KS1 – 1abc, 2ab, 3ab, 4abcd, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2ab, 3abc, 4abcd, 5abcde

KS3 – 1abc, 2ab, 3abc, 4abcd, 5abcde

HOW TO MAKE a Musical Washing Line

The instruments for the musical washing line in the Growing Schools Garden were made by Windmill First School, Worcestershire and Loddon Special School, Hampshire. To make a washing line for the show garden, we used thick garden rope supported by treated hazel posts painted with leaf patterns drawn in pastels and decorated with brightly coloured string. The posts were sunk into the ground and set in place with dry-mix cement. Garden rope was then tied between the two posts to make a strong, sturdy washing line.

If you want to give the washing line an extra sound dimension, use an old metal down-pipe to make a speaking pipe. This consists of a giant 'U-bend', the bottom part of which is buried under the ground. It works like a telephone, so when a child speaks into one end the sound comes out of the other. These pipes can be purchased, but they are also easy and cheap to make yourself.

Windmill First School made instruments from old pots and pans which were painted in bright colours and strung up with wooden spoons to use as drum sticks. Use a good quality metal paint, such as multi-crom translucent paints, Hammerite or metallic model paints which will last longer outside.

Loddon School made wind chimes, tambourines, shakers and rattles. To make a tambourine, superglue two plastic plant pot saucers face together (use saucers made from 'soft' rather than 'brittle' plastic with rims rather than straight sides). Decorate with acrylic or plastic paints. Once it is dry, carefully drill eleven small holes at evenly spaced intervals, through the outer rims of the saucers (this should be done by an adult). Thread a short length of galvanised wire through ten of the holes, attach a sleigh bell to the piece of wire and secure tightly. Attach a longer piece of wire through the final hole with which to hang up the tambourine.

To make rattles, take four recycled tin cans of different sizes. Remove any sharp edges with a metal file or cover with duck tape. Decorate the cans with metal paints and, once they are dry, drill a hole in the bottom

of each. Thread the cans onto a length of wire by size, starting with the smallest. Secure a washer or bead on both sides of the hole to stop the cans slipping up and down the wire. Attach a dolly peg to the bottom of the wire for the children to rattle the cans with.

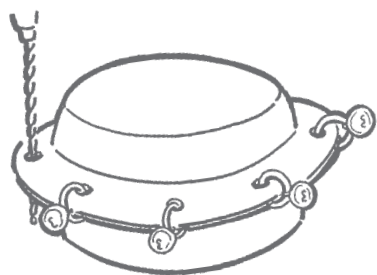
To make the shakers, fill three different-sized pieces of strong plastic piping with shells, buttons and beads. Superglue stoppers to the end and decorate the tubes with plastic paints. Screw a small eyelet through each end of the tube and superglue in place. Once they are dry, thread thin garden rope through the eyelets and attach to the washing line.

The wind chimes created by Loddon were made from old copper piping, which looked attractive and made a beautiful sound. You will need six pieces of copper piping of different lengths, five to hang down and one horizontal piece to which the others are attached.

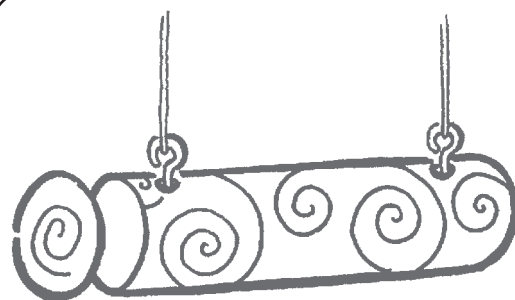
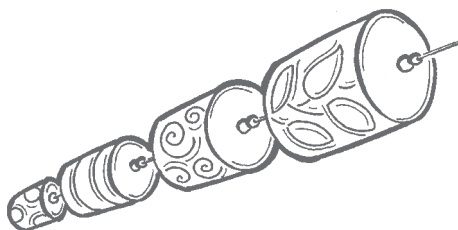
The hardest part of making wind chimes like these is drilling a series of holes along such a narrow piece of pipe. Wear protective goggles and clamp the pipe in a vice to stop it slipping. Drill five holes evenly along the length of each piece of piping, passing right through both sides. Attach sleigh bells to the piping by threading wire through each hole, then attach each individual pipe to the horizontal piece of pipe to complete the wind chime.

Suspend the instruments from the washing line with garden rope, and attach sticks, wooden or metal spoons to act as drum sticks.

Tambourine



Tin can rattler



Shaker

Musical washing line and alternative washing line with underground sound pipe



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All the items required to make a musical washing line can be obtained from scrap yards, junk shops or the local DIY store for minimal cost.