



AT OBERLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, Taylor Macfee (above) played her flute during class while Channing Farr (below) played the drum. The sixth graders took turns playing their pieces during band class on a recent Friday to show what they had learned.



Herald staff photos by Kimberly Davis

Band kids learn to play at school

The sixth graders all waited for their turn.

Most had their instruments in their hands, touching the keys to the song as they waited and listened to the rest of the class, although there wasn't any sound coming out.

It was Friday afternoon, and each member of the band at Oberlin Elementary School was preparing to show teacher Christie Morris how well they could play their piece.

Mrs. Morris weaved around the chairs as she listened to each band member. After they played, some went on to the next highest level while others received help from their teacher with a difficult part.

Each week, the students play one piece by themselves for Mrs. Morris. If they pass, they get another piece to study for the next week and a weekly award. If the student doesn't pass, they get to try it again for the next week.

This year, Mrs. Morris said, she has 24 students in the fifth-grade band and 18 in the sixth grade. The students meet each afternoon, learning new songs both together and individually.

Mrs. Morris said in the fifth grade, she tries to teach the students the foundations of music, proper posture and position of their instruments, counting, breathing and how to listen and play together. In the sixth grade, she added, she tries to teach the students more advanced rhythms, the balance of sound and more challenging music.

The grade-school band holds two concerts a year, one at Christmas and one in the spring.

"Band is important," said Mrs. Morris, "because it builds leadership and camaraderie, teaches self discipline, and is a creative outlet and an activity that uses both parts of the brain."

The students' next concert will be Thursday, May 3. Mrs. Morris said



IN BAND CLASS, Oberlin Elementary sixth grader Dannay Rhein played her clarinet when it was her turn.

the sixth-grade band has already started to prepare with Tuesday and Thursday rehearsals and the fifth graders will start in March.

Some of the sixth graders have taken advantage of the opportunity to play for the Oberlin Rotary Club

and the school pep band.

"I love the fact that band members, through their weekly awards," said Mrs. Morris, "will stretch themselves as far as they can to improve and become better and stronger players."