THE TREEHOUSE SCHOOL
The Treehouse Trust
Nature, Nurture & Nourishment

Curriculum, Learning and Teaching Policy

This policy was updated in Feb 2026.

The policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Trustee with responsibility – Sheri Abel, Quality of Teaching Team.

The Treehouse Trust's Vision
We aim to influence and change the education system in the UK, demonstrating that an alternative, contemporary model can equip children with the confidence and aptitudes they need to respond positively to the opportunities and challenges of the rapidly changing world in which we live and work.

The Treehouse Trust's Mission
Founded in 2012, The Treehouse is committed to providing the best primary school experience for children and their families through its innovative child-centred approach. Over time, children thrive, becoming autonomous learners, well prepared for the next phase of their educational journey, and later, for the world of work, leisure, and relationships.

The Treehouse School aims to:

- promote the well-being of all children, through a stimulating, enriching educational environment, in which they are happy and thrive.
- provide and create learning opportunities that challenge children physically and mentally, stimulate interest and imagination, and lead to high levels of engagement both indoors and outdoors, onsite and offsite.
- enhance the emotional, social, physical, creative and intellectual development of each child.
- provide children with the time and opportunity to explore their own interests, and to make their own decisions and choices, developing their capacity to work independently.
- encourage children to explore, appreciate and respect their environment, becoming responsible citizens of the future.
- develop children's confidence and self-esteem, promoting positive attitudes and respect towards themselves and others.

The Curriculum

Fundamentally, like any other educational establishment, our goal is to ensure that children experience a broad and balanced 'diet' through which they make good or better progress, in all areas of their development. Our challenge has been, and continues to be, to find the best, most effective and efficient way to do this.

We believe that the most effective learning takes place when children have high levels of well-being and engagement. This is best achieved when children are exposed to a range of experiences, and given the time, space and support to make sense of them, as well as giving them time to pursue those areas that are of interest to them. This experiential approach focuses on the development of competencies in children rather than their ability to amass facts and knowledge and learn isolated sets of skills.

We believe our efforts as educators should contribute to developmental changes, resulting in shifts in children's capabilities visible in 'real life' in a wide array of contexts, and in the way children handle new situations. We also endorse the idea that the competencies we wish to develop in our children are complex; consisting of dispositions, attitudes, concepts, knowledge, skills and understanding, all of which interlink. Therefore, much of our provision consists of providing contexts which engage, challenge and involve children fully in their learning rather than breaking the competencies apart, into subject areas for example. Our approach is therefore genuinely holistic; it is also evolving as we learn more and evaluate the impact of our work.

Whilst our goal is to provide a broad and balanced education, we also wish to capitalise on the children's interests and respond to local and national events and opportunities as they arise. Our plans are therefore subject to change. Broad themes enabling the children to further develop their individual interests and areas of knowledge are identified annually. We use The National curriculum as a source of reference. The knowledge, skills and understanding we wish to develop in each of these areas can be found in our 'All in One' document. We also aim to achieve quality and depth of learning rather than complete coverage of the curriculum- recognising that the development of essential skills, attitudes and qualities in children are our priority.

Our evolving curriculum is influenced by the work of educationalist Ferre Laever whose work focuses on the following domains:

- Levels of well-being and Involvement (or the ability to engage with learning).
- Language and communication skills.
- Logical and mathematical thinking.
- Understanding of the social and cultural wider world.
- Self-organisational skills and entrepreneurism, inspiring thinking outside the box.
- Emotional health and ability to communicate feelings in a variety of ways.
- Gross and fine motor skills.
- Artistic expression.
- Understanding of the physical world.

In addition, we have added

- Understanding of a healthy lifestyle

These domains cover and include the key subject areas that form The National Curriculum and complement Howard Gardener's Multiple Intelligences or 'Smart Areas' which The Treehouse has a strong allegiance to. They fit perfectly, and indeed enhance, our developmentally based approach to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the domains are broad enough to accommodate any future changes that we may wish or are required to make in the future.

Artistic Expression (Picture and Music Smart)
Over the course of a school year, building on prior learning, we offer a range of artistic and creative curricular contexts. This can be through a whole school focus, or workshops, which are carefully tailored to meet the needs of the children.

Fine Motor Development (Body Smart)
Competence in this area relates to dexterity in handling all sorts of tools and objects which require meticulous co-ordination for example, scissors, manipulating a computer mouse, and catching a ball. The children are immersed in opportunities to develop and refine their skills in this area throughout the school day.

Gross Motor Development and Healthy Lifestyle (Body Smart)
We take our role in helping children to develop healthy lifestyles extremely seriously. With opportunities to cook and eat a range of healthy, nutritious meals, in conjunction with regular opportunities for children to be active throughout the school day, both physically and mentally, we aim to make a lifelong impact.

Our all-encompassing approach includes providing children with opportunities to develop their gross motor skills, as well as a range of other competencies, through a number of formal contexts such as regular PE lessons and Forest School sessions. As our facilities are limited, we make good use of a range of local amenities, settings and experts to enable us to offer a wide, challenging and varied curriculum.

Language and Communication (Word Smart)
Developing children's Language and Communication skills are given a high profile at The Treehouse, integrated into all areas of the children's learning. Our developmentally based approach, along with assessment driven planning, ensures that we focus on the areas that children need to learn next. This is achieved through a range of strategies, including daily practise and the provision of purposeful contexts for learning.

Logical and Mathematical Thinking (Number Smart)
The National Curriculum for Mathematics is used as a reference point in planning to ensure both consistency and progression. Our open-ended problem-solving approach is used wherever possible to stimulate and develop children's mathematical thinking and understanding, and to enable us to revisit essential mathematical skills. Our approach is strongly influenced by Jo Boaler's work; she is professor of Mathematics Education at Stanford University. Alongside formal planned maths sessions, we find opportunities for the use and application of 'everyday' maths throughout the school week, for example when preparing meals and shopping. There is also a strong emphasis on developing children's mental maths skills.

Understanding the Physical World (Nature Smart)
Developing a connection and appreciation of the natural world is a fundamental part of our work at The Treehouse. In addition to discrete units of work focusing on this important area of the children's learning, good environmental and sustainable practices are threaded through the school day.

Self-Organisation and Entrepreneurship (Self and Learner Smart)
For children to become independent, autonomous learners, they need to be given opportunities to take responsibility and make some decisions for themselves; they also need to be given the time needed to follow their own interests. Our practice allows for a high level of learner autonomy. By removing the limits to children's learning and offering them greater ownership, they often achieve far more than either they, or we, might expect.

Furthermore, over time, we have found that giving children the opportunity to choose some activities/projects they pursue (Choice and Challenge) has led to greater levels of engagement and excellent attitudes towards learning in all areas of their development. Children plan, organise and review their own learning and projects, and with guidance, learn how to reflect more deeply on their progress and achievements. As well as giving us an insight into how the children learn, and their interests, this open ended and inclusive pedagogy means that children of all abilities can succeed.

Establishing a more open form of organisation is not the equivalent of total freedom. It requires a carefully developed structure based on rules and agreements, a well-organised setting, meticulous planning, and a daily routine which gives ample room for children's decision making.

In addition to developing the children's ability to become autonomous learners, we are also committed to developing strategies and tools that will help them to become more efficient and effective learners. Being 'Learner Smart' is given a high profile and status at The Treehouse. American psychologist, Carol Dweck's work on developing a culture of 'Growth Mindset' complements and takes this element of our work further forward.

Social and Emotional Development (People and Self Smart)
We believe positive relationships with and between the children and their families are central to successful learning. Children thrive when they are treated positively, fairly and with respect; are listened to and understood; and have clear boundaries and consistency.

Furthermore, for children to develop their social and emotional skills fully, they need a safe, positive environment, characterised by security, teamwork and camaraderie, in which they can experiment with and learn how to form positive and successful relationships, as well as learn how to express and share their feelings.

Planning

We are constantly evaluating our practice, observing children (*What's working well? How could this be improved? What are the children interested in? Which questions do they ask themselves? What stimulates their curiosity?),* analysing the children's achievements and progress, building on what we see. This enables us to create bespoke plans aiming to stimulate high levels of engagement, achievement and progress as we challenge and push children towards the extremes of their capabilities.

At the end of each academic year, our evaluations inform the overall direction we will take the following year, thus ensuring a broad and balanced approach. Each week, a short-term plan is written based on an assessment of needs and interests, referring to our schemes of work, daily plans are evaluated and reviewed again on a termly basis. In this way, we feel we are best able to respond to the needs and interests of the children, any local or national events, or opportunities that may arise, as well as providing a well-balanced curriculum. Using the National Curriculum as a guide, our aim is for quality, breadth and depth of learning, so we are selective and responsive in the choices we make.

Assessment

Experiential education is perfectly compatible with a systematic approach to assessing and monitoring children's progress. The systems we have developed detect, over time, children who need extra support, and we will adapt our approach and take necessary actions to bring them back on track. If children are demonstrating a delay the first approach is to explore and aim to boost their well-being and ability to engage with learning. See: Responding to Individual Needs Policy for more information.

Each child's progress is assessed using a five-scale description - level 3 is the score the majority of learners of a certain age would achieve, with level 1 being very low and 5 very high. During their termly Focus Child Week, each child is allocated a level which captures their overall performance in each area of their learning. This information is shared with parents, and with Trustees termly following an analysis of the cohort's data. See: Assessment Policy for more information.

The Physical Environment

Our focus is always on achieving the optimum environment for learning, and we are constantly developing both the indoor and outdoor spaces to provide appealing areas to stimulate and maximise learning. As space is limited, particularly indoors, modifications and interventions to improve the use of space, in response to the needs and interests of the children and curriculum, often take place. On a daily basis, adults and children select the space they wish to work in to best suit the task.

The material and resources in the school, garden and new site, have been selected, stored and displayed so that they are accessible and correspond to the needs and interests of the children. In line with our values and principles, all users are encouraged to look after, and take responsibility for the equipment. This includes anything that is damaged or unsafe. From a young age, children learn how to use a range of tools and equipment safely, with less supervision as they become more competent.

The Role of the Adult in Children's Learning

In our experience, when the curriculum offers open-ended opportunities for all children to problem-solve and think creatively, there is space for learners to demonstrate what they are capable of. Therefore, a conscious decision has been made to provide time during the school week when the children follow their own interests, with guidance and interventions from the adults. There are also timetabled periods when the adults teach specific skills or understanding to groups or individual children; the rest of the time the adult's role is to support children when they are engaged in child initiated activities.

We use a range of strategies to support children such as:
Stimulating children to help them get started or to sustain interest in their project or activity.
Finding a suitable resource: e.g. Offering a book as a source of inspiration.
Teaching a specific skill e.g. Teaching children how to whittle with knife safely.
Making a suggestion: e.g. Maybe you could add a light to the inside of your castle using some of our electricity resources.
Asking thought provoking questions: How are you going to tackle this?

Appendix 1: Involvement and Well-Being Scales, Developmental Domains

The Leuven Scale for Well-being

Emotional well being

Well-being focuses on the extent to which an individual feel's at ease with them self, and the vitality and self-confidence they exhibit. It is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health.

1) Extremely low

The individual shows signs of discomfort and may look anxious, sad or angry. He/she is wary and may be withdrawn; they have difficulty interacting and responding to others, and their environment appropriately.

2) Low

The child's posture, facial expression and actions indicate that they do not feel at ease however, the signals are less explicit than those exhibited in level 1. This sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.

3) Moderate

The child shows little or no emotion or signs demonstrating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort. They operate at a 'neutral' level.

4) High

The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5), however, these signals are not consistently evident.

5) Extremely high

The child looks happy and is cheerful. They are lively and full of energy. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He /she makes the most of the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

Level of involvement

Involvement focuses on the extent to which pupils are operating to their full capabilities. In particular it refers to whether the child is focused, engaged and interested in various activities.

1) Low Activity

Activity at this level can be simple, stereotypic, repetitive and passive. The child is inattentive and displays no energy. There is an absence of cognitive demand. Typically, the child may stare into space. N.B. This may be a sign of inner concentration.

2) A Frequently Interrupted Activity

The child is engaged in an activity, but half of the observed period includes moments of non-activity, in which the child is not concentrating and is staring into space. There may be frequent interruptions in the child's concentration, but his/her Involvement is not enough to return to the activity.

3) Mainly Continuous Activity

The child is busy at an activity, but it is at a routine level and the real signals for Involvement are missing. There is some progress, but energy is lacking and concentration is at a routine level. The child can be easily distracted.

4) Continuous Activity with Intense Moments

The child can become absorbed in an activity returning to it after interruptions. Stimuli, from the surrounding environment, however attractive, cannot seduce the child away from the activity.

5) Sustained Intense Activity

The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest Involvement. In the observed period there will be evidence of: concentration, creativity, energy and persistence. This intensity must be present for almost all the observation period.

Emotional health

If high levels of well-being are evident it reflects inner contentment. It reveals a child who is comfortable in their own skin and can has good self-confidence and self-esteem. The child is in touch with his/her own feelings, takes pleasure from what the environment offers, enjoys the company of others (children and adults) and has strategies for coping with painful experiences and setbacks (resilience). Emotional health is fundamental for a happy life.

Level 1: VERY LOW

Struggles with controlling and expressing emotions. Signals are: lack of energy or restlessness, avoiding contact or engagement with others and is impulsive. Displays dominant/ destructive/ aggressive behaviour, lacks resilience.

Level 2: LOW

Starting to control and express emotions, gaining self-confidence in the process. Not completely comfortable in the setting, but when promoted, using a range of strategies to deal with uncomfortable/ unfamiliar contexts and interactions.

Level 3: AVERAGE

Can generally control own emotions beginning to express how they are feeling. Shows a growing self-confidence in a range of familiar situations. Has a growing bank of strategies to draw upon to help them deal with uncomfortable/unfamiliar contexts or interactions. Demonstrates growing resilience in the face of adversity.

Level 4: HIGH

Can express feelings/control own emotions. Feels comfortable and content within the setting. Self-confidence and self-esteem are good. Copes with a range of situations/interactions appropriately. Resilient and able to cope with set-backs. Embraces challenge.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

Feels good about themselves and demonstrates high self-confidence and self-esteem in a variety of situations. Doesn't easily become intimidated. Sticks up for himself/herself without being defensive. Is in touch with his or her own feelings and can cope with painful experiences. Displays inner contentment but at the same time is enthusiastic and open-minded.

Gross Motor Development

Competence in this area involves the ability to co-ordinate different parts of the body and control of the muscular system in order to achieve a certain aim or perform a particular task. This requires well-developed body awareness: being in touch with your 'own body', being aware of one's posture and the body's position in relation to the surroundings and spatial awareness. Excellence in this domain can be linked to all forms of artistic expression such as dance and drama.

Level 1: VERY LOW

For his/her age lacks control and fluency in situations that demand (complex) movement. These movements are performed slowly or awkwardly indicating how difficult they are finding them. Responses to obstacles or signals are slow. They often stumble, push things over or easily give up. They have difficulty copying movements, following patterns, and struggle to keep in time with the rhythm even when modelled.

Level 2: LOW

Spatial and body awareness are low for his/her age with physical tasks proving a challenge. Can pick up basic patterns and is starting to develop rhythm. With practice can achieve some hand-eye co-ordination in ball games but may find reacting in different situations difficult.

Level 3: AVERAGE

Has for his/her age developed some co-ordination in body movement. Can copy and remember basic patterns of movement which are performed with some rhythm and fluidity.

Hand-eye co-ordination and reaction times are in line with the ability you would expect for his/her age, which is particularly evident in ball games.

Level 4: HIGH

Shows well developed physical co-ordination for his/her age. Movements are fluid and rhythmical with a good level of performance skill. Complex patterns can be learned and performed from memory. Achieves physical tasks and aims with ease, showing good balance and spatial awareness.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

Shows excellent physical skills – for his/her age which are demonstrated in a broad range of situations in which movement is required. It is a pleasure observing his/her movements in space: supple and graceful, with great efficacy, at a measured pace, rhythmical, readily reacting to changes and signals. Easily picks up new patterns of movement (like gestures, ball games, tumbling, dance).

Fine Motor Development

Competence in this area relates to individual dexterity in handling all sorts of tools and objects which require meticulous co-ordination for example, scissors, pencils, a computer mouse or in handling small items such as beads and Lego, or in completing practical tasks such as buttoning a coat, dressing a doll, using cutlery. In addition to this manual skill (using hands and fingers) it also relates to the control of other parts of the body like using their eyes (blinking), controlling their tongue and facial expressions.

Level 1: VERY LOW

Has for his/her age difficulty performing tasks where dexterity is required. Needs help in many activities/situations. Handles tools in an awkward way. Avoids tasks that require fine motor skills. Attempts lead to a rough result. Makes unnecessary secondary movements. Often accidents occur (dropping objects, knocking things over, spilling, gluing things crookedly, drawing and colouring outside the lines).

Level 2 : LOW

Gaining control when undertaking tasks that require dexterity, and achieving good levels when an adult is supervising. Outcomes are variable dependent upon the levels of input and support.

Level 3: AVERAGE

Has for his/her age competence in performing tasks where dexterity is required such as cutting, sewing and colouring. Can tackle most tasks that require fine motor skills with some confidence. Learns quickly from modelling and is willing to try things for themselves. Has more control over their body, and the materials that they use. Independent outcomes are recognisable and a reasonable quality.

Level 4: HIGH

Is for their age very good at handling and manipulating tools and materials independently. Able to select the right tool/material for the job and to sustain concentration. Learns quickly from modelling/input. Outcomes are good or better.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

Is for his/her age very skilful in handling small objects and tools: is able to perform complex tasks fluently and with precision, independently. Responds to new stimulus and input immediately and with accuracy e.g. calligraphy. When completing tasks concentrates and is able to isolate the action from the rest of the body. Easily picks up new patterns of movement.

Language and Communication

This domain is about mastering language as an 'instrument' to express in an accurate and powerful way, both orally and in writing, something one experiences, feels or thinks. Through this, the original experience or thought becomes sharper (for oneself) and at the same time, accessible to others. In a passive sense, linguistic competence is the skills required to easily understand and access what other people express in all sorts of forms (orally and in writing) and through all kinds of media (television, radio, film, drama, the internet).

Level 1: VERY LOW: Speaking and Listening

For their age, the child's verbal competence is poor: s/he has difficulties understanding other people or communicating with others. Language use is very simple.

Level 1: VERY LOW: Reading

The child enjoys sharing books, rhymes and songs. They know their name and can recognise it in print. For older children: has a limited sense of symbols and does not reflect on language.

Level 1: Very LOW: Writing

Uses a range shapes and symbols to convey meaning. Has no understanding of letter: sound correspondence. Meaning changes when child 'reads-back' what they have written.

Level 2: Low: Speaking and Listening

The child is learning how to listen more attentively, but finds it difficult to sustain appropriate behaviours such as body language and facial expressions. They are beginning to share things that interest them with other people, sometimes at an inappropriate time. The child responds when spoken to; they often rely on others to initiate and propel conversations.

Level 2: Low: Reading

The child has secured some simple sounds and high frequency words; with encouragement, they are beginning to relate them to print. They recognise rhyme and are able to segment and blend CVC words. They enjoy sharing and talking about books with an adult. The child is becoming aware of some of the ways they can find information of interest e.g. skimming, search engines, contents/index. They enjoy looking at information books and screens that contain images and information.

Level 2: Low: Writing

Has a go at writing for different purposes, using some sounds, common frequency words and leaving finger spaces. The child is learning how to form cursive letters and numbers correctly. They can usually read their writing back. They understand the difference between being an author and secretary.

Level 3: Average: Speaking and Listening

The child is becoming better at gauging when to speak and when to listen. They are learning how to attract the interest of their audience e.g. selecting the most interesting pieces of information to share with others; speaking with expression; making eye contact. When prompted, they ask/answer (relevant) questions, knowing the difference between a question and a statement.

Level 3: Average: Reading

The child can read and understand simple texts using a range of strategies including sounds, high frequency words, the context, and grammar. They enjoy listening to and talking about shared stories and information texts. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books, and can navigate their way around information texts using different tools.

Level 3: Average: Writing

The child writes with confidence and enthusiasm, combining words and pictures about subjects that interest them. They can write and punctuate simple sentences spelling some high frequency words correctly, others phonetically. They have a growing bank of high frequency words and spelling strategies e.g. Look-say-cover-write-check, and spelling rules including recognising that each syllable has a vowel, adding 'ed' to past tense verbs, dropping the 'e' to add 'ing'. They are learning how to join their writing correctly.

Level 4: High: Speaking and Listening.

The child speaks clearly, structuring what they say including if appropriate, a beginning, middle and end. They ask a range of questions e.g. To seek clarification, solve a problem, glean new knowledge. They can respond to questions giving extended explanations, or an appropriate response if they do not know the answer. The child can initiate and propel conversations with familiar and less familiar people. They listen attentively, responding appropriately.

Level 4: High: Reading.

The child can read more complex texts with fluency, expression and understanding. They use a range of strategies to work out the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. Their range of independent reading is expanding, and includes quality, age appropriate texts. They enjoy listening to and talking about shared stories and information texts. They can read a range of information texts, skimming and scanning to locate the information they need, becoming more selective and tenacious in finding information.

Level 4: High: Writing.

The child has developed a fluid joined handwriting style. They are beginning to experiment and adapt their writing for different audiences and purposes, sometimes using devices like mind maps and writing frames to help them to plan their work. They understand and use compound sentences and can punctuate a 'perfect' sentence appropriately. The child is beginning to group sentences into paragraphs and use a range of sentence starters. They recognise and are starting to use complex sentences. They understand the difference between the role of the author and secretary, rereading their work to identify where improvements can be made. They are transitional spellers and know and can apply a range of spelling strategies.

Level 5: Very High. Speaking and Listening

For their age, the child communicates with fluency and accuracy, expressing thoughts and feelings using a wide vocabulary. They adapt their speech in both formal and informal situations, to suit the audience and purpose, knowing when to speak and when to listen. They initiate and can sustain discussions and conversations, articulating their thoughts and opinions clearly. They ask and answer questions readily.

Level 5: Very High: Reading

The child reads with fluency and understanding for pleasure and information. They ask and answer questions and make relevant, sophisticated comments when sharing books and texts with others. They can interpret a range of information books and texts, at speed, to locate the information they need. They can locate, read, understand, synthesise and share information.

Level 5: Very High: Writing

The child is beginning to make stylistic choices about how they want their joined handwriting to look. They can write at speed and present their ideas for a range of audiences and purposes, using devices to capture the reader's attention and interest. E.g. Story, report, Powerpoint, recount. They revise and edit their own writing, making improvements as they go. Spelling is generally correct, drawing on a range of spelling strategies, polysyllabic words are phonetically sound.

Artistic Expression (visual arts, music and practical)

Artistic expression includes the ability to understand and enjoy the artistic expression of others, as well as being able to use all kinds of means/media to represent an experience, idea, sensation, feeling or thought. Outcomes demonstrate the child's imagination as well as helping them to process the experience and to share it with others. Artistic expression comprises the following areas: art and design; language (words/poetry/stories/role play/drama); movement (dance in all forms) and musical expression.

Level 1: VERY LOW

The child does not engage with the arts. S/he Is not able for their age to express them self adequately in any of the 4 areas. They have a limited awareness of the opportunities within each of the areas, and are unable to use the narrow range of techniques and skills they do have, without relying heavily on others for support and stimulus.

Level 2: LOW

The child is starting to show an interest in some areas of the arts. When prompted, they use a growing bank of techniques and skills to express them self. They continue to be dependent on others for direction and reassurance.

Level 3: AVERAGE

The child is beginning to gain more pleasure from different art forms, and is able to respond to them when given a structure to work from. They are starting to experiment with different techniques and skills with increased independence and confidence.

Level 4: ABOVE AVERAGE

The child engages with, and responds to, a variety of art forms with increasing independence, drawing on a range of stimuli and experiences. They experiment with their own ideas and have a growing bank of techniques through which they express their feelings or experiences.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

The child enjoys a variety of art forms, and can express their feelings or experiences through artistic activities in one or more of the four areas. They are creative and have original ideas, with an eye for aesthetics, successfully using different elements (e.g. symbols, colour, proportions, harmony, composition, pace, rhythm) to represent their ideas.

Understanding of the Physical World

This domain encompasses the sciences and some areas of geography/technology. It focuses on the child's ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the physical world, ranging from matter (sand grains to galaxies) to living creatures (unicellular organs to human beings). As well as having an intuitive awareness and understanding of all kinds of physical phenomena and how they behave, it includes the ability to predict what might happen to a range of materials, and how they might react in different situations. The domain also extends to understanding how the 'laws of nature' have helped to create tools and designs to survive and make life easier.

Level 1: VERY LOW

For their age, the child is not really receptive or interested in the physical world, or eager to explore their surroundings. They are unfamiliar with an array of physical phenomena and have difficulty imagining or predicting (common) effects of combining materials. They are unable to draw on prior experiences to solve problems related to the physical environment.

Level 2: LOW

The child is starting to show some interest in the physical world and their environment, especially when surrounded by others who are keen and curious. They rely mainly on others for motivation, stimulus and theories, only sharing their own thoughts and ideas or becoming involved in projects or investigations when prompted.

Level 3: AVERAGE

The child has a growing interest and understanding of the physical world and their surroundings. They are starting to use what they know, and their intuition to answer questions and make predictions. With support, they ask questions and undertake projects and investigations, sharing their outcomes and conclusions with others. They can make some suggestions when presented with a (technical) problem, some of which may be reasonable.

Level 4: ABOVE AVERAGE

The child is interested in the physical world and keen to explore it. They make plausible suggestions about the properties and characteristics of a range of objects, materials, living creatures and their environment. They are keen to investigate different ideas, and are learning how to do this with more independence. They make a range of suggestions when faced with a (technical) problem.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

The child is very curious and keen to experience and explore the physical world. For their age, they have an advanced understanding of the properties and characteristics of a range of objects, materials, living creatures and environments. They ask questions and draw on their knowledge and previous experiences to predict the outcomes of investigations, drawing sound conclusions from their results. They can suggest appropriate solutions for (technical) problems based on their understanding of the physical world.

Understanding the Social World

Social competence is about being in touch with one's own feelings and perceptions as well as being able to empathise with others. Socially aware individuals understand interactions between people intuitively and can predict the behaviour of others in all kinds of situations. They have a host of tools and skills to draw upon when interacting with others, adapting their behaviour and responses to the situation and setting. They are interested in the wider social world, respect and appreciate the beliefs and cultures of others, and have an understanding of the how and why communities organise and conduct themselves.

Level 1: VERY LOW

S/he has for their age little insight into their own feelings and needs. They have difficulty empathising with other people, or understanding other people's behaviour or motives. As a result, their interactions are often inappropriate and the child has little success in socialising with others. They show little interest in the strengths, beliefs or culture of others.

Level 2: LOW

Whilst they continue to put their own needs and feelings above others, the child is starting to understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Behaviour and conduct varies according to the boundaries and structures that are in place. The child has limited interest or understanding of people with different cultural beliefs and needs.

Level 3: AVERAGE

S/he has a growing awareness of their own needs and feelings, and those of others. They are learning how to behave, 'read' and respond appropriately to others in a range of settings and contexts, and how to form and sustain friendships and relationships. They are interested, but have a limited understanding of the wider social world.

Level 4: ABOVE AVERAGE

The child is aware of and sensitive to their own needs and feelings and those of others. They can 'read' and empathise with other people, varying their responses and interactions to suit. They behave well and are keen to conform. They are interested in the lives, cultures and beliefs of others.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

S/he has for their age an acute awareness of their own feelings and needs and those of others, taking this into account when interacting with others. Their behaviour in a range of settings and contexts is excellent and they show a great interest in the people they meet. The child can empathise with others, including those with different needs and those from a diversity of cultures and religions.

Logical and Mathematical Thinking

This domain refers to the 'power of abstraction', or the ability to operate beyond the concrete.

Learners are able to sort and categorise objects, positioning and number them, discover patterns, linking cause with consequence and with the ability to draw conclusions. They demonstrate a positive attitude and logical thinking, overcoming any difficulties as they arise.

Level 1: Very Low

For their age, the child has a limited ability to understand abstract concepts, relying on the concrete. They are unable to solve simple problems without support and find learning new concepts a struggle. They show no real interest or enthusiasm for this area of their development.

Level 2: Low

The child is starting to gain confidence, and showing some signs of understanding beyond the concrete. They can retain, conserve and apply prior learning, drawing on it in different contexts. With guidance, they can tackle simple problems.

Level 3: Average

The child is developing an interest and some enthusiasm for this area of their development. They are starting to be able grasp more abstract concepts, and secure them with practise and repetition. They are developing a bank of basic skills which they use and apply with increasing independence. They rely on support to take them through the steps involved in solving a problem, and sometimes spot patterns and links beyond the obvious.

Level 4: High

For their age, the child demonstrates an understanding of concepts at a level beyond their peers. They are interested and easily engaged in this area of their development, with the ability to explain their understanding and thinking to others. They learn and can apply new concepts with some ease, and enjoy solving problems, looking for solution beyond the obvious.

Level 5: VERY HIGH

The child can deal with the abstract, articulating and demonstrating coherently their understanding of a range of concepts relating to concepts and areas such as number, measure, shape, space and handling data. They can pick up new concepts quickly, and apply them. They can solve problems with confidence, applying previous knowledge and skills; they select the quickest route and can explain their thinking. S/he uses estimation as part of the process, and checks their answers using an appropriate method as part of any calculation. They spot patterns and link cause/consequence.

Self-organisation/entrepreneurship

This domain concerns the ability to organise oneself effectively, and make the most of opportunities that arise. Children who achieve the most success in this area, are able to: make choices; set themselves goals; work hard and persevere to achieve outcomes; reflect and learn from experiences. Self-organisation combined with initiative and creativity results in 'entrepreneurship' and innovation.

Level 1: Very Low

The child finds it very difficult to take initiative, relying heavily on others. S/he has difficulty making choices and lacks direction. They find it difficult to start an activity and to think through the steps required to achieve an outcome. The child gives up easily and rarely achieves a good result in new situations. They do not learn from experience (s), can appear helpless and may be dependent on others.

Level 2: Low

The child is learning how to make choices and decisions but lacks the confidence needed to do this independently. When motivated and well supported, they see an activity or task through to its conclusion and are pleased with the outcome.

Level 3: Average

Over time, the child has learned how to take more responsibility for them self, relying less heavily on those around them. They are able to make decisions and choices and can see a project through from start to finish with increasing independence. When they hit an obstacle they have several strategies to draw upon to overcome it.

Level 4: Above Average

The child is highly motivated, keen to participate and inspired by those around them. For their age, their organisational skills are well developed and they can manage their time and the projects they are involved with effectively. They persevere, finding different ways to overcome any obstacles that they encounter. They are beginning to experiment and take more risks, displaying more imagination and creativity.

Level 5: Very High

For their age, the child is able to take responsibility and manage them self well. S/he knows what they want, can set goals, embark on an activity without delay and achieve a good result. The child does not give up at the first obstacle and persists in order to reach the goal. They adapt to changing circumstances, working strategically and noticing and ceasing opportunities as they arise. S/he takes initiative displaying imagination and creativity, which in turn, inspires other children.